

Workforce Summit

Local Employment Planning Council
(London Economic Region)



Final Report

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Background

In LEPC Phase 1, we did an environmental scan to look at which groups were involved in workforce planning – representing local, regional, provincial and even national interests. This simple exercise demonstrated a wide array of workforce development activity, but these activities often took place independently of one another. As a result, individual workforce development groups had limited information about the goals, outcomes and performance indicators of other workforce planning groups. Consequently, there was little incentive to collaborate on broader systemic issues related to the workforce.

We further learned in LEPC Phase 1 that not all organizations/planning groups defined collaboration in the same way. This resulted in the development of the Service Coordination Continuum, which offered planning groups the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which they shared information and planned together with other groups. It also served as a benchmark for groups to establish goals on how they would move from one level of the continuum to the next and why they might want to do so.

From a community planning perspective, workforce planning partnerships were primarily concentrated at Level 2 of the Service Coordination Continuum. The goal of the Workforce Summit was to bring the various workforce planning groups/partnerships together to encourage awareness and communication among these initiatives to broaden knowledge, share best practices and encourage the partnerships to continue their journey through the Service Coordination Continuum.

Service Coordination Continuum (section 2)

Level 1 AWARENESS No collaboration	Level 2 COMMUNICATION Basic collaboration by sharing information	Level 3 COORDINATION Close collaboration with some system integration	Level 4 COLLABORATION Close collaboration approaching an integrated system	Level 5 INTEGRATION Full collaboration in a transformed, integrated system
KEY SERVICE PLANNING FEATURES				
Organizations plan and deliver programs and services according to their own mandate and goals. No coordination of the management of collaborative efforts.	Organizations plan and deliver programs and services according to their own mandate and goals and may share their plans with each other. Some providers buy into collaboration and place value on having needed information.	Organizations share information about programs and services and future plans with other groups and receive similar information from community partners for consideration in individual planning and decision-making processes. Organization leaders support integration through mutual problem solving of some system barriers.	Organizations plan and organize programs and services together. Organizations support integration, if funding allows, and put effort into solving some system issues without fundamentally changing how programs and services are offered.	Organizations plan and organize the system of programs and services for the community and identify providers with the strongest capacity to deliver different components of the system. Organizations collaborate driven by a shared vision for the community. Organizations strongly support integration with expected change in service delivery and resources provided to move forward.

Source: LEPC Service Coordination Continuum

As a result of the work in LEPC Phase 1, we decided it would be advantageous to invite workforce planning groups to come together to explore joint planning opportunities. There are many types of organizations that have an interest in community workforce development— economic development, self-employment/entrepreneurship, apprenticeship, employment services, adult literacy, school boards, post-secondary institutions, sector-specific groups, and labour/unions.

Further research showed that these groups meet frequently and their composition, particularly in rural communities, can require the participation of the same people on multiple committees – all with very similar purposes. Questions were being raised as to the overall impact of these various groups, causing groups to consider working more closely together to achieve collective impact.

It was to address this desire for collective impact that we decided to host the Workforce Summit. The challenge was how to plan the Summit such that groups with varying responsibilities, varying interests in workforce development and varying levels of formality in planning (different planning cycles, desired outcomes, resources and reporting mechanisms) would find attending the Summit to be of value.

As a first step, we decided to invite all workforce planning groups to the Summit. To get participants to reflect on their workforce planning activities, we requested input in advance from participants on why they are involved in workforce planning, if there are any other groups with which they coordinate for workforce planning and what they would like to accomplish via the Summit. We collated their responses into booklets so that all attendees would have this basic information on other workforce planning groups.

Key objectives for the Summit were:

- To encourage each participant to identify a concrete activity that they could execute with another workforce planning group
- To examine workforce planning from both a business and service provider perspective and how the two could complement one another
- To share best practices
- To identify successes in workforce development planning

Workforce Summit Results

Total attendance at the Workforce Summit was forty-six, which included thirty-seven invitees and nine LEPC staff. Staff members participated in the activities representing a variety of collaborations in the area.

We decided to open the day with a panel discussion and to profile some of the workforce planning groups that were already demonstrating high levels of collaboration.

