FAR NORTHEAST TRAINING BOARD (FNETB)
your local labour market planning network

COMMISSION DE FORMATION DU NORD-EST (CFNE)
votre réseau local de planification du marché du travail

Recruitment, Training and Retention

2026

Survey results

FAR NORTHEAST TRAINING BOARD (FNETB)
your local labour market planning network

COMMISSION DE FORMATION DU NORD-EST (CFNE)
votre réseau local de planification du marché du travail

1425 Front Street, P.O. Box: 2198 Hearst ON P0L 1N0
Phone: 705.362.5788
www.fnetb.com

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ontario.

The information presented in this report is current at the time of its release.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The FNETB would like to thank the 271 employers who took the time to answer the 2026 survey. Once again, employer outreach was greatly enriched by the collaboration and support of the local organizations that assist and support this project by distributing the survey to their members. The participating business organizations in 2026 were:

- Cochrane Board of Trade
- Northern Corridor Chamber of Commerce
- Temiskaming Shores & Area Chamber of Commerce
- Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RETENTION

2026 Employer Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

The Far Northeast Training Board (FNETB) is one of twenty-five workforce planning board across Ontario funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

A key mandate of workforce planning boards is to conduct research and analyze what is happening in the local labour market. In addition to using various data sources such as business data from Statistics Canada and the Census, workforce planning boards also conduct research, consult key stakeholders throughout the year and lead partnership projects to support and inform local workforce development strategies and local actions.

An important part of the community outreach is to collect input from employers about the challenges they are facing with employee recruitment, training and retention. This report contains the results of the Recruitment, Training and Retention survey conducted in May 2026 with employers across the region serviced by the Far Northeast Training Board (districts of Cochrane and Timiskaming).

METHODOLOGY

A survey questionnaire was designed to collect information from local employers from various industries related to the local labour force supply and demand imbalances. The survey included questions related to workforce recruitment, training and retention, on strategies that are in place or that are being considered by local employers related to the adoption of technology, on the impacts of tariffs on their business and on their workforce, and on employers' awareness of the various available resources and supports for hiring and training.

Survey Monkey was used as the platform to administer the survey. The 2026 online employer survey consisted for the most part of the same questions that were posed in 2025 and it was distributed during the month of May to highlight changes from the same period in 2025. Various strategies were used to get the word out, including direct emails and the use of social media.

Limitations: While the survey results are a snapshot in time and based on the input of employers who responded across various industry sectors, it is important to note that it is not representative of all employers in the FNETB region but rather a reflection of the experience and current situation of those who responded to the survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents findings from the Far Northeast Training Board's 2026 Recruitment, Training and Retention Survey, conducted with employers in the FNETB region. The survey explores workforce separations, hiring plans, vacancies, recruitment and retention challenges, employee training, youth employment opportunities, technological change, tariff impacts, and awareness of available workforce and training support programs.

The findings in this report represent input of the 271 employers who responded to this year's survey which was conducted during the month of May 2026. While some employers did not answer all questions, three quarters did. Employers who responded represent all industry sectors and most who completed the survey were company owners, managers, human resources, and in other upper management positions in both the private-for-profit and non-profit sectors. Additionally, more than sixty percent had been in business for twenty-five years or more.

The 2026 online employer survey consisted for the most part of the same questions that were posed in 2025 and it was distributed during the month of May to highlight changes from the same period in 2025. That is why, where possible throughout the report, we look at shifts between 2025 and 2026.

To provide an additional level of insight into employee recruitment, training and retention, the report presents the responses from the overall pool of responding businesses as well as a distinction between those received from goods-producing industries and from the services-producing industries. The added level of detail aims to help identify focused local initiatives to support the recruitment, training and retention of the workers required by employers in various industries.

While the findings do not reveal a lot of change from the results of the 2025 survey, some of the more significant findings once again open the door for further exploration of opportunities to provide greater support. Key findings from the 2026 Recruitment, Training and Retention Survey include:

> Workforce separations remained significant, over two thirds (68%) of employers reported staff departures. The main reasons were employees quitting, terminations, retirements, and layoffs. Employees most often left for higher pay, personal reasons, or more flexible work. Terminations were often linked to lack of job skills, weak work ethic, limited experience, or poor interpersonal skills.

> Hiring activity is strong in 2026, with 77% of employers reporting they had hired or planned to hire. The top reason is filling existing vacancies, followed by organizational growth and replacing retirees. Goods-producing industries are more likely to hire because of growth, while services-producing industries are more affected by retirements and other staffing needs.

Vacancies remain a major issue, with just over half of employers reporting current vacancies, rising to 68% in goods-producing industries. High-demand hard-to-fill roles mentioned most often include administrative occupations, supervisors, production workers, accountants/bookkeepers, sales/client service roles, heavy equipment operators, and mechanics.

Employers are adapting to unfilled positions mainly by asking current staff to work overtime, subcontracting or outsourcing work, redistributing duties, using staffing agencies, reducing services, or having managers and owners step in. Compared with 2025, reliance on overtime and subcontracting has increased, while use of automation and remote work as vacancy solutions has declined.

Recruitment challenges are driven by skill gaps and labour supply issues. Employers cite lack of required skills, limited work experience, lack of qualifications, low applicant volume, competition from other employers, wage expectations, and weak soft skills. Housing shortages, lack of daycare, and limited public transportation also affect recruitment and retention.

Recruitment methods rely heavily on networks and digital platforms. Word of mouth, personal contacts, referrals, and social media are the most successful methods. Goods-producing employers tend to recruit more widely outside the region, including across Northern Ontario, Southern Ontario, other provinces, and internationally.

The most valued hiring skills are dependability, work ethic, and dedication, followed by teamwork/interpersonal skills and communication. Goods-producing employers place more emphasis on technical skills, following instructions, and independence, while services-producing employers value communication, customer service, and interpersonal skills more strongly.

Most employers support employee training, especially through funding, flexible schedules, information about training opportunities, and government incentives. On-the-job training is the most common delivery method. Barriers include training costs, lack of local programs, travel distance, productivity loss, fear of losing trained employees, and lack of awareness of available supports.

Student and youth employment opportunities remain common, especially summer jobs, unpaid co-op placements, and part-time work. Most opportunities are aimed at high school students, while apprenticeships are more common for college students and internships more often involve university students.

Technological change is already affecting employers, especially cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, digitalization, cloud technology, and data management. Looking ahead, employers expect greater impacts from automation, robotics, autonomous equipment, electrification, and AI. These changes are expected to increase the need for advanced computer and data skills, improve productivity, and possibly both create and eliminate jobs.

U.S. tariffs are creating uncertainty and operational pressures, especially for goods-producing industries. Key effects include supply chain disruptions, price increases, restricted spending, delayed expansion, and difficulty honouring contracts. Services-producing industries are less directly affected but still experience indirect economic impacts.

Familiarity with employment and training programs varies widely. Employers are most familiar with high school and college co-op placements and Employment Ontario Employment Services. Awareness is much lower for programs such as Get SET, newcomer settlement services, and Indigenous training and employment services. Goods-producing employers are more familiar with trades and apprenticeship programs, while services-producing employers are more familiar with internships, university co-ops, and settlement supports.

Overall, the document shows that employers in the FNETB region continue to face persistent workforce pressures related to recruitment, retention, vacancies, and skills gaps. Other external factors such as housing and transportation barriers, training access, technological change, and economic uncertainty all add to those workforce pressures.

As stated earlier, the key findings in 2026 are in most cases quite similar to those from the 2025 survey. Once again, they provide important insight to inform local opportunities to help address the challenges employers face regarding the recruitment, training and retention of the skilled workforce the region needs to grow and thrive now and in the future.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Limitations: While the survey results are a snapshot in time and based on the input of employers who responded across various industry sectors, it is important to note that it is not representative of all employers in the FNETB region but rather a reflection of the experience and current situation of those who responded to the survey.

The 2026 Employee Recruitment, Training and Retention Survey was administered to employers in the Far Northeast Training Board area in May 2026. In total, 271 employers started the survey and, while some employers did not answer all the questions, more than three-quarters did.

Employers who responded represent all industry sectors and most who completed the survey were company owners, managers, human resources, and in other upper management positions in both the private-for-profit and non-profit sectors. Additionally, more than sixty percent had been in business for twenty-five years or more.

Appendix B provides a profile of survey respondents and their business/organisation.

WORKFORCE SEPARATIONS IN 2025

SEPARATIONS IN 2025 *(269 responses)*

A separation is defined as a retirement, a dismissal/being fired, an employee who left or quit, a permanent layoff, a temporary layoff, or any other termination of employment.

When asked if their business or organization experienced any separations in 2025, over two-thirds of organizations surveyed saw staff departures through various means. The single largest driver for employee separations in 2025 was employees quitting (82%), followed by terminations or firings (52%), retirements (30%), and layoffs (23%).

Table 1: Separations in 2025 *(180 respondents)*

	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES
Employee quit	82%	82%	82%
Employee terminated/fired	52%	68%	46%
Employee retired	30%	38%	26%
Layoff	23%	52%	12%
Other	8%	8%	8%

A further question explored the specific reasons behind some of those separations; the primary drivers depended heavily on whether the departure was voluntary (employee quitting) or involuntary (employee terminated or fired).

TOP 3 REASONS FOR VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES

- to find a higher paying job (74%;)
- for personal reasons (46%) such as parental leave or returning to school/training; and
- to secure more flexible or remote work (30%).

Other contributing factors included seeking better work schedules (22%), less emotionally (20%) or physically (19%) demanding work, and needing more hours (16%).

TOP 3 REASONS FOR INVOLUNTARY DEPARTURES

- a lack of skills required for the job (56%);
- a lack of work ethics or basic life skills (56%); and
- a lack of experience coupled with an unwillingness to learn (37%).

