Peel Halton Workforce Development Group

2026

PEEL HALTON

Local Labour Market Plan Report

Background

The Peel Halton Workforce Development Group (PHWDG) is a community-based, not-for-profit organization that serves the Peel and Halton Regions. The PHDWG functions as a neutral broker of research, disseminator of information, and facilitator of collaborative partnership development. The PHWDG works with the community to identify trends and opportunities in the labour market environment which impact our workforce. We then nurture the ideas which emerge from our consultations and seek to develop partnerships to address these issues, to further help our community to thrive in our local economy. Operating as part of the Local Boards Network of Ontario, PHWDG is one of 25 local planning board areas funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to conduct and distribute local labour market research and engage community stakeholders in a planning process that supports local solutions to local issues.

Peel Halton Workforce Development Group   Workforce Planning Ontario www.workforceplanningontario.ca   Ontario

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Employers have had to contend with a lot over the past few years. Just prior to COVID, their biggest challenge was finding job candidates during a time of low unemployment rates. COVID, of course, brought major upheavals, from lockdowns to the shift to remote work. As the pandemic receded, job vacancy rates soared, especially in the service sector occupations most affected by the lockdowns. In 2022, inflation started increasing and employers had to struggle with rising costs and growing pressures to increase wages.

More recently, employers have had to manage and plan their operations in the face of unrelenting uncertainty brought on by tariffs and the re-shaping of supply chains, as well as by the rapid pace of technological change, in particular, the rise of artificial intelligence and its implications for the workplace.

Throughout all this, employers have been remarkably resilient. The gloomiest forecasts have not prevailed, although it does appear that 2026 will continue to pose challenges as far as economic growth and employment growth are concerned.

This Local Labour Market Plan presents the most current data available to show what have been the labour market and business trends in Peel, Halton, the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area and Ontario over the past year, putting these figures in context through comparisons with previous years.

As well, because of the tumultuous nature of all these difficulties, the Peel Halton Workforce Development Group also explored the issue of mental health and wellness in the workplace, providing a qualitative perspective on the quantitative data analysis.

Unemployment Rates

After the spike in unemployment rates brought on by COVID, unemployment fell relatively quickly, but since 2023 has been increasing again. In recent months, the local unemployment rates dipped somewhat, but the three-month moving average unemployment rate in December 2025 was in the higher range:

- Toronto CMA: 7.5%
- Mississauga: 9.1%
- Brampton: 9.0%

The proportion of unemployed individuals who have been unemployed for more than six months has reached levels last seen just after COVID and just after the 2008 Recession, which suggests that even though unemployment has only increased somewhat, there is a portion of the labour force who are feeling the effects far more than others.

Participation Rates

Even though they vary from month to month and year to year, the broad trend in participation rates, (the proportion of the population aged 15 years or older who are either employed or actively looking for work) has shown almost no change between 2018 and 2025 in either the Toronto CMA or Ontario. On the one hand, even as the population is aging, older workers may be prolonging their employment both to stay active but also to supplement their retirement income, which may feel less adequate in the face of rising costs.

In terms of the average offered wage for a job opening, the figures remained relatively flat between 2019 and 2023 when held for inflation.

Job vacancy rates and average offered wage

Job vacancy rates rose sharply following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic but have since declined steadily, now falling below pre-pandemic levels. In the Toronto region, these trends have varied by occupation: vacancy rates in health occupations increased and then declined more gradually, while rates in Sales and Service Occupations rose and fell more rapidly. Trends in Trades, Transport, and Equipment Operators and related occupations followed an intermediate pattern.

In terms of the average offered wage for a job opening, the figures remained relatively flat between 2019 and 2023 when held for inflation, but since then the average offered wage has increased. This is likely a consequence of some wage catch-up in the labour market, but could also represent a smaller proportion of lower-paid jobs among all job vacancies.

Median employment income

Indeed, median employment income derived from tax filer data shows very little increase in Peel and Halton between 2017 and 2023 (the most recent available data), and among Peel males it actually declined.

Migration data

Peel Region has consistently had large net in-migration over the years, except between 2020 and 2021, when there was net out-migration. This migration is led by those aged 25 to 44 years old, followed by those aged 18 to 24 years old, while all other age groups show net out-migration. The net in-migration is a consequence of individuals coming from outside Canada, while there is net out-migration to other parts of Ontario and, to a much lesser extent, Canada.

Halton region also experiences net in-migration each year, led primarily by those aged 25 to 44 years old and, to a lesser extent, those aged 0-17 years old, which shows that Halton is more likely than Peel to attract young families. Like Peel, a considerable share of Halton's net in-migration comes from outside Canada, but it also has net in-migration from the rest of Ontario, with only a small net out-migration leaving for other parts of Canada.

Canadian Business Counts and monthly business openings and closings

As a result of COVID-19 lockdowns, the number of businesses with employees in the Toronto CMA declined by approximately 16% between January and May 2020. It was not until January 2022 that business counts returned to their January 2020 level. Growth has continued since that point, and by September 2025 the number of employer businesses stood roughly 3% above pre-pandemic levels. The tourism sector was the most severely affected, experiencing both the largest initial decline and the slowest recovery. However, over the past year, growth in the number of tourism-related businesses has outpaced that of all other sectors.

Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts data track the number of establishments in Peel and Halton, measured in June and December of each year, serving as a near census of businesses. The industries with the largest number of establishments in each region are as follows:

- **Peel:** Transportation and Warehousing; Real Estate and Rental and Leasing; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- **Halton:** Real Estate and Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance

Between June 2024 and 2025, the number of establishments in Peel grew in all size categories except firms with 100 employees, where there was a net decline of 3.5%. Otherwise, Peel has experienced consistent increases among establishments in all employee size categories in each year since June 2021.

Between June 2024 and 2025, the number of establishments in Halton grew in all size categories except firms with 20 to 99 employees, where there was a net decline of 1.2%. Otherwise, like Peel, Halton has experienced consistent increases among establishments in all employee size categories in each year since June 2021.

Broad trends in the change in the number of establishments with employees can be expressed in terms of the following three industry clusters:

- Goods Producing (includes Manufacturing, Construction, Utilities and so on)
- Knowledge Sector (industries with a higher proportion of jobs requiring a post-secondary education, such as Finance and Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Educational Services)
- Service Sector (all other service sector jobs, such as Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services)

Comparing results for Peel and Halton with Ontario between June 2018 and June 2025, one finds:

- The Knowledge Sector had the largest proportional increase, especially in both Peel and Halton; the number of such firms in Ontario grew by 16%, while the increases were 26% in Peel and 32% in Halton
- The Goods Producing Sector grew by 10% in Ontario, with Peel exceeding that rate (16%) while Halton fell a little short (6%)
- The Service Sector grew by 9% in Ontario, exceeded by both Peel (19%) and Halton (13%)

Almost half of respondents felt that the incidence of mental health and wellness issues has increased somewhat or significantly.

Views of employers – highlights from Employer Survey 2025

The 2025 employer survey focused on mental health and wellness in the workplace, with over half of the questions devoted to this topic. The remaining questions covered trends relating to remote work, the impact of workforce or business changes on employers, including technological and environmental considerations, as well as the consequences of US tariffs, and reliance on and knowledge about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

There is a correlation between the incidence of mental health and wellness concerns and the degree to which an employer places importance on issues related to mental health and wellness in their organization; a correlation does not mean one causes the other, but that responses to these two questions track in the same direction: high incidence and high importance go together. With that higher importance, these employers also tend to be more active in their responses, from consulting with staff or providing mental health days.

When asked in what ways the incidence of mental health and wellness issues was of concern to their organization, over 60% referred to the impact on productivity as well as on the level of employee engagement.

Almost half of respondents felt that the incidence of mental health and wellness issues has increased somewhat or significantly, while another third said it had stayed the same. Only one in ten said it has decreased somewhat or significantly. Slightly fewer than one in eight were not sure.

Over half of the respondents indicated that over the last two years staff have asked to learn more about ways to better support people with mental health and wellness needs. Another four in ten of respondents have felt uncertain about how to start a conversation with an employee where a mental health and wellness concern was suspected, while a third felt they had not managed the situation as well as they would have liked. In most cases, this has happened once or twice, but at least one in ten said it has happened more than once or twice.

Many employers do have practices relating to messaging and corporate culture that seek to address mental health and wellness concerns in their organization.

Many employers also have policies relating to how work is carried out that would contribute to mental health and wellness, such as safe workplace policies, mental health days, negotiating hybrid work, flexibility regarding overtime, accommodating employees with caregiver responsibilities, and ensuring that employees have input or options when it comes to scheduling their hours of work. However, fewer have specific accommodation policies for employees with mental health and wellness concerns.

There is a considerable difference among respondents in terms of what specific supports are provided to employees to support mental health and wellness; for example, more than seven out of ten provide prescription drug coverage and/or supplemental health insurance, and half to two thirds provide mental health days, short- and long-term disability and Employee Assistance Program.

A little over a third of respondents feel very confident in their organization's ability to support employees with mental health and wellness concerns, one half feel somewhat confident, and one in ten feel not very confident or not at all confident.

When it comes to areas where respondents felt their organization could improve their actions to better address the mental health and wellness needs of their employees, the major areas involved messaging and the climate established by the organization, its managers and supervisors.

On the issue of remote work, there is a decline in the proportion of workers who are not working at all remotely, and notable increases among those working hybrid (especially half their time remotely) and those working all their time remotely.

In terms of how various workforce or business changes were impacting their organization over the past six months, respondents expressed increasing concerns regarding costs, inflation and the pressure to increase wages. The next three prominent concerns were: challenges with supply chains, challenges recruiting either mid-level or senior level workers, and commuting or transportation challenges.

When asked about specific technological and environmental changes, the biggest current and future impacts were with respect to cyber-security, digitalization, cloud-based technology, real time data collection and analysis, and artificial intelligence.

Employers feel these changes will result in workers needing skills upgrading, that the uncertainty will make business planning more challenging and that productivity will increase. As well, more employers feel that jobs will be lost rather than that new jobs will be created as a result of technological change.

Consultations with employers, stakeholders and key informants

PHWDG engaged in two consultation processes, one as part of the mental health and wellness project, and one through interviews with employers to follow-up on the employer survey results. These consultations delivered a number of key findings:

- That the incidence and reporting of mental health and wellness concerns have increased
- That employers are increasingly aware of this issue and are seeking ways to address it
- That there are strategies and approaches that employers can adopt to better respond to these concerns, starting with messaging and corporate culture, paying attention to how work is organized to reduce the stress brought on by the workplace, and providing appropriate supports and benefits, as well as pursuing appropriate training for managers and supervisors so that these strategies can be effectively implemented

2

Peel and Halton Labour Market Update

This section reviews various labour market indicators, including unemployment rates, participation rates, job vacancy rates, employment income data and migration data, to provide insight into the current state of the labour market in Peel and Halton.

Unemployment rates

As has been regularly documented in past Local Labour Market Plan reports, COVID caused a large increase in the unemployment rates across Ontario. Table 1 compares unemployment rates by year, for two years before COVID (2018 and 2019), when COVID hit in 2020 and its aftermath in 2021, and the trajectory since then, up until 2025. Chart 1 illustrates the comparison. These rates are reported for Ontario, for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)[1], and for the Rest of Ontario (Ontario figures minus the Toronto CMA).

Table 1: Annual unemployment rates, Ontario, Toronto CMA and Rest of Ontario, 2018-2025

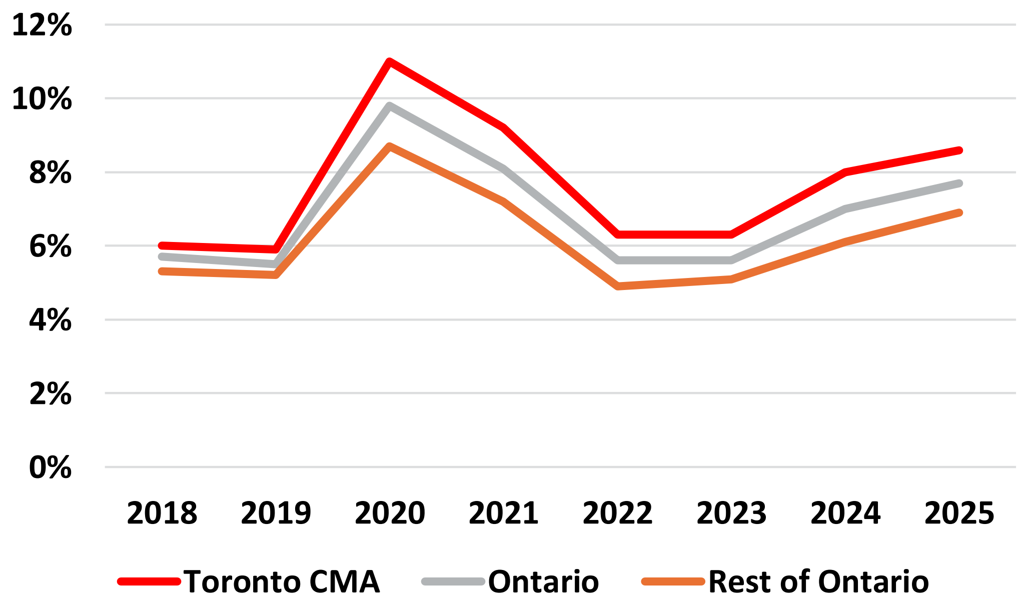
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Toronto CMA	6.0%	5.9%	11.0%	9.2%	6.3%	6.3%	8.0%	8.6%
Ontario	5.7%	5.5%	9.8%	8.1%	5.6%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%
Rest of Ontario	5.3%	5.2%	8.7%	7.2%	4.9%	5.1%	6.1%	6.9%

Statistics Canada, tables 14-10-0327-01 and 14-10-0461-01

[1] The Toronto CMA encompasses the City of Toronto, York Region, Peel Region, all of Halton Region except Burlington, a portion of Durham Region (Pickering, Ajax and Uxbridge), together with New Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury (Simcoe County) and Mono (Dufferin County). The Toronto CMA accounts for almost half (47%) of Ontario's labour force, while Peel and Halton account for a third (33%) of the Toronto CMA's labour force.

If one were to display only the Ontario data, one would miss the fact that COVID had a more significant impact on the Greater Toronto Area than the Rest of Ontario.

Chart 1: **Annual unemployment rates, Ontario, Toronto CMA and Rest of Ontario, 2018-2025**

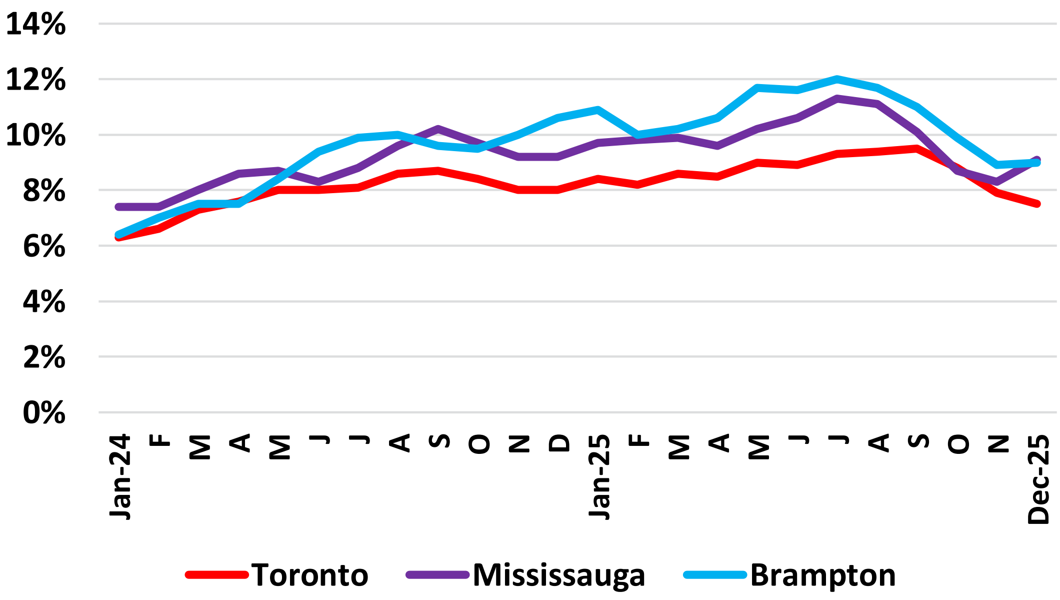


Statistics Canada, tables 14-10-0327-01 and 14-10-0461-01

If one were to display only the Ontario data, one would miss the fact that COVID had a more significant impact on the Greater Toronto Area than the Rest of Ontario. In 2020, the annual unemployment rate in the Toronto CMA reached 11.0%, more than two percentage points higher than the 8.7% in the Rest of Ontario. Since then, the rates went down in tandem for two years, stayed stable in 2023, but in 2024 and 2025 the rates increased, more so in the Toronto CMA, such that the difference between the rate in the Toronto CMA and the Rest of Ontario widened again to almost 2%.

Chart 2 presents unemployment rates for the local area by month, for each of Mississauga and Brampton, with a comparison to the figures for the Toronto CMA, from January 2024 to December 2025. The data shown is a three-month moving average, meaning that the figure presented is the average of the current month and the previous two months, to create a more robust sample for smaller geographic areas.[2]

Chart 2: Unemployment rates by three-month moving average, Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto CMA, January 2024 to December 2025, seasonally unadjusted



The overall trend in the unemployment rate showed a steady increase from January 2024 to late summer 2025, after which the unemployment rate fell in October and November. For most of this time, the unemployment rate is higher in Mississauga than it is in the Toronto CMA, and the Brampton unemployment rate is usually higher than that for Mississauga.

[2] The data for Chart 2 is presented in Table A1 in the Appendix.

The participation rate dropped at the height of COVID, as the labour market was virtually shut down.

Participation rates

The participation rate measures the proportion of the working-age population (15 years and older) who are in the labour force, that is, either employed or actively looking for work. Chart 3 shows the annual participation rates for Ontario, Toronto CMA, and the Rest of Ontario.

The participation rate is greatly influenced by the age profile of a community; a larger number of recent immigrants (who tend to be younger) and/or a larger proportion of families with children (suburbs) typically go hand-in-hand with a higher participation rate, signaling a higher proportion of working-age adults. This explains the higher participation rate in the Toronto CMA and the lower figures for the Rest of Ontario.

