



NEWS RELEASE

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REPORT EXAMINES STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN WORK AND SOCIETY FOR SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO IN POST-PANDEMIC LABOUR MARKET

The regional and local reports examine four probable futures of how supply and demand of the labour market may shift in next 12-24 months and offers support in workforce contingency planning

Windsor, ON – The COVID-19 pandemic has caused economic and social disruption throughout the world. This includes in our work, everyday lives, and society as a whole. To address this, Workforce Planning West, a coalition of nine workforce planning boards in Southwestern Ontario, with assistance from project partners Libro Credit Union, Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab, and Western Ontario Wardens Caucus, published their [Workforce Planning West Scenario Planning Report](#) and [Interactive Dashboard](#), following six months of industry consultation involving more than 250 stakeholders and key informants.

Workforce WindsorEssex also released a local scenario planning report, [Windsor-Essex Post-Pandemic Scenario Planning Report](#), including [an interactive dashboard](#). The other workforce boards that are part of Workforce Planning West will be releasing their local reports in the coming days.

The Southwestern Ontario and the Windsor-Essex reports each look at the effects of the pandemic locally and regionally in labour markets throughout Southwestern Ontario, while providing communities with a strategic framework to proactively plan ahead despite high uncertainty.

The Southwestern Ontario report considered four probable futures relating to the degree to which there is structural change in the workforce and structural change in society. Some notable findings in the regional report include:

- The post-pandemic economy will require a workforce of lifelong, continuous learners.
- Structural changes in society will permanently impact how we do every day activities.
- Structural changes in the workforce will affect where, when, and how we work.

The Windsor-Essex report considered four probable futures relating to the severity of public health, how it has impacted the regional unemployment crisis, and how it has restructured society. Some notable findings from the Windsor-Essex report found:

- Resolving the unemployment crisis requires an investment in work-based learning and industry-based curriculum to adapt to the post-pandemic labour market.

- Industries must consider an agility-based framework in their business plans to respond to quickly changing events.
- Structural changes in the workforce will impact how we connect, create, and communicate.

Each report describes how the supply and demand of the labour market may shift in the next 12-24 months as a result of COVID-19 and identifies specific actions and initiatives that employment and training services, government, secondary and post-secondary education, and community leaders can implement in the near future to mitigate impacts or bridge skills gaps that emerge in each of the future scenarios. The reports are accompanied by an interactive online dashboard of key scenario indicators that determine the scenario-based labour market outcomes.

Through the participation and collaboration of partners and various local stakeholders, this report equips Southwestern Ontario with the foresight to promote proactive adaptation of the labour market to pandemic and post-pandemic conditions including social distancing, the normalization of working from home, reduced travel, changes to consumer demand, changes to global supply chains, and more.

As the project lead, Workforce WindsorEssex would like to thank the executives, project leads, and staff from the eight other Workforce Planning Boards that participated in the project: Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, and Workforce Planning Hamilton. Workforce WindsorEssex would also like to extend gratitude to the partners that contributed their time, ideas, and expertise to this project: Libro Credit Union, Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab, and Western Ontario Wardens Caucus. Thanks are also due to the 250+ stakeholders and key informants who contributed their time, ideas, and expertise to the nine local and one regional Scenario Planning projects.

QUOTES:

“As we work together to defeat COVID-19, it is important that we lay the groundwork for an economic recovery that spreads opportunity to hardworking families in our communities. These planning reports will help ensure workers in Southwestern Ontario have access and are connected to well-paying jobs not just tomorrow and next month, but for many years to come.”

- *Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training & Skills Development*

“Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic locally and regionally has been a challenge for jobseekers and employers. There has not been a time in recent memory when changes to the workforce have been more important. Workforce WindsorEssex is proud to collaborate with our Workforce Planning West Boards on this very important project.”

- *Trudy Button, Research and Policy Analyst and Project Lead for Regional Scenario Planning, Workforce WindsorEssex*

“As we begin to plan for the economic recovery of Western Ontario, ensuring that our region has the workforce to meet employers’ needs is critical. The Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus is pleased to be a partner on these reports that will play a pivotal role in our recovery.”

- *George Bridge, Chair Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus, Mayor of Minto*

“Challenging times are still ahead as we enter year two of the pandemic. But local employers remain diligent in building new bridges for employment opportunities. Workforce WindsorEssex is pleased to have come together with local industry leaders to demonstrate the importance of a sustainable labour market, amid and after the global pandemic.”

- *Samantha C. Dalo, Research Associate and Project Lead for Local Scenario Planning, Workforce WindsorEssex*

“Talent and workforce are the fuel that powers the economic development engine. These important reports not only identify the probable futures that may impact how the supply and demand of the labour market may shift in the next one to two years, but identifies specific actions and initiatives that can be implemented to mitigate negative impacts or bridge skill gaps.”

- *Stephen MacKenzie, President and Chief Executive Officer, WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation*

QUICK LINKS:

- Read the [Workforce Planning West Scenario Planning Project for the Southwestern Ontario Region](#).
- View the [Interactive Dashboard](#) for the Workforce Planning West Scenario Planning Project for the Southwestern Ontario Region.
- Read the [Windsor-Essex Post-Pandemic Scenario Planning Report](#).
- View the [Windsor-Essex Interactive Dashboard](#) of key scenario indicators that determine the scenario-based labour market outcomes.
- To learn more about the Post Pandemic Scenario-Based Workforce Planning project, including how to access all ten reports and dashboards visit: <https://www.workforcewindsorsex.com/workforce-scenarios>.

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About Scenario-Based Planning

Scenario-based planning is a collaborative systems and design-thinking framework for facilitating strategic planning by identifying and managing the possible outcomes of a set of future scenarios affecting a focal issue. Applying this framework in workforce planning in Southwestern Ontario is an innovative strategy that ensures regional stakeholders are prepared to act proactively in probable local and regional post-pandemic labour market scenarios.

About Workforce Planning West

Workforce Planning West is comprised of the nine Workforce Planning Boards operating in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. Members include Chatham-Kent Workforce Planning Board, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, Workforce Planning Hamilton, and Workforce WindsorEssex.

On this project, Workforce WindsorEssex acted as the project lead.

About Workforce WindsorEssex

Workforce WindsorEssex is a workforce and community development board whose mission is to lead regional employment and community planning for the development of a strong and sustainable workforce.

Workforce WindsorEssex is an experienced leader in the development of regional labour market tools, research, guides, and events that create positive change in the local labour market while saving others time and effort. These resources, created in close coordination with employment, education, and industry partners, are designed to help job seekers, employers, students, and educators, as well as the community, make more informed labour market decisions using locally-responsive, data-rich, and unbiased resources. To learn more about Workforce WindsorEssex and view our tools and resources, visit www.workforcewindsoressex.com.

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