Other major drivers for termination included: poor interpersonal and teamwork skills (34%); not taking the job seriously (31%); and failing to understand or respect company HR policies (30%).

A smaller percentage of terminations were driven by behavioral issues, such as improper conduct including violence or harassment (14%), and substance abuse issues (12%).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

There are significant differences between goods-producing and services-producing industries regarding both the frequency of employee terminations and the specific behaviors that lead to them.

Terminations are notably more common in the goods-producing sector. In 2026, 68% of separations in goods-producing industries were due to employees being terminated or fired, compared to only 46% in services-producing industries. The specific reasons for termination diverge in several key areas between the two sectors:

- Work Ethic and Life Skills: A lack of work ethics or basic life skills is a much larger driver of terminations in goods-producing industries (63%) than in services-producing industries (53%).
- Substance Abuse: Goods-producing industries terminate employees for substance abuse issues at more than double the rate (20%) of services-producing industries (8%).
- Job Skills: Services-producing industries report a slightly higher rate of termination due to employees lacking the specific required job skills (58%) compared to goods-producing industries (53%).
- Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills: A lack of interpersonal or teamwork skills is cited much more frequently as a breaking point in the services sector (37%) than in the goods sector (27%).
- Improper Conduct: Terminations due to improper conduct, such as violence or harassment, are slightly more common in services industries (15%) than in goods-producing industries (12%).

Shared Challenges Across Both Industries - Despite the differences in hard skills and behavioral expectations, some termination reasons are consistent across the board. Most notably, both the goods-producing and services-producing industries reported the exact same rate (37%) for terminating employees because they lack experience and are unwilling to learn.

Additionally, terminations caused by a general lack of professional commitment—such as employees not taking the job seriously (Goods: 29%, Services: 31%) or failing to understand and respect HR policies (Goods: 31%, Services: 30%)—were nearly identical across both.

Table 2: Reasons employees leave or quit their jobs *(178 respondents)*

	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES
For a higher paying job	74%	78%	72%
For personal reasons (parental leave, for school/training)	46%	38%	49%
For more flexible work/remote work	30%	42%	26%
For better work schedules (no shift work)	22%	26%	20%
For less emotionally demanding work	20%	8%	24%
For less physically demanding work	19%	34%	13%
Because they need more hours	16%	10%	18%
Because of physical health issues	14%	14%	13%

Table 3: Reasons employees are terminated or fired *(167 respondents)*

	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES	GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES
Employees lack the skills required for the job	56%	53%	58%
Employees lack work ethics/basic life skills	56%	63%	53%
Employees lack experience and are unwilling to learn	37%	37%	37%
Employees lack interpersonal/teamwork skills	34%	27%	37%
Employees don’t take the job seriously	31%	29%	31%
Employees don’t understand/respect company HR policies	30%	31%	30%
Because of improper conduct (violence or harassment)	14%	12%	15%
Because of substance abuse issues	12%	20%	8%

HIRING IN THE CURRENT YEAR – 2026

Employers were also asked about hiring for 2026, whether they had hired or were planning to hire. A total of 265 employers answered that question with 77% answering that they had hired or planned to hire in 2026. A significant majority of these employers intend to recruit staff, primarily to address staff turnover and to facilitate organizational growth.

Table 4: Reasons for new hires in 2026 *(204 respondents)*

	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**
Filling existing vacancies	75%	75%	75%	80%	74%	74%
Growth/expansion	52%	50%	64%	62%	48%	45%
Retirements	24%	29%	20%	36%	25%	26%
Restructuring	10%	12%	10%	13%	10%	12%
Technological changes	2%	6%	2%	7%	2%	6%
Other	10%	12%	3%	5%	12%	15%

The primary driver behind 2026 hiring plans is filling existing vacancies, which was cited by 75% of surveyed employers as their main reason for bringing on new staff.
Other significant drivers include:

- Growth or expansion: Cited by 52% of respondents.
- Retirements: Replacing retiring employees is the third most common reason, accounting for 24% of hiring plans, though this represents a slight decrease from 29% in 2025.
- Less common reasons for hiring include restructuring (10%) and technological changes (2%).

Additionally, about 10% of employers noted other miscellaneous drivers such as part-time seasonal needs, summer student programs, temporary coverage for vacations or leaves of absence, and newly accessible funding or grants.

When asked to chose from a list of broad occupational categories, the type of occupations for which they hired or expected to hire in 2026, the most frequently indicated occupational categories are:

Administrative occupations (41%)
Supervisors (27%)
Production workers and labourers (18%)
Accountants and bookkeepers (15%)
Sales associates and client services (12%).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

While goods-producing and services-producing industries both share the same primary reason for hiring, there are notable differences in how growth, retirements, and other factors that drive their workforce plans:

- Filling vacancies is the top priority for both: Both sectors are heavily driven by the need to fill existing vacancies, doing so at nearly identical rates (75% for goods-producing and 74% for services-producing).
- Growth is a much larger factor for goods-producing industries: A significant majority (64%) of goods-producing employers cite growth or expansion as a reason for hiring, compared to less than half (48%) of services-producing employers.
- Retirements are slightly more impactful in services: Services-producing industries report a higher rate of hiring to replace retiring employees (25%) compared to the goods sector (20%).
- "Other" reasons are far more common in services: Services-producing employers are four times as likely (12% vs. 3%) to hire for miscellaneous reasons, which include part-time seasonal needs, and summer students.
- Restructuring and technology affect both equally: Both sectors cite restructuring (10%) and technological changes (2%) as hiring drivers at the exact same rates.

While filling existing vacancies remains the top priority across all sectors, the data highlights distinct needs between goods-producing and service-oriented industries.

GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES

In 2026, occupations mentioned most often by goods-producing industries specifically are: Supervisors (46%), Production workers and labourers (41%), Administrative occupations (34%), Heavy equipment operators (29%), and Heavy-duty equipment mechanics (24%).

In 2025, the occupations identified by the goods-producing industries were quite similar: Production workers and labourers (51%), Heavy equipment operators (19%), Administrative occupations (19%), Construction millwrights, industrial mechanics (13%), and Mechanics (13%).

SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES

In 2026, occupations mentioned most often by services-producing industries specifically are: Administrative occupations (44%), Supervisors (19%), Sales associates/Client services (15%), Accounting and bookkeeping (15%), Program/service managers and Executive Directors (13%).

In 2025, the services-producing industries identified the following occupations: Sales associates/Client services (20%), Administrative occupations (14%), Nurses (13%), Production workers and labourers (11%).

VACANCIES AND HARD TO FILL POSITIONS

51% of respondents report vacancies

A total of 264 employer answered the question about current vacancies. Just over half those who answered that question (51%) reported having current vacancies. That percentage jumps to 68% for the goods-producing industries.

A follow-up question touched on the occupational categories that are the most difficult to find qualified workers for. Overall, based on the responses of 134 respondents to that question, the occupations identified as difficult to fill are:

Supervisors (19%)
Heavy duty mechanics (15%)
Administrative occupations (13%)
Senior managers (11%)
Production workers – labourers (11%).

Other occupations identified as difficult to find qualified workers for included: summer students, radio host, reporter, housekeepers, telecommunication technicians, licensed electricians, home health care personnel, meat cutters, counsellors, senior or intermediate environmental scientists, clinicians, banking advisors, engineers, diamond drillers and helpers, building operators, communication intern, maintenance, graphic designer, sign installer, client service managers, lawn care technician, therapist, skilled development, vehicle parts and service department.

<u>Hard-to-fill positions identified specifically by goods-producing industries in 2026</u>:

Heavy duty mechanics (31%)
Supervisors (24%)
Welders (24%)
Production workers and labourers (22%)
Construction millwrights, industrial mechanics (20%).

<u>Similar responses were provided by goods-producing employers in 2025:</u>

Production workers and labourers (34%)
Heavy equipment operators (15%)
Supervisors (14%)
Administrative occupations (14%)
Mechanics (14%).

ADAPTING WHEN VACANCIES REMAIN UNFILLED

A follow-up question aimed to gain some insight on how employers adapt when they are unable to fill their vacancies. A total of 129 employers answered that question.

Businesses are relying on overtime

To manage unfilled roles, employers are increasingly using overtime, out-sourcing, and redistributing duties.

By far, the most common way companies adapt to unfilled vacancies is by leaning on their existing workforce, with 59% of employers having current staff work more overtime.

Beyond increasing overtime, companies rely on several other strategies to manage labor shortages: subcontracting or outsourcing (37%); redistributing work or reducing the workforce (26%); using staffing agencies (14%); offering remote work options (6%); and implementing technology or automation (5%).

Employers resort to a wide variety of "other" operational and strategic workarounds. These alternative adaptations include:

- Leadership stepping in: Managers, senior partners, or owners personally fill vacant roles to ensure work gets done.
- Altering hiring standards and channels: Companies are hiring unskilled or less qualified workers, recruiting internationally, or relying on personal networks and platforms like LinkedIn.
- Reducing business output and services: Many adapt by reducing business hours, wait-listing services, or deliberately declining contracts.
- Compromising operations: Some organizations resort to running short-staffed, compromising on overall service quality, or seeking help from volunteers to stay afloat

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

The most significant difference in how the goods-producing and services-producing sectors adapt to vacancies lies in their use of subcontracting or outsourcing. Goods-producing industries rely heavily on this strategy, with 60% utilizing it, compared to only 25% of services-producing industries.