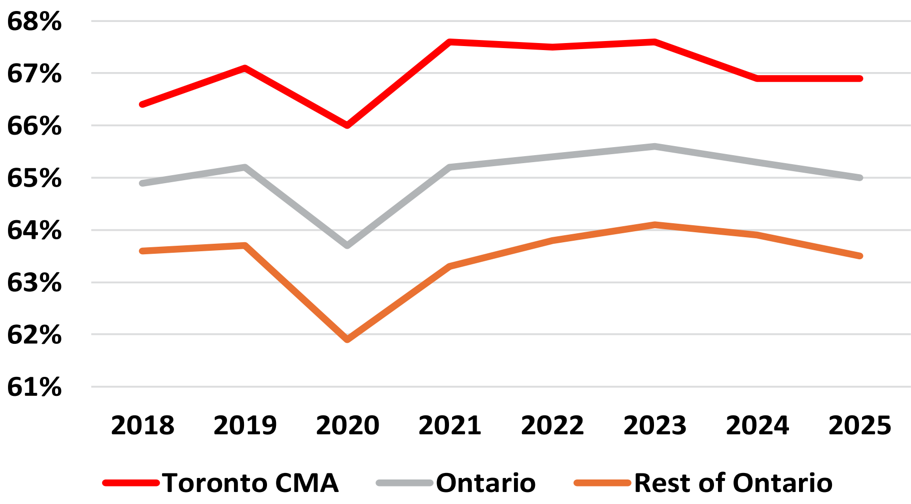
Table 2: Annual participation rates, Toronto CMA, Ontario and Rest of Ontario, 2018-2025

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Toronto CMA	66.4%	67.1%	66.0%	67.6%	67.5%	67.6%	66.9%	66.9%
Ontario	64.9%	65.2%	63.7%	65.2%	65.4%	65.6%	65.3%	65.0%
Rest of Ontario	63.6%	63.7%	61.9%	63.3%	63.8%	64.1%	63.9%	63.5%

Statistics Canada, Tables 14-10-0327-01 and 14-10-0461-01

The participation rate dropped at the height of COVID, as the labour market was virtually shut down. It recovered by 2021 and 2022 but has declined slightly in 2024 and 2025, likely because the unemployment rate started increasing; individuals looking for work and finding it more challenging to secure a job may become discouraged and drop out of the labour market.

Chart 3: Annual participation rates, Toronto CMA, Ontario and Rest of Ontario, 2018-2025



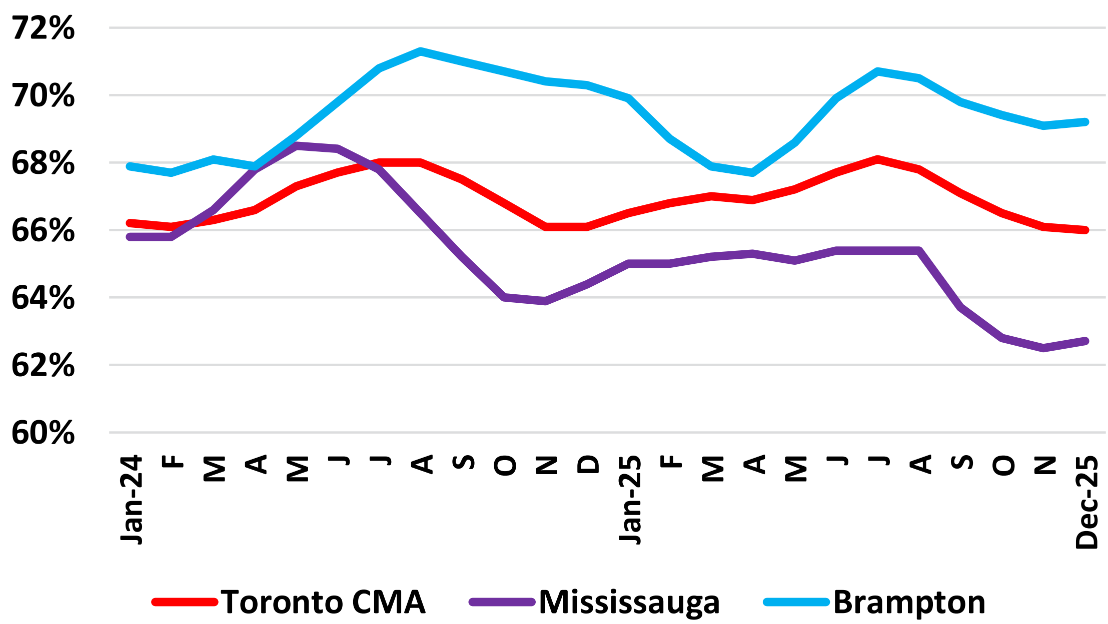
14-10-0327-01 and 14-10-0461-01

Statistics Canada, tables 14-10-0445-01 and 14-10-0459-01

Chart 4 presents the three-month moving average participation rates for the Toronto CMA, Mississauga and Brampton, from January 2024 to December 2025.

Overall, Brampton's participation rate has tended to be higher and that of Mississauga has been somewhat lower. Brampton's participation rate has increased over this 24-month period, that of Mississauga has declined, while the rate for the Toronto CMA has stayed almost the same, even though there have been variations month to month.

Chart 4: Three-month moving average participation rate, Toronto CMA, Mississauga and Brampton, January 2024 to December 2025 (seasonally unadjusted)



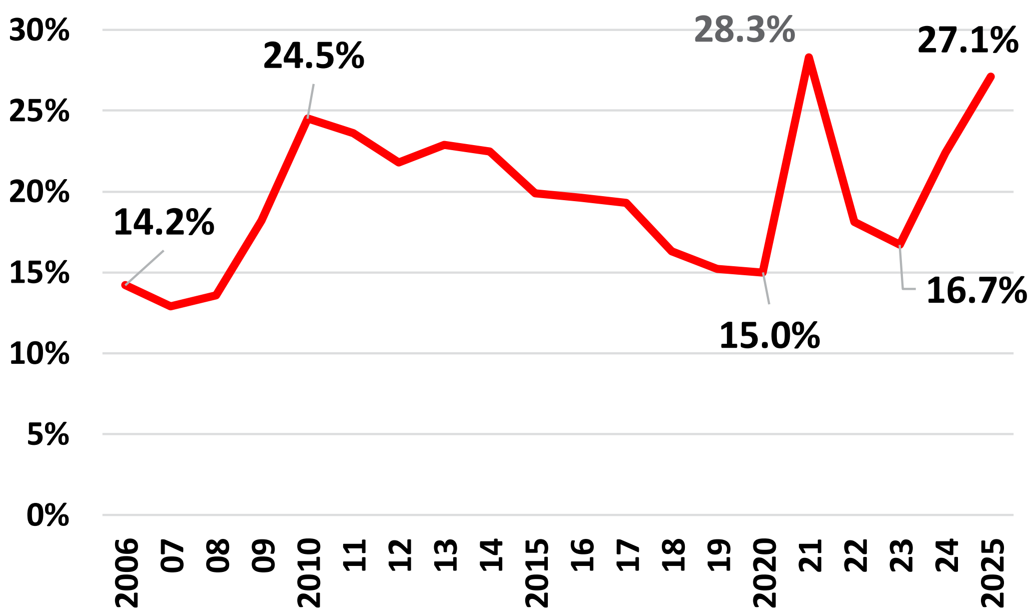
Statistics Canada, tables 14-10-0378-01 and 14-10-0445-01, and Halton Region data

When the recession hit in late 2008, that proportion started increasing, rising to 24.5% in 2010.

Long-term Unemployment

Long-term unemployment is usually defined as being unemployed for six months or more (26 weeks or more).[3] Chart 5 presents the annual data for those unemployed for more than six months; this data is only available at the provincial level.

Chart 5: Annual proportion of unemployed who are unemployed for more than six months, Ontario, 2006-2025



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0057-01

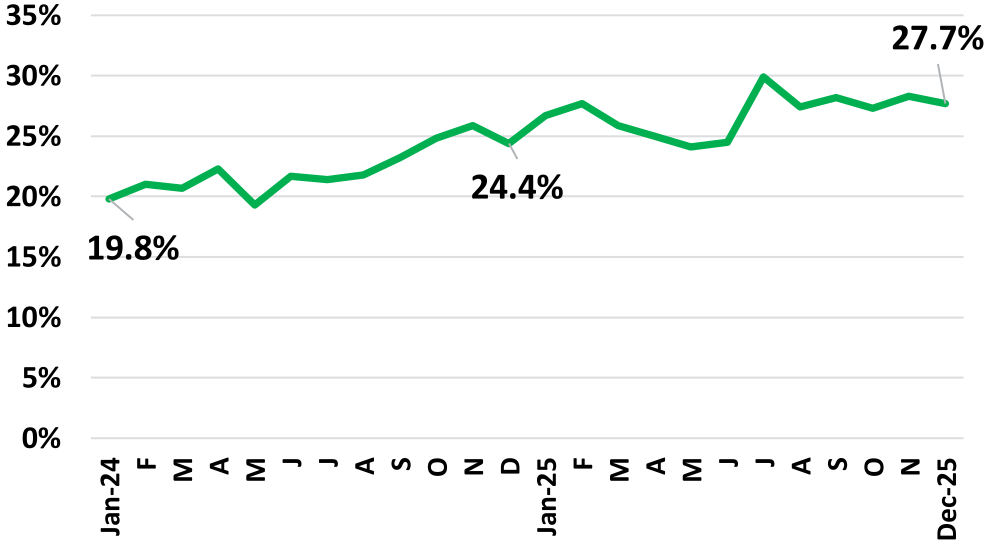
In 2006, the proportion of the unemployed who were long-term unemployed (more than six months) stood at 14.2% and was still falling. When the recession hit in late 2008, that proportion started increasing, rising to 24.5% in 2010. As the recession receded, the proportion of long-term unemployed fell, but slowly. When COVID hit and many individuals became unemployed, the percentage share of long-term unemployed fell further, because so many had just recently become unemployed all at once. By 2021, the proportion of long-term unemployed had jumped to 28.2%, higher than the share caused by the 2008 recession. Yet the recovery from the COVID-induced recession was much quicker because the economic

[3] In this section, both annual and monthly data will be presented, to illustrate current trends. While the annual data is available for those unemployed 26 weeks or more, the monthly data is only available for those unemployed 27 weeks or more. Fortunately, the annual data also provides figures for those unemployed 27 weeks or more. Thus, the 27-week data will be presented; while it does not precisely measure long-term unemployment, the proportions of those unemployed more than 26 or 27 weeks are relatively close; more importantly are the trends which are revealed, whether long-term unemployment is increasing or decreasing.

slowdown was not a result of business conditions but instead caused by shutdowns of businesses as a health precaution. As the shutdowns lifted, by 2023 the long-term unemployed had already dropped to 16.7%. However, since then, the incidence of long-term unemployment has increased in each of 2024 and 2025, rising to 27.1%, a figure higher than that induced by the 2008 recession and almost as high as that caused by the pandemic, which signals significant difficulties for some in the labour market.

Chart 6 shows the same measurement, this time month by month. The data is seasonally adjusted, meaning it is slightly altered to smooth out variations caused by unemployment patterns resulting from seasonal jobs. The incidence of long-term unemployment stood at 19.8% in January 2024 and the trend line has shown a continuing increase, to 24.4% in December 2024 and 27.7% in December 2025. This is a troubling trend, as it suggests an underlying weakness in the economy and a category of individuals who will find it more difficult to become employed.

Chart 6: Monthly proportion of unemployed who are unemployed for more than 27 weeks, Ontario, January 2023 to December 2024 (seasonally adjusted)



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0342-01

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Through the entire post-COVID period, the job vacancy rate in the Toronto Economic Region has been lower than that for the Rest of Ontario.

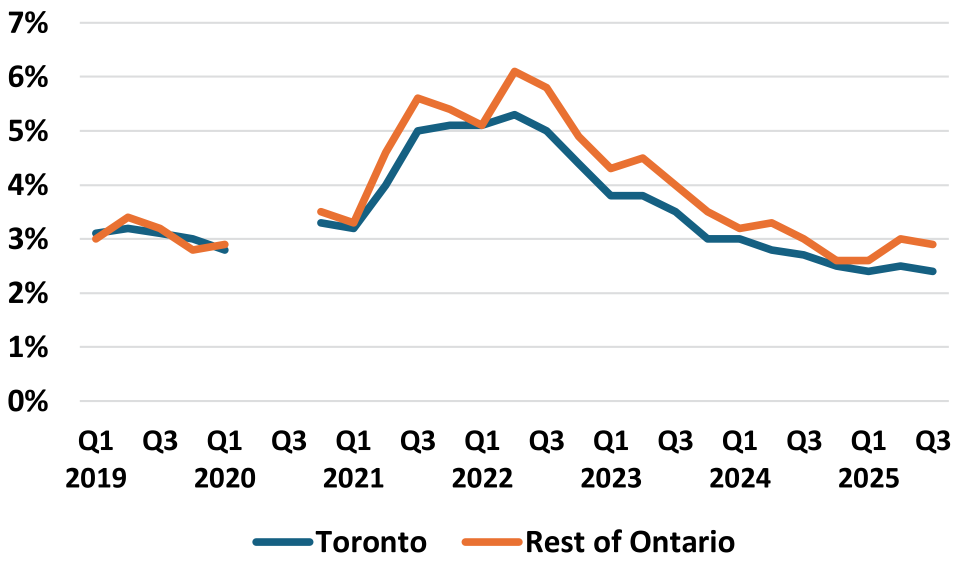
Job vacancy rates

The job vacancy rate is calculated by adding up all job vacancies reported by employers and dividing by the total number of filled jobs plus the total number of vacant jobs.

Chart 7 provides the job vacancy rate by quarter, starting in Quarter One 2019, to establish the trend before COVID, until Quarter 3 2025, the last quarter for which there is data.[4] During Quarters 2 and 3 of 2020, Statistics Canada did not administer the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, as the pandemic lockdowns across the country essentially shut down a major portion of the labour market. The job vacancy rates are provided for the Toronto Region[5] and the Rest of Ontario (Ontario minus the Toronto Region).

Before COVID, the job vacancy rate fluctuated within a relatively narrow band throughout 2019 and Q1 2020. Right after COVID, the job vacancy rate increased considerably, almost doubling by Q2 2022, before starting a slow and steady decline. By Q2 2024, the job vacancy rate had dropped in both the Toronto Economic Region and the Rest of Ontario to a level lower than it had been in the five quarters before COVID. It continued to drop through 2024 and 2025, rising slightly in the Rest of Ontario in Q2 and Q3 2025. Through the entire post-COVID period, the job vacancy rate in the Toronto Economic Region has been lower than that for the Rest of Ontario.

Chart 7: Job vacancy rates, Toronto Region and Rest of Ontario, Q1 2019 to Q3 2025, unadjusted for seasonality



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0441-01

[4] The data for Chart 7 is presented in Table A2 in the Appendix.
[5] The job vacancy rate is reported by economic region, not census metropolitan areas. There are only minor geographic differences between the Toronto CMA and the Toronto Economic Region. Peel Region and Halton Region (except Burlington) are in the Toronto Economic Region.

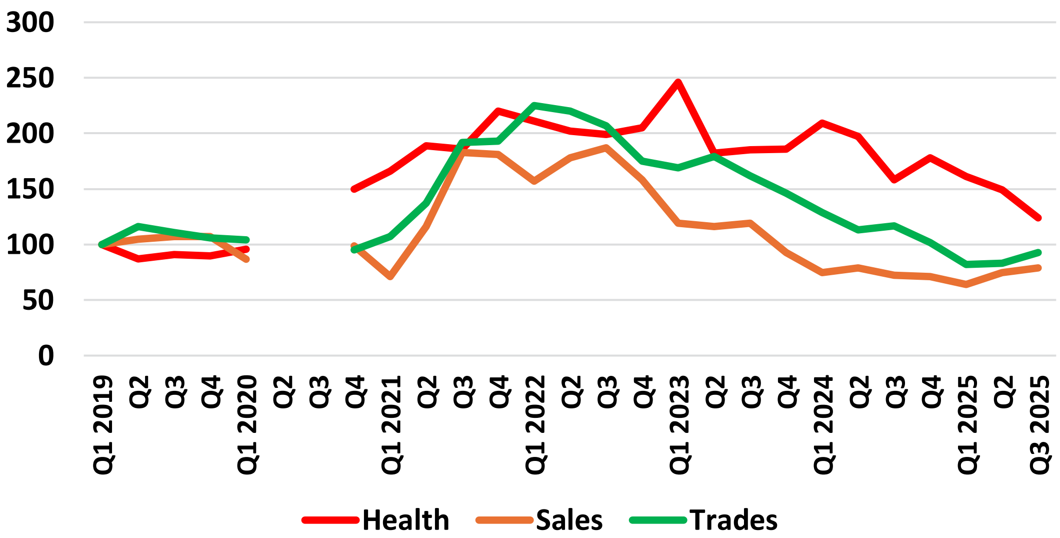
Another insight into the recent dynamics in the local labour market is provided by examining trends in job vacancy rates by occupations. Chart 8 shows the number of job vacancies in the Toronto Economic Region for the following three occupational categories and their labels in the chart:

- Health occupations (Health)
- Sales and service occupations (Sales)
- Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (Trades)

The number of job vacancies in each of these categories varies considerably. To illustrate the trends over time and compare them, the number of job vacancies in Q1 2019 for each occupation is given a value of 100, and each subsequent quarter is expressed in relation to that Q1 2019 number. Thus, a value of 105 means that the number of job vacancies in that quarter was 5% higher than the number for Q1 2019.

For each of these three occupations, the level of job vacancies stayed stable during the five quarters before COVID. After COVID, the job vacancy levels rose sharply, doubling in most instances by the end of 2021. Job vacancies for the Health Occupations continued increasing and only slowly started declining in 2023; by Q3 2025, they were only slightly higher than what they had been before COVID. Job vacancies for the Sales and Service Occupations and the Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations started declining sooner after their peak and dropped further. By Q3 2025, they were just slightly below their pre-COVID levels.

Chart 8: Ratio of job vacancies for select occupations, Toronto Economic Region, Q1 2019 to Q3 2025 (Q1 2019 = 100) unadjusted for seasonality



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0444-01

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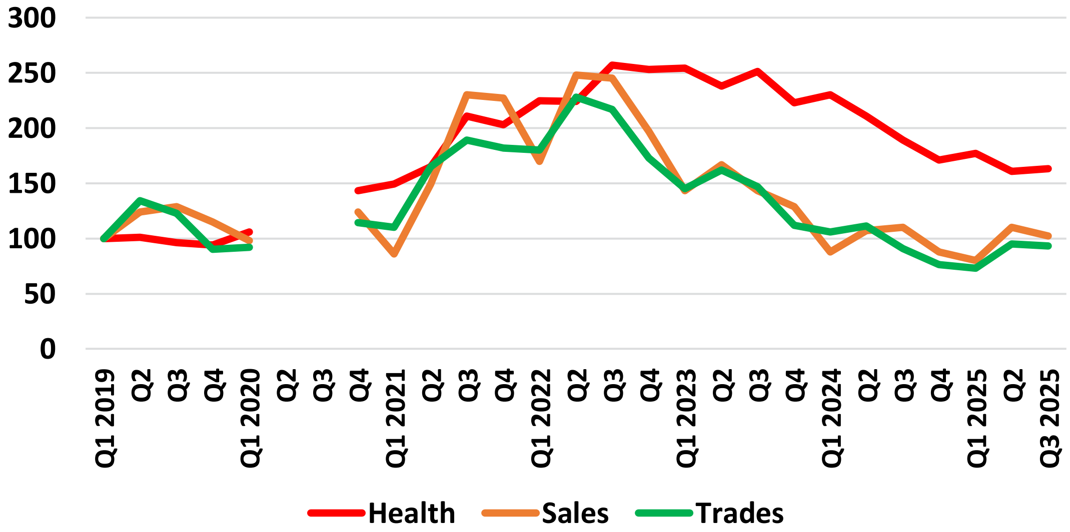
All of which is to say that the dynamics of job vacancies by these occupations in the Toronto Region were more or less the same as those experienced in the Rest of Ontario . . .

