employerone 2016-2017
SURVEY

Kenora & Rainy River Districts
Final Report

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board
113-100 Casimir Avenue
Dryden, ON P8N3L4
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EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

NORTHERN ONTARIO
WORKFORCE PLANNING

employerone® SURVEY RESULTS 2016

Kenora & Rainy River Districts

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of the employers that took the time to complete the employerone® *survey and for the workforce information that they shared. We also acknowledge the following for the assistance that they provided by assisting us with the promotion of the survey: Dryden District Chamber of Commerce, Ignace Area Business Association, Kenora Chamber of Commerce, Labour Market Group Sioux Lookout, Sioux Lookout Chamber of Commerce, Kenora Chamber of Commerce, Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce, Red Lake Chamber of Commerce, Atikokan Chamber of Commerce, Emo Chamber of Commerce, NTAB Board of Directors, and Sam Dirksen, Marketing Coordinator Intern at The Labour Market Group for the design work. The assistance of Tom Zizys for his data consultation expertise and our translator Gilles Dignard are also acknowledged.*

*employer*one® SURVEY RESULTS 2016

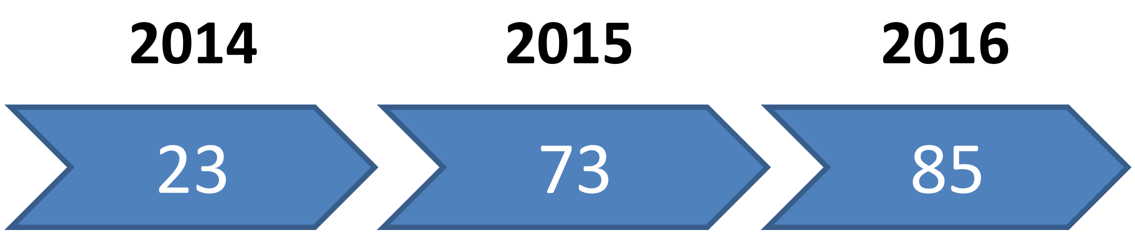
Kenora and Rainy River Districts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third *employer*one® survey that the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board has utilized to gather local labour market information. This existing method is what we are using to get an understanding of the current and projected workforce needs of the employers in both of the regions of the Kenora and the Rainy River districts. There are other sources such as Statistics Canada, labour market research, job vacancy postings and our stakeholder/community consultations that we use as well but this gives us a direct contact with each employer that participates.

In 2014 the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) now known as the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD), tasked the six Northern Workforce Planning Boards to conduct these interviews using the *employer*one® survey as our tool. The results have varied for each year dependent on who responded.

In 2014, 45 employers responded with 23 completions, representing 1,004 employees in the NTAB area. In 2015, 102 employers responded with 73 completions, representing 4,643 employees. This larger number may have resulted as a result of the Planning Boards working together to make the survey more user friendly than it was the first year. In 2016 NTAB received 171 starts to the survey with 85 full completions that represented 2,373 employees. Of these surveyed 13 employers identified themselves as having participated in the previous year as well.



The 2011 National Household Survey in the NTAB area accounted for 33,740 jobs. The Labour Force Survey shows that the level of employment remained almost unchanged from 2011 to 2016 in Northwest Ontario. So this latest survey shows that the respondents are responsible for around 7% of all local jobs.

Our Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) are the backbone of our regions. The main responders to this survey are Retail Trade, Finance & Insurance, and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, while the lower responders were the firms in Construction, Transportation & Warehousing and Other Services.

There are 387 firms in the two regions with 20 or more employees as of June 2016. This fiscal 8.3% (32 firms) participated in the survey or one in twelve. That is why last year's survey represented 4,643 employees versus 2,373 this year. Last year's respondents 2015, compared to 2016 were as follows:

		2015	2016
1-4	employees:	19%	36%
5-19	employees:	41%	29%
20-99	employees:	23%	27%
100+	employees:	17%	8%

The 2014 results are not shown for comparison because the survey from that fiscal was changed. The 2015/2016 surveys were similar so comparison is warranted.

SNAPSHOT OF WHAT WE HEARD:

421

Separations

SEPARATIONS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS: 94 Companies answered this question and of these 52 or 55% reported a separation in the past year. The total amount of separations amounted to 421 resulting in an annual turnover rate of 20.8% which is higher than last year's 15.2%. The Employees who quit their jobs account for two-thirds or 67% of all of the separations. Of these groups, Service Workers account for 25% and surprisingly the Trades made up for another 10% of all the separations. The next most prominent reason for separations is Temporary and Permanent lay-offs.

492

Hires

HIRINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS: There were 492 hires versus the 421 separations over the same period. 65 employers hired last year which again is higher than the 52 employers that reported separations. Hires did slightly outnumber the separations last year but by a small number based on these responses. Around 14% of these hires involved the re-hiring of previously laid-off workers, but most of this related to only one employer. Again Service Workers were the top hires of all of the categories.

HIGH FREQUENCY HIRING OCCUPATIONS: (25 PEOPLE OR MORE) Food and Beverage Server (N=53); Housekeeper (N=43); Equipment Operator (N=29); Production Technician (N=27); Food Counter Attendant (N=25);

RECRUITMENT METHODS: Word of mouth; personal contacts; referrals; informal networks were the top methods used by employers, followed by online job boards and postings, and third was the company's own website. The majority of workers hired are from our two districts rather than outside of our areas. The hires from within Canada did rise from 17% to 26% and the internationally hired workforce also rose from 2% in 2015 to 7% in 2016.

TRAINING: Last year in 2015, 87% of employers stated that they provided training for their employees. That number is down for 2016; two-thirds or 67% said they provided training. The number one challenge cited was the cost to train, followed by distance, and the fact relevant training is not offered locally (in the district). Awareness of existing training programs and the loss of productivity during the training time came in tied at 32%.

TOP COMPETENCIES FOR CURRENT/FUTURE WORKFORCE: Customer service skills came in as the top competency for current and future employees; higher than last year's numbers. Listed next were work ethic, dedication, and dependability. The third competency recorded is an employee who is self-motivated and has the ability to work with little or no supervision.

The method that we have to collect this vital information from the largest amount of participants continues to be a "survey." NTAB understands the challenges that employers face when asked to participate and are aware of survey burnout, but this information is critical to the development, growth and sustainability of our current and future workforce. It also gives us a window of vital information that we can then share with our partners and stakeholders as to what we can do collectively to keep proactively promoting our two regions as viable places to live and work.

INTRODUCTION

As you read this report please note, we will (in 2017) be asking you to participate in an *employerone®* Survey again; however we are working on revising it. The first year it was too convoluted and not user friendly. We listened to respondent feedback and revised the survey for year two. Year three we used the same survey as year two so that we could do a full comparison (apples to apples). From the results this year NTAB feels that we need to add more local questions. We know that asking the same employers similar enquiries each year can result in less participation. Not all companies have large changes each year so they may not feel it is as necessary to participate.