Other notable comparisons between the two sectors include:

- Overtime: Asking current staff to work more overtime remains the primary strategy for both sectors, though it is slightly more prevalent in goods-producing (62%) than services-producing (57%) industries.
- Staffing agencies: Services-producing industries utilize staffing agencies slightly more (15%) than goods-producing industries (11%).
- Workforce reduction or redistribution of work: Goods-producing industries report using this strategy slightly more often (29%) than services-producing industries (24%).
- Remote work and automation: Both sectors have low adoption rates for these strategies, with goods-producing industries at 7% for both remote work and technology/automation, while services-producing industries report 6% for remote work and 5% for technology/automation.

Services-producing industries are far more likely to resort to "Other" strategies, with 25% of respondents choosing this option compared to just 9% of goods-producing employers. These alternative strategies include tactics such as managers stepping in to do the work, reducing business hours, wait-listing services, or declining contracts.

Table 5: Adaptations where vacancies cannot be filled *(129 respondents)*

	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
More overtime for current staff	59%	46%	62%	63%	57%	39%
Subcontract/Outsourcing	37%	31%	60%	52%	25%	23%
Staff reduction/re distribution of work	26%	51%	29%	62%	24%	7%
Access staffing agencies	14%	14%	11%	11%	15%	12%
Offer remote work options	6%	10%	7%	6%	6%	12%
Implementation of technology/automation	5%	12%	7%	12%	5%	12%
Other	19%	9%	9%	3%	25%	11%

Between 2025 and 2026, the results show a shift in how employers adapt to unfilled vacancies. Here are the most notable changes across all industries:

- Decreased reliance on workforce reduction and redistribution: The most significant shift is a steep decline in employers reducing their workforce or redistributing work, dropping from 51% in 2025 to just 26% in 2026. Interestingly, this massive drop was driven by the goods-producing sector (falling from 62% to 29%), whereas services-producing industries increased their use of this strategy (from 7% to 24%).
- Increased reliance on overtime: Leaning on current staff to work more overtime saw a major increase, rising from 46% overall in 2025 to 59% in 2026. This jump was particularly pronounced in the Services-producing sector, which went from 39% to 57%.
- Decline in remote work and automation: Both technology implementations and remote work options lost traction as adaptation strategies. The use of technology or automation dropped from 12% to 5% overall, and offering remote work options fell from 10% to 6%.
- Growth in subcontracting and alternative strategies: Subcontracting or outsourcing increased moderately from 31% in 2025 to 37% in 2026.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CHALLENGES

Employers were asked to indicate the biggest challenges they face when recruiting new employees. A total of 239 employers answered that question.

The primary barriers to successful recruitment for local employers fall into two main categories:

- Applicant qualifications and experience:
    - The most significant challenge, cited by 56% of surveyed employers, is that applicants lack the required skills. This is closely followed by a lack of necessary work experience (50%) and a lack of specific qualifications (46%). Additionally, 30% of respondents note that candidates often lack soft skills or a strong work ethic.
- Applicant volume and competition:
    - Employers also struggle to find enough candidates, with 45% reporting a low number of applicants. Even when candidates are available, employers face stiff competition from other businesses (27%) and challenges in meeting candidates' compensation expectations (21%). Furthermore, 14% of employers report issues with "ghosting," where applicants do not show up for their scheduled interviews.

Also cited in the "Other" category:

- Language requirements: Finding candidates who speak French or are bilingual.
- Work structure: Struggles with offering only seasonal or part-time work or having unconventional and non-guaranteed hours.
- Location: The remote geographical location of the jobs and applicants being nervous about applying for jobs in Northern Ontario.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

Recruitment challenges differ significantly between goods-producing and services-producing industries, with each sector facing distinct primary pain points.

Challenges more prominent in goods-producing Industries are primarily hindered by candidates' lack of readiness and high competition for talent.

- Lack of experience and qualifications:
    - A significant 67% of goods-producing employers cite a lack of required work experience as a top challenge, compared to only 44% in services-producing industries. Similarly, 55% report that applicants lack the necessary qualifications, whereas only 44% of services sector employers say the same.
- Competition from other employers:
    - Goods-producing businesses face steeper competition for talent, with 37% citing it as a major hurdle, compared to 24% in the service sector.

The services-producing industries struggle more with applicant volume, candidate reliability, and shifting expectations.

- Low applicant volume:
  - Finding candidates at all is a major issue, with 50% of services-producing employers citing a low number of applicants, compared to just 30% in goods-producing industries.
- Soft skills and reliability:
  - Candidates lacking soft skills or a strong work ethic is a larger problem in services (32%) than in goods (22%). Service employers are also twice as likely to experience "ghosting," with 16% reporting that applicants do not show up for interviews, compared to only 8% in goods-producing industries.
- Compensation expectations:
  - Meeting candidates' wage expectations is harder for employers in the service-producing industries (23%) than for goods-producing employers (15%).

Table 6: Biggest challenges when recruiting new employees *(239 respondents)*

CHALLENGE	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**
Applicants lack the skills required	56%	60%	58%	75%	55%	55%
Applicants lack work experience required	50%	47%	67%	60%	44%	42%
Applicants lack the qualifications required	46%	48%	55%	52%	44%	47%
Low number of applicants	45%	52%	30%	52%	50%	52%
Applicants lack soft skills/work ethics	30%	36%	22%	31%	32%	38%
Competition from other employers	27%	37%	37%	38%	24%	37%
Compensation expectations	21%	30%	15%	28%	23%	31%
Applicants don’t show up for interview	14%	%	8%	%	16%	%
Other	11%	%	8%	6%	11%	11%

OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Respondents were asked about other factors that impact their ability to recruit and retain employees. External and infrastructural issues also heavily impact recruitment, the most prominent is a shortage of housing, which impacts 28% of employers. Other notable community barriers include a lack of daycare (16%) and a lack of public transportation (16%).

In addition to the general lack of availability, employers specifically pointed to the prices of houses in their open-ended responses about factors limiting employee recruitment and retention.

28%

Housing shortage

16%

Lack of daycare

16%

No public transportation

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

The impact of the housing shortage was not felt equally across all businesses, varying notably by sector:

- Goods-producing industries: These employers are impacted the most, with 33% citing the lack of housing as a recruitment and retention challenge in 2026.
- Services-producing industries: The housing shortage was mentioned by 26% of service sector employers in 2026.

While housing was the largest external factor—ranking higher than a lack of daycare (16%) or public transportation (16%)—it is important to note that nearly two-thirds of employers (64%) reported that these broader external factors did not affect their recruitment and retention efforts at all.

RECRUITMENT METHODS

Respondents were asked to indicate the top three recruitment methods that were the most successful for their needs. The most successful recruitment methods relied heavily on personal networks and digital platforms. The top methods identified by employers were:

- Word of mouth, personal contacts, or employee referrals: This was the most successful method overall, cited by 78% of employers.
- Social media: 73% of employers found social media to be a highly successful recruitment tool.
- Free online job boards: Utilized successfully by 33% of respondents. Specific platforms like Indeed and the JobsIn job portal were frequently highlighted.
- Company websites: Cited as a top method by 31% of employers.
- Community employment centres: Identified as successful by 19% of respondents.

TOP 3 RECRUITMENT METHODS

78 %

Word of mouth personal contacts

73 %

Social media

33 %

Online job portal

Beyond these primary strategies, employers noted a few other specific tactics, including internal hiring, utilizing professional search firms, open hiring (described as "show up, get a job"), and directly trying to recruit employees from other businesses.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

While good-producing industries and services-producing industries both heavily rely on social media and local recruitment, there are distinct differences between goods producing and services producing industries in both their preferred recruitment methods.

- Word of mouth: While word-of-mouth referrals declined overall between 2025 and 2026, this drop was entirely driven by the services sector, where it fell from 85% in 2025 to 77% in 2026. In contrast, word of mouth remained perfectly stable at 82% for goods-producing industries across both years.

- Paid vs. free job boards: Goods-producing industries rely more heavily on paid recruitment platforms. In 2026, 22% of goods-producing industries used paid online job boards, exactly double the rate of services industries (11%). Services industries showed a slightly higher preference for free online job boards (35% vs. 28%) and their own organizational websites (32% vs. 27%).
- Job fairs: Goods-producing industries historically used job fairs much more aggressively (40% in 2025 vs. 27% for services), and while usage plummeted in both sectors by 2026, goods-producing industries still utilize them nearly twice as often (22% vs. 12%).
- Community outreach: Services industries maintain stronger ties with community employment centres (21% vs. 13% for goods-producing industries).
- Both sectors saw substantial growth in social media recruitment, which rose to 70% in 2026 (up from 62% in 2025) for goods-producing industries and 74% (up from 66% in 2025) for services-producing industries.

Regarding the geographic reach for recruitment the data shows that the goods-producing industries cast a much wider net. Both sectors primarily recruit locally within their community or district (95% for goods-producing industries and 97% for services-producing in 2026). However, good-producing industries are significantly more likely to recruit outside their immediate region compared to services-producing industries:

- Other Northern Ontario communities: 72% of goods-producing industries recruit here, compared to only 47% of services-producing industries.
- Southern Ontario: Goods-producing industries are nearly twice as likely to recruit from Southern Ontario (47% vs. 23% for services-producing industries).
- National and international: Goods-producing industries compared to services-producing industries are more than three times as likely to recruit from other provinces (32% vs. 10%) and more than twice as likely to recruit internationally (15% vs. 7%).

MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS WHEN HIRING

Respondents were asked to select the three most important skills (from a list of thirteen) that are most important to them when hiring. The results reveal that there are three skills that are consistently ranked as the most important across all industries, with the first being significantly more valued than the rest:

- Work ethic, dedication, and dependability chosen by 59% of employers.
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills: The second most valued skill, cited by 36% of employers.
- Oral and written communication: Rounding out the top three, this was highlighted by 31% of employers.

Other highly valued skills identified in 2026 include customer service (26%), a willingness to learn (26%), and self-motivation and independence (24%).