By way of comparison, Chart 9 shows the same occupation vacancy data for the Rest of Ontario.

Chart 9: Ratio of job vacancies for select occupations, Rest of Ontario, Q1 2019 to Q3 2025 (Q1 2019 = 100), unadjusted for seasonality

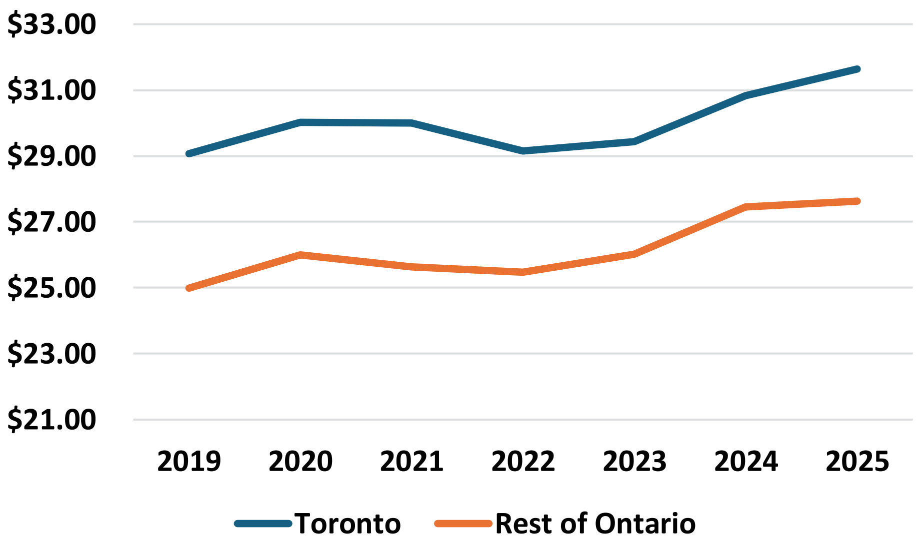


Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0444-01

The pattern is generally similar, with vacancies for Health Occupations increasing considerably, then dropping somewhat but still staying high, where Sales and Service Occupations increase by a large factor, then decline back to pre-COVID levels, with the same trend applying as well to Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations. All of which is to say that the dynamics of job vacancies by these occupations in the Toronto Region were more or less the same as those experienced in the Rest of Ontario, except for a slower decline in the job vacancies among Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations.

The Job Vacancy and Wage Survey also collects data on the hourly wage being offered and provides an average offered hourly wage for each quarter. There can be seasonal variations in the data: there are more job openings for summer jobs in Quarter 2, lowering the average wage level, then as those job openings end in the fall, the average offered wage goes up. To eliminate the seasonal variations, an annual figure has been created by averaging the results for each quarter (the entry for 2025 is the average of the three reported quarters). To make comparisons across each year, the figures have been converted into constant Q3 2025 dollars, to eliminate the impact of inflation. Chart 10 shows the results for Toronto and the Rest of Ontario.

Chart 10: Average offered hourly wage, Toronto and Rest of Ontario, 2019 to 2025, constant (Q3 2025) dollars



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0441-01

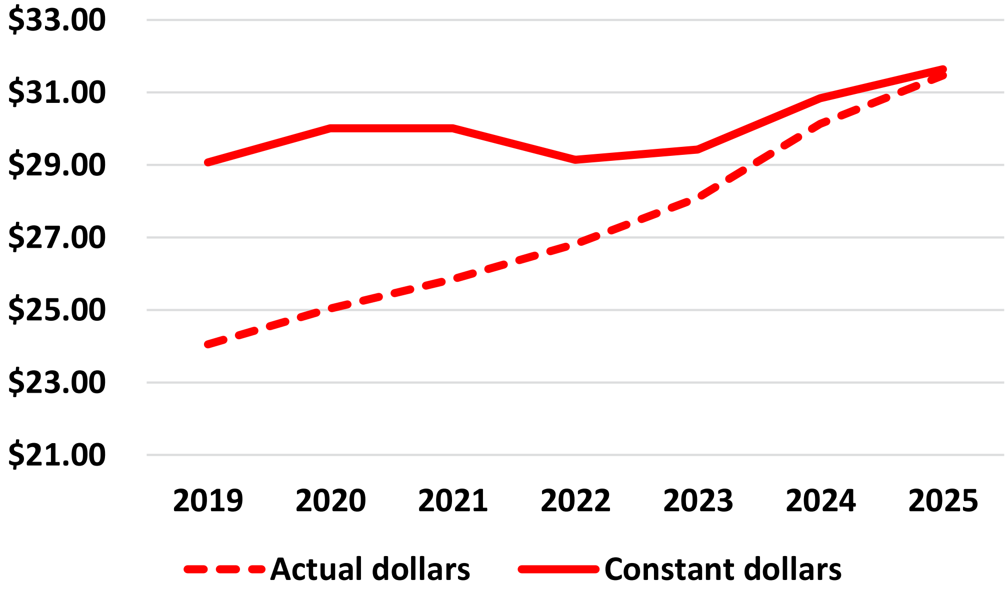
Several observations about Chart 10:

- The average offered wage in the Toronto Region is noticeably higher than in the Rest of Ontario
- The average offered wage, in constant dollars, actually declined between 2020 and 2022
- Starting in 2023, the average offered wage increased; between 2023 and 2025, it rose by slightly over 8% in both Toronto and the Rest of Ontario
- Not all the increase can be attributed to rising wages, as the mix of occupations for which there are vacancies could also impact the average offered wage

When the rate of inflation was especially high (particularly in 2022), the pay stub figure was increasing, but the purchasing power of that wage was dropping.

The impact of inflation is illustrated in Chart 11, showing the average offered wage in Northeast Ontario, comparing the actual dollar figure (what wage earners saw in the pay stub) and the constant dollar (the value of the wage expressed in Q3 2025 dollars). When the rate of inflation was especially high (particularly in 2022), the pay stub figure was increasing, but the purchasing power of that wage was dropping.

Chart 11: Average offered hourly wage, actual and constant Q3 2025 dollars, Toronto Region, 2019 to 2025



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0441-01

Tax filer data

Tax filer data is derived from T1 income tax returns, where income tax forms filled out in the spring provide data on employment income in the previous calendar year. The tax filer data represents over 70% of the total population aged 15 years and older.

Table 3 shows the total number of tax filers with reported employment income[6] for 2017 to 2023 (the most recent year for which there is data).

Table 3: Total number of tax filers with employment income, Peel and Halton, 2017-2023

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Peel	723,360	759,930	765,130	777,520	782,770	846,210	874,770
Halton	282,530	290,740	290,190	296,260	297,610	310,790	318,730

Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File, 2017-2023

In general, the number of tax filers in Peel and Halton increased each year, except for Halton in 2019, when it declined slightly. The rate of increase was higher between 2017 and 2018, but in the next three years, the change was in the range of a 1% to 2% increase. In 2022, there was a much larger increase, 8.1% in Peel and 4.4% in Halton; one must assume that as COVID receded, many more residents resumed work that resulted in this increase in reported employment income. In 2023, there was moderately high growth in the number of tax filers with employment income, 3.4% in Peel and 2.6% in Halton.

[6] Includes wages, salaries, commissions, tips and gratuities.

In 2022, the median employment income dropped in all areas, in part because lower-paid workers returned to work.

Tables 4 and 5 provide the data for median employment income,[7] for each of males and females, for Peel, Halton, Toronto CMA and the Rest of Ontario. The figures are expressed in constant 2023 dollars, to remove the effect of inflation.

The general trend was for incomes to stay in a relatively narrow range between 2017 and 2020. In constant dollar terms, the median employment income in Peel, for both males and females, declined around 2.5%. In all other areas, it increased around 1% to 2%, except for females in Toronto, where it held steady.

Table 4: Median employment income, males, Peel, Halton, Toronto CMA and Rest of Ontario, 2017-2023 (2023 dollars)

MALES	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Peel	$ 50,297	$ 50,183	$ 49,088	$ 49,080	$ 50,648	$ 47,649	$ 47,900
Halton	$ 68,926	$ 69,526	$ 69,000	$ 70,265	$ 72,085	$ 70,278	$ 71,390
Toronto CMA	$ 53,779	$ 54,282	$ 53,881	$ 54,872	$ 56,703	$ 54,599	$ 55,000
Rest of ONT	$ 53,054	$ 53,714	$ 53,258	$ 53,517	$ 55,479	$ 54,076	$ 54,622

Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File, 2017-2023

In 2021, there was a slight increase in the median employment income figure; this is likely due to the fact that in this COVID period, individuals in lower-paid occupations, such as customer-facing roles, were not working (and more likely receiving the COVID Canada Emergency Response Benefit – CERB), while workers in higher-paid occupations were able to continue working remotely. In 2022, the median employment income dropped in all areas, in part because lower-paid workers returned to work.

In 2023, the median employment income increased by 0.5% to 1.5% for males and by around 2% for females.

Table 5: Median employment income, females, Peel, Halton, Toronto CMA and Rest of Ontario, 2017-2023 (2023 dollars)

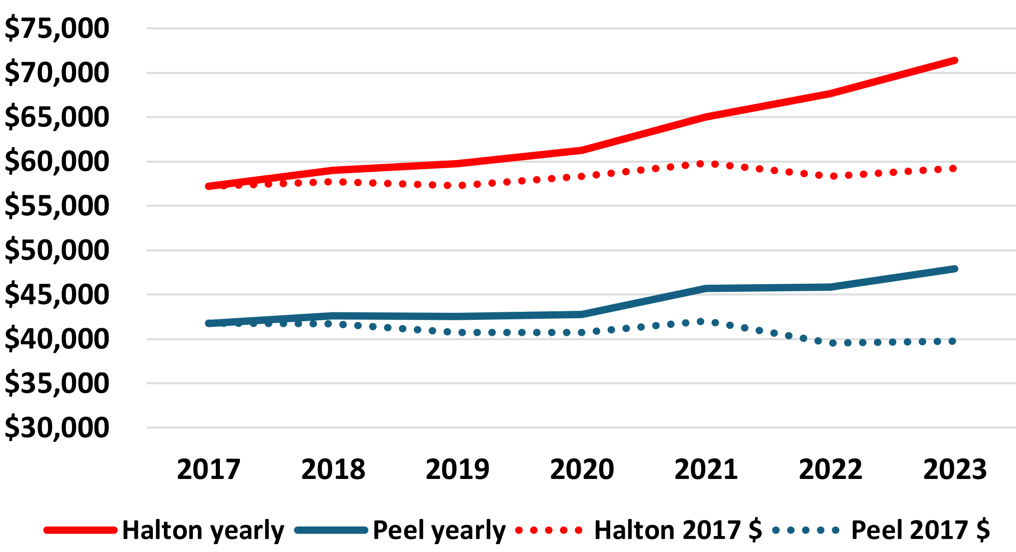
FEMALES	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Peel	$ 38,102	$ 38,886	$ 38,519	$ 37,060	$ 39,857	$ 38,994	$ 39,740
Halton	$ 47,417	$ 47,909	$ 47,644	$ 48,025	$ 50,581	$ 49,872	$ 50,900
Toronto CMA	$ 40,982	$ 41,843	$ 41,580	$ 41,028	$ 44,083	$ 43,119	$ 44,000
Rest of ONT	$ 38,245	$ 39,428	$ 39,499	$ 39,263	$ 41,295	$ 40,687	$ 41,571

Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File, 2017-2023

[7] Median employment income represents the wage of that individual whose earnings are at the mid-point of the wages of all individuals; 50% of the warn earners earn less than that amount and 50% of the wage earners earn more than that amount.

To visualize the impact that inflation has had on incomes, Charts 12 and 13 show the trajectory of median employment income for males and females in Peel and Halton, highlighting two different measures. In both charts, the red lines represent the incomes for Halton residents and the blue lines show the incomes for Peel residents. The solid lines show the median employment income as expressed in current dollars, that is, for each year, that is the dollar amount for that year, the figure that one would see on one's pay stub or that one would report for tax purposes. The dotted lines show the figures adjusted for inflation, that is, in constant dollars using 2017 as the baseline. Each other year is expressed in the value of 2017 dollars (this is unlike the data presented in Tables 4 and 5, where the constant dollar reference is 2023 dollars).

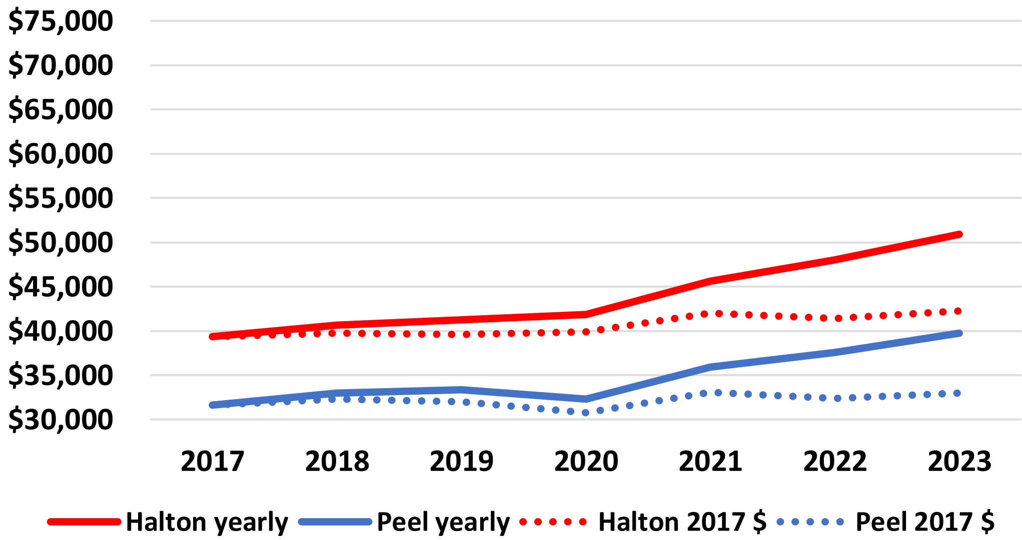
Chart 12: Median employment income, males, Peel and Halton, 2017-2023 (current and 2017 dollars)



Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File, 2017-2023

PEEL HALTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Chart 13: **Median employment income, females, Peel and Halton, 2017-2023 (current and 2017 dollars)**



Statistics Canada, Income and Financial Data of Individuals, Preliminary T1 Family File, 2017-2023

A few observations about Charts 12 and 13:

- The current dollar value for median employment income stayed within a narrow band but generally increased between 2017 and 2020, although it did decline for Peel females in 2020; in all instances, it increased in 2021, 2022 and in 2023
- However, the data adjusted for inflation shows a different story; between 2017 and 2020, median employment income increased very slightly for Halton males and females, and dropped slightly for Peel males and females; in 2021, it increased for Halton males and females and stayed flat afterwards stayed relatively flat between 2017 and 2020, increased slightly in 2021, but dropped in 2022, whereas for Peel males and females, it increased in 2021 and then declined
- The gap between the current value and the constant value increased each year and especially increased in 2022, which reflects the pace of inflation
- Essentially, the story can be expressed as follows: what workers "saw" was their pay cheque increasing (the solid line – current dollars), but what workers "felt" was that their pay cheque was flat or decreasing (the dotted line – constant dollars)

Peel has consistently had high net in-migration totals, except for 2020-21, when there was a net out-migration from Peel.

Migration data

The migration data is derived from a dataset compiled by Statistics Canada using a comparison of addresses from individual income tax returns for two consecutive years. The data in this report covers the tax year comparisons for six two-year periods, from 2016-2017 to 2022-2023.

Tables 6 and 7 show the net migration figures by age group for each year between 2016/17 and 2022/23, as well as the net total for those seven years, for each of Peel and Halton. Net is the difference between the number of individuals migrating into an area minus the number of individuals migrating out of an area. A positive net figure means more individuals migrated in than migrated out.

Peel has consistently had high net in-migration totals, except for 2020-21, when there was a net out-migration from Peel. The total for 2022-23 is the highest it has been in seven years, almost double the previous high during that period.

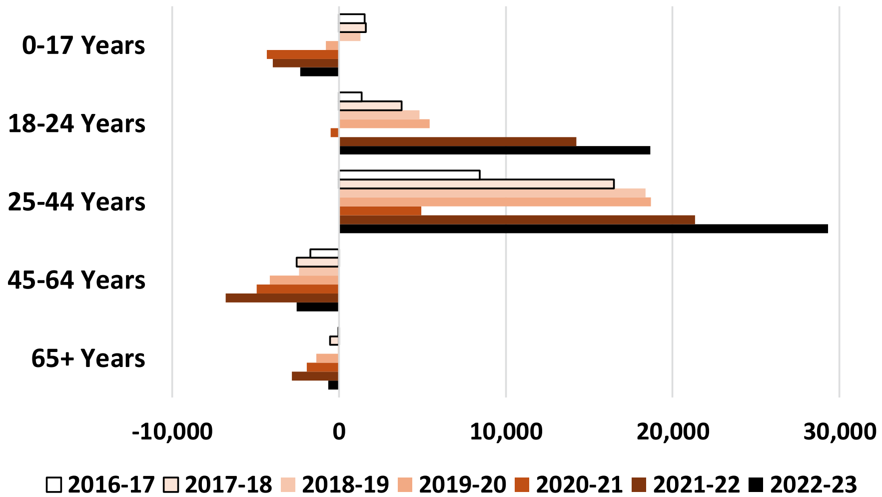
The distribution of net migration by age is very diverse. Peel consistently loses population among those aged 45-64 years old and 65 years and older, and it consistently gains population among those aged 25-44 years old. Among those aged 0-17 years old, Peel used to see net in-migration, but since 2019-20, there has been net out-migration, indicating that families with children are choosing to move elsewhere. Among those aged 18-24 years old, there has usually been a net in-migration, which in the last two years has increased substantially. Table 6 provides the data and Chart 14 illustrates the trends.