However, this labour market information is essential to various stakeholders such as Employment Ontario Service providers who assist with job matches; educators and school guidance counselor who help students explore career options; post-secondary institutions that provide specialized training for professional and skilled trades; and towns and municipalities for economic development.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

OUTREACH STRTEGIES: NTAB and the *employerone®* branding continue to be used to identify this important survey. We continue to include: personalized emails; employer site visits; employer breakfasts in different communities; posting it on various web-sites; employer connections through other organizations; local Chambers of Commerce; and attending employer-related events.

EMPLOYER/SECTOR SELECTION PROCESS: While employers of all sizes were targeted with the above outreach efforts, NTAB also reached out to larger local employers.

FINDINGS

LIMITATIONS: It continued to be a challenge to get employers to respond to the 2016 survey. Of the employers that did respond only a few said that they had participated in previous years. Again, not all of the employers that started the survey completed it. Lastly, some respondents gave multiple answers to some of the questions resulting in some of the outcomes coming in at more than 100%.

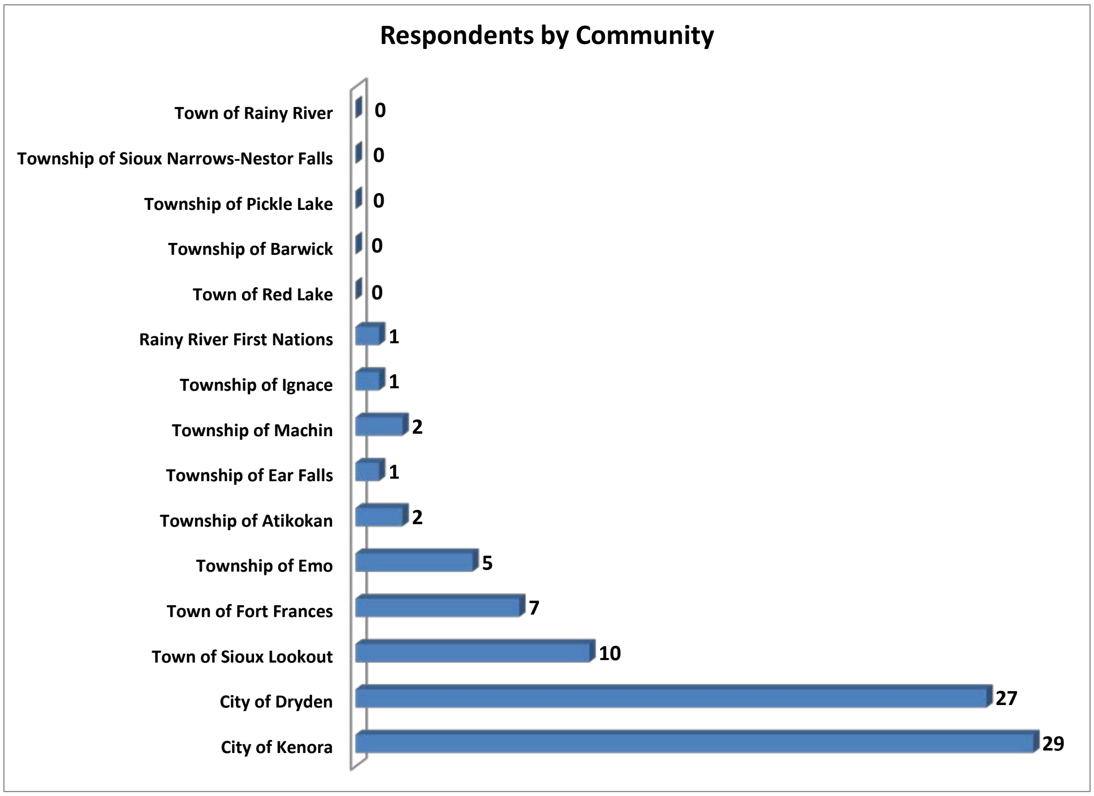
This labour market information is essential.

Profile of respondents

In total, 171 employers started the survey and 85 completed it, with a variable number of respondents for each question. 13 respondents indicated that they had been part of the survey last year, when 102 employers had participated.

Table 1: Respondents by Community

City of Kenora	29
City of Dryden	27
Town of Sioux Lookout	10
Town of Fort Frances	7
Township of Emo	5
Township of Atikokan	2
Township of Ear Falls	1
Township of Machin	2
Township of Ignace	1
Rainy River First Nations	1
Town of Red Lake	0
Township of Barwick	0
Township of Pickle Lake	0
Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls	0
Town of Rainy River	0



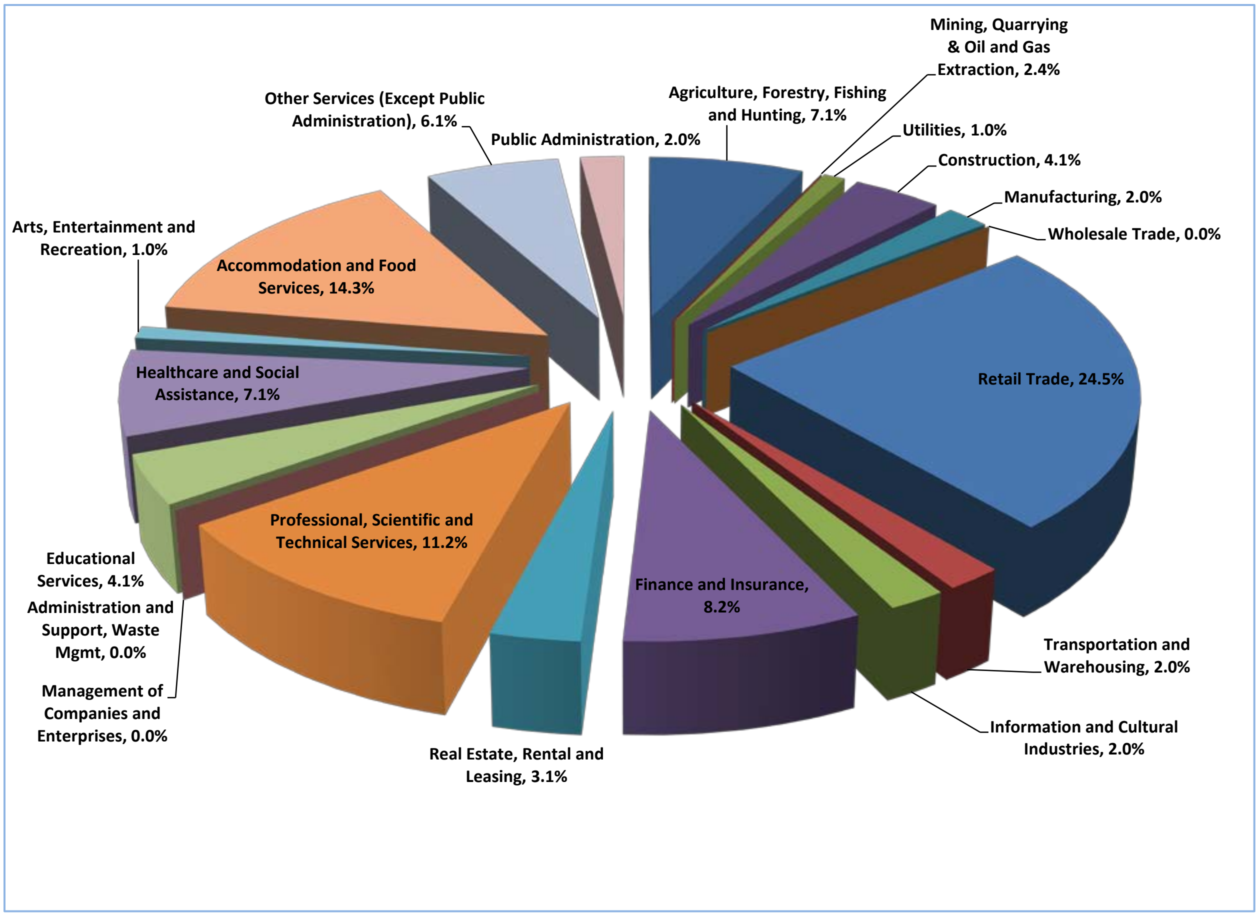
Respondents reflected a range of industries. Table 2 provides the breakdown of the participants by industry and compares the percentage distribution with the distribution of businesses in the NTAB area (Rainy River and Kenora Districts) in June 2016. The colour-coding for the survey results highlights where the survey percentage share is much greater (green) or much lower (red) than the actual distribution.