Table 7: Most important skills when hiring *(239 respondents)*

SKILLS	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Work Ethic, Dedication, Dependability	59%	77%	67%	88%	57%	72%
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills	36%	59%	30%	64%	39%	56%
Oral and Written Communication	31%	44%	13%	23%	38%	51%
Customer Service	26%	46%	10%	16%	32%	58%
Willingness to Learn	26%	47%	35%	61%	23%	41%
Self-Motivation and Independence	24%	45%	32%	47%	22%	45%
Technical	23%	31%	35%	50%	18%	24%
Problem Solving and Creativity	17%	26%	20%	33%	16%	23%
Ability to Follow Instructions	15%	33%	32%	55%	10%	24%
Time Management, Organization Skills	15%	37%	13%	31%	15%	39%
Professionalism	14%	30%	10%	14%	15%	36%
Computer Literacy	9%	19%	3%	6%	11%	24%
Analytical/Research Skills	3%	8%	0%	13%	4%	6%

TOP 3 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS WHEN

59%

Work ethics

36%

Teamwork

31%

Communication

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

While work ethic, dedication, and dependability is the most important skill (chosen by 67% of goods-producing employers and 57% of services-producing employers in 2026, their other priorities diverge significantly based on the nature of their work.

Goods-Producing Industries tend to prioritize technical execution, independence, and adherence to process:

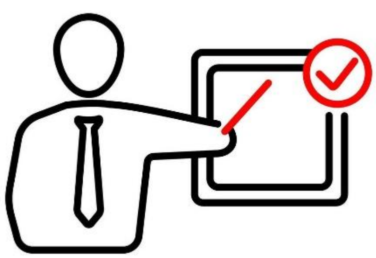
- Ability to follow instructions: 32% vs. 10%.
- Technical skills: 35% vs. 18%.
- Willingness to learn: 35% vs. 23%.
- Self-motivation and independence: 32% vs. 22%.

Services-Producing Industries, on the other hand, heavily prioritize interpersonal and client-facing skills. Compared to the goods sector, they place a much higher value on:

- Oral and written communication: 38% vs. 13%.
- Customer service: 32% vs. 10%.
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills: 39% vs. 30%.

Additionally, services-producing industries place a bit more importance on computer literacy (11% compared to 3% in goods-producing), while goods-producing industries place a slightly higher value on problem-solving and creativity (20% compared to 16% in services).

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING



Employers were asked if and how they support training for their employees, and the barriers they face to providing training. A total of 239 employer answered this question.

The results reveal that the most common way businesses support employee training is by funding training, either fully or in part, a method utilized by 66% of surveyed organizations in 2026. This financial support is particularly prevalent in goods-producing industries, where 77% of businesses fund training, compared to 62% in services-producing industries.

Beyond direct funding, businesses support their employees' professional development through the following methods:

- Offering flexible work schedules: Provided by 40% of organizations, allowing employees the time needed to pursue educational opportunities.
- Supplying information on available opportunities: Used by 38% of businesses to help guide employees toward relevant training programs.

- Leveraging government incentives: Nearly a fifth (19%) of businesses use government hiring and training incentives to support employee training.

Only a very small minority of businesses (7%) reported that they do not provide any support for employee training.

MOST COMMON SOURCES FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING

When it comes to the actual delivery of training for employees, the vast majority of businesses (84%) rely heavily on on-the-job training. Other popular training sources that organizations support include:

- online webinars or workshops (52%)
- peer-to-peer training (42%).
- colleges (29%)
- industry professional associations (25%).

The least common sources, selected by fewer than 10% of respondents, include:

- adult learning centres (6%)
- local unions (3%)
- school boards (2%).

OBSTACLES TO PROVIDING TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

When asked about obstacles to provide or to support employee training:

- Financial constraints: The cost of training is the most common obstacle, cited by over half (53%) of all respondents.
- Location and availability: Logistical challenges are major hurdles, with 44% of businesses stating that relevant programs are not offered in their region, and 39% citing the distance required to travel for training.
- Retention and operational impact: Roughly a third of respondents are concerned about the loss of trained employees to other employers (34%) and the loss of productivity during the periods when employees are engaged in training (32%).
- Lack of awareness: A smaller portion of businesses struggle with a lack of information, including not being aware of available training programs (26%), lacking awareness of support for employee training (15%), and being unaware of legislated training requirements (5%).

In addition to these main categories, businesses also reported several other operational and personnel challenges. These include a lack of employee motivation or interest in the training offered, difficulties in releasing workers due to small staffing levels or heavy workloads, government funding cutbacks, and a lack of online course options for classes that require in-person attendance.

Table 8: Obstacles to the provision of or support for training *(239 respondents)*

OBSTACLES TO TRAINING	TOTAL ALL INDUSTRIES		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Cost of training	53%	54%	58%	53%	51%	54%
Relevant programs not offered in the region	44%	33%	38%	30%	46%	35%
Distance to travel for training	39%	42%	42%	38%	38%	44%
Loss of trained employees to other employers	34%	33%	47%	41%	30%	31%
Loss of productivity during training periods	32%	31%	40%	31%	30%	31%
Lack of awareness of training programs available	26%	23%	20%	20%	28%	24%
Lack of awareness of support for employee training	15%	19%	10%	5%	16%	19%
Lack of awareness of legislated training requirements	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	4%
Other	13%	13%	17%	19%	12%	11%

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

The obstacles faced by goods-producing and service-producing industries differ primarily in their focus on operational impacts versus access to information and local programs.

Goods-producing industries are significantly more concerned with the operational and workforce impacts of training. Specifically, they are much more likely to cite:

- the loss of trained employees to other employers (47% compared to 30% in services)
- the loss of productivity during training periods (40% compared to 30% in services)
- the cost of training (58% vs. 51%)
- the distance to travel for training (42% vs. 38%).

Service-producing industries, on the other hand, struggle more with finding suitable, localized programs and information. They are more likely to report:

- that relevant programs are not offered in their region (46% compared to 38% in goods-producing)
- a lack of awareness of available training programs (28% vs. 20%)
- a lack of awareness of support for employee training (16% vs. 10%).

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH

Respondents were also asked whether they offered employment experience opportunities to students and youth in 2025 and 2026. Data collected from 239 respondents indicates that approximately two-thirds of employers offer at least one type of work experience for students and youth.

Summer jobs are the most commonly reported employment experience opportunity planned for 2026, with 50% of respondents intending to offer them. These positions are primarily directed toward high school students, with smaller shares available to college and university students.

The next most common opportunities planned for 2026 are:

- Unpaid co-op placements: Planned by 33% of respondents, these are also mostly directed at high school students.
- Part-time jobs: Planned by 32% of respondents, these positions are also largely concentrated among high school students.

Together, these top three categories suggest that the most frequent employment opportunities are highly concentrated among younger students.

For older students, the remaining planned opportunities have a more varied distribution:

- Apprenticeships (17% of respondents) are mostly concentrated among college students.
- Paid internships (9% of respondents) are most concentrated among university students.
- Paid co-op placements (15% of respondents) are divided almost equally among high school, college, and university students.
- Unpaid internships are planned by 12% of respondents.

The overall pattern of student and youth employment opportunities planned for 2026 is broadly consistent with what employers offered in 2025, though there are several notable shifts in the types of roles and the students they target. Summer jobs, unpaid co-op placements, and part-time jobs remain the top three most common opportunities across both years.

Shifts in the Types of Roles Offered

- Declines in paid co-ops and part-time work: The most significant drop is in paid co-op placements, which fell from 21% of respondents in 2025 to just 15% in 2026. Part-time jobs also saw a decline, dropping from 36% to 32%.
- Increases in internships: Employers are planning to offer more internships in 2026. Unpaid internships rose from 9% to 12%, and paid internships increased slightly from 8% to 9%.

- Stable offerings: Summer jobs saw only a marginal decrease (51% to 50%), and unpaid co-op placements remained perfectly steady at 33%. Apprenticeships also remained relatively stable, dipping slightly from 18% to 17%.

Shifts in the Target Demographics: The distribution of these opportunities among high school, college, and university students is also changing:

- Internships are shifting toward high school students: In 2025, high school students only received 15% of paid internships and 10% of unpaid internships. In 2026, their share of these opportunities is expected to roughly double, climbing to 29% and 25%, respectively.
- University students will see fewer unpaid internships: The share of unpaid internships directed at university students is dropping sharply from 52% in 2025 to 32% in 2026. However, university students will capture a larger share of the shrinking paid co-op market, with their share rising from 22% to 30%.

Table 9: Employment experience opportunities for students and youth *(239 respondents)*

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITY		HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS		COLLEGE STUDENTS		UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	
		2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Paid Coop placements	*Total FNETB Region*	**41%**	**35%**	**37%**	**35%**	**22%**	**30%**
	Goods-producing industries	50%	30%	50%	50%	0%	20%
	Services-producing industries	37%	37%	31%	30%	31%	33%
Unpaid Coop placements	*Total FNETB Region*	**75%**	**75%**	**16%**	**16%**	**9%**	**9%**
	Goods-producing industries	100%	90%	0%	10%	0%	0%
	Services-producing industries	64%	69%	23%	19%	13%	12%
Paid internship	*Total FNETB Region*	**15%**	**29%**	**45%**	**33%**	**40%**	**38%**
	Goods-producing industries	20%	20%	40%	20%	40%	60%
	Services-producing industries	13%	31%	47%	38%	40%	31%
Unpaid internship	*Total FNETB Region*	**10%**	**25%**	**38%**	**43%**	**52%**	**32%**
	Goods-producing industries	0%	50%	100%	50%	0%	0%
	Services-producing industries	20%	23%	35%	42%	55%	35%
Apprenticeships	*Total FNETB Region*	**30%**	**37%**	**65%**	**61%**	**5%**	**2%**
	Goods-producing industries	29%	30%	71%	70%	0%	0%
	Services-producing industries	32%	43%	59%	52%	9%	5%
Summer jobs	*Total FNETB Region*	**46%**	**47%**	**31%**	**33%**	**23%**	**20%**
	Goods-producing industries	40%	41%	31%	38%	29%	21%
	Services-producing industries	48%	49%	31%	31%	21%	20%
Part-time jobs	*Total FNETB Region*	**64%**	**58%**	**26%**	**29%**	**11%**	**13%**
	Goods-producing industries	72%	71%	22%	29%	6%	0%
	Services-producing industries	61%	54%	27%	29%	12%	17%

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

The results point to differences between the goods-producing industries and the services-producing industries. Goods-producing industries offer very few, if any, opportunities to university students across most employment categories.