Table 6: Net Migration by Age Groups, Peel, 2016-17 to 2022-23

PEEL	AGE					TOTAL
	0-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	
2016-17	1,533	1,358	8,439	-1,720	-32	9,578
2017-18	1,609	3,762	16,478	-2,555	-521	18,773
2018-19	1,288	4,832	18,374	-2,413	-57	22,024
2019-20	-802	5,419	18,702	-4,162	-1,353	17,804
2020-21	-4,324	-507	4,928	-4,928	-1,917	-6,748
2021-22	-3,953	14,237	21,360	-6,795	-2,833	22,016
2022-23	-2,326	18,676	29,335	-2,557	-641	42,487
2017-18 to 2022-23	**-8,508**	**46,419**	**109,177**	**-23,410**	**-7,322**	**116,356**

Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

Chart 14: Net Migration by Age Groups, Peel, 2016-17 to 2022-23



Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

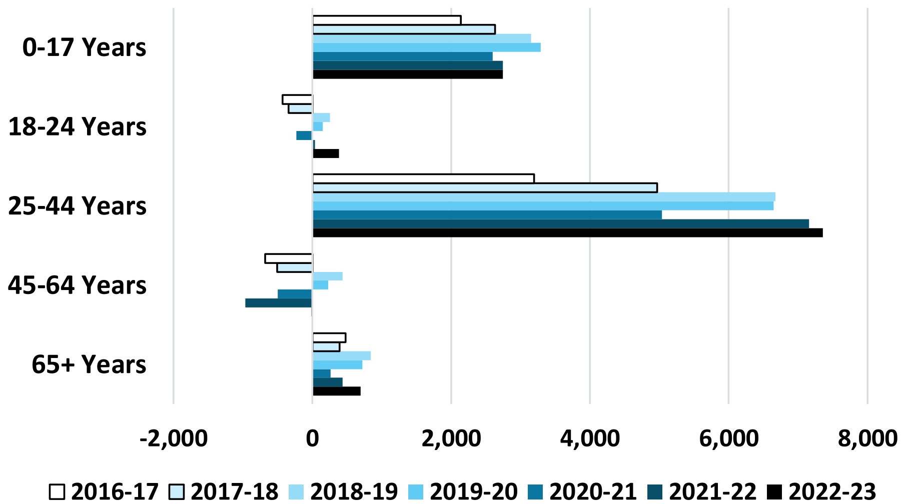
In the case of Halton, there has also been a large total net in-migration over these seven years, and the total for 2022-23 is at the very high end of that scale. By far, this total is led by very large in-migration of those aged 25-44 years old, accounting for two-thirds of the net figure. The next largest category is among those aged 0-17 years old, representing almost a third, indicating that young families are regularly moving into Halton. All the other age categories have small net figures, with a net out-migration of those aged 45-64 years old. There is also a small total net out-migration of those aged 18-24 years old, but in any given year that figure can be a small positive or a small negative number. Table 7 provides the data and Chart 15 illustrates the trends.

Table 7: Net Migration by Age Groups, Halton, 2016-17 to 2022-23

HALTON	AGE					TOTAL
	0-17	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	
	2,137	-429	3,195	-682	483	4,704
2017-18	2,631	-339	4,971	-510	391	7,144
2018-19	3,154	257	6,676	439	843	11,369
2019-20	3,288	147	6,644	226	719	11,024
2020-21	2,602	-233	5,035	-494	260	7,170
2021-22	2,743	35	7,154	-968	439	9,403
2022-23	2,743	382	7,356	-11	694	11,164
2017-18 to 2022-23	**19,298**	**-180**	**41,031**	**-2,000**	**3,829**	**61,978**

Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

Chart 15: Net Migration by Age Groups, Halton, 2016-17 to 2022-23



Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

Profiling the data by where migrants were coming from and going to provides further insight into migration patterns. Tables 8 and 9 show that data, categorized as follows:

- Intra-provincial: movement to and from Ontario
- Inter-provincial: movement to and from Canada, excluding Ontario
- International: movement to and from outside Canada

Table 8: Net Migration by Source and Destination, Peel, 2016-17 to 2022-23

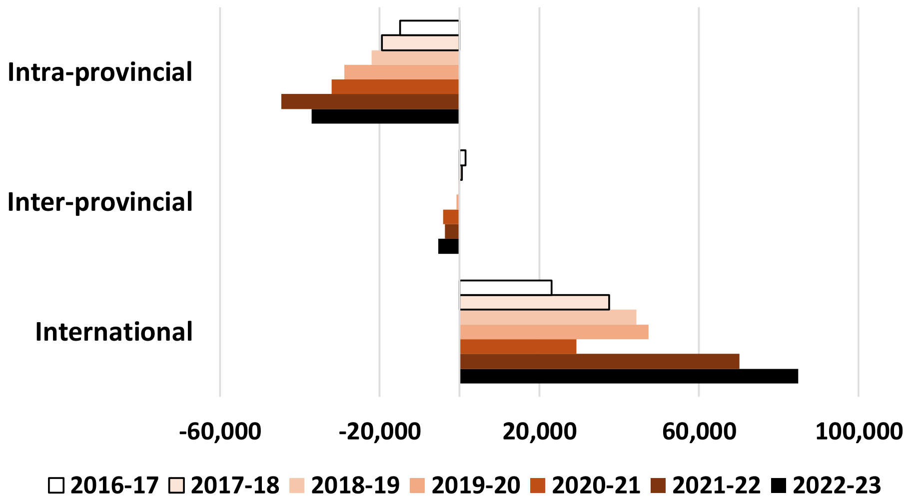
	Intra-provincial		Inter-provincial		International		TOTAL	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2016-17	-7,415	-7,479	662	794	10,692	12,324	3,939	5,639
2017-18	-9,744	-9,623	228	346	18,581	18,985	9,065	9,708
2018-19	-10,946	-11,093	-1	-347	22,299	22,112	11,352	10,672
2019-20	-14,189	-14,644	-131	-549	24,126	23,191	9,806	7,998
2020-21	-15,779	-16,183	-2,081	-2,082	15,027	14,350	-2,833	-3,915
2021-22	-22,328	-22,261	-1,740	-1,886	36,185	34,046	12,117	9,899
2022-23	-18,680	-18,433	-2,705	-2,547	45,982	38,870	24,597	17,890
2016-17 to 2022-23	-99,081	-99,716	-5,768	-6,271	172,892	163,878	68,043	57,891

Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

The net out-migration that was evident in 2020-21 in Table 8 not because more people were moving out of Peel, but because considerably fewer individuals came from overseas into Peel.

In the case of Peel (Table 8), the pattern is as follows: a significant net number of residents leave Peel for other parts of Ontario, and this number has been growing. An even larger number arrive from overseas, and this number has also been growing (except in 2020-21, on account of COVID). The number moving to or from other provinces is small in comparison and has in the last five years become a net out-migration. The net out-migration that was evident in 2020-21 in Table 8 not because more people were moving out of Peel, but because considerably fewer individuals came from overseas into Peel. In 2021-22, the net international migration figures not only increased but shot past the net figures for previous years and rose further in 2022-23. Chart 16 combines the male and female numbers into a single figure for the sake of comparison over the years.

Chart 16: Net Migration by Source and Destination, Peel, 2016-17 to 2022-23



Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

Halton had also had net in-migration from inter-provincial migration, although that source has now flipped to a net out-migration result.

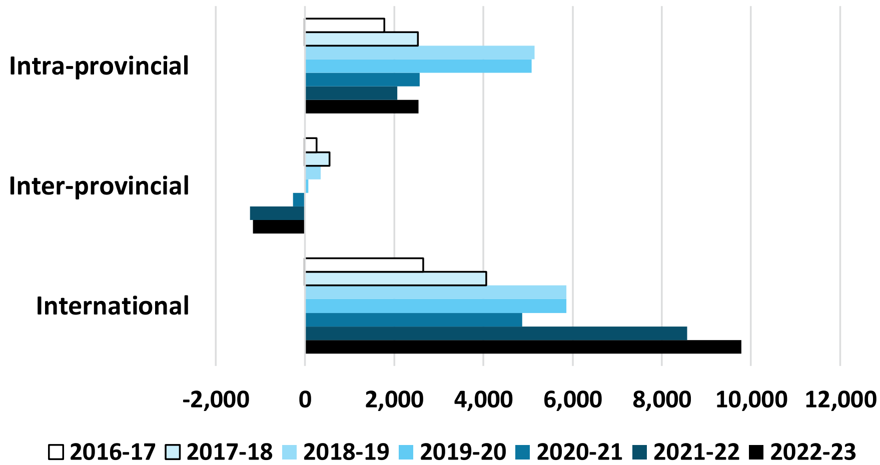
Unlike Peel, Halton (Table 9) receives net in-migration from other parts of Ontario, but since 2018-19, that number has been eclipsed by international net in-migration. The international net in-migration increased substantially in 2021-22 and continued to grow in 2022-23. Halton had also had net in-migration from inter-provincial migration, although that source has now flipped to a net out-migration result. While total net migration in 2021-22 was a bit lower than that experienced in 2018-19 and 2019-20, by 2022-23 the total net in-migration returned to the same range. Chart 17 shows these trends for Halton.

Table 9: Net Migration by Source and Destination, Halton, 2016-17 to 2022-23

	Intra-provincial		Interprovincial		International		TOTAL	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2016-17	744	1,041	203	61	1,176	1,479	2,123	2,581
2017-18	1,210	1,316	281	275	1,938	2,124	3,429	3,715
2018-19	2,427	2,725	126	224	2,842	3,025	5,395	5,974
2019-20	2,496	2,592	28	49	2,913	2,946	5,437	5,587
2020-21	1,281	1,297	-100	-172	2,375	2,489	3,556	3,614
2021-22	777	1,291	-591	-646	4,499	4,073	4,685	4,718
2022-23	1,241	1,309	-509	-658	4,811	4,970	5,543	5,621
2016-17 to 2022-23	**10,176**	**11,571**	**-562**	**-867**	**20,554**	**21,106**	**30,168**	**31,810**

Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

Chart 17: Net Migration by Source and Destination, Halton, 2016-17 to 2022-23



Statistics Canada, Tax filer (T1FF) – Migration Estimates, 2016/17 to 2022/23

PEEL HALTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

3

Canadian Business Counts

Introduction

A regular part of our annual review of labour market indicators includes profiling Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, which reflects the number of business establishments in a community. We also profile how these numbers have changed, by size of establishment and by industry. As a general rule, Statistics Canada recommends against using its semi-annual count of businesses as a longitudinal barometer of whether the number of businesses is growing or shrinking in a given community, and they particularly cautioned against using this data as a way to measure the impact that COVID had on the number of businesses. We note this caution but continue to use comparisons as an additional piece of evidence that contributes to our understanding of local business and employment patterns.

We are also including data from another Statistics Canada program, the Monthly Business Openings and Closures data, as this provides another perspective regarding how businesses (and, by inference, employment) were affected during and after the pandemic.

Monthly Business Openings and Closures

These figures are derived from the Business Register which Statistics Canada maintains and are supplemented by payroll deduction files from the Canada Revenue Agency. This data provides the following information:

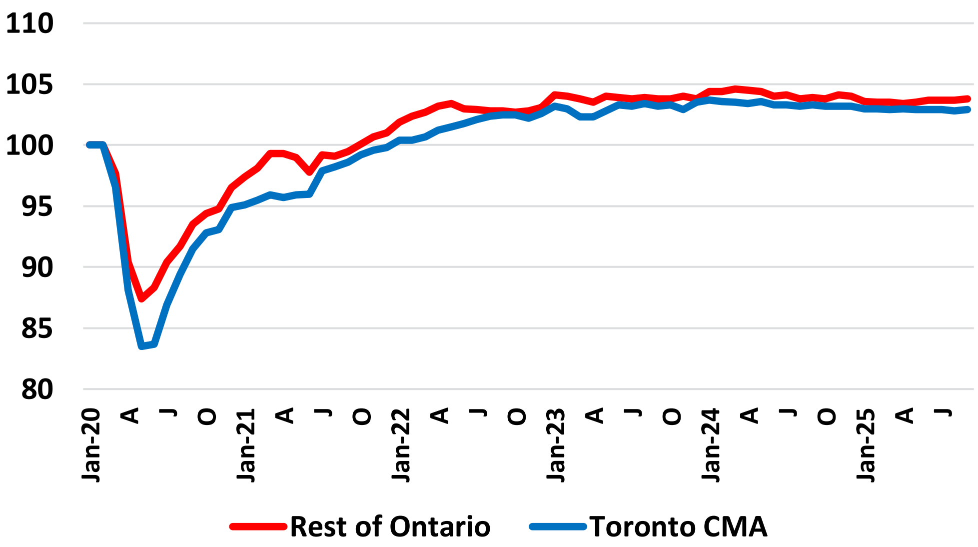
- **Business openings:** An establishment that had no employee in the previous month but has an employee in the current month
- **Business closures:** An establishment that had an employee in the previous month but has no employee in the current month
- **Active businesses:** An establishment that has an employee in the current month
- **Continuing businesses:** An establishment that had an employee in the previous month and has an employee in the current month

This data was particularly relevant to the circumstances of the pandemic because a business closure can be temporary or permanent (as opposed to an exit). The experience of the pandemic included many businesses which closed for a limited period, but then re-opened.

The limitation of the data is that it is not available for smaller geographies, but rather only for provinces and larger census metropolitan areas. Even for the census metropolitan areas, the data is not available for all industries, because the data groups become quite small and cannot be released due to confidentiality requirements.

Active businesses. Chart 18 profiles active businesses in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (or CMA; this area includes Peel and all of Halton except Burlington) and the Rest of Ontario (that is, excluding the Toronto CMA). Monthly data is provided from January 2020, to show the number just before COVID hit (March 2020), up to the most recent available figures (September 2025). All data in the chart is expressed in relation to the number of businesses active in January 2020; that figure is given a value of 100 and all subsequent months are a ratio of that 100. A value of 95 means that the number of businesses is 5% lower than the number present in January 2020.

Chart 18: Ratio of active businesses, Toronto CMA and Rest of Ontario, January 2020 to September 2025 (January 2020 = 100) (seasonally adjusted)



Statistics Canada, Table 33-10-0270-01

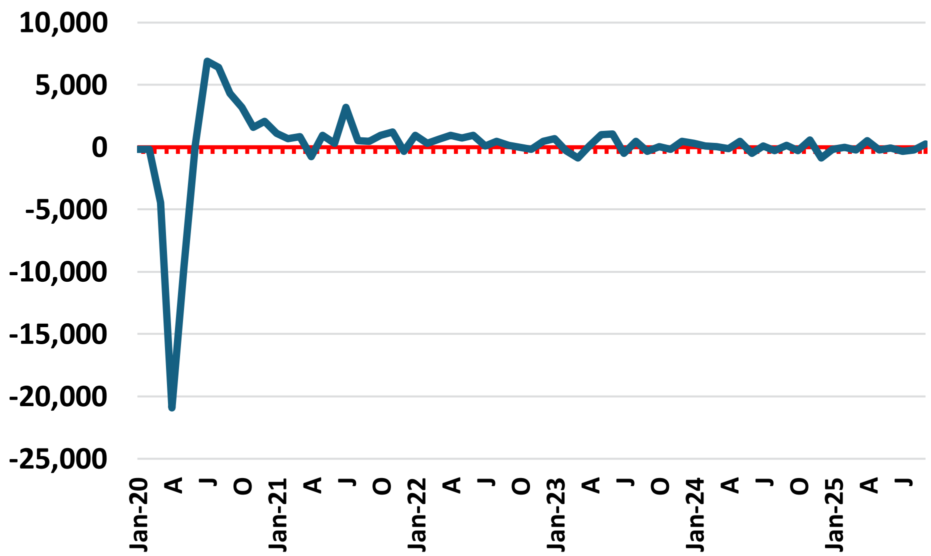
The broad trend for both areas was much the same: a sharp drop right after COVID hit and then a recovery which took over a year. However, the details are slightly different:

- The Toronto CMA was more severely affected by COVID (in May 2020, the number of active businesses was 16% below what it had been in January 2020), and the recovery took a longer time (it took until January 2022 to return to the number of active businesses present in January 2020); the number of active businesses continued to grow for two years afterwards, then reached a plateau near the start of 2024; since then, the number dropped slightly; in September 2025, the number of active businesses in the Toronto CMA was around 3% higher than it had been in January 2020
- In the Rest of Ontario, the COVID impact was slightly less severe (in May 2020, the number of active businesses were 13% below what they had been in January 2020), and the recovery was more robust, reaching the January 2020 number of active businesses by October 2021; as in the Toronto CMA, the number of active businesses continued to grow, then it reach a plateau; in September 2025, the number of active businesses in the Rest of Ontario was also around 4% higher than it had been in January 2020, slightly down from where it had been around the start of 2024

For 2023, the number difference between business openings and closures was a positive 1,799, showing growth in the local economy.

Business openings versus closings. Another way to look at these numbers is to focus on the difference between the number of business openings and the number of business closures per month. Chart 19 tracks this number for the Toronto CMA, from January 2020 to September 2025. A positive number means there were more openings than closures and a negative number means there were more closures than openings.

Chart 19: Net difference between business openings and business closures, Toronto CMA, January 2020 to September 2025



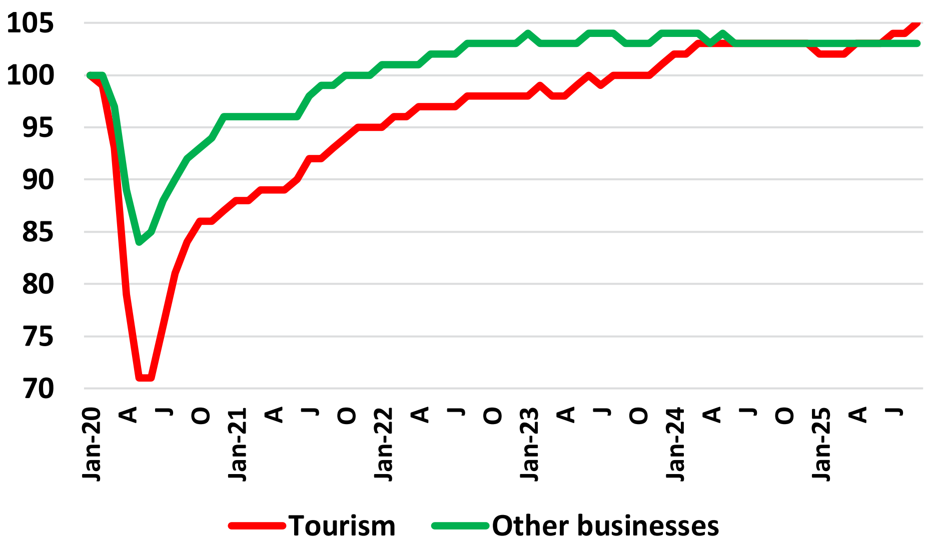
Statistics Canada, Table 33-10-0270-01

The immediate net loss between business openings and closures in the Toronto CMA was massive at the onset of COVID: minus 4,400 in March 2020, minus 21,000 in April and minus 9,600 in May. The number started rebounding already in June 2020, but those initial losses were only made up by March 2022, a full year later. For 2023, the number difference between business openings and closures was a positive 1,799, showing growth in the local economy. But in 2024, the figure was a net negative at minus 261, indicating a stalling in the growth in the number of firms. For 2025 (up until September), the net number was a larger negative figure, at minus 459 firms, suggesting a weakening of the economy.