Table 2: Number and percent of respondents by industry

INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PERCENT	ACTUAL
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	7	7.1%	4.9%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0.5%
Utilities	1	1.0%	0.4%
Construction	4	4.1%	12.6%
Manufacturing	2	2.0%	1.9%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	2.8%
Retail Trade	24	24.5%	15.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	2	2.0%	5.8%
Information and Cultural Industries	2	2.0%	1.0%
Finance and Insurance	8	8.2%	2.2%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	3	3.1%	3.5%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	11	11.2%	4.7%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0.3%
Administration and Support, Waste Mgmt	0	0.0%	2.7%
Educational Services	4	4.1%	1.6%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	7	7.1%	9.1%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1	1.0%	2.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	14	14.3%	14.6%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	6	6.1%	9.9%
Public Administration	2	2.0%	3.8%
TOTAL	**98**	**99.8%**	**100.1%**

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2016

There were 387 firms with 20 or more employees in June 2016 in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts, and 8.3% of them (32 firms) participated in this survey (one in twelve).



There are a few imbalances when it comes to the distribution of respondents by industry, but there are certainly more instances where the survey distribution is quite close to the actual distribution of firms by industry in the study area. The sectors with a disproportionately higher share of responses are Retail Trade, Finance & Insurance, and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, while there was a disproportionately lower participation on the part of firms in Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, and Other Services.

The distribution of respondents by number of employees shows a greater proportion of respondents with a larger number of employees compared to the actual figures, which is evident among those firms with 20 or more employees. There were 387 firms with 20 or more employees in June 2016 in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts, and 8.3% of them (32 firms) participated in this survey (one in twelve).

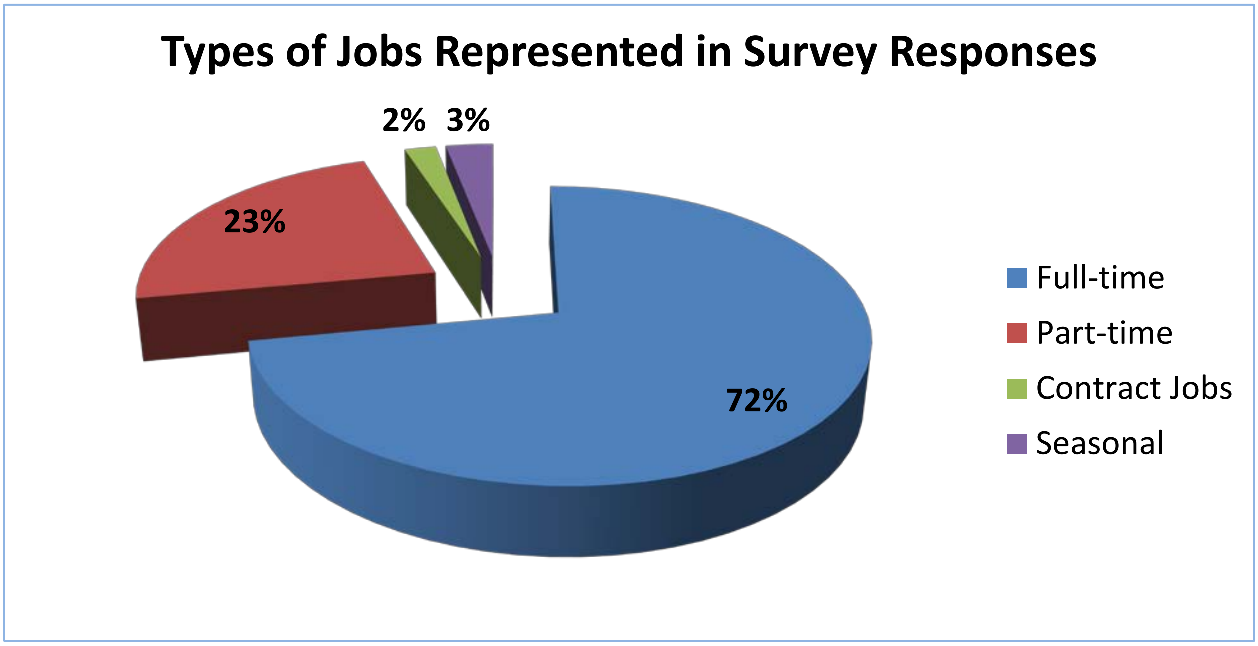
Table 3: Percent of respondents by number of employees compared to actual percentage (N=92)

	1-4 employees	5-19 employees	20-99 employees	100+ employees
Survey	36%	29%	27%	8%
Actual	48%	37%	13%	2%

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, June 2016

Overall, the respondents represented 2,373 employees. In the 2011 National Household Survey, the NTAB area accounted for 33,740 jobs. According to the Labour Force Survey, the level of employment has remained almost unchanged between 2011 and 2016 in Northwest Ontario. Consequently, we can estimate that respondents to the survey are responsible for somewhere around 7% of all local jobs.

According to the respondents, around 72% of these jobs were full-time, 23% were part-time. Around 2% were contract jobs and 3% of jobs were seasonal.



Approximately 27% of all jobs were filled by youth under the age of 25 years, and 21% of the jobs were filled by adults aged 55 years or older. The proportion of youth is considerably higher than the 14% figure available from the National Household Survey (NHS), while the figure for workers aged 55 and older is very close to the 20% proportion from the NHS. Survey respondents also indicated that females made up 48% of their workforce.

The survey respondents largely represent older firms, most of which were over 10 years old. In fact, 45% are over 20 years old. Eight (8) businesses of the total that responded were more than 100 years old.