Panel Discussion

It was not easy to determine which four panellists we would profile for the panel discussion. Ultimately, we decided on these four panellists:

- ❖ **Shelley Harris**, Director of Education and Settlement
YWCA St. Thomas–Elgin
- ❖ **Jeff Surridge**, Chief Executive Officer
Community Employment Services Oxford
- ❖ **Lee Smithson**, General Manager
The Small Business Help Centre (Middlesex County)
- ❖ **Robert Collins**, Director of Workforce Development
London Economic Development Corporation

While many people and groups are engaged in planning related to workforce development in the London Economic Region (LER), the panellists for the Workforce Summit were selected because they demonstrated an array of workforce development partners – urban and rural, business and social services, education/training and employment services as well as represented the four geographic areas within the LER.



Reasons to engage

Panellists were asked what factors prompted them to become involved in integrated workforce planning. The reasons were many. Integrated planning is perceived as a way to:

- Meet client needs
- Be proactive versus reactive
- Build communities
- Make the best use of community resources
- Share connections

Results and best practices

When asked to identify results and best practices that have emerged from integrated planning, panellists offered the following:

- Recognize the need for talent
- Use community knowledge in decision-making
- Use data strategically
- Collectively support employers
- Develop a regional focus
- Address supply and demand issues
- Simplify processes for job seekers and employers

Impact

During the Summit, it was acknowledged that workforce planning is only effective if it makes an impact. Panellists were asked to address how they evaluate the impact of integrated planning in their communities, and said they:

- Think of their clients as being the entire community
- View planning as being on a spectrum and they create impact when they build relationships and value the expertise within their own communities
- Use data to identify trends over time and assess impact
- Track investment dollars
- Identify the extent to which jobs in key local sectors are filled successfully

Lessons learned

Workforce planning groups consistently reflect upon their work. Panellists were asked to share any lessons learned with the broader group and they said:

- The ability to track metrics to validate your work is critical
- When launching programs and services – to job seekers or to employers – rapid response times are expected by your customers



Group Q & A

Since this was the inaugural Workforce Summit, we wanted to provide an opportunity for a large group discussion so that we could enable participants to share lessons learned and identify challenges from their various perspectives. We used feedback from registrants regarding what they wanted to get out of the Summit to develop questions for the large group discussion. What follows are the questions posed and responses received during the group Q & A.

What are some strategies for successfully connecting with employers for engagement and research purposes?

- The EmployerOne Survey
- The Job Developers Network
- The WorkInOxford.ca and WorkInMiddlesex.ca platforms / websites (also a great example of regional collaboration)
- Treating employers as our customers and serving their needs
- Showcasing specialized industries and sectors and highlighting their vitality and growth – with a connection to post-secondary education able to respond to related job / training needs
- The Business retention and expansion tool (OMAFRA)

How do other workforce planning bodies plan to create positive employment opportunities for individuals with multiple barriers?

- Partners in Employment (PIE)
- Speaking a language that employers understand and will respond to (what's in it for me?)
- Recognizing that barriers can sometimes be controlled, and other times, cannot
- The Ability First Coalition promotes the business case for hiring and retaining people with disabilities
- Building relationships with our indigenous communities
- Reframe the conversation: don't try to "sell" people with multiple barriers, but promote their skills – stop using language that doesn't promote clients to the best of their abilities
- Continue looking at the non-participation rate and the reason behind it

How do other workforce planning bodies efficiently and effectively build cross-sector relationships?

- Look at common needs both within a sector that you're trying to strengthen and across sectors
- Find the overlaps in your mandate, and create a plan to meet with others that have the same shared mandates
- Identify issues and concerns that cross sectors, and create opportunities for people to come together to discuss them (ex. transportation, and how it impacts job seekers, employers, the city/county)

What are the educational needs of our community?

- The EmployerOne survey results assist in identifying educational needs as does the direct contact with employers (ex. The Low German Conference) because these needs change from community to community
- Soft skills – team work, work ethic, communication skills, etc.
- The broader community also needs education to overcome myths around the local workforce
- Education for those with limited Canadian workplace experience about to learn about workplace culture and skills (ex. the Job Retention checklist)
- Work with employers to help identify value in skills and abilities rather than credentials (ex. The *London For All* plan)
- The community needs to be educated that there are lots of jobs available
- A better system to recognize foreign credentials, so we stop sending our internationally trained professionals back to school

Has anyone been successful in addressing a workforce issue or know of a community or region that has been successful?