Through 2023 and early 2024, the number of business sector establishments reached a plateau, whereas the number of tourism establishments continued to grow slowly.

Industries. It is well-established that the tourism sector was particularly hard hit by the COVID lockdowns. Industry subsectors that make up the tourism sector are tourism transportation, travel services, recreation and entertainment, accommodation, and food and beverage services. The active business data is only available for larger geographies, so to illustrate the impact of COVID and the trajectory of the subsequent recovery, Chart 20 illustrates the trends for the Toronto CMA, profiling the tourism sector and all other business sector industries (excluding tourism industries, as well as excluding industries in educational services and health care and social assistance).

Chart 20: Active businesses, tourism industries and all other business sector industries, Toronto CMA, January 2020 to September 2025 (January 2020 = 100)



Statistics Canada, Table 33-10-0270-01

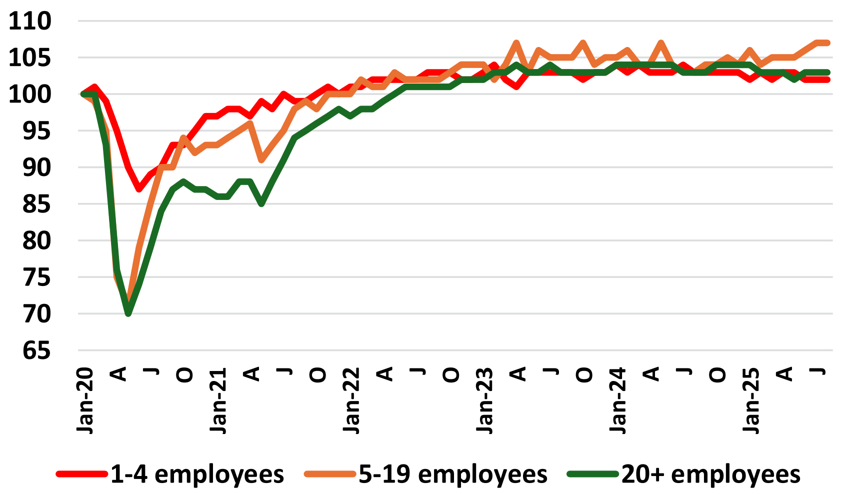
By May 2020, soon after COVID struck, the number of active tourism sector businesses had declined by 29% in the Toronto CMA, whereas the drop among all other business sector industries was less severe at 16%. While both sectors rebounded relatively quickly, the recovery for business sector industries was more robust, returning by December 2021 to the number of businesses which had been present in January 2020. The tourism recovery took much longer and was more likely to suffer greater setbacks with subsequent lockdowns, such that this sector only returned in June 2023 to its January 2020 level of establishments. Through 2023 and early 2024, the number of business sector establishments reached a plateau, whereas the number of tourism establishments continued to grow slowly. By the summer of 2025, the rate of growth in the tourism sector had outpaced that in all other businesses. In September 2025, the number of active tourism businesses was 5% higher than it had been in January 2020, while for the other businesses, the increase had only been 3%.

Thus, while the tourism sector did suffer much more than other industries on account of COVID, and their recovery took a longer time, some five years after the start of COVID there not only has been a convergence in the business growth trends across the tourism sector and all other business service sectors, the tourism sector has actually grown more.

Employment size of establishment. The changes in the number of establishments can also be examined by the employment size of the establishment. Chart 21 shows the results for the Toronto CMA for all businesses, profiling three categories of employee sizes:

- 1-4 employees
- 5-19 employees
- 20 or more employees

Chart 21: Active businesses by number of employees, Toronto CMA, January 2020 to August 2025 (January 2020 = 100)



Statistics Canada, Table 33-10-0722-01

The greatest proportional decline as a result of COVID was among establishments with 20 or more employees (in May 2020, a 30% drop from January), followed closely by firms with 5 to 19 employees (29% drop), whereas firms with 1 to 4 employees declined much less (minus 10%), no doubt because as firms laid off workers but continued operating, they shifted from a larger employee size category to a smaller one. The two smaller categories, 1 to 4 and 5 to 19 employees, recovered faster: the 1-4 employee category returned to the same number of establishments it had in January 2020 by October 2021; the 5-19 employee category returned to its pre-COVID level by January 2022, just a few months later; whereas the recovering for larger firms (20 or more employees) took place in two stages, a recovery in the fall of 2020, then a further increase in the number of establishments in the fall of 2021, reaching its pre-COVID

Firms with 20 or more employees saw more closings, with the recovery taking longer, but after five years their growth rate has exceeded that of small firms.

level in June 2022. In 2023, the 5-19 employee category proportionately rose to higher levels, while the other two categories stayed relatively flat. By August 2025, the relative standing was as follows: the number of active firms with 1-4 employees were 2% higher than had been the case in January 2020; active firms with 1-19 employees were 7% higher; and firms with 20 or more employees were 3% higher.

Thus, while firms with 1-4 employees may have closed fewer firms on account of COVID and recovered more quickly, their growth rate has been lower. Firms with 20 or more employees saw more closings, with the recovery taking longer, but after five years their growth rate has exceeded that of small firms. It is the 1-19 employee firms which have shown the most robust growth: significant decline in numbers as a result of COVID, a relatively quick recovery, and then considerable growth over the last two years.

Number of businesses, by size of establishment and by industry

Tables 1 and 2 provide the summary data for all businesses located in Peel and and Halton Regions for June 2025. Each table provides two different counts:

1) Classified businesses: The major part of the table provides the data for all businesses for which the industry classification is known and shows the breakdown by number of employees as well;

2) All businesses, classified and unclassified: The last three rows of the table present the distribution of all businesses (classified and unclassified) by number of employees; roughly 12% of the total count in Peel and 13% of the total count in Halton represent businesses that are unclassified (that is, Statistics Canada was unable to ascertain the industry of the establishment); the provincial average is 11%, which simply means that Peel and Halton have a little less information about their businesses than the provincial average.

Explanation for specific columns in the tables:

- **The second-to-last column** in each table shows the percentage distribution of all classified businesses by industry
- **The last column** shows the ranking of the total number of classified businesses by industry, from the largest (1) to the fewest (20) number of businesses. The five industries with the most classified businesses have their ranking numbers bolded in red
- **The highlighted cells** identify the three industries with the largest number of firms for each employee size category (that is, for each column)
- **Where under the percentage distribution a cell has 0%**, it does not mean there are no firms in that category, only that the number of firms, when expressed as a percentage of the total, is below 0.5% of the total and has been rounded down to 0%. Also, where the total is slightly less or more than 100%, this is due to rounding of the component percentages.

TABLE 10 – PEEL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES BY EMPLOYEE SIZE RANGE JUNE 2025										
INDUSTRY SECTOR 2-DIGIT NAICS	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES								%	RANK
	0	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100+	TOTAL		
11 Agriculture	497	70	24	12	7	3	0	613	0	17
21 Mining	31	10	5	1	3	0	0	50	0	19
22 Utilities	107	12	3	2	4	0	5	133	0	18
23 Construction	11820	3752	827	406	265	105	73	17248	8	4
31-33 Manufacturing	2388	952	610	434	413	204	200	5201	2	12
41 Wholesale Trade	2603	1214	660	581	484	209	174	5925	3	10
44-45 Retail Trade	5952	2345	1277	669	419	207	108	10977	5	7
48-49 Transportation/Warehousing	40126	15022	522	352	264	120	165	56571	25	1
51 Information and Cultural	1241	324	117	48	37	17	19	1803	1	14
52 Finance and Insurance	6706	922	185	185	174	64	33	8269	4	9
53 Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	48558	2035	228	123	72	20	19	51055	22	2
54 Professional Scientific Tech	21167	7732	781	404	243	106	78	30511	13	3
55 Management of Companies	838	53	31	28	63	37	86	1136	1	16
56 Administrative Support	6129	1222	446	253	216	132	137	8535	4	8
61 Educational Services	1540	303	146	108	87	26	12	2222	1	13
62 Health Care & Social Assist	6671	2680	1109	557	286	76	59	11438	5	5
71 Arts, Entertainment & Rec	1261	158	64	42	47	24	24	1620	1	15
72 Accommodation & Food	1919	851	1063	684	602	168	42	5329	2	11
81 Other Services	7108	2907	843	313	150	40	20	11381	5	6
91 Public Administration	2	3	0	0	3	5	32	45	0	20
CLASSIFIED BUSINESSES	166664	42567	8941	5202	3839	1563	1286	230062		
Percentage of all classified and unclassified businesses	73%	18%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	100%		
Cumulative percentage	73%	92%	95%	97%	99%	99%	100%			
ONTARIO percentage of classified and unclassified businesses	74%	15%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%			

TABLE 11 – HALTON NUMBER OF BUSINESSES BY EMPLOYEE SIZE RANGE JUNE 2025										
INDUSTRY SECTOR 2-DIGIT NAICS	**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**								**%**	**RANK**
	0	**1-4**	**5-9**	**10-19**	**20-49**	**50-99**	**100+**	**TOTAL**		
11 Agriculture	409	54	16	17	10	7	1	514	1	17
21 Mining	39	13	2	2	1	2	0	59	0	19
22 Utilities	86	5	3	1	3	3	2	103	0	18
23 Construction	4266	1279	370	187	131	41	20	6294	8	4
31-33 Manufacturing	870	339	171	158	128	78	67	1811	2	12
41 Wholesale Trade	1115	533	234	180	160	60	46	2328	3	10
44-45 Retail Trade	2386	919	619	439	253	111	62	4789	6	5
48-49 Transportation/Warehousing	3407	892	95	61	61	32	40	4588	5	7
51 Information and Cultural	678	172	53	31	16	5	8	963	1	15
52 Finance and Insurance	3833	486	142	133	83	46	30	4753	6	6
53 Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	21279	933	113	64	33	8	4	22434	27	1
54 Professional Scientific Tech	11188	3904	364	241	139	50	27	15913	19	2
55 Management of Companies	693	45	12	16	30	16	19	831	1	16
56 Administrative Support	2390	536	207	120	87	29	27	3396	4	9
61 Educational Services	851	151	53	61	60	16	10	1202	1	14
62 Health Care & Social Assist	3985	2008	526	392	183	47	51	7192	9	3
71 Arts, Entertainment & Rec	855	168	46	58	50	17	13	1207	1	13
72 Accommodation & Food	634	270	325	260	300	85	18	1892	2	11
81 Other Services	2574	912	379	185	64	17	7	4138	5	8
91 Public Administration	4	1	0	4	0	1	11	21	0	20
CLASSIFIED BUSINESSES	61542	13620	3730	2610	1792	671	463	84428		
Percentage of all classified and unclassified businesses	74%	16%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%	100%		
Cumulative percentage	74%	90%	94%	97%	99%	100%	100%			
ONTARIO percentage of classified and unclassified businesses	74%	15%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%			

. . . the industries with higher number of firms include: Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services in both Peel and Halton, as well as Wholesale Trade in Peel and Health Care & Social Assistance in Halton

Some observations:

- **Number of small firms:** Businesses are by far made up of small establishments. 73-74% of the classified and unclassified firms in Peel and Halton have no employees,[8] the same as the provincial average of 74%; among firms with 1-4 employees, Peel has 18% and Halton 16%, both just slightly higher than the provincial average of 15%
- **Highest number of firms by industry:** The second to last column provides the percentage distribution of all firms by industry:

  - The three industries with the largest percentage of firms in Peel are: Transportation & Warehousing, accounting for 24.6% (last three years: 24.5%; 23.8%; 22.9%; clearly, this continues to be a proportionately growing sector); followed by Real Estate and Rental & Leasing at 22.2% (last three years: 20.0%; 18.7%; 17.9%; another industry showing steady proportional growth), then in third place, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, with 13.3% (last three years: 13.9%; 14.4%; 14.5%; the decline in the percentage share is a consequence of the growth in percentage share of the other two industries; the number of employers in this industry has grown each of the last four years)
  - In Halton the configuration is different: Real Estate and Rental & Leasing has the largest number of firms at 26.6% (last three years: 24.4%; 22.9%; 21.9%; a growth rate that exceeded that of Peel); second was Professional, Scientific & Technical Services at 18.8% (last three years: 19.4%; 19.6%; 19.6%); for third place, Health Care & Social Assistance representing a share of 8.5% of establishments (last three years: 8.1%; 8.4%; 8.5%); as noted last year, it would appear that for several years now, the rental market has attracted more landlords into this business
  - By way of context, the five largest industries by number of firms in Ontario are: Estate and Rental & Leasing (25.7%); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (13.4%); Construction (9.1%); Transportation & Warehousing (8.4%); and Health Care & Social Assistance (7.4%)
- **Highest number of firms by size and industry:** The three largest industries by each employee size category have also been highlighted:

  - The tables demonstrate how the very large number of firms in the no employee size category drives the total numbers (that is, in both Peel and Halton, for Real Estate and Rental & Leasing and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services); where Peel and Halton differ is in the large number of solo operators in Transportation & Warehousing in Peel (64% of whom are in truck transportation), whereas in Halton, third place is occupied by Construction, but closely followed by Health Care & Social Assistance, Finance & Insurance, and Transportation & Warehousing
  - In the mid-size ranges (10-49 employees), the industries with higher number of firms include: Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services in both Peel and Halton, as well as Wholesale Trade in Peel and Health Care & Social Assistance in Halton
  - Among the largest firms (100+ employees), the two areas diverge: in Peel, the three largest industries are Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade and Transportation & Warehousing; in Halton, the three largest are Manufacturing, Retail Trade and Health Care & Social Assistance

[8] This actually undercounts the number of self-employed individuals. The Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Count database does not include unincorporated businesses that are owner-operated (have no payroll employees) and that earn less than $30,000 in a given year.

Looking more closely at firms with zero employees, Real Estate & Rental and Leasing accounts for almost three in ten (29%) of all such firms in Peel, and a third (34%) in Halton.

Looking more closely at firms with zero employees, Real Estate & Rental and Leasing accounts for almost three in ten (29%) of all such firms in Peel, and a third (34%) in Halton. In both Peel and Halton, 72% of this industry's zero employee firms are landlords of residential buildings and dwellings, and another 14% are real estate agents.

In Peel, another quarter (24%) of zero employee firms were found in Transportation & Warehousing, and 13% in Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, of which 37% were firms in Computer Systems Design and Related Services, and another 23% in Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services.

In Halton, the second largest industry for zero employee firms was within Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, where 32% consisted of firms in Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services and 29% represented Computer Systems Design and Related Services. The third largest industry in this employee size category was Construction, with over half (52%) made up of Speciality Trade Contractors and another 38% being firms in Construction of Buildings.

In the range of firms with 1 to 19 employees, the following represent the three largest industries in this category:

Peel

- **Transportation & Warehousing (15,896 firms):** Even among these small firms, truck transportation accounts for 87% of the establishments, followed by 9% among firms in Support Activities for Transportation
- **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (8,917 firms):** Computer Systems Design and Related Services are by far the largest sector among these firms, representing 45% of all firms, followed by Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services (14%), and two sectors tied at 12%: Legal Services and Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping and Payroll Services
- **Construction (4,985 firms):** Six out of ten (63%) of these firms are Speciality Trade Contractors and a little over one-third (35%) are firms in Construction of Buildings

Halton

- **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (4,495 firms):** Computer Systems Design and Related Services are by far the largest sector among these firms, representing 42% of all firms, followed by Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services (19%), then Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping and Payroll Services (10%)
- **Health Care & Social Assistance (2,908 firms):** Offices of Physicians represent 46% of these firms, followed by 39% among all other health professionals
- **Retail Trade (1,881 firms)**: The largest sector in this category is Health and Personal Care Retailers (23%), followed by Clothing and Clothing Accessories Retailers (11%) and Grocery and Convenience Retailers (7%)

In the range of medium-sized firms with 20 to 99 employees, the following represent the three largest industries in this category:

Peel

- **Accommodation & Food Services (742 firms):** The vast majority of these are food services establishments: 336 Limited-service Eating Places and 329 Full-service Restaurants; the next largest category is Hotels with 52 establishments
- **Wholesale Trade (684 firms):** The big categories are: 248 Machinery, Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers; 131 Building Material and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers; and 82 Food, Beverage and Tobacco Merchant Wholesalers
- **Manufacturing (616 firms):** The big categories are: 113 Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing firms; 80 Food Manufacturing firms; 66 Machinery Manufacturing firms

Halton

- **Accommodation & Food Services (378 firms):** 202 Full-service Restaurants, 148 Limited-service Eating Places, then 18 Hotels
- **Retail Trade (339 firms):** The largest categories are: 70 Health and Personal Care Retailers; 60 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Retailers; 52 Automobile dealers
- **Health Care & Social Assistance (228 firms):** The bigger categories are: 68 Child Day-care Services; 25 Community Care Facilities for the Elderly; 25 Individual and Family Services; 24 Offices of Dentists

Peel has 677 firms with 100-199 employees and 413 firms with 200-499 employees. Halton has 267 firms with 100-199 employees and 133 firms with 200-499 employees.

At the large end of employee size spectrum, Peel has 185 firms with 500 or more employees and Halton has 57. Drilling down further:

- **In Peel, the larger clusters are:** 30 firms in Transportation & Warehousing; 24 firms in Management of Companies and Enterprises (these are head or regional corporate offices or holding companies); 21 firms in Administrative & Support Services; 18 firms in Manufacturing; 17 firms in Wholesale Trade; 17 firms in Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; 10 firms in Retail Trade; 10 firms in Health care & Social Assistance
- **In Halton, the larger clusters are:** 9 firms in Manufacturing; 9 firms in Public Administration; 7 firms in Wholesale Trade; and 5 firms in Transportation & Warehousing; and 4 firms in each of Administrative & Support; Educational Services; and Health Care & Social Assistance

It should be noted that Statistics Canada discourages comparisons of this sort, on the grounds that their data collection and classification methods change.