Table 4: Age of company

Less than 2 years old	Between 2 and 5 years old	Between 6 and 10 years old	Between 11 and 20 years old	Over 20 years old
7	18	8	17	41

The rest of the analysis will present the substantive responses.

SEPARATIONS

Did your organization experience any separations over the last 12 months?

94 companies provided an answer regarding whether they had experienced a separation in the previous year. These companies represented 2,025 jobs. Of these, 52 companies (55%) reported a separation in the past year. The total separations amounted to 421, resulting in an annual turnover rate of 20.8%, higher than last year's 15.2%. Table 5 presents the data on separations by type of occupation and by type of separation.

Table 5: Number of separations, by occupational category and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	TOTAL
Managers & Executives	16	7	0	4	2	2	**31**
Professionals	4	2	0	0	0	0	**6**
Technical	23	0	0	0	0	0	**23**
Trades	40	1	29	2	7	0	**79**
Apprentices	3	0	1	0	0	0	**4**
Sales & Marketing	6	0	3	0	2	0	**11**
Admin & Clerical	10	3	0	4	0	8	**25**
Production Worker	24	2	0	16	2	1	**45**
Service Worker	103	0	6	14	1	0	**124**
Other	52	3	10	2	4	2	**73**
TOTAL	**281**	**18**	**49**	**42**	**18**	**13**	**421**

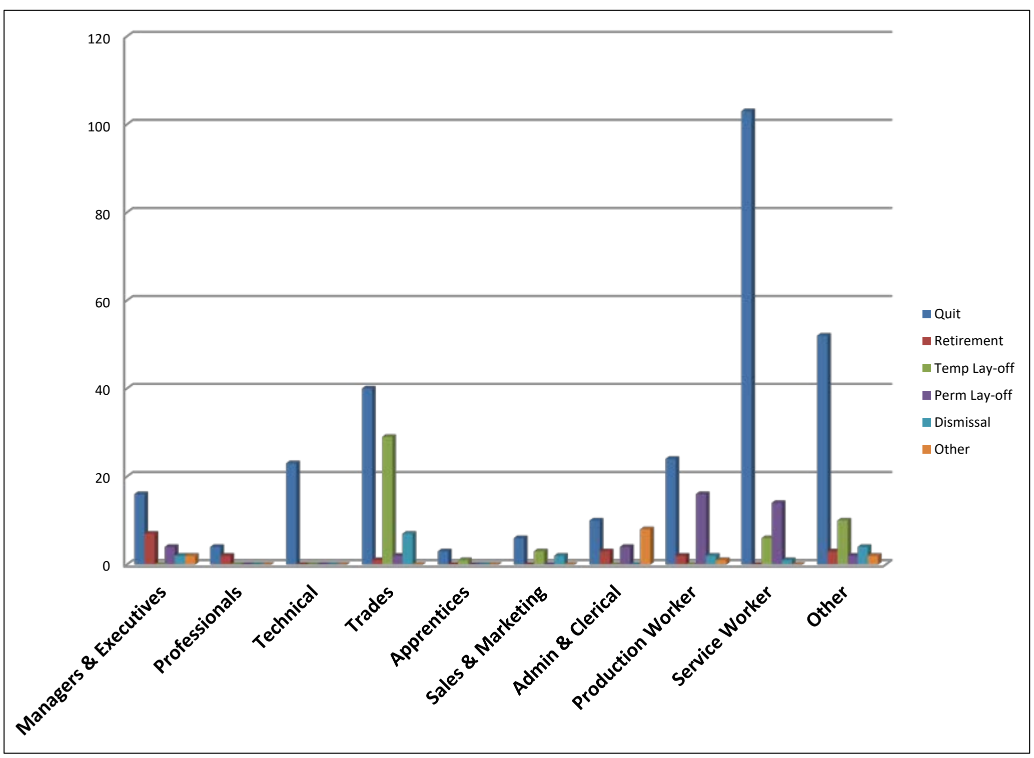


Table 6 presents these same figures as a percentage distribution, in order to make comparisons between the categories easier.

Overall, Quits account for two-thirds (67%) of all separations, and in each occupational category, Quits are the largest single reason for a separation. Quits are particularly pronounced among Service Workers and Other worker categories. Indeed, Quits among Service Workers account for a quarter (25%) of all separations. Somewhat surprisingly, Quits among Trades make up another 10% of all separations.

The next most prominent reasons for separations are lay-offs, both Temporary (12%) and Permanent (10%), with all other categories coming in at 3 - 4%.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of separations, by occupational category and reason for separation

	Quit	Retirement	Temp Lay-off	Perm Lay-off	Dismissal	Other	2015 TOTAL
Managers & Executives	4%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	**8%**
Professionals	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**2%**
Technical	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**6%**
Trades	10%	0%	7%	1%	2%	0%	**19%**
Apprentices	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	**1%**
Sales & Marketing	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	**3%**
Admin & Clerical	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	**6%**
Production Worker	6%	1%	0%	4%	1%	0%	**11%**
Service Worker	25%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	**29%**
Other	12%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	**18%**
TOTAL	**67%**	**4%**	**12%**	**10%**	**4%**	**3%**	**100%**

NEW HIRES

Did your organization hire anyone over the last 12 months?

Table 7 lists the figures for total hires over the previous 12 months, by occupational categories and by type of employment. The column shaded green list the numbers for separations in the same period.

Overall, there were 492 hires over the last 12 months, slightly higher than the 421 separations over the same period. 65 employers reported hiring last year, 70% of the respondents to this question, somewhat more than the 52 employers who reported separations, all of which suggests hires did indeed outpace separations last year, but by a small margin, based on these numbers.

There is reason to think that the hiring figures somewhat under-estimate the actual number of hires: the proportion of full-time jobs among the hires is around 83%, higher than the share of all jobs which are full-time. It is likely that employers responding to this question have under-counted the number of contract and seasonal hires.

Around 14% of the hires involved the re-hiring of previously laid-off workers, but most of these were related to only one employer.

Table 7: Total number of hires, comparison to total number of separations

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL HIRES		TOTAL SEPARATIONS
Managers & Executives	25	3	1	0	**29**		**31**
Professionals	10	0	1	0	**11**		**6**
Technical	24	10	0	0	**34**		**23**
Trades	18	5	0	0	**23**		**79**
Apprentices	24	0	0	0	**24**		**4**
Sales & Marketing	28	4	0	2	**34**		**11**
Admin & Clerical	19	3	3	3	**28**		**25**
Production Worker	60	2	0	0	**62**		**45**
Service Worker	117	26	1	4	**148**		**124**
Other	85	11	0	3	**99**		**73**
TOTAL	**410**	**64**	**6**	**12**	**492**		**421**

In the last 12 months, please list the occupations (up to 3) for which you hired the most employees

There were 108 entries for this question, representing slightly more than 80 different high frequency hiring occupations. More than half of the time, the number of hires was only one or two (for example, 30 occupations were a single hire). Table 8 lists those occupations with at least 10 new hires. These nine (9) occupations accounted for over half (55%) of the 433 frequent hires.