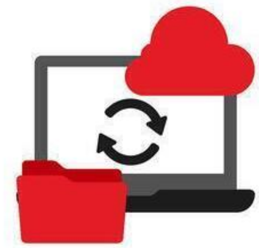
Services-producing industries distribute their opportunities much more broadly across all three student groups. For example, paid co-op placements in the services sector are divided almost equally among high school, college, and university students (each securing roughly 30% to 37% of the roles), whereas the goods-producing sector concentrates 50% of these placements on college students.

Other notable differences in how these sectors offer opportunities include:

- Paid Internships: Goods-producing industries heavily favor university students for paid internships, with their share of these roles jumping from 40% in 2025 to 60% in 2026. In the services sector, paid internships are much more balanced, with high school, college, and university students each claiming between 31% and 38% of the roles in 2026.
- Unpaid Internships: In goods-producing industries, unpaid internships were entirely reserved for college students in 2025 and are expected to be split 50/50 between high school and college students in 2026. The services sector offers a vastly different landscape, where university students historically claimed the majority of unpaid internships (55% in 2025), though this is projected to drop to 35% in 2026.
- Unpaid Co-op Placements: Goods-producing industries target these almost exclusively at high school students (100% in 2025, shifting slightly to 90% in 2026). While the services sector also leans heavily towards high school students (64% to 69%).
- Part-time Jobs: Both sectors primarily rely on high school students for part-time work, but the goods-producing sector concentrates these roles much more heavily in that demographic (71% to 72%). The services sector is more varied, offering more balanced shares to college students (27% to 29%) and university students (12% to 17%).

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

Respondents were asked about the impact of technological changes on their business and workforce, both currently and in the future.



A substantial portion of 236 employers who answered that question report that digital and data-based issues are currently impacting their workforce, and respondents often highlight that they are dealing with multiple overlapping technologies at once. The most prominent areas of current impact include:

- Cyber-security (43%)
- Artificial intelligence (40%)
- Digitalization (38%)
- Cloud-based technology: (38%)
- Real time data collection, management, and analysis (35%).

Table 10: Technologies currently impacting or that will impact the workforce *(236 respondents)*

CHANGES	TOTAL FNETB REGION		GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
Cyber-security	43%	28%	33%	37%	28%	25%
Artificial intelligence	40%	40%	21%	47%	26%	32%
Digitalization	38%	22%	28%	26%	29%	24%
Cloud-based technology	38%	19%	32%	25%	28%	22%
Data collection, management, analysis	35%	23%	30%	26%	26%	20%
Automation and robotics	9%	31%	12%	42%	9%	15%
Autonomous equipment	6%	25%	11%	40%	5%	10%
Electrification	6%	19%	5%	28%	4%	6%
Other	9%	9%	7%	7%	4%	4%

The most notable trend for the future is the sharp increase in expected impacts from automation and robotics. Three specific areas show the largest jumps in expected future impact compared to their current levels:

- Automation and robotics: Expected to impact 31% of workforces in the future, a significant jump from only 9% currently.
- Autonomous equipment: Expected to impact 25% of workforces in the future, rising from just 6% currently.
- Electrification: Expected to impact 19% of workforces in the future, up from 6% currently. "Electric vehicles" were also specifically called out by respondents as an impending change.

Decreasing future concern: Interestingly, while cyber-security is the most cited as having the highest current technological impact, the proportion of respondents concerned about it drops significantly to 28% when looking toward the future. Similarly, other heavily cited current technologies like digitalization (22%), real-time data collection (23%), and cloud-based technology (19%) are all projected by respondents to have a notably lower impact in the future than they do today.

Respondents also highlighted a variety of other specific, highly varied changes expected to impact the future workforce. These include online shopping, electronic messaging, self-installation, fraud, equipment, online and hybrid learning platforms, virtual communication, remote service delivery, assistive technology for neurodivergent learners, specialized platform training for tools like electronic medical records (EMR).

IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE:

- The most significant resulting impact of new technologies on the workforce is a surging demand for digital capabilities. 44% of respondents anticipate a need for advanced computer skills, making it the top predicted impact overall, alongside a strong need for data management skills (28%).
- Improved workforce productivity is a major expected benefit, cited by 33% of respondents. Digital tools are also facilitating virtual communication and remote work arrangements (17%), as well as the remote delivery of services.
- While 14% of respondents believe new jobs will be created, a slightly higher proportion (16%) anticipate that some jobs will be lost
- Artificial intelligence is the top anticipated future technological impact overall, with 40% of respondents expecting it to affect their workforce. Notably, AI is the only major digital technology where the anticipated future impact remains exactly as high as its current impact.

Table 11: Impacts on the workforce of technological and environmental changes *(236 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	2026	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**
Our workforce will need advanced computer skills	44%	29%	39%	31%	45%	28%
Workforce productivity will improve	33%	26%	26%	29%	36%	24%
Our workforce will need data management skills	28%	21%	30%	24%	28%	20%
It will facilitate remote work arrangements	17%	12%	7%	9%	20%	13%
Our workforce will decrease - jobs will be lost	16%	20%	23%	28%	15%	17%
Our workforce will increase - jobs will be created	14%	13%	12%	12%	14%	13%
Other	4%	%	4%	9%	4%	7%

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

The impact of technological changes differs significantly between goods-producing and services-producing industries, particularly when looking toward the future. While services-producing industries are largely focused on digital skills and remote work, goods-producing industries are bracing for a massive wave of physical automation and AI. The most striking difference lies in the types of technologies expected to impact these sectors in the future:

- Physical automation and electrification: Goods-producing industries anticipate a massive shift toward physical technologies. For the future, 42% of goods-producing respondents expect impacts from automation and robotics, and 40% from autonomous equipment. In stark contrast, only 15% and 10% of services-producing industries expect impacts in these respective areas. Similarly, electrification is expected to impact 28% of the goods-producing workforce in the future, compared to just 6% in services.
- Artificial Intelligence: While AI is a major factor for both, the data points to a heavier future impact on goods-producing industries (47%) compared to services-producing industries (32%).

Differences in workforce impacts: These different technological adoptions translate into distinct realities for the workers in these sectors:

- Job security: Goods-producing industries are more likely to anticipate workforce reductions as a result of these changes. For 2026, 23% of goods-producing respondents expect some jobs to be lost, compared to 15% in services-producing industries.
- Remote work and productivity: Because services-producing industries rely more on digital and cloud-based tools than physical machinery, they are far more likely to see technology facilitate remote work arrangements (20% vs. only 7% in goods-producing). Services industries also seem to be more optimistic about these tools improving workforce productivity (36% vs. 26% for the goods-producing industries).
- Skill requirements: Services-producing industries report a slightly higher need for advanced computer skills (45%) compared to goods-producing industries (39%). However, the need for data management skills is relatively similar across both sectors (30% in goods, 28% in services).

IMPACT OF US TARIFFS

Respondents were asked about the impact that US tariffs on their business or organization presently and in the future. A total of 231 employers answered that question.

While many respondents currently report immediate operational strain, a substantial portion also anticipates future growth delays and the need to reduce spending due to economic uncertainty.

Table 12: Impact of US tariffs, currently and in the future, 2026 Survey *(231 respondents)*

NATURE OF IMPACT	TOTAL FNETB REGION		GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
No impact on our business/organization	39%	21%	25%	15%	43%	23%
Our supply chain will be impacted	36%	19%	53%	25%	31%	16%
We will have to raise our prices	36%	20%	58%	24%	30%	19%
We will restrict spending	30%	17%	44%	24%	26%	15%
We will delay growth/expansion plans	14%	16%	27%	16%	10%	16%
It will be difficult to honor existing contracts	11%	12%	22%	18%	8%	10%
Reduced hours, staff and operations	9%	13%	11%	20%	8%	10%

When asked the same question last year, In most instances, a higher percentage of respondents were expecting a future impact, which is understandable since clarity on what those tariffs was unpredictable in May 2025.

Table 13: Impact of US tariffs, currently and in the future, 2025 Survey *(216 respondents)*

NATURE OF IMPACT	TOTAL FNETB REGION		GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
No impact on our business/organization	26%	20%	11%	9%	32%	24%
Our supply chain will be impacted	35%	43%	49%	56%	30%	39%
We will have to raise our prices	30%	41%	42%	51%	26%	39%
We will restrict spending	29%	32%	38%	33%	25%	31%
We will delay growth/expansion plans	12%	25%	15%	29%	11%	23%
It will be difficult to honor existing contracts	13%	16%	24%	20%	9%	14%
We will reduce our hours, staff and operations	6%	13%	9%	15%	4%	12%

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

Goods-producing industries generally experience a much more severe and direct impact from US tariffs than services-producing industries. Across surveys from both 2025 and 2026, data shows that goods-producing sectors are consistently hit harder in areas like supply chain disruptions, price hikes, and restricted spending due to economic uncertainty. Key differences in how the two sectors are impacted include:

- Overall Vulnerability:
  - Services-producing industries are significantly more likely to report being unaffected by the tariffs. In the 2026 survey, 43% of services-producing industries reported having no current impact on their business, compared to only 25% of goods-producing industries. This trend was consistent in 2025, where 32% of services felt no current impact versus just 11% of goods producers.
- Supply Chain and Pricing:
  - Supply chain disruptions and the need to raise prices are the most common impacts of tariffs overall. In 2026, 53% of goods producers reported current supply chain impacts compared to just 31% of service providers. Similarly, 58% of goods producers indicate having had to raise their prices, whereas only 30% of services had to do the same.
- Business Growth and Operations:
  - Goods-producing industries are much more likely to pull back on business development. In 2026, 44% of goods producers reported restricting spending due to uncertainty (compared to 26% of services), 27% had to delay growth or expansion plans (compared to 10% of services), and 22% faced difficulty honoring existing contracts (compared to just 8% of services).