Change in the number of firms by industry, June 2024 to June 2025

Changes in the number of employers are experienced differently across the various industries. Tables 3 and 4 highlight the changes in the number of firms by industry and by employee size between June 2024 and June 2025 for Peel and Halton. The tables also list the total number of firms in each industry in June 2025, to provide a context. The colour-coding of the tables (green where there is an increase, orange where there is a decrease) helps to illustrate any pattern.

A comparison between this year's net changes by employee size and those of the previous six years is also included at the bottom of each table, to illustrate what have been the overall changes in the number of businesses over this period. It should be noted that Statistics Canada discourages comparisons of this sort, on the grounds that their data collection and classification methods change. At the very least, these comparisons can provide the foundation for further inquiry, tested by local knowledge about changes in industries.

Peel. Table 12 shows the changes in the number of establishments for Peel between June 2024 and June 2025. A few observations to highlight:

- Starting with the seven bottom rows, which show the cumulative changes by four employee size categories over seven years: one row sticks out, when comparing figures between 2020 and 2021, there were large net losses among firms with 20-99 and 100 or more employees; after that, for three years, there was consistent growth in all categories; comparing June 2024 and June 2025, there has been a decline of 44 firms with 100 or more employees, and the other categories show lower increases in numbers that were present in previous years (although the increase of firms in the 20-99 employee category is the same as last year, one can assume that a considerable proportion of that number are firms that had 100 or more employees last year and had shed some workers, dropping them into the next lower category)
- Even with the size of the decrease among firms with 100 or more employees, it is not the case that there would be declines in employment, as the increases in firms in other categories are significant; some assessments are easy to make: Finance & Insurance lost firms across all categories, while Real Estate & Rental and Leasing gained across all categories (the increase in the number of firms over last year was almost 20%); Transportation & Warehousing also experienced very healthy gain, including among firms with 100 or more employees; in most other industries, there was a net decline among firms with 100 or more employees

TABLE 12 – PEEL CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS, BY INDUSTRY AND BY FIRM SIZE, JUNE 2024 TO JUNE 2025						
INDUSTRY	Firm size (number of employees)					Total number of firms June-25
	0	1-19	20-99	100+	TOTAL	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and farming	14	2	0	0	16	613
Mining and oil and gas extraction	-4	-2	1	0	-5	50
Utilities	8	4	1	0	13	133
Construction	466	233	19	-6	712	17248
Manufacturing	96	3	8	-7	100	5201
Wholesale trade	77	-14	-16	0	47	5925
Retail trade	-4	89	8	-14	79	10977
Transportation and warehousing	4126	84	-28	12	4194	56571
Information and cultural industries	-52	-17	6	0	-63	1803
Finance and insurance	-140	-6	-10	-1	-157	8269
Real estate and rental and leasing	8321	37	2	2	8362	51055
Professional, scientific and technical services	894	-87	17	-12	812	30511
Management of companies and enterprises	-27	1	-9	1	-34	1136
Administrative and support	413	-1	23	-5	430	8535
Educational services	138	-28	11	-1	120	2222
Health care and social assistance	672	177	51	-10	890	11438
Arts, entertainment and recreation	64	23	7	-1	93	1620
Accommodation and food services	158	167	-10	-2	313	5329
Other services	576	199	-12	-1	762	11381
Public administration	-1	-1	-1	1	-2	45
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2024-25	15795	863	68	-44	16682	230062
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2023-24	17736	1332	67	41	19176	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2022-23	15636	1792	272	56	17756	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2021-22	2338	2325	334	28	5025	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2020-21	8148	326	-457	-94	7923	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2019-20	1929	899	52	-1	2879	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2018-19	7163	2694	206	73	10136	

Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2024 and June 2025

. . . sectors which had healthier growth were Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, Real Estate & Rental and Leasing, and Health Care & Social Assistance

Halton. Table 13 shows the pattern for Halton:

- Starting again with the seven bottom rows, which show the cumulative changes by four employee size categories over seven years: The changes between 2020 and 2021 show the impact of COVID, with large net losses among firms with 20-99 and 100 or more employees, many of which would have dropped to the smaller employee size categories; for the next three years, there were increases in all categories but one; the comparison between June 2024 and June 2025 shows a decrease among firms with 20-99 employees; perhaps more telling, looking only at the combined outcomes for firms with 20-99 and 100 or more employees, the net changes were as follows: 2021-22: plus 267 firms; 2022-23: plus 179 firms; 2023-24: plus 64 firms; 2024-25: minus 26 firms; in short, a steady decline among larger firms, even while there has been consistently healthy growth among firms with zero and 1-19 employees
- By industry, sectors which had weaker outcomes were Manufacturing, Retail Trade and Other Services; sectors which had healthier growth were Construction, Transportation & Warehousing, Real Estate & Rental and Leasing, and Health Care & Social Assistance

TABLE 13 – HALTON CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS, BY INDUSTRY AND BY FIRM SIZE, JUNE 2024 TO JUNE 2025						
INDUSTRY	Firm size (number of employees)					Total number of firms June-25
	0	1-19	20-99	100+	TOTAL	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and farming	-6	3	0	0	-3	514
Mining and oil and gas extraction	7	-2	2	0	7	59
Utilities	7	-1	1	0	7	103
Construction	103	33	1	-1	136	6294
Manufacturing	79	5	-5	-1	78	1811
Wholesale trade	-3	-17	2	2	-16	2328
Retail trade	-34	5	15	-13	-27	4789
Transportation and warehousing	327	-19	1	4	313	4588
Information and cultural industries	-1	1	0	0	0	963
Finance and insurance	-32	37	-9	5	1	4753
Real estate and rental and leasing	3094	47	3	-2	3142	22434
Professional, scientific and technical services	546	39	-4	3	584	15913
Management of companies and enterprises	-20	-3	6	1	-16	831
Administrative and support	133	49	-2	-1	179	3396
Educational services	74	5	0	1	80	1202
Health care and social assistance	343	173	-19	1	498	7192
Arts, entertainment and recreation	54	23	0	1	78	1207
Accommodation and food services	23	26	-3	1	47	1892
Other services	158	-21	-18	1	120	4138
Public administration	0	1	0	1	2	21
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2024-25	4852	384	-29	3	5210	84428
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2023-24	4611	331	48	16	5006	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2022-23	4775	658	180	-1	5612	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2021-22	930	973	228	39	2170	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2020-21	2075	204	-212	-57	2010	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2019-20	337	308	30	8	683	
NET TOTAL CHANGES, 2018-19	2069	464	133	12	2678	

Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2024 and June 2025

Goods producing industries typically employ larger proportions of blue-collar workers, the majority of whom are males.

Time series from June 2018 to June 2025

Changes which occur from year to year can sometimes be the consequence of a change in how a firm is classified or a small increase or decrease in employment resulting in a shift from one employee size category to another, the kind of measurement error which Statistics Canada is worried about when making comparisons in the number of firms between one year and the next.

What can be more revealing is the longer pattern of changes among larger aggregates of firms. The following charts track these changes for all firms with employees, comparing the following clusters of industries between June 2018 and June 2025:

Goods Producing	Service Sector	Knowledge Sector
• Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting • Construction • Manufacturing • Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction • Utilities	• Accommodation and food services • Administrative and support • Arts, entertainment and recreation • Other services • Real estate and rental and leasing • Retail trade • Transportation and warehousing • Wholesale trade	• Educational services • Finance and insurance • Health care and social assistance • Information and cultural industries • Management of companies and enterprises • Professional, scientific and technical services • Public administration

Industries within each cluster share certain similarities:

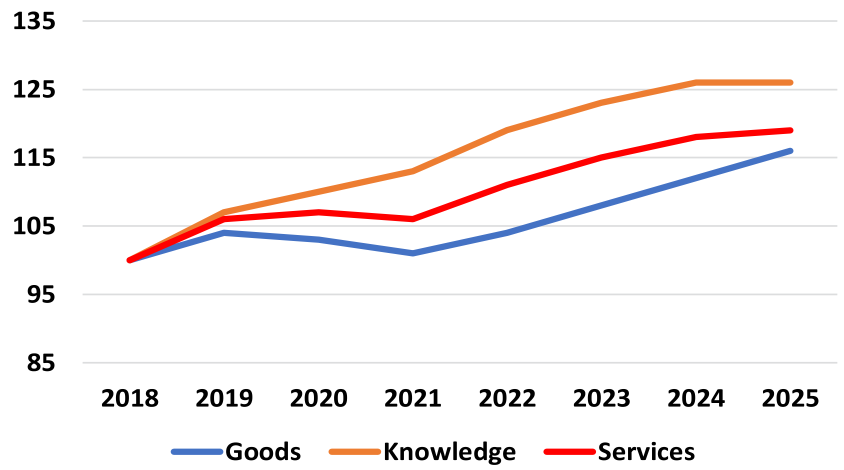
- Goods producing industries typically employ larger proportions of blue-collar workers, the majority of whom are males
- Service sector industries tend to be lower paying[9]
- Knowledge sector industries are also technically service sector industries; however, these industries tend to have higher proportions of jobs that typically require a post-secondary education

The number of firms present in each category in June 2019 is assigned a value of 100 and for each subsequent year the number of firms is expressed in relation to that value of 100. For example, if the value is 105, it means that the number of firms rose by 5%. In this way, one can compare the proportional change when the actual number of firms in each category is vastly different.

9 One could make an argument that Wholesale Trade should be in the Knowledge Sector category, but it is very close to the average proportions of jobs requiring a postsecondary education. It represents a smaller proportion of all jobs and where it is placed makes less difference in terms of the overall figures.

Charts 22 and 23 show the results for Peel and Halton, and for context, Chart 24 shows the trends for Ontario.

Chart 22: Ratio of number of firms with employees by Goods Producing Sector, Knowledge Sector and Service Sector, Peel, June 2018 to June 2025 (June 2018 = 100)



Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2018 to June 2025

Overall, the trends by each cluster for Peel were as follows:

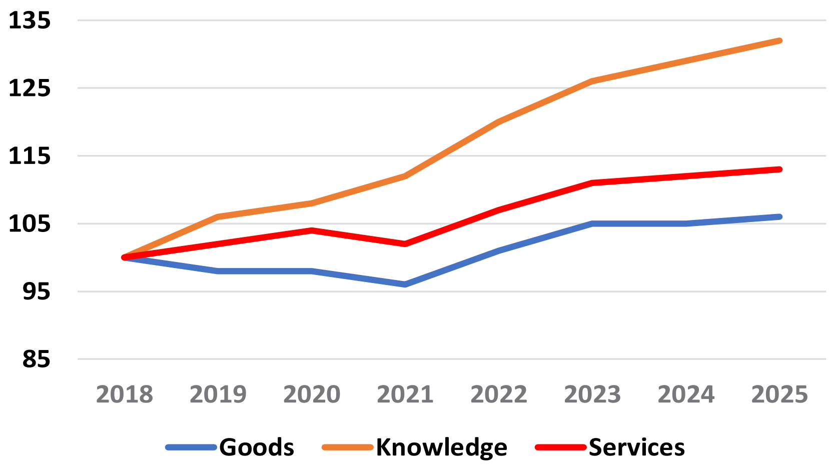
- **The Knowledge Sector** has seen a steady and increasing growth over these last eight years and in 2025 the number of employers was 26% higher than in 2018
- **The Goods Producing Sector** dipping in 2021 but afterwards experienced healthy increase, so that by 2025 the number of employers was 16% higher than in 2018
- **The Services Sector** had a smaller dip in 2021, but also had healthy growth afterwards, resulting in the number of employers in 2025 being 19% higher than it had been in 2018

Within these three sectors in Peel there are important variations:

- **Knowledge Sector:** There was very strong growth in the number of employers in the following industries: Public Administration (+54%); Health Care & Social Assistance (+39%); Educational Services (+30%); and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (+26%); there was moderate growth among Finance & Insurance (13%); Information & Cultural Industries held steady (no change); while Management of Companies declined (-10%)
- **Goods Producing Sector:** Mining, Quarrying, & Oil and Gas Extraction grew from 13 to 19 employers, while Construction grew by 26%; Manufacturing held steady (+1%); whereas declines in the number of employers was registered among Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (126 firms down to 116 firms) and Utilities (28 firms to 26 firms)
- **Services Sector:** Real Estate & Rental and Leasing had very high growth (+52%), followed by Accommodation & Food Services (+30%), Transportation & Warehousing (+24%), and Other Services (+21%); industries with medium growth rates were Administrative & Support (+13%), Retail Trade (+9%) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+9%); only Wholesale Trade experienced a loss (-7%)

The Knowledge Sector has seen a steady and increasing growth over these last eight years and in 2025 the number of employers was 32% higher than in 2018

Chart 23: Ratio of number of firms with employees by Goods Producing Sector, Knowledge Sector and Service Sector, Halton, June 2018 to June 2025 (June 2018 = 100)



Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2018 to June 2025

The trends by each cluster for Halton were as follows:

- **The Knowledge Sector** has seen a steady and increasing growth over these last eight years and in 2025 the number of employers was 32% higher than in 2018
- **The Goods Producing Sector** dipped in 2021 but afterwards experienced healthy increase, so that by 2025 the number of employers was 6% higher than in 2018
- **The Services Sector** had a smaller dip in 2021, but also had healthy growth afterwards, resulting in the number of employers in 2025 being 13% higher than it had been in 2018

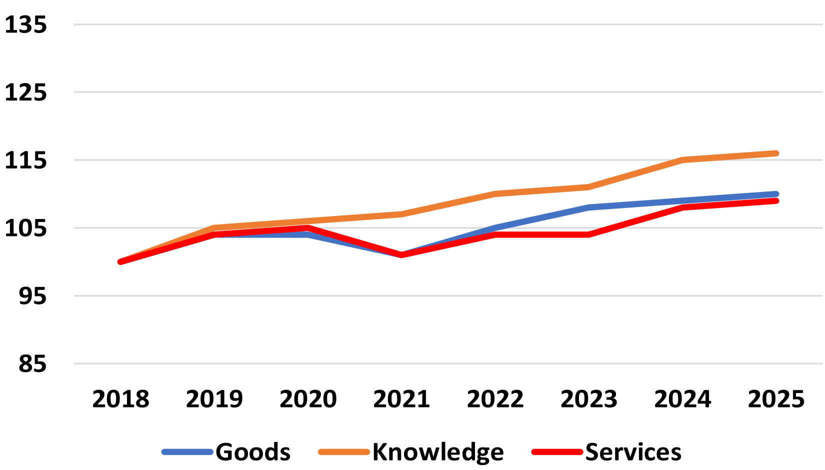
Within these three sectors in Halton, the variations were as follows:

- **Knowledge Sector:** There was very strong growth in the number of employers in the following industries: Health Care & Social Assistance (+49%); Public Administration (+42%); and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (+30%); and Educational Services (+27%); and; there was moderate growth among Finance & Insurance (13%) and Management of Companies (+8%); while Information & Cultural Industries declined slightly (-2%)
- **Goods Producing Sector:** Only Construction registered growth (+11%); Manufacturing more or less stayed steady (-1%), while all other industries saw the number of employers decline: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (-5%); Mining, Quarrying, & Oil and Gas Extraction (-5%); and Utilities (from 21 employers to 17)
- **Services Sector:** Real Estate & Rental and Leasing had very high growth (+53%), followed by Transportation & Warehousing (+26%) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+26%); medium growth rates were found among Accommodation & Food Services (15%), Retail Trade (+12%), and Administrative & Support (+5%); Other Services had a small increase (+3%), while Wholesale Trade declined slightly (-4%)

A relevant reference point is to compare these trends for those for Ontario. Chart 24 presents the same results for Ontario over the same time period. There are a few comparison points:

- **The 2018 to 2025 pattern for the Knowledge Sector** shows considerably higher growth in Peel (+26%) and Halton (+32%) than Ontario (+16%)
- **The pattern for the Goods Producing Sector is more similar:** Peel in that period grew by 16%, Halton by a lower 6%, while Ontario grew by 10%
- **The pattern for the Services Sector** was that growth was higher in Peel (+19%) and Halton (+13%) than Ontario (+9%)

Chart 24: Ratio of number of firms with employees by Goods Producing Sector, Knowledge Sector and Service Sector, Ontario, June 2018 to June 2025 (June 2018 = 100)



Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, June 2018 to June 2025

Overall, what this shows is that the consistent population growth in Peel and Halton was also accompanied by a larger growth rate among employers, compared with Ontario, between 2018 and 2025, with Halton only lagging a bit in the Goods Producing Sector.

4

Views from Employers – Highlights from the 2025 Employer Survey

The employer survey represented the 15th year that the Peel Halton Workforce Development Group (PHWDG) had administered an employer survey. This year's survey focused on mental health and wellness in the workplace, with over half of the questions devoted to this topic. The remaining questions covered trends relating to remote work, the impact of workforce or business changes on employers, including technological and environmental considerations, as well as the consequences of US tariffs, and reliance on and knowledge about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Two major findings of the survey were:

1) There is a correlation between the incidence of mental health and wellness concerns and the degree to which an employer places importance on issues related to mental health and wellness in their organization; a correlation does not mean one causes the other, but that responses to these two questions track in the same direction: high incidence and high importance go together.

2) Most of the other responses about mental health and wellness also seem to have a relationship to this incidence and importance correlation; employers who have higher incidences of and place greater importance on mental health and wellness concerns:

i. Report higher impacts on their organization on such issues as the need to adjust the employee benefit package, the number of short- and long-term leave requests, and the level of employee conflict or toxic behaviours, among others

ii. Are more likely to report that the incidence of mental health and wellness concerns has been increasing

iii. Are more likely to consult with staff or to track metrics regarding mental health and wellness issues

iv. Are more likely to provide mental health days, an Employee Assistance Program or wellness apps or subscriptions

v. Are more likely to feel very confident in their ability to support employees with mental health and wellness concerns.

The survey was administered between September 15 and October 24, 2025. This survey was distributed electronically through various channels such as social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter), the PHWDG website, e-mail campaigns and PHWDG's community partners. In total, 243 employers started the survey and the average number of respondents per question was 128.

This year's survey focused on mental health and wellness in the workplace, with over half of the questions devoted to this topic.

The survey is not a random sample, but its respondents are generally representative of the characteristics of employers in Peel and Halton, except in the case of a few categories:

- Thirty percent of the survey respondents have 100 or more employees, compared to 2% of all establishments in Peel and Halton; similarly, firms with 1-4 employees make up a much smaller proportion of the survey compared to their share of all establishments
- By industry, the survey share of Manufacturing firms is far higher, while the share of Transportation and Warehousing is far lower; the only other industries where there is a larger discrepancy are Accommodation & Food Services, Educational Services, Other Services, and Retail Trade
- There are slightly more employers completing the survey from Halton Hills, and fewer employers from Brampton, compared to their share of all employers across Peel and Halton

Overall, the number of employers completing this annual survey has been declining over the last three years, even though there have been limited changes in either the length of the survey or how it is distributed. This in itself can be considered a finding of the survey, that employers have become fatigued with surveys or that they may feel so taken up with their day-to-day demands that they feel they do not have the time to complete a survey.