Table 8: Largest number of hires among high frequency hiring occupations

OCCUPATION	NUMBER	OCCUPATION	NUMBER
Food and beverage server	53	Pilot	21
Housekeeper	41	Retail sales clerk	17
Equipment operator	29	Office/administrative support	14
Production technician	27	Front desk clerk	11
Food counter attendant	25		

Employers were further asked whether any of these high frequency hires were hard to fill. Two-thirds of employers (67%) who identified high frequency hires said yes. Table 9 lists the top five reasons cited and compares these results to the top five reasons cited for the last two surveys. The same response is coded in the same colour across the years to make comparisons easier. Overall, there is more similarity in responses between 2016 and 2015 than with 2014. For the last two years, the five same reasons are cited, only in a different order.

Table 9: Top five reasons cited for difficulty in hiring for high frequency hires, 2015 and 2014

2016	2015	2014
Applicants not meeting skills requirements	Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities
Not enough applicants	Applicants not meeting skills requirements	Applicants not meeting skills requirements
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	Not enough applicants	Not enough applicants
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	Applicants not meeting work experience	Inability to compete with other employers due to pay and benefits
Applicants not meeting work experience	Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	No local qualified applicants

Table 10 shows the proportion of employers who answered this question claiming difficulties in hiring for high frequency hiring positions by the specific reasons for their difficulties, and compares the results to last year.

Table 10: Reasons for which it is hard to recruit and the proportion of employers citing that reason

REASON	2016 PERCENT	2015 PERCENT
Applicants not meeting skills	67%	64%
Not enough applicants	62%	51%
Applicants not meeting motivation, attitude, or interpersonal abilities	50%	31%
Applicants not meeting qualifications (education level/credentials)	50%	69%
Applicants not meeting work experience	43%	33%
No local qualified applicants	41%	26%
Inability to compete with other employers due to pay and benefits	21%	18%
No applicants at all	19%	13%
Inability to compete with other employers due to nature of work (seasonal, shift work, irregular hours, job content)	14%	21%
Inability to compete with other employers due to remote location/poor public transit	7%	21%
Inability to compete with other employers due to promotion opportunities	2%	5%
Applicants not meeting language requirements	2%	5%
Inability to assess a foreign educational qualification or credential	0%	0%
Other	0%	5%

RECRUITMENT

What recruitment methods were used to find job candidates?

Respondents were asked to indicate what mechanisms they used to recruit job candidates, for any hiring. Answers were provided by 62 respondents and the percentage citing each recruitment method is listed in Table 11. (The total responses add up to more than 100% because almost every employer cited more than one method of recruitment.) The response from the 2015 survey is included for comparison's sake.

Table 11: Frequency of use of recruitment methods (Number of respondents: 65)

RECRUITMENT METHOD	2016 FREQUENCY OF USE	2015 FREQUENCY OF USE
Word of mouth/personal contacts/referrals/informal networks	81%	74%
Online job boards/postings	68%	72%
Company's own website	52%	48%
Newspaper ads	42%	55%
On-site job signs or posters	37%	35%
Unsolicited resumes	36%	34%
Government employment centres or websites	29%	37%
Non-government or community employment service centres or websites	16%	26%
On-site recruitment at schools, colleges, or universities	16%	20%
Executive search companies or temporary help agencies	10%	6%
Other	10%	2%
Job fairs	8%	12%
Trade or professional association publications/websites	3%	15%

In terms of frequency of use by employers, the top two methods were the same as last year's results (and the year before), and generally, the ranking and scoring is much the same as last year. A few items to note, however: reliance appeared to go down for the following methods: **newspaper ads; government employment centres or websites; and non-government or community employment service centres or websites.**

How do you rate the availability of qualified workers in Rainy River and Kenora Districts?

Employers had a low opinion about the availability of qualified workers in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts. Of the 61 responses, almost four out of ten (39%) said “Poor” and another near four out of ten (39%) said “Fair.” While that is a poorer assessment than last year, it is closer to the assessment derived from 2014. If one assigned a numerical value to each choice, where “3” = Excellent, “2” = Good, “1” = Fair, and “0” = Poor, then added up the scores and divided by the total number of responses, the average figure would be 0.87. Last year the composite score was 1.08, while in 2014 the score was a low 0.76.

Diagram 1: Rating the availability of availability of qualified workers in Rainy River and Kenora (N=65)

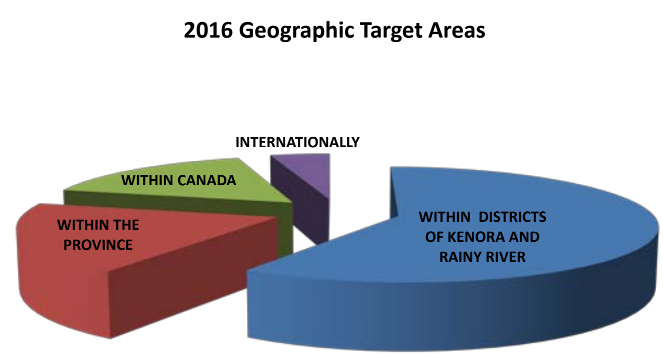
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
2016	5%	16%	39%	39%
2015	5%	31%	32%	32%
2014		10%	55%	35%

Which of the following geographic areas were targeted for recruitment?

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas their recruitment efforts targeted. Table 12 lists the responses by number of employers selecting each option, together with the percentage of respondents choosing each of the options. Last year’s responses are also provided.

Table 12: Geographic target areas for job recruitment activities (2016: N=61; 2015: N=65)

	WITHIN DISTRICTS OF KENORA AND RAINY RIVER	WITHIN THE PROVINCE	WITHIN CANADA	INTERNATIONALLY
2016	93%	31%	26%	7%
2015	92%	35%	17%	2%



Most of the recruitment effort of employers is focused in the Districts of Rainy River and Kenora, with considerable outreach extending to the province as well. There appears to be a growth in the recruitment effort that is targeting Canada and beyond. Perhaps what is surprising is that 7% of the respondents who replied claimed that they do not recruit within the Rainy River and Kenora Districts. (The percentages add up to more than 100% because some employers listed more than one option.)

Did you receive any assistance from a free employment service agency representing one of the following groups when recruiting for these occupations?

Employers were less likely to receive employment services from an agency providing assistance on behalf of a particular demographic group. Of the respondents who provided a response to this question, 82% said they received no such assistance. Apart from help in securing Aboriginal job candidates and to a lesser extent youth, reliance on such assistance amounted only to a small proportion of survey respondents, as follows (some employers received assistance in relation to more than one category):

- 12% received assistance from an agency serving Aboriginals
- 8% of respondents indicated they received employment services from an agency assisting youth (15-24 years of age)
- 5% received assistance from an agency serving persons with disabilities
- 5% received assistance from an agency serving immigrants or visible minorities
- 2% received assistance from an agency serving older workers (55 years and older)

Did you use a paid recruitment agency?

Six employers indicated that they used a paid recruitment agency, while 56 said they had not, resulting in 10% of those responding to the question confirming that they used a paid recruitment agency (in 2015, the figure was 5%, while in 2014 it was 11%).