Despite experiencing fewer direct impacts, services-producing industries face notable indirect consequences from tariffs. Respondents indicated that:

- As directly impacted businesses reduce their own expansion plans, they consequentially reduce their need for outside services.
- Increased cost-of-living pressures and broader economic uncertainty limit consumers' ability to afford services, while the services-producing industries themselves simultaneously face higher operating costs.

FAMILIARITY WITH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate their level of familiarity with different categories of employment and training programs. According to the survey results employer awareness is strongest for co-op placements and employment services, while familiarity is much lower for newer, specialized, or more targeted support programs. For many of the programs and services evaluated, respondents were more likely to report being "somewhat familiar" rather than "very familiar," indicating a moderate level of general awareness rather than strong familiarity.

Table 14: Familiarity with employment and training programs – FNETB REGION *(231 respondents)*

	FNETB REGION TOTAL		
	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	13%	41%	46%
College Coop Placements Program	23%	42%	35%
University Coop Placements Program	31%	40%	30%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	43%	35%	21%
Student Employment Programs	38%	39%	23%
Government Internship Programs	59%	28%	13%
Skilled Trades Ontario	44%	32%	23%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	26%	42%	32%
College Programs offered locally	36%	42%	21%
University Programs offered locally	53%	31%	16%
Get SET – Skills, Education and Training program	77%	15%	8%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	61%	32%	7%
Local Immigration Programs	55%	33%	12%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	66%	27%	9%
Local Services for Business Development	51%	36%	13%

The programs with the highest employer familiarity levels (identified by respondents as "very familiar") are:

- High School Coop Placements Program (46%)
- College Coop Placements Program (35%)
- Employment Ontario Employment Services (32%)

The programs with the lowest employer familiarity levels (identified by respondents as "not at all familiar") are:

- Get SET – Skills, Education and Training program (77%)
- Local Settlement Services for Newcomers (66%)
- Indigenous Training and Employment

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES-PRODUCTING INDUSTRIES

Based on the data, familiarity with available programs and services varies noticeably depending on whether a business operates in the goods-producing or services-producing sector. These differences largely reflect the distinct workforce needs of each industry.

Data in Table 15 shows that goods-producing industries indicate a significantly higher familiarity with trades and entry-level vocational programs. For example, 42% of goods-producing respondents are "very familiar" with Skilled Trades Ontario, compared to only 18% in the services sector. They are also more likely to be "very familiar" with the High School Coop Placements Program (55% vs. 43% for services) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (29% vs. 19% for services).

Table 15: Familiarity with programs and services- GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES

	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	15%	31%	55%
College Coop Placements Program	25%	36%	38%
University Coop Placements Program	42%	33%	25%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	33%	38%	29%
Student Employment Programs	40%	45%	15%
Government Internship Programs	69%	27%	4%
Skilled Trades Ontario	25%	33%	42%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	29%	45%	25%
College Programs offered locally	47%	35%	18%
University Programs offered locally	64%	22%	15%
Get SET – Skills, Education and Training	78%	20%	2%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	56%	38%	5%
Local Immigration Programs	58%	36%	5%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	71%	27%	2%
Local Services for Business Development	56%	35%	9%

Table 16 below shows that services-producing industries report higher familiarity with university-level programs, internships, and community settlement services. Services respondents are four times more likely to be "very familiar" with Government Internship Programs (16% vs. 4% for goods-producing industries) and substantially more familiar with Local Immigration Programs (14% vs. 5% for goods-producing industries) and Local Settlement Services for Newcomers (11% vs. 2% for goods-producing industries). They also show a slightly higher rate of being "very familiar" with University Coop Placements (31% vs. 25% for goods-producing industries).

Table 16: Familiarity with programs and services- GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES

	SERVICES-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES		
	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	13%	44%	43%
College Coop Placements Program	22%	44%	34%
University Coop Placements Program	27%	42%	31%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	47%	34%	19%
Student Employment Programs	38%	38%	25%
Government Internship Programs	56%	28%	16%
Skilled Trades Ontario	50%	32%	18%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	24%	41%	34%
College Programs offered locally	33%	45%	22%
University Programs offered locally	49%	34%	17%
Get SET – Skills, Education and Training	76%	14%	10%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	62%	30%	8%
Local Immigration Programs	54%	32%	14%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	62%	27%	11%
Local Services for Business Development	49%	36%	15%

Both sectors show limited to no awareness of highly specialized or newer programs, though services industries maintain a slight edge. For instance, 78% of goods-producing respondents and 76% of services respondents are "not at all familiar" with the Get SET program.

For broad employment assistance like Employment Ontario Employment Services, services industries report higher strong awareness (34% "very familiar") compared to goods-producing industries (25% "very familiar")

CONCLUSION

The results of the 2026 Recruitment, Training and Retention Survey confirm that employers in the FNETB region continue to operate in a challenging labour market shaped by persistent vacancies, competition for skilled workers, changing employee expectations, and broader economic pressures.

Although many findings remain consistent with the 2025 survey, the continued presence of these issues highlights the need for sustained, coordinated action to strengthen recruitment, improve retention, expand access to training, and better connect employers with available workforce supports.

Moving forward, the findings provide a strong foundation for local partners, service providers, educators, training organizations, and employers to work together on practical solutions that respond to the region’s evolving workforce needs.

By increasing awareness of existing programs, supporting youth and student employment pathways, addressing barriers such as housing, transportation and childcare, and preparing workers and businesses for technological change, the region will be better positioned to build and retain the skilled workforce required to support long-term economic growth and community prosperity.

Across the Far Northeast Training Board area, a total of 271 employers started the survey and while there was some drop-off in respondents as the survey progressed, around three-quarters completed the survey.

INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED *(271 responses)*
Table 1 provides the breakdown of respondents by industry and compares the percentage distribution with the actual percentage distribution of businesses in the FNETB region (districts of Timiskaming and Cochrane). The color-coding in Table 1 highlights where the survey percentage share is significantly greater (green) or significantly lower (red) than the actual distribution based on the Canadian Business Counts data as of December 2025.

TABLE 1: NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY

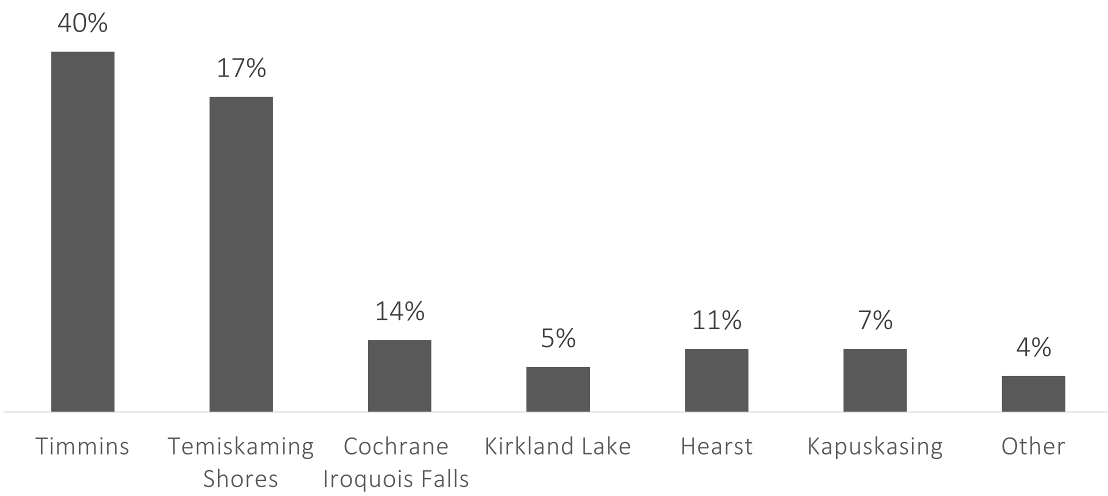
INDUSTRY	SURVEY		ACTUAL
	NUMBER	PERCENT	PERCENT
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	12	4.4%	7.7%
Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	21	7.7%	1.1%
Utilities	4	1.5%	0.7%
Construction	24	8.9%	9.4%
Manufacturing	11	4.1%	2.2%
Total Goods-producing industries	72		
Wholesale Trade	2	0.7%	8.9%
Retail Trade	23	8.5%	5.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	0	0.0%	2.2%
Information and Cultural Industries	5	1.8%	0.9%
Finance and Insurance	20	7.4%	4.9%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	6	2.2%	20.8%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	25	9.2%	6.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0.7%
Administration and Support, Waste Mgmt	8	3.0%	3.2%
Educational Services	17	6.3%	0.9%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	36	13.3%	9.0%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	8	3.0%	1.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	13	4.8%	4.1%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	25	9.2%	8.9%
Public Administration	11	4.1%	0.8%
Total Services-producing industries	**1944**		
TOTAL	**266**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Actual figures are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, December 2025, Timiskaming and Cochrane

PERSON COMPLETING THE SURVEY *(271 responses)*

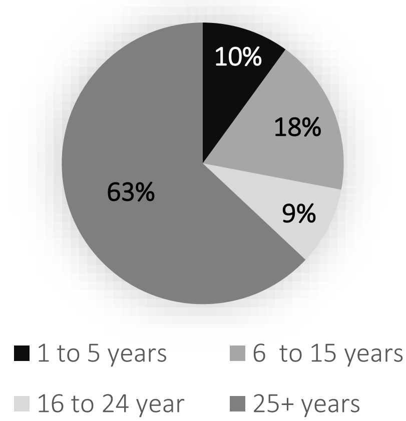
Eighty-six percent of the surveys were completed by a senior person in the organization as follows: owner (35%); human resources (16%); and supervisor/manager (35%). Others (14%) included in that category are those in an executive director's role, in an administrative position or front-line role.