It is also worth pointing out that 243 respondents started the survey and began answering questions about their location, industry and employee size of their organization. Yet on the first question, which was relatively simple ("rank the importance of mental health and wellness to your organization"), a third dropped out at that point. It seems more likely that when directly asked the question, those who did not feel it was an important issue might have decided they saw no purpose in continuing the survey.

Of course, there is no way of knowing for certain. But it may serve our understanding of the survey results to view them as not necessarily representing the views of all employers, but rather of those employers who are more likely to believe the issue is very important or a critical priority.

As a result, the survey also compared results for two categories of respondents:

- "Lower importance" respondents: those who felt that the importance of mental health and wellness to their organization was "not important," "somewhat important" or "important"
- "Higher importance" respondents: those who felt that the importance of mental health and wellness to their organization was "very important" or a "critical priority"

Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) said that mental health and wellness was either very important or a critical priority to their organization. This was more likely to be the case for very small (1-4 employees) and very large (100 or more employees) organizations.

When asked in what ways the incidence of mental health and wellness issues was of concern to their organization, over 60% referred to the impact on productivity as well as on the level of employee engagement. Among the range of impacts reviewed, smaller firms (1-4 or 5-19 employees) often expressed lower levels of impact for many of these items, while larger firms (100 or more employees) are much more likely to note there was an impact with respect to short- or long-term leave requests, requests for hybrid or remote work, and the need to adjust the employee benefit package.

Almost half of respondents felt that the incidence of mental health and wellness issues has increased somewhat or significantly, while another third said it had stayed the same. Only one in ten said it has decreased somewhat or significantly. Slightly fewer than one in eight were not sure. The smallest firms (1-4 employees) and the largest firms (100 or more employees) were more likely to feel the incidence had increased.

Over half of the respondents indicated that over the last two years staff have asked to learn more about ways to better support people with mental health and wellness needs. Another four in ten of respondents have felt uncertain about how to start a conversation with an employee where a mental health and wellness concern was suspected, while a third felt they had not managed the situation as well as they would have liked. In most cases, this has happened once or twice, but at least one in ten said it has happened more than once or twice.

Many employers do have practices relating to messaging and corporate culture that seek to address mental health and wellness concerns in their organization, though a much smaller proportion track mental health-related metrics.

Many employers also have policies relating to how work is carried out that would contribute to mental health and wellness, such as safe workplace policies, mental health days, negotiating hybrid work, flexibility regarding overtime, accommodating employees with caregiver responsibilities, and ensuring that employees have input or options when it comes to scheduling their hours of work. However, fewer have specific accommodation policies for employees with mental health and wellness concerns.

Where these policies exist, employees tend to make use of them (in the 75% to 89% range), with only the accommodations for employees with caregiver responsibilities being used slightly less (69%).

There is a considerable difference among respondents in terms of what specific supports are provided to employees to support mental health and wellness:

- More than seven out of ten provide prescription drug coverage and/or supplemental health insurance
- Half to two thirds provide mental health days, short- and long-term disability and Employee Assistance Program
- Over one-third make available on-site or virtual counseling
- Three in ten offer wellness apps or subscriptions
- One in five provide subsidies for special programs, such as gym membership, exercise classes, yoga classes

The general trend is that the larger the firm by employee size, the higher the percentage of employers who provide the support, though there is less variation by firm size when it comes to the provision of mental health days.

A little over a third of respondents feel very confident in their organization's ability to support employees with mental health and wellness concerns, one half feel somewhat confident, and one in ten feel not very confident or not at all confident, rising to almost two out of ten among firms with 5-19 employees.

On the issue of remote work, there has been an overall declining trend in the proportion of employers who say they have employees who can work remotely.

When it comes to areas where respondents felt their organization could improve their actions to better address the mental health and wellness needs of their employees, at least six out of ten respondents felt there was room for improvement with respect to:

- Manager training around empathetic leadership and psychological safety
- Ensuring supervisors and managers are responsive to the mental health and wellness circumstances of employees
- Messaging to employees to assure they feel comfortable disclosing mental health and wellness concern
- Better communications for reducing the stigma about mental health and wellness challenges and/or calling out behaviours that are not tolerated

It is noteworthy that these four items all involve messaging and the climate established by the organization, its managers and supervisors.

On the other hand, half or more respondents felt there was no need for change to:

- Prescription drug coverage (not surprising, as this was the support most likely to be provided by employers)
- Policies regarding hybrid or remote work (given that employers have been fine-tuning this policy for several years, it may be that they don't feel it needs further adjustment)
- Employee Assistance Program, including access to psychologists or other mental health professionals (slightly over half of respondents say they provide an Employee Assistance Program)
- Providing flexibility regarding workload, hours of work and scheduling of work

On the issue of remote work, there has been an overall declining trend in the proportion of employers who say they have employees who can work remotely. There is a decline in the proportion of workers who are not working at all remotely, and notable increases among those working hybrid (especially half their time remotely) and those working all their time remotely.

By employee size categories:

- Small firms (1-4 employees) have higher proportions of employees working mainly from home
- Firms with 5-19 and 20-99 employees have roughly equal proportions of employees working largely in the workplace and working hybrid
- Large firms (100 or more employees) also have around half of their employees working hybrid, around one-third working primarily in the workplace, with a slightly higher proportion working remotely most of the time

In terms of how various workforce or business changes were impacting their organization over the past six months, respondents expressed increasing concerns regarding costs, inflation and the pressure to increase wages. The next three prominent concerns were: challenges with supply chains, challenges recruiting either mid-level or senior level workers, and commuting or transportation challenges.

When asked about specific technological and environmental changes, the biggest current and future impacts were:

- Cyber-security (highest combined current and future impact)
- Digitalization
- Cloud-based technology
- Real time data collection, management and analysis
- Artificial intelligence (the latter having the largest expected future impact)

Respondents further identified how these changes would impact their workforce:

(1) Workers will need skills upgrading

(2) The uncertainty makes business planning a challenge

(3) Productivity will increase

As well, more employers feel that jobs will be lost rather than that new jobs will be created as a result of technological change.

When asked about the impact of US tariffs, respondents said the biggest challenge they face has been coping with the impact uncertainty has had on their business planning, now and in the future. Other significant impacts are or are expected to be the need to restrict spending, the disruption of supply chains and having to raise prices.

Seven out of ten of respondents neither use nor are considering using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Even among those who use or are considering using the program, only four out of ten are aware of recent changes to the program, except where six out of ten know that they must pay foreign workers the posted prevailing wage for the occupation and location.

Peel Halton Workforce Development Group

2025

PEEL HALTON EMPLOYER SURVEY

Mental Health and Wellness in the Workplace:

Does it Make a Difference to Think it is Important?

Almost half of employers feel that the incidence of mental health and wellness concerns has increased among their employees in the last two years

Employers are facing times full of uncertainty: two-thirds say US tariffs make business planning difficult; more than half say technological changes (like AI, digitization, use of real-time data) also make business planning challenging

Almost half of the organizations do not track mental health-related metrics

PEEL HALTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

2025

PEEL HALTON EMPLOYER SURVEY

Mental Health and Wellness in the Workplace:

Does it Make a Difference to Think it is Important?

Almost two-thirds of employers provide mental health or personal days or flexible leave

One out of ten employers are not very or not at all confident in their organization's ability to support employees with mental health or wellness concerns

The most pressing current business issues for almost three-quarters of employers are the impact of inflation and the pressure to increase wages

Seven out of ten of respondents neither use nor are considering using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program

PEEL HALTON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

5

Employment Ontario Services Data

This section provides information and analysis of client data released by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development in 2025 and offers insights into client demographics and outcomes between April 2024 and March 2025. The data elements capture client and program information for the 2024-25 fiscal year and cover the following:

- Integrated Employment Services (IES)
- Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG)
- Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)
- Better Jobs Ontario (BJO)
- Apprenticeship (APPR)

Integrated Employment Services

1. Overall Number of Clients

- Total Clients: 26,128 (Peel: 21,280, Halton: 4,848) were assisted by Employment Ontario Services
- Peel accounted for 81.4% of total clients, while Halton made up 18.6%.
- Peel continues to serve a significantly larger share of clients, which aligns with its larger population base and higher demand for employment supports.

2. Clients by Age Group

- **Largest Age Group: 25–44 (60.3%)**

This remains the dominant demographic, highlighting strong engagement from midcareer workers and young professionals seeking employment or career advancement.

- **Youth 15–24 (16.6%)**

Youth continue to represent a significant portion of clients, reinforcing the importance of earlycareer employment supports.

- **Older Workers 45–64 (21.9%)**

A substantial share of clients are midtolate career individuals, often, navigating career transitions, layoffs, or reentry into the workforce.

- **Senior Job Seekers 65+ (1.1%)**

Engagement remains low, consistent with retirement trends and reduced workforce participation among older adults.

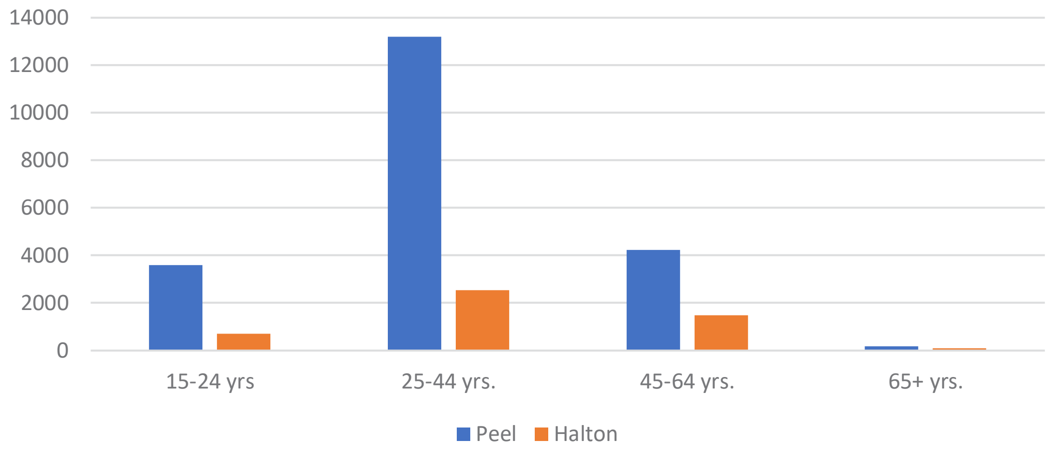
In 2024–2025, Newcomers remained the largest client group in both regions.

Regional Comparison:

While Peel has higher absolute numbers across all age groups, the proportional distribution is very similar between Peel and Halton, indicating comparable demographic patterns in service usage.

Profile of Peel & Halton (IES) Clients

Clients by Age Group (Peel vs Halton) 2024-2025

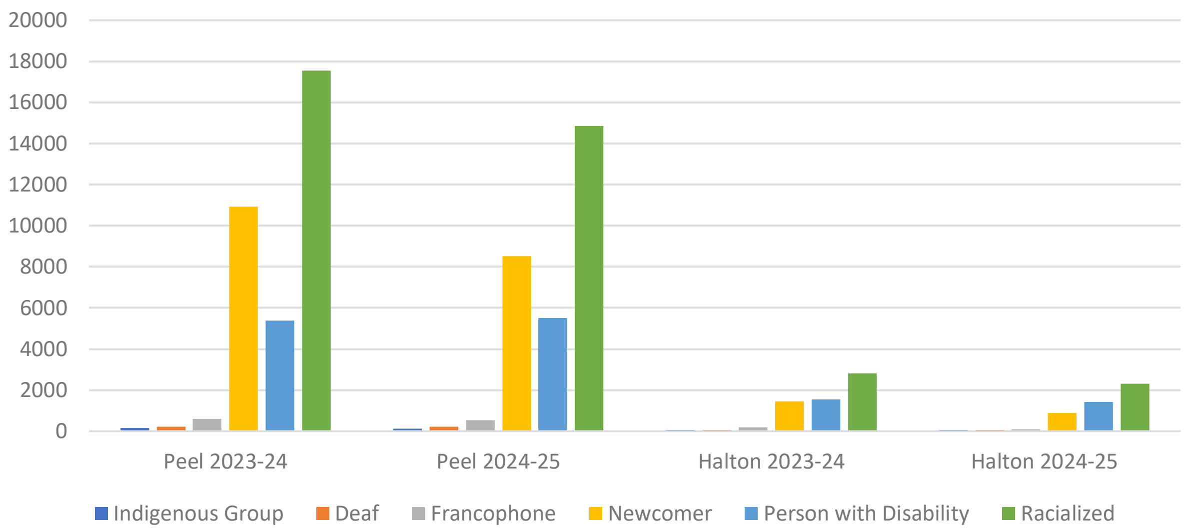


Source: Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

- In Peel, male clients represent the largest share of service users, with **11,663 men** compared to **9,374 women**. Individuals identifying as **"Other"** or choosing **"Prefer Not to Disclose"** make up a very small proportion of the client population. No data were reported for clients identifying as Trans, and some records remain categorized as Unknown.
- A similar pattern appears in Halton, where **2,485 men** access services compared to **2,297 women**. As in Peel, clients identifying as **"Other"** or selecting **"Prefer Not to Disclose"** represent a small share of the overall population, and no Trans data were reported.
- When Peel and Halton are viewed together, **men** account for approximately **54.2%** of all clients, while **women** represent **44.7%**. Clients identifying as **"Other"** or choosing **"Prefer Not to Disclose"** collectively make up about **1.1%** of all reported gender responses.
- In 2024–2025, **Newcomers** remained the **largest client group** in both regions. Compared to the previous reporting period, client volumes increased by **28% in Peel** and **63% in Halton**, underscoring continued settlement-driven labour market entry and the role of EO services in facilitating workforce integration.
- Use of services among **Racialized clients** increased steadily in both regions **(+18% in Peel; +23% in Halton)**, indicating ongoing engagement with employment services to address systemic barriers and support attachment to sustainable employment.
- **Francophone** participation increased in both regions, with particularly strong proportional growth in Halton. While overall volumes remain modest, these results suggest improved access and utilization of services among Francophone clients.

- **Persons with disabilitie**s clients remained stable overall. Peel experienced a marginal decline **(–3%)**, while Halton recorded an increase **(+11%)**. This reflects continued demand for employment supports that address accessibility and accommodation needs.
- Number of **Indigenous and Deaf** clients showed **regional variation**, with growth in Peel among Indigenous clients and in Halton among Deaf clients. These variations reinforce the importance of **place-based planning and targeted outreach** to address local service gaps.
- Overall, Peel continued to serve the majority of Employment Service clients by volume, while Halton experienced higher percentage **growth across several designated groups**, reflecting regional demographic and labour market dynamics.

Clients by Designated Groups 2023-24 vs 2024-25

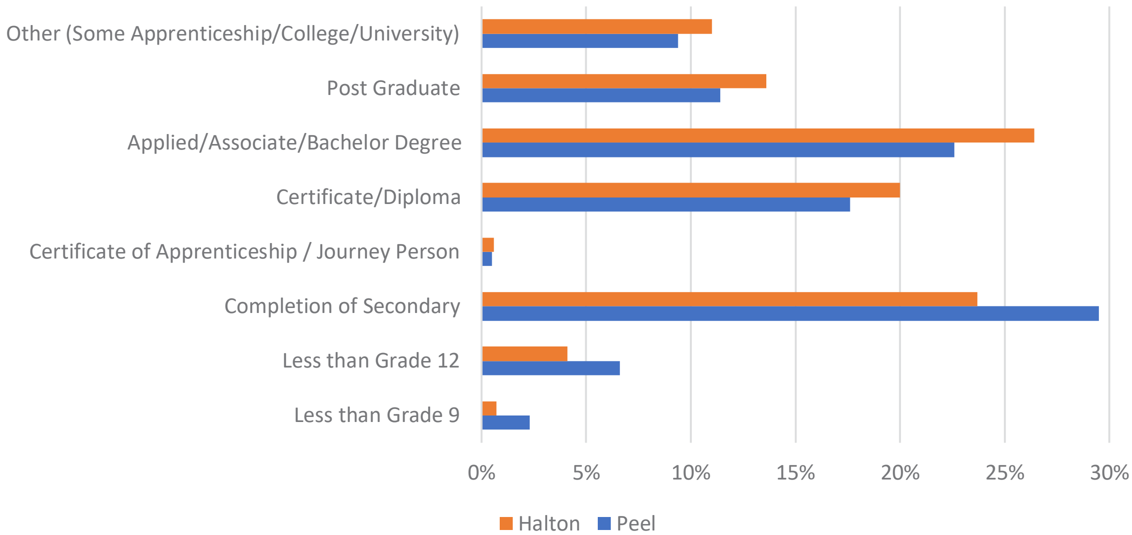


Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Educational Levels of Peel & Halton (IES) Clients

The following chart profiles the educational attainment of both Peel & Halton clients at intake.

Clients by Designated Groups 2023-24 vs 2024-25



Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Key Insights

Across Peel and Halton, the data show:

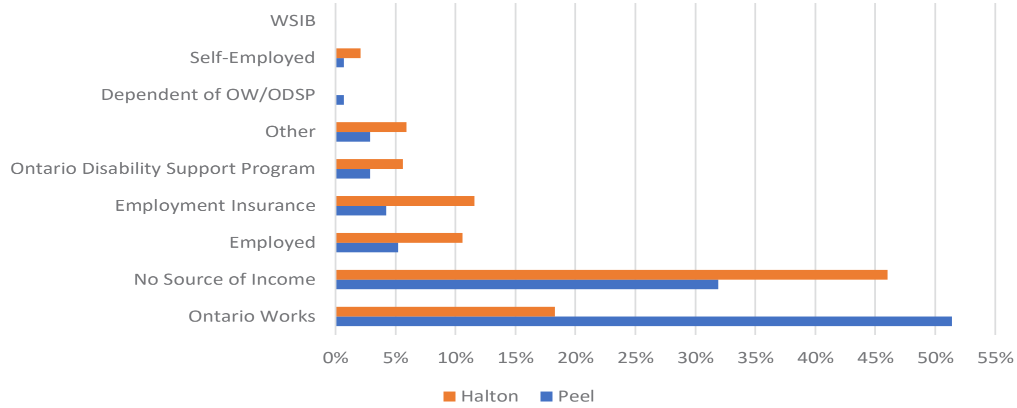
- A strong reliance on employment services among individuals with postsecondary education, especially in Halton.
- Peel serves a more educationally diverse population, including more clients with lower levels of formal schooling.
- Degree holding and postgraduate clients form a significant portion of service users, suggesting demand for professional level employment support.
- Trades related education is under-represented, pointing to potential gaps or outreach opportunities.
- Secondary school graduates remain the largest single group, highlighting the importance of accessible pathways into training and employment.