2014	2015	2016
11%	5%	10%

Projected Hires

334

FUTURE HIRING

Do you plan on hiring anyone over the next 12 months? In what occupational categories? What is the reason for the job opening?

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents indicated that they planned on hiring over the next 12 months, the same proportion as expressed a hiring intention last year (68%). The projected number of hires is considerably lower than last year's hires – the same pattern was evident last year (projected hires being considerably less than actual hires in that year, roughly in the same proportions).

Table 13 shows the number of expected job hires over the next 12 months, by occupational category and by employment type (tan cells), and compares the figures to the reported hires over the past year (green cells) (from Table 6), and the same figures reported from last year's survey (yellow cells).

Observations:

- The 2016 actual hires amount to roughly 80% of the 2016 projected hires;
- The 2017 projected hires are 45% less than the 2016 projected hires;
- It would warrant further inquiry to determine if employers actually are more pessimistic about the coming year or if they are simply exercising a high level of caution in not projecting future hiring.

Table 13: Projected number of hires in coming year, compared to hires in past year

	Full-time	Part-time	Contract	Seasonal	TOTAL PROJECTED HIRINGS for 2017		2016 PROJECTED HIRINGS		2016 PAST YEAR ACTUAL HIRINGS
Managers & Executives	19	0	0	1	**20**		**27**		**29**
Professionals	6	0	0	0	**6**		**54**		**11**
Technical	19	10	0	0	**29**		**25**		**34**
Trades	24	10	0	0	**34**		**43**		**23**
Apprentices	20	10	0	1	**31**		**22**		**24**
Sales & Marketing	5	4	0	0	**9**		**0**		**34**
Admin & Clerical	3	3	1	0	**7**		**28**		**28**
Production Worker	50	1	0	0	**51**		**134**		**62**
Service Worker	73	11	1	4	**89**		**122**		**148**
Other	44	7	3	4	**58**		**149**		**99**
PROJECTED HIRINGS	**263**	**56**	**5**	**10**	**334**		**604**		**492**
HIRINGS PAST YEAR	**410**	**64**	**6**	**12**	**492**				

Employers were asked why they expected to have job openings. Of the 61 respondents who answered this question, 25 (41%) cited expansion or restructuring, 11 (18%) mentioned retirements, and another 25 (41%) chose Other as their response. When asked to elaborate, the Other reasons primarily referenced replacements for staff who were fired or who had left.

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

What is the minimum level of education required for new hires in the various occupational categories?

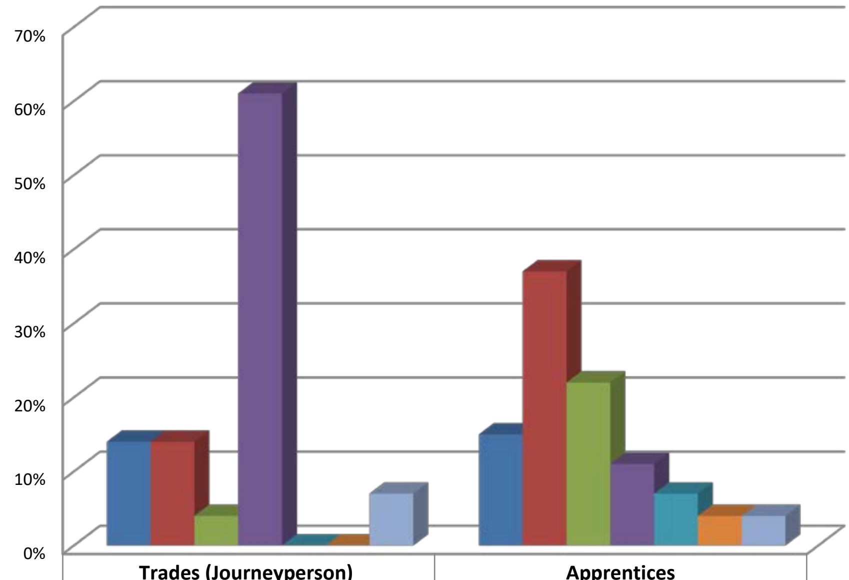
Employers were asked to list the minimum educational attainment requirements for the broad occupational categories. Table 14 lists the percentage distribution of the responses by each occupation.

The light-shaded cells in the table indicate values of over 15%, and the darker shaded cells indicate values of 35% or more. For certain occupations, one specific designation is the clear choice: 61% of employers expect a tradesperson to have a trades certificate and 39% require that a professional have a professional degree. However, for a large range of occupations in the Rainy River and Kenora Districts a high school diploma is sufficient.

Table 14: Minimum educational requirements by occupational categories

	NONE	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME POST-SECONDARY	TRADES CERTIFICATE	COLLEGE DIPLOMA	UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	PROFESSIONAL OR GRADUATE DEDGREE
Managers and Executives	16%	21%	16%	2%	23%	13%	8%
Professionals (eg: Engineers)	14%	14%	7%	4%	14%	7%	39%
Technical	15%	26%	11%	11%	30%	4%	4%
Trades (Journeyperson)	14%	14%	4%	61%	0%	0%	7%
Apprentices	15%	37%	22%	11%	7%	4%	4%
Sales and Marketing	25%	40%	10%	3%	13%	5%	5%
Administrative and Clerical	21%	46%	11%	2%	16%	2%	2%
Production Workers	43%	24%	19%	10%	5%	0%	0%
Service Workers	45%	29%	18%	3%	5%	0%	0%
Other	29%	21%	16%	3%	12%	15%	5%

Minimum Education Requirements for Trades and Apprentices (Hiring)



	Trades (Journeyperson)	Apprentices
NONE	14%	15%
HIGH SCHOOL	14%	37%
SOME POST-SECONDARY	4%	22%
TRADES CERTIFICATE	61%	11%
COLLEGE DIPLOMA	0%	7%
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	0%	4%
PROFESSIONAL OR GRADUATE DEDGREE	7%	4%

In last year's survey, while a high school diploma was similarly sufficient for many occupations, there were higher proportions of employers citing a college diploma and higher for technical, professional and managerial occupations.

Please select the top 3 competencies for most of your employees

Table 15 tabulates the scoring of all respondents who identified the top three competencies that their employees needed to possess, both for their current as well as future workforce. The results are compared to the figures from last year's survey.

Table 15: Necessary competencies, current and future workforces, all jobs and hard-to-fill jobs (2016: N=86; 2015: N=76)

	2016		2015	
Competency	**Current**	**Future**	**Current**	**Future**
Customer service skills	53	40	35	34
Work ethic, dedication, dependability	45	34	39	36
Self-motivated/ability to work with little or no supervision	41	28	33	29
Communication skills (both oral and written)	35	24	26	23
Teamwork/interpersonal skills	27	19	30	21
Willingness to learn	25	24	27	18
Professionalism	23	18	17	14
Time management or organizational skills	16	16	9	6
Computer literacy skills	16	13	10	8
Problem solving, reasoning, creativity	16	11	18	16
Technical skills	15	11	9	9
Analytical/research skills	3	3	2	0

These competencies are listed in order of the total number of times they were named for current workers in 2016. The ranking for future workers varies only a little. Overall, there is not much change from last year, with a few competencies changing their ranking. The main point is that there is a clear top tier of competencies: customer service skills; work ethic; self-motivated; communication skills; teamwork/interpersonal skills; willingness to learn; and professionalism. Analytical/research skills received hardly any votes, and a lower tier of competency expectations consisting of: technical skills; problem-solving, reasoning, creativity; computer literacy skills, and time management/organizational skills.