BUSINESS LOCATION (*271 responses*)



The "Other category represents Chapleau, the James Bay Coast and a handful from outside the FNETB area, such as North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Val d'Or.
Note: some respondents identified more than one location.

YEARS OF OPERATION *(271 responses)*



Note: For the following questions, the respondent was allowed to pick more than one selection.

TYPE OF BUSINESS *(271 responses)*

- 63% private for-profit sector
- 21% not for profit/registered charity employer
- 11% Francophone business
- 3% Indigenous business
- 2% non-government funded not for profit employer
- 4% government-funded for-profit employer
- 4% franchise

63%
of the 271 respondents were private sector for profit businesses.

39%
of the respondents have employees who are 65 or over

CURRENT WORKFORCE BY AGE COHORT: *(271 responses)*

- 58% employ someone under 25 years old
- 91% employ someone between 25 and 55
- 62% employ someone 55 or over
- 39% employ someone 65 or older

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CURRENT WORKFORCE *(290 responses)*

Respondents were asked about the demographic composition of their workforce. The following are the percentages of respondents who reported having employees for each of the demographics:

- Males (87%)
- Females (91%)
- Francophones (62%)
- Indigenous (39%)
- Immigrants (42%)
- Students: Domestic students (34%), International students (17%)
- People with a known disability: physical disability (20%), developmental disability (16%)

APPENDIX B – COMPARATIVE TABLES BY SUB-REGION

The tables in this section of the report highlight the percentage responses to some of the survey questions for the entire FNETB region and for three sub-regions: the Timmins region, the Northern Corridor region (from Hearst to Iroquois Falls), and the District of Timiskaming.

Table 1: Reasons for separations in 2025

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Employee quit	82%	79%	86%	82%	79%	85%	70%	74%
Employee retired	30%	42%	23%	38%	37%	43%	43%	44%
Layoff	23%	30%	25%	38%	29%	38%	30%	24%
Employee terminated/fired	52%	56%	58%	61%	48%	68%	13%	47%
Other	8%	%	9%	%	6%	%	13%	%

Table 2: Reasons why employees leave or quit their jobs

	TOTAL FNETB REGION	TIMMINS AREA	TIMISKAMING DISTRICT	NORTHERN CORRIDOR
For a higher paying job	74%	77%	75%	68%
For more flexible work/remote work	30%	31%	32%	29%
For less physically demanding work	19%	21%	17%	18%
For less emotionally demanding work	20%	21%	19%	14%
For better work schedules (no shift work)	22%	16%	21%	39%
Because they need more hours	16%	10%	21%	21%
For personal reasons (parental leave, for school/training)	46%	36%	57%	50%
Because of physical health issues	14%	16%	13%	7%
Other	15%	12%	19%	14%

Table 3: Reasons employees are terminated or fired

	TOTAL FNETB REGION	TIMMINS AREA	TIMISKAMING DISTRICT	NORTHERN CORRIDOR
Employees lack the skills required for the job	56%	55%	53%	56%
Employees lack work ethics/basic life skills	56%	55%	57%	56%
Employees lack interpersonal/teamwork skills	34%	33%	35%	33%
Employees lack experience and are unwilling to learn	37%	50%	23%	37%
Employees don't understand or respect company HR policies	30%	26%	33%	37%
Employees don't take the job seriously	31%	27%	33%	33%
Because of substance abuse issues	12%	9%	18%	7%
Because of improper conduct (violence or harassment)	14%	12%	17%	19%
Other	13%	14%	12%	15%

Table 4: Reasons for new hires in 2026

	TOTAL FNETB REGION			TIMMINS AREA			TIMISKAMING DISTRICT			NORTHERN CORRIDOR		
	2026	2025	2024	2026	2025	2024	2026	2025	2024	2026	2025	2024
Retirements	24%	29%	33%	20%	23%	27%	19%	27%	37%	35%	36%	35%
Fill existing vacancies	75%	75%	81%	74%	79%	81%	77%	79%	88%	78%	71%	74%
Growth/expansion	52%	50%	46%	61%	56%	53%	51%	46%	42%	30%	46%	37%
Restructuring	10%	12%	15%	6%	11%	16%	16%	7%	15%	8%	13%	13%
Technological changes	2%	6%	8%	2%	6%	9%	1%	2%	7%	3%	9%	4%
Other	10%	%	%	7%	%	%	9%	%	%	16%	%	%

Table 5: Adapting when vacancies cannot be filled

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**
More overtime for current staff	59%	46%	73%	38%	42%	55%	50%	49%
Subcontract/Outsourcing	37%	31%	31%	35%	40%	30%	35%	29%
Reduction/redistribution of work	26%	44%	25%	43%	28%	44%	30%	48%
Access staffing agencies	14%	12%	15%	18%	9%	7%	15%	12%
Offer remote work options	6%	10%	11%	6%	4%	14%	0%	9%
Technology/automation	5%	12%	9%	9%	2%	16%	5%	15%
Other	19%	%	16%	%	26%	%	20%	%

Table 6: Biggest challenges when recruiting new employees *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**
Applicants lack the skills required	56%	60%	58%	70%	52%	59%	62%	56%
Applicants lack work experience required	50%	47%	57%	53%	42%	45%	49%	45%
Applicants lack the qualifications required	46%	48%	59%	54%	39%	41%	41%	50%
Low number of applicants	45%	52%	36%	48%	51%	52%	54%	56%
Applicants lack soft skills/work ethics	30%	36%	25%	35%	35%	37%	26%	39%
Competition from other employers	27%	37%	23%	37%	32%	38%	21%	37%
Compensation expectations	21%	30%	13%	25%	26%	33%	23%	36%
Applicants don't show up for interview	14%	%	20%	%	14%	%	5%	%
Other	11%	%	8%	%	8%	%	21%	%

Table 7: Other factors affecting the employer's ability to recruit and retain employees *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Lack of housing	28%	43%	18%	50%	31%	48%	28%	64%
Lack of daycare	16%	24%	11%	30%	14%	21%	31%	38%
Lack of public transportation	16%	21%	5%	26%	20%	27%	26%	26%
Lack of reliable and affordable high speed internet access	0.8%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%

Table 8: Recruitment methods used to find candidates for job vacancies *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Word of mouth, personal contacts, employee referrals	78%	84%	75%	84%	80%	81%	85%	67%
On-site job signs or posters	13%	33%	12%	23%	14%	36%	18%	41%
Our business/organization's own website	31%	57%	27%	57%	30%	60%	36%	54%
Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn)	73%	65%	68%	58%	72%	71%	87%	68%
Paid online job boards	14%	29%	21%	30%	11%	38%	5%	21%
Free online job boards	33%	64%	52%	67%	26%	71%	13%	55%
Onsite recruitment at schools, colleges and universities	2%	25%	2%	32%	2%	28%	0%	19%
Job fairs	13%	31%	19%	28%	11%	32%	5%	32%
Trade or professional publications or websites	4%	18%	3%	20%	5%	19%	5%	15%
Community employment centre	19%	44%	9%	28%	24%	61%	31%	47%
Executive search companies/Head-hunters	3%	7%	4%	9%	1%	7%	0%	3%
Print media	6%	21%	2%	13%	10%	25%	3%	24%
Radio ads	5%	10%	2%	8%	7%	7%	8%	14%
Other	5%	%	3%	%	7%	%	5%	%

Table 9: Areas from which new employees are recruited *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Within the community/the district	96%	96%	97%	96%	99%	97%	90%	80%
Other Northern Ontario communities/districts	54%	59%	58%	59%	51%	56%	44%	58%
Southern Ontario communities	29%	33%	32%	35%	27%	36%	21%	31%
Other provinces	15%	23%	18%	27%	14%	25%	10%	20%
Internationally	9%	14%	11%	20%	7%	15%	5%	9%

Table 10: Three most important skills when hiring *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Work Ethic, Dedication and Dependability	59%	77%	69%	77%	51%	80%	51%	76%
Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills	36%	59%	36%	61%	32%	47%	46%	66%
Oral and Written Communication	31%	44%	31%	44%	27%	37%	38%	48%
Customer Service	26%	46%	19%	40%	30%	50%	38%	47%
Willingness to Learn	26%	47%	24%	51%	33%	46%	21%	43%
Self-Motivation and Independence	24%	45%	24%	43%	33%	50%	5%	46%
Technical	23%	31%	29%	39%	18%	31%	21%	23%
Problem Solving and Creativity	17%	26%	15%	18%	18%	30%	15%	25%
Ability to Follow Instructions	15%	33%	16%	32%	17%	33%	13%	35%
Time Management and Organization Skills	15%	37%	14%	42%	11%	36%	23%	30%
Professionalism	14%	30%	13%	26%	14%	33%	13%	35%
Computer Literacy	9%	19%	7%	18%	9%	19%	13%	19%
Analytical/Research Skills	3%	8%	2%	8%	5%	9%	3%	6%