Ontario Works usage is dramatically higher in Peel (51.4%) compared to Halton (18.3%).

Sources of Income for Peel & Halton (IES) Clients

The following chart profiles the share of clients by income source accessing Inegrated Employment Services both in Peel & Halton during 2024-2025.

Share of Clients by Income Sources



Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Key Insights

- **High Levels of Clients with No Source of Income in both Regions**

Both Peel (31.9%) and Halton (46.0%) have a substantial proportion of clients reporting no source of income. Halton's percentage is notably higher, indicating a more acute level of financial vulnerability among its clients. This trend underscores a strong need for foundational employment supports, rapid attachment programs, and income stabilization pathways.

- **Much Higher Reliance on Ontario Works in Peel**

Ontario Works usage is dramatically higher in Peel (51.4%) compared to Halton (18.3%). This suggests that Peel clients are experiencing deeper and more prolonged financial hardship. Employment services in Peel may need to prioritize intensive supports, barrier reduction strategies, and wrap around services.

- **Higher Employment and EI Rates in Halton**

Halton has a significantly higher share of clients who are employed (10.6%) or receiving Employment Insurance (11.6%), compared to Peel's 5.2% and 4.2% respectively. This pattern suggests that Halton clients may be experiencing shorter term unemployment, job transitions, or underemployment, rather than long term detachment from the labour market. Workforce development efforts in Halton could focus on upskilling, reskilling, and career mobility.

- **Higher ODSP Representation in Halton**

Halton shows a higher proportion of clients on ODSP (5.6%) compared to Peel (2.9%). This indicates a meaningful presence of clients with disabilities or chronic health conditions accessing employment services. Programs in Halton may need to strengthen inclusive employment strategies, employer engagement around accommodations, and specialized supports for job seekers with disabilities.

Trends to Monitor

1. Increasing Demand for Basic Employment Supports

The high proportion of clients with no income and those relying on Ontario Works or ODSP signals a growing need for foundational employment services. Economic shifts, rising living costs, or labour market disruptions could intensify this demand.

2. Diverging Regional Needs: Peel's Deep Hardship vs. Halton's Transitional Unemployment

Peel's extremely high Ontario Works rate suggests longterm financial instability, while Halton's higher employment and EI rates point to shortterm or cyclical unemployment. Workforce planning should reflect these distinct regional realities.

3. Growing Need for Inclusive Employment Pathways

With higher ODSP representation in Halton and a notable number in Peel, both regions must continue prioritizing accessible employment, employer education on accommodations, and disabilityinclusive hiring practices.

Literacy Basic Skills Services for Peel & Halton Clients

- A total of **2,915** learners accessed Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) services across **Peel (2,066 learners)** and **Halton (849 learners)** in 2024–2025. This includes both new and carry over in person learners, as well as those who participated through eChannel.
- Age based participation patterns remain consistent with previous years: approximately half of all LBS learners are of prime working age (25–44), while youth (15–24) and adults aged 45–64 each represent about onequarter of the learner population. A smaller proportion of learners are aged 65 and older.
- Among designated groups, Newcomers and Racialized learners continue to make up the largest shares, reflecting the demographic composition of both regions and the strong demand for skills upgrading among these communities. Persons with Disabilities also represent a significant portion of LBS participants.

About 49% of all Literacy Basic Skills learners were of prime working age 25-44 years old, 24% were youth, 24% were 45-64 years old and the rest were 65 years and older.

Education and Employment Characteristics

Across Peel and Halton:

- Secondary school completers account for a substantial share of LBS learners.
- Learners with less than Grade 12 continue to rely on LBS programs to strengthen foundational skills.
- A notable proportion of learners also hold college or university credentials, demonstrating that LBS programs serve individuals across a wide educational spectrum.

Employment related indicators show that:

- A majority of LBS learners are unemployed, and a significant proportion report no source of income, underscoring the role of LBS as an essential entry point for individuals facing economic vulnerability.
- Among those who are employed full time, nearly half identify postsecondary education as a goal, while two thirds of full time students identify apprenticeship pathways as their primary objective.
- About four in ten unemployed learners identify employment as their main goal, highlighting the importance of LBS as a bridge to the labour market.

Better Jobs Ontario Services for Peel & Halton Clients

- In 2024–2025, a total of **253 participants** across Peel and Halton engaged in Better Jobs Ontario–related services. The demographic profile shows that the program primarily served **working-age adults**, with the majority falling between **25 and 44 years old**, followed by a substantial share aged **45 to 64**. This reflects a strong demand for mid career retraining and employment transitions.
- The program reached a highly diverse group of participants. In Peel, **racialized individuals represented 75.5%** of all participants, while in Halton they accounted for **48.8%**. Persons with disabilities also formed a significant portion of the learner population in both regions, representing **25.5% in Peel** and **29.3% in Halton**. Newcomers were more prominent in Peel, making up **10.4%** of participants.
- Income source data highlights the financial vulnerability of many Better Jobs Ontario progam participants. In Peel, **27.4% reported having no source of income**, while in Halton this figure was **43.9%**. Employment Insurance was also a major income source in both regions, suggesting that many participants were navigating periods of job loss or transition. Ontario Works was more common in Peel, where **21.7%** of participants relied on it.
- Transport Truck Driver training has historically been the most common selection and remained a leading pathway for participants seeking rapid entry into high-demand occupations.

Better Jobs Ontario Services Top Skills Training Programs in Peel & Halton	
2024-2025	**2023-2024**
Transport Truck Drivers	Transport Truck Drivers
Home support workers, caregivers and related occupations	Social and Community Service Workers
Information systems testing technicians	Estheticians, electrologists and related occupations.

Source: Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Representation among designated groups shows that racialized apprentices make up a substantial portion of participants, particularly in Peel.

Canada Ontario Job Grant for Peel & Halton Clients

172 employers received the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (the Job Grant). This grant provided direct financial support to individual employers to train, a total of, **766 employees**. The majority of employers were small businesses employing less than 50 employees. The outcomes were quite positive and employers reported that training met their workforce needs.

Apprenticeship for Peel & Halton Clients

- During 2024–2025, apprenticeship participation remained strong across Peel and Halton, with **9,504 active apprentices** and **3,253 new registrations** recorded. Certificates of Apprenticeship and modular training registrations also remained steady, reflecting continued demand for skilled trades training.
- The average age of apprentices was 25, consistent with previous years, and the majority of participants were between 15–24 and 25–44 years old.
- Apprenticeship continues to be maledominated, with males representing nearly nine out of ten apprentices across both regions.
- Most apprentices had completed secondary education, while a smaller proportion entered with less than Grade 12, demonstrating the accessibility of apprenticeship pathways for learners with diverse educational backgrounds.
- Representation among designated groups shows that racialized apprentices make up a substantial portion of participants, particularly in Peel. Francophone, Indigenous, and persons with disabilities are also present across both regions, contributing to the diversity of the apprenticeship system.

The following table shows the list of trades with the highest number of new registrants in Peel and Halton remained largely consistent with previous years, indicating stable demand across key skilled trades sectors.

Top 10 new registrations in trades (2024-2025)

PEEL	HALTON
309A – Electrician (Construction & Maintenance)	**309A – Electrician (Construction & Maintenance)**
310S – Automotive Service Technician	**310S – Automotive Service Technician**
313A – Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic	**332A – Hairstylist**
310T – Truck & Coach Technician	**306A – Plumber**
306A – Plumber	**433A – Industrial Mechanic Millwright**
332A – Hairstylist	**403A – General Carpenter**
310B – Auto Body & Collision Damage Repairer	**310B – Auto Body & Collision Damage Repairer**
313D – Residential Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic	**308A – Sheet Metal Worker**
401A – Brick & Stone Mason	**313D – Residential Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic**
415A – Cook	**442A – Industrial Electrician**

Source: Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Key Insights

- Electrician (309A) dominates in both regions, with Peel contributing the majority of registrations.
- Automotive and transportation trades (310S, 310T) remain consistently strong across both regions.
- HVAC trades (313A, 313D) appear twice, showing sustained demand for these technicians.
- Halton's top ten trades include more representation from construction trades (Carpenter, Millwright), while Peel's list is more heavily weighted toward electrical and automotive pathways.

6

Consultations

PHWDG engaged in two consultation processes with stakeholders during this past year. As part of the mental health and wellness project, PHWDG interviewed a number of key informants, including labour market stakeholders, to gain their views regarding the incidence and impact of mental health and wellness issues in the workplace, together with suggestions for what employers can do in response. As well, in addition to the employer survey itself, which provides considerable insight into the views of employers on a range of topics, interviews are also held with a select number of employer respondents to probe more deeply into some of the survey questions.

From the interviews conducted as part of the mental health and wellness project, a number of important insights emerged. Firstly, from the perspective of most mental health practitioners and labour market stakeholders, the incidence of mental health and wellness challenges has increased in recent years. It was striking how many employment service providers volunteered that this was a growing concern in relation to their own staff, evidenced by higher levels of stress among staff, more absenteeism, greater use of employee benefits and higher turnover numbers.

Most informants cited youth as the demographic group most likely to exhibit mental health challenges (as well as the group most likely to disclose). Newcomers, as well as social assistance recipients, were other demographic categories sometimes highlighted as groups that are more vulnerable.

All key informants cited a constellation of interrelated factors contributing to the increasing prevalence of mental health and wellness concerns. These factors include proximate stressors such as rising living costs—particularly housing affordability—and persistent employment insecurity, especially among individuals in precarious forms of work, alongside broader structural and societal anxieties, including tariff and trade conflicts, the climate crisis, and perceived threats to employment arising from advances in artificial intelligence.

Interviewees generally felt that employers had grown much more conscious of this issue, even as some would say that more employers need to become aware and that more have to move from awareness to effective strategies for addressing these concerns.

Effective strategies clustered into three categories:

- Creating a climate in the workplace, through messaging and the corporate culture, which assures employees that it is safe to raise mental health and wellness concerns
- Paying attention to how work is organized so as to reduce the stress brought on by the workplace and to give employees more flexibility regarding their work arrangements, including the pace, location and timing of work
- Providing appropriate responses, including supports and benefits, to both prevent and address the incidence of mental health and wellness concerns

. . . individuals felt more comfortable disclosing their mental health and wellness concerns, the consequence being both an increased incidence of these challenges as well as a growing level of disclosure.

In the follow-up interviews to the employer survey, similar observations emerged. Firstly, that overall levels of stress had increased, while at the same time, individuals felt more comfortable disclosing their mental health and wellness concerns, the consequence being both an increased incidence of these challenges as well as a growing level of disclosure.

It was also a common view that employers had grown more sensitive to this issue, partly because of increasing awareness about the topic but also because it has become apparent that these issues have a direct impact on the performance of an organization.

In short, the consultations delivered a number of key findings:

- That the incidence and reporting of mental health and wellness concerns have increased
- That employers are increasingly aware of this issue and are seeking ways to address it
- That there are strategies and approaches that employers can adopt to better respond to these concerns, which include the framework cited above, but which also includes appropriate training for managers and supervisors so that these strategies can be effectively implemented

7

Looking Ahead: 2026-2027 Action Plan

Many factors are influencing the workforce and workplace in Peel and Halton.

- **Global economic and trade pressures:** The workforce in Peel, Halton, and across Ontario continues to experience the impacts of U.S. government policies, particularly tariffs and other trade actions that affect supply chains, investment decisions, and employment stability.
- **Artificial Intelligence and technological change:** Artificial Intelligence is complex and has a mixed impact on jobs across the region:
  - **Job creation:** The GTA has experienced strong growth in AI-related, high-skill roles.
  - **Job displacement risk:** Middle- and lower-skill jobs face a higher risk of automation.
  - **Worker anxiety:** Many workers fear job displacement and widening skills gaps.
  - **Skills gap challenge:** Education and training systems need stronger alignment with current and emerging industry demands.
- **Mental health and workplace well-being: Workplace wellness has become a significant concern:**
  - Employers report increased mental health challenges and stress among employees, yet much lack the formal supports or training needed to respond effectively.
  - Small and medium-sized businesses, in particular, struggle to provide structured wellness supports.
  - Impact: Poor mental health can reduce productivity, increase absenteeism, and weaken employee retention.
- **Ongoing workforce pressures:**

Automation, skills mismatches, and barriers to credential recognition continue to affect workforce participation and employment outcomes in Peel and Halton.

The **Peel Halton Workforce Development Group** continues to engage key workforce stakeholders—including employers, educators, funders, employment service providers, economic development partners, human resource organizations, and municipal, provincial, and federal governments—to better understand emerging trends and opportunities.

Outlined below are our **proposed 2026–2027 activities**, which aim to create clarity, strengthen collaboration, and reduce gaps within the workforce system.

Priority 1: **Mobilizing reliable labour market data to our community**

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities
Mobilize and share local labour market data with stakeholders across Peel and Halton.	• Consulted stakeholders to identify priority labour market issues • Analyzed local labour market data • Prepared and disseminated the 2024–2025 LLMP	• Engage stakeholders to identify emerging priorities • Analyze updated Census, Canadian Business Counts, and EO data • Prepare the 2025–2026 LLMP
Convene stakeholders to examine emerging labour market trends.	• Hosted a regional workforce development event • Shared insights on AI and emerging workforce trends • Increased stakeholder awareness of labour market issues	• Identify priority topics and subject-matter experts • Plan and deliver a regional workforce development event

Priority 2: Dissemination of Labour Market Information and Intelligence

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities
Disseminate timely, local labour market information through social platforms.	• Shared daily labour market information across WIPH social platforms (Facebook, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube) • Increased engagement from municipal partners, service providers, educators, and employers	• Continue to grow platform reach and partner participation • Strengthen employer and stakeholder contributions
Provide a weekly summary of labour market information to stakeholders.	• Compiled and distributed the LMI Roundup weekly via email and social channels • Increased newsletter subscriptions	• Continue weekly distribution • Implement targeted outreach to grow subscriber base
Support small and medium-sized employers with workforce intelligence.	• Delivered quarterly webinars addressing HR legislation, workplace mental health, and emerging risks • Engaged subject-matter experts and employers across sectors	• Survey employers to identify priority needs • Deliver quarterly webinars aligned to employer demand
Provide monthly insights into local job market activity.	• Published monthly Labour Market Insights reports using job postings from publicly accessible sources • Introduced an interactive dashboard for stakeholder use	• Continue monthly reporting • Promote report as a key indicator of job market activity

Priority 3: Employer Engagement to Identify Trends, Gaps, and Timely Solutions

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities	Ongoing Focus
Engage employers to understand emerging workforce trends and skill requirements.	n/a	• Conduct literature review and identify relevant data sources • Engage key informants and sector stakeholders • Undertake consultations focused on the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector • Prepare and disseminate findings	• Provide sector-specific insights on recruitment trends, skill demands, and workforce responses to economic and technological change
Assess the impacts of major economic disruptions on labour market outcomes.	n/a	• Conduct literature review and data analysis • Prepare and disseminate report	• Support workforce stakeholders with evidence on how systemic shocks affect employment outcomes and service planning

Priority 4: Support Job Seekers Using Local Workforce Resources

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities
Promote Peel Halton Workforce Hub (PHWH) tools.	• Introduced enhanced PHWH tools to Employment Service Providers and partners	• Continue promotion to job seekers and community partners • Coordinate outreach with EO service providers
Promote youth guides to support service navigation.	• Promoted Peel and Halton youth guides through social channels and youth-serving organizations	• Update content as needed • Continue promotion

Priority 5: **Promote Skilled Trades as Viable Career Pathways**

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities
Increase awareness of skilled trades career opportunities.	• Researched funding opportunities to support skilled trades awareness	• Organize an "Apprenticeship Career Connections (ACC)" event to support Provincial priorities in the skilled trades. • The ACC event, if funding is received, will showcase & promote career pathways to the trades for youth.

Priority 6: **Strengthen the Settlement Landscape for Newcomer Outcomes**

Action	2025–26 Activities	2026–27 Activities
Strengthen coordination among newcomer-serving organizations.	• Initiative deferred	• Convene planning group and re-establish the Newcomer Organization Network (NCON) to improve collaboration, professional development, and knowledge sharing across the settlement sector
Expand engagement within the newcomer service system.	n/a	• Conduct outreach to increase NCON membership

APPENDIX

Table A1: Unemployment rates by three-month moving average, Mississauga, Brampton and Toronto CMA, January 2024 to December 2025, seasonally unadjusted

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024											
TORONTO CMA											
6.3%	6.6%	7.3%	7.6%	8.0%	8.0%	8.1%	8.6%	8.7%	8.4%	8.0%	8.0%
MISSISSAUGA											
7.4%	7.4%	8.0%	8.6%	8.7%	8.3%	8.8%	9.6%	10.2%	9.7%	9.2%	9.2%
BRAMPTON											
6.4%	7.0%	7.5%	7.5%	8.4%	9.4%	9.9%	10.0%	9.6%	9.5%	10.0%	10.6%
2025											
TORONTO CMA											
8.4%	8.2%	8.6%	8.5%	9.0%	8.9%	9.3%	9.4%	9.5%	8.8%	7.9%	7.5%
MISSISSAUGA											
9.7%	9.8%	9.9%	9.6%	10.2%	10.6%	11.3%	11.1%	10.1%	8.7%	8.3%	9.1%
BRAMPTON											
10.9%	10.0%	10.2%	10.6%	11.7%	11.6%	12.0%	11.7%	11.0%	9.9%	8.9%	9.0%

Statistics Canada, tables 14-10-0445-01 and 14-10-0459-01

Table A2: Job vacancy rates, Toronto Region and Rest of Ontario, Q1 2019 to Q3 2025

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019				
Toronto Region	3.1%	3.2%	3.1%	3.0%
Rest of Ontario	3.0%	3.4%	3.2%	2.8%
2020				
Toronto Region	2.8%	---	---	3.3%
Rest of Ontario	2.9%	---	---	3.5%
2021				
Toronto Region	3.2%	4.0%	5.0%	5.1%
Rest of Ontario	3.3%	4.6%	5.6%	5.4%
2022				
Toronto Region	5.1%	5.3%	5.0%	4.4%
Rest of Ontario	5.1%	6.1%	5.8%	4.9%
2023				
Toronto Region	3.8%	3.8%	3.5%	3.0%
Rest of Ontario	4.3%	4.5%	4.0%	3.5%
2024				
Toronto Region	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%
Rest of Ontario	3.2%	3.3%	3.0%	2.6%
2025				
Toronto Region	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%	
Rest of Ontario	2.6%	3.0%	2.9%	

Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0441-01

Peel Halton Workforce Development Group

2026

PEEL HALTON

Local Labour Market Plan Report

Peel Halton Workforce Development Group

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