Training for incumbent workers

Employers were asked whether they were able to provide or support ongoing training and education opportunities for their employees over the last year, and two-thirds (67%) said they did, a figure somewhat lower than last year (87%).

When employers were asked if they encountered challenges or barriers in offering ongoing training or education, 11 employers answered in the affirmative, but in the follow-up question seeking details regarding those challenges or barriers, 25 employers provided responses. The percentage distribution of the barriers they cited is listed in Table 16. The total adds up to more than 100% because most named more than one barrier (indeed, half named three or more).

Table 16: Percentage of respondents citing challenges/barriers to employees receiving training or education (N=25)

Cost	72%
Distance to travel to facility	48%
Relevant training is not offered locally (the district)	44%
Awareness of existing training programs	32%
Loss of productivity during training time	32%
Losing trained employees to other businesses	20%
Awareness of training support programs	16%
Other	4%
Awareness of legislated training	0%

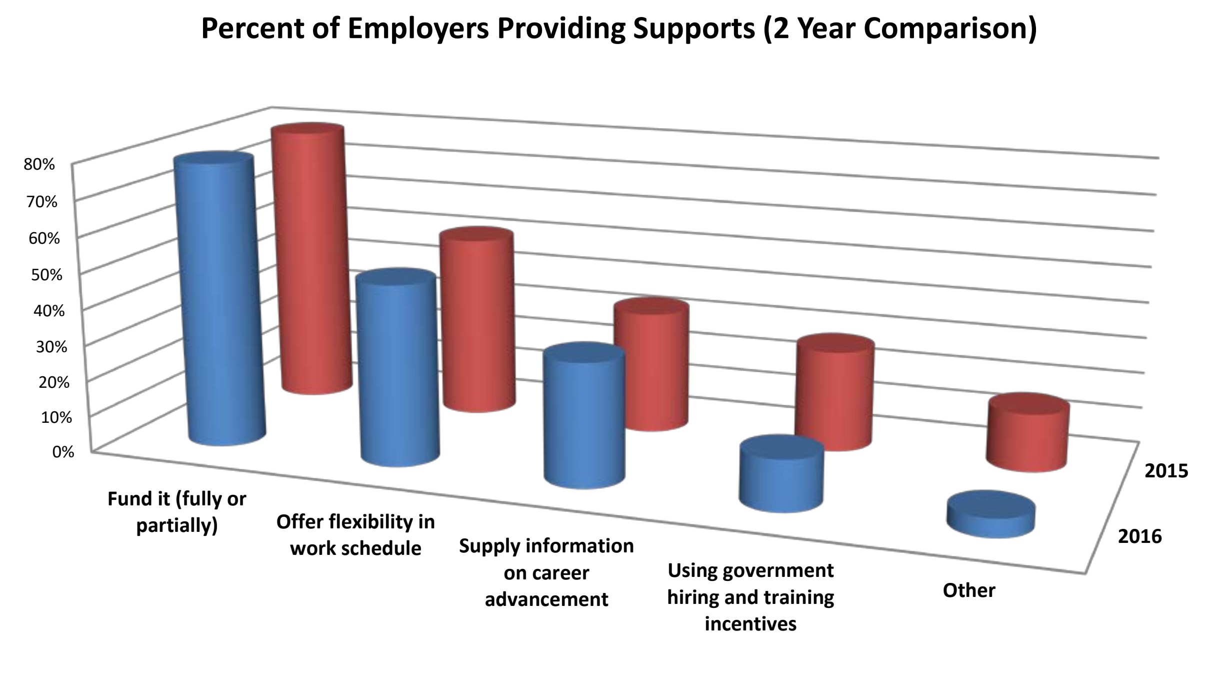
By far, cost is the single most significant barrier. Importantly, as far as the Rainy River and Kenora Districts are concerned, it is the issue of distance and unavailability of relevant training. A concern about poaching of trained workers by other employers does not rank as high on this list (20%), although it is a factor often mentioned in media reports when discussing the lack of workplace training.

Respondents were further asked in what specific ways they supported training or education for their employees. Table 17 identifies the percentage of employers engaged in training who provided each of the following supports. The figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one support – in fact, slightly over half (54%) of employers provided more than one support. The results from last year are also displayed.

Table 17: Percent of employers providing supports (N=56)

	2016	**2015**
Fund it (fully or partially)	79%	79%
Offer flexibility in work schedule	50%	51%
Supply information on career advancement	34%	34%
Using government hiring and training incentives	14%	28%
Other	5%	16%

Employers offer very concrete forms of support, either through funding the training (in whole or in part) or by providing flexibility in the work schedule, as opposed to simply providing information. The results are very close to the answers from last year, except that the reliance on government hiring and training incentives appears to have dropped.