Table 11: How businesses or organizations support training and education for their employees *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
We fund training or education, either fully or in part	66%	66%	64%	70%	64%	60%	72%	60%
We use government hiring and training incentives	19%	44%	15%	19%	19%	20%	21%	27%
We offer flexible work schedules	40%	43%	40%	39%	44%	50%	33%	44%
We supply information on opportunities available	38%	21%	31%	38%	43%	46%	36%	51%
We do not provide support for employee training	7%	%	9%	%	6%	%	5%	%
Other	10%	%	9%	%	11%	%	10%	%

Table 12: Common sources of training and education *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
On the job training	84%	81%	86%	81%	86%	87%	82%	79%
Online webinars/workshop	52%	51%	53%	47%	52%	51%	56%	55%
Peer-to-Peer training	42%	46%	44%	45%	44%	57%	28%	37%
College	29%	42%	31%	53%	28%	40%	26%	30%
Industry Professional Association	25%	27%	31%	25%	22%	39%	18%	20%
Private trainers	21%	18%	26%	19%	18%	14%	21%	24%
University	15%	19%	14%	26%	14%	19%	15%	15%
Adult Learning Centre	6%	9%	3%	7%	9%	9%	5%	7%
Local union	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%	3%
School Board	2%	3%	1%	6%	3%	3%	0%	1%
Other	5%	%	8%	%	3%	%	3%	%

Table 13: Obstacles to the provision of or support for training *(239 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Cost of training	53%	54%	51%	51%	54%	60%	56%	56%
Relevant programs not offered in the region	44%	33%	34%	34%	29%	37%	72%	29%
Distance to travel for training	39%	42%	31%	35%	43%	50%	49%	42%
Loss of trained employees to other employers	34%	33%	43%	38%	29%	39%	23%	25%
Loss of productivity during training periods	32%	31%	35%	35%	34%	34%	21%	28%
Lack of awareness of training programs available	26%	23%	25%	19%	31%	23%	21%	22%
Lack of awareness of support for employee training	15%	19%	8%	18%	19%	20%	18%	16%
Lack of awareness of legislated training requirements	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	13%	3%
Other	13%	%	15%	%	14%	%	%	%

Table 14: Employment experience opportunities for students and youth - TIMMINS *(91 respondents)*

	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS		COLLEGE STUDENTS		UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Paid Coop placements	40%	33%	50%	47%	10%	20%
Unpaid Coop placements	72%	67%	18%	24%	9%	9%
Paid internship	0%	20%	50%	40%	50%	40%
Unpaid internship	9%	15%	55%	54%	36%	31%
Apprenticeships	22%	20%	72%	80%	6%	0%
Summer jobs	38%	36%	35%	45%	27%	19%
Part-time jobs	58%	56%	32%	37%	10%	7%
We do not offer any of those opportunities	65%	68%	9%	14%	26%	18%

Table 15: Employment experience opportunities for students and youth – TIMISKAMING DISTRICT *respondents)*

	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS		COLLEGE STUDENTS		UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	
	2025	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**
Paid Coop placements	41%	40%	27%	33%	32%	27%
Unpaid Coop placements	81%	87%	19%	13%	0%	0%
Paid internship	30%	42%	30%	25%	40%	33%
Unpaid internship	0%	50%	0%	38%	100%	13%
Apprenticeships	29%	53%	66%	41%	6%	6%
Summer jobs	51%	53%	26%	24%	23%	22%
Part-time jobs	74%	66%	23%	21%	3%	14%
We do not offer any of those opportunities	68%	75%	16%	8%	16%	17%

Table 16: Employment experience opportunities for students and youth – NORTHERN CORRIDOR *(239 respondents)*

	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS		COLLEGE STUDENTS		UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	
	2025	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**	**2025**	**2026**
Paid Coop placements	33%	40%	33%	0%	33%	60%
Unpaid Coop placements	58%	75%	8%	8%	33%	17%
Paid internship	0%	0%	100%	33%	0%	67%
Unpaid internship	17%	20%	17%	20%	67%	60%
Apprenticeships	50%	29%	50%	71%	0%	0%
Summer jobs	53%	55%	32%	25%	16%	20%
Part-time jobs	55%	47%	20%	29%	25%	23%
We do not offer any of those opportunities	79%	60%	14%	20%	7%	20%

Table 17: Technological changes currently impacting or that will impact the workforce *(236 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
Digitalization	38%	22%	33%	19%	41%	26%	38%	26%
Real time data collection, management and analysis	35%	23%	39%	16%	30%	23%	39%	38%
Automation and robotics	9%	31%	10%	24%	10%	39%	5%	31%
Autonomous equipment	6%	25%	9%	26%	6%	26%	3%	23%
Cloud-based technology	38%	19%	36%	14%	41%	22%	36%	26%
Artificial intelligence	40%	40%	34%	41%	38%	41%	56%	39%
Cyber-security	43%	28%	38%	26%	44%	8%	49%	46%
Electrification	6%	19%	6%	16%	8%	22%	5%	21%
Other	9%	9%	8%	10%	9%	8%	10%	8%

Table 18: Impacts on the workforce of technological and environmental changes *(236 respondents)*

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
No impact on our workforce	27%	%	30%	%	24%	%	31%	%
Our workforce will need advanced computer skills	44%	29%	39%	22%	48%	32%	46%	29%
Workforce productivity will improve	33%	26%	36%	31%	33%	27%	23%	21%
Our workforce will need data management skills	28%	21%	29%	19%	24%	20%	36%	18%
It will facilitate remote work arrangements	17%	12%	10%	10%	20%	17%	21%	9%
Our workforce will decrease - some jobs will be lost	16%	20%	16%	17%	22%	20%	3%	21%
Our workforce will increase - new jobs will be created	14%	13%	19%	15%	9%	15%	10%	7%
Other	4%	16%	3%	18%	3%	9%	10%	17%

Table 19: Impact of US tariffs, currently and in the future *(231 respondents)* 2026 SURVEY

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
No impact on our business/organization	39%	21%	35%	14%	40%	24%	44%	26%
Our supply chain will be impacted	36%	19%	41%	17%	32%	18%	39%	26%
We will have to raise our prices	36%	20%	41%	19%	35%	22%	31%	18%
We will have to restrict spending because of uncertainty	30%	17%	27%	14%	30%	19%	36%	21%
We will delay growth/expansion plans	14%	16%	13%	17%	16%	14%	18%	21%
We will have difficulty honoring existing contracts	11%	12%	10%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
We will reduce our hours, staff and operations	9%	13%	8%	9%	9%	15%	10%	18%
Other	6%	4%	7%	7%	4%	3%	5%	0%

Table 20: Impact of US tariffs, currently and in the future *(231 respondents)* 2025 SURVEY

	TOTAL FNETB REGION		TIMMINS AREA		TIMISKAMING DISTRICT		NORTHERN CORRIDOR	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future	Current	Future
No impact on our business/organization	26%	20%	27%	23%	27%	16%	24%	18%
Our supply chain will be impacted	35%	43%	42%	45%	38%	49%	29%	36%
We will have to raise our prices	30%	41%	31%	41%	31%	42%	32%	44%
We will have to restrict spending because of uncertainty	29%	32%	23%	25%	34%	41%	36%	26%
We will delay growth/expansion plans	12%	25%	13%	24%	14%	28%	14%	24%
We will have difficulty honoring existing contracts	13%	16%	13%	11%	19%	22%	10%	15%
We will reduce our hours, staff and operations	6%	13%	7%	11%	3%	16%	8%	14%
Other	7%	7%	6%	6%	11%	11%	11%	6%

Table 21: Familiarity with programs and services- TIMMINS AREA

	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	16%	36%	48%
College Coop Placements Program	16%	40%	44%
University Coop Placements Program	28%	35%	38%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	38%	39%	24%
Student Employment Programs	42%	40%	18%
Government Internship Programs	58%	27%	15%
Skilled Trades Ontario	38%	36%	26%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	27%	39%	34%
College Programs offered locally	32%	43%	25%
University Programs offered locally	45%	33%	22%
Get SET – Skills, Education & Training program	76%	18%	6%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	55%	41%	5%
Local Immigration Programs	45%	41%	14%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	67%	28%	8%
Local Services for Business Development	51%	42%	7%

Table 22: Familiarity with programs and services- TIMISKAMING DISTRICT

	Not at all familiar	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	13%	7%	41%
College Coop Placements Program	23%	20%	47%
University Coop Placements Program	31%	29%	47%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	43%	44%	32%
Student Employment Programs	38%	33%	40%
Government Internship Programs	59%	55%	28%
Skilled Trades Ontario	44%	43%	30%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	26%	22%	47%
College Programs offered locally	36%	40%	40%
University Programs offered locally	53%	65%	25%
Get SET – Skills, Education & Training program	77%	79%	14%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	61%	63%	26%
Local Immigration Programs	55%	61%	26%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	66%	64%	26%
Local Services for Business Development	51%	44%	36%

Table 23: Familiarity with programs and services- NORTHERN CORRIDOR

	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
High School Coop Placements Program	18%	51%	31%
College Coop Placements Program	41%	39%	21%
University Coop Placements Program	38%	31%	31%
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program	56%	33%	10%
Student Employment Programs	38%	41%	21%
Government Internship Programs	72%	23%	5%
Skilled Trades Ontario	59%	31%	10%
Employment Ontario Employment Services	28%	41%	31%
College Programs offered locally	38%	46%	15%
University Programs offered locally	52%	38%	21%
Get SET – Skills, Education & Training program	77%	10%	13%
Indigenous Training and Employment Services	70%	28%	3%
Local Immigration Programs	61%	31%	8%
Local Settlement Services for Newcomers	56%	36%	8%
Local Services for Business Development	62%	26%	13%