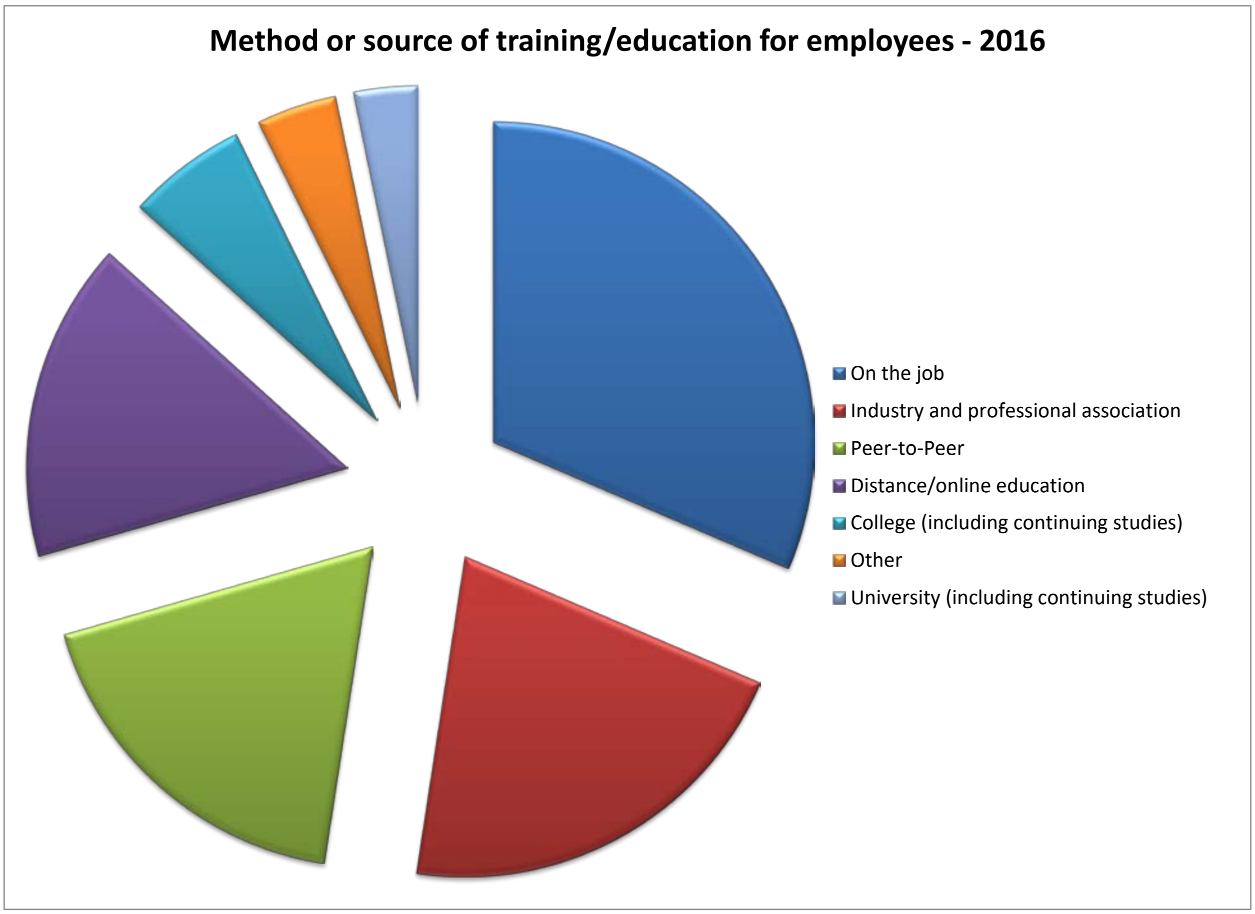


	Fund it (fully or partially)	Offer flexibility in work schedule	Supply information on career advancement	Using government hiring and training incentives	Other
2016	79%	50%	34%	14%	5%
2015	79%	51%	34%	28%	16%

In terms of the sources or delivery methods for training or education, by far the most common is on-the-job training. Table 18 lists each method by percentage of employers who undertook training. Once again, the figures add to more than 100% because some employers identified more than one training method.

Table 18: Method or source of training/education for employees

	2016	2015
On the job	78%	78%
Industry and professional association	52%	49%
Peer-to-Peer	45%	39%
Distance/online education	40%	45%
College (including continuing studies)	15%	25%
Other	10%	10%
University (including continuing studies)	8%	9%



The results are very similar to last year's survey answers. After on-the-job training, there is considerable reliance on an industry or professional association, peer-to-peer training, and distance or on-line education. Further down the list, a quarter of employers make use of colleges, whereas reliance on universities is relatively minimal. The other category included training offered by suppliers as well as contracted private trainers.

Do you provide any workplace-relevant training to students and future workers?

In terms of providing any workplace-relevant training to students or future workers, more than half (58%) said they did not – this was a considerably higher figure than last year's 44%. Of the remaining, the type of training and whether it was paid or unpaid varied, as Table 19 illustrates. Of employers who offered such experiences, two-thirds (66%) offered more than one such opportunity to students or job seekers. The percentages for Table 19 are calculated on the basis of all employers who answered this question, both those providing such an experience and those not.

Table 19: Percentage of employers providing workplace experience opportunities (N=83)

	Paid co-op	Unpaid co-op	Paid internship	Unpaid internship	Apprentice
High school student	11%	24%	2%	0%	4%
College student	6%	5%	6%	0%	5%
University student	4%	6%	4%	0%	0%
Job seeker	4%	1%	5%	0%	5%

By far, the most common form of work experience offered is through unpaid co-op placements for high school students. Co-op placements for college and university students are almost equally split between paid and unpaid positions, while in the case of internships, all positions are paid.

SUMMARY COMMENTS – OBSERVATIONS

The numbers of the respondents varied from the 2015 survey as did the sector of employers. This report has a larger number of smaller employers responding. The total amount of hires did outnumber the separations which can be seen as positive news.

Hiring is still seen as a challenge and so are the skill levels of the employees that are seeking work. Employers are still reporting a low opinion about the availability of qualified workers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. 39% of the responders stated "Poor" for the quality of the applicants which is higher than 2015 (32%), and 39% stated fair versus 32% in 2015. Those that rated as good quality employees came in at 16% from 31% in 2015. Only 5% of all applicants were scored as excellent quality by the employers for both of the years 2015 and 2016. This is a poorer assessment than 2015 but comes closer to the 2014 calculations. In 2014 the score was 0.76, for 2015 it was 1.08 and 2016 scored at 0.87. Adding to this is the fact that training is costly and can sometimes be prohibitive to provide. We need to find a solution to be able to have more qualified applicants apply and for employers to be able to provide the needed training and mentoring necessary to match the gaps that are currently in our existing workforces.

OUTREACH EFFORTS: Getting employers to participate continues to be a challenge. In 2014 we were told that the survey was too long. In 2015 the number of responses did increase. In 2016 some of the response NTAB received was that it was the same survey as 2015 and employers felt that they had just provided us with the feedback and now here we were back asking them to do it again. So for the 2017 survey we will add more local questions while still keeping it relatively short so that it is not overwhelming or too time consuming. Once again we will ask other organizations and associations to assist us with this task. We will also employ a telemarketing company to assist with the survey next fiscal to hopefully reach more participants.

RESPONSE SIMILARITIES: It was not surprising those small, medium and larger employers all reported similar strategies and issues that relate to recruitment and training issues.

Recruitment Methods: Remain relatively consistent to the previous year. The one interesting fact was the small amount of increased Canada wide and International hires that did happen.

Top Competencies: The lack of "soft skills" is still apparent. Customer service skills came in as the number one quality that employers were seeking. Employees need to understand that each customer is a link to their employment and paycheque. Employers need to be conscious of their bottom line in order to be able to retain their employees.

Training: As expensive as training is it is such a vital part of having viable employees. Without it some people are not aware of how to properly do their job which again can negatively impact the employer. Large churn over of employees is costly and can create hardships. Making new employees feel competent in their performance can make them feel like part of the success and possibly prevent them from leaving.

Labour market data is vital to knowing what is happening in the latest trends, which opportunities are available and what the priorities are for both job seekers and employers. Are companies expanding? How is e-commerce affecting the industry? Do we have the knowledge and technology to support these? Only by hearing from the employers who are willing to share that information with NTAB are we able to gain a true understanding, and then share those results with our partners and stakeholders. This helps planners, economic developers, educators, employment service providers, students and job seekers to understand where their efforts should be placed. Who is hiring? What are they looking for? Can I provide that service? How long is the training and if I pursue that career choice will there be a job for me at the end of the day?

These are the gaps and overlaps that we want to identify and help to create solutions for. We are not a singular unit and therefore rely on your input.

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