- The Peel Region project – where job seekers from outside our area are being connected to jobs here
- Overcoming delays / responding quickly to client needs via a "priority response team," which has seen measurable success at WIL
- Fanshawe Elgin's "Career Destinations" series, which offers targeted, short-term programming like Cash Register training, resulting in either job success or further education

- The Job Developer's Network
- The retail training offered by ATN through the Old East Grocer project
- Fanshawe Elgin offers a free Welding for Women course in partnership with CWB, which has led to employment success. This course has become a community collaboration so that it can be offered to a broader audience.
- The Oxford Invitational Youth Robotics Challenge – has led to employment and many youth have continued their relationship with the challenge
- The Home Builders' Association initiative that creates mentorships for women in construction
- The ability to feature success stories via London & Area Works
- Living Alive Granola's success, not only with their business but in sharing the success of those with mental health challenges
- Free partnerships with organizations like Knighthunter
- Events like this for networking!
- Build a Dream, brought to the area by the TVDSB & LDCSB to promote construction careers to young women

Where will the discussion go from here?

- The LEPC should be expanded to include even more local representation (in other words, more staff!)

Meet Your Match

During this portion of the agenda, participants were given a puzzle piece and encouraged to find the person in the room who was their match. They were then given 20 minutes to discuss how their two workforce planning groups could creatively work together to advance their individual mandates.

Some participants realized their organizations were already working together, and they were able to discuss current initiatives.

Examples include:

- United Way Elgin Middlesex and The Apprenticeship Network - connected through *London For All* campaign
- ATN and Student Success at UWO – already working together for placements at ATN and Western



Additional connections:

The majority of those matched in this activity had either not been previously working together or were able to discuss new ways that they might work together such as:

- Municipal social services and federal services considered an opportunity to develop education for caseworkers, so staff can help their clients and staff at both levels of government can work on employer outreach
- Municipal social services and United Way offices have similar interests in Poverty Tables and sharing lessons learned regarding precarious housing
- Employment services networks and literacy services networks discussed ways to integrate employment and literacy, such as co-hosting some professional development for staff
- Employment services and business associations talked about sharing information for employers and apprenticeship
- Employment services and data providers identified the potential for each service to come and speak at a LEPC Central Planning Table meeting
- Economic Development Offices and Post-secondary institutions discussed training and collaboration for staff
- Provincial ministry offices suggested more meetings regarding employment and economic development between local ministry offices
- Community Futures offices and employment services proposed sharing workshops on newcomers
- The Francophone Network and local community college discussed a potential partnership to host a francophone workforce summit
- Post-secondary institutions and economic development offices found that they were passionate about employers
- Employment services and social services offices recognized that there is increasing participation of people with social assistance and OW supports. Caseworkers are now decentralized and the organizations have an opportunity to learn from each other.
- Municipalities and community services highlighted engaging people with soft skills. How do we develop soft skills? How do we work together on motivational learning circles from different perspectives? Where are the opportunities for financial literacy? How do we get people to come to Soft Skills training and learn about them?
- United Way and employment services discussed sharing more about the free services in the LEPC area
- Local Immigration Partnerships and the literacy network saw an opportunity to identify newcomers and English skills to better map and understand newcomers and literacy requirements



Post Yarn Activity

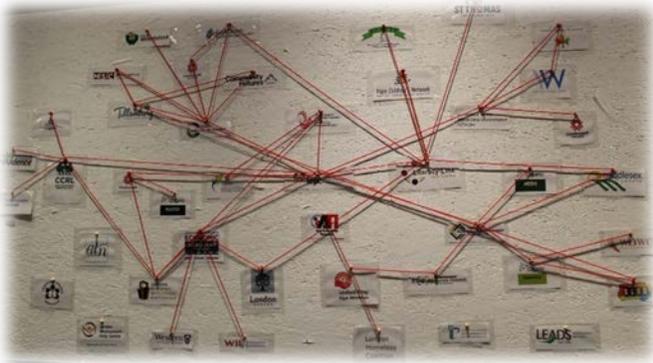


Figure 1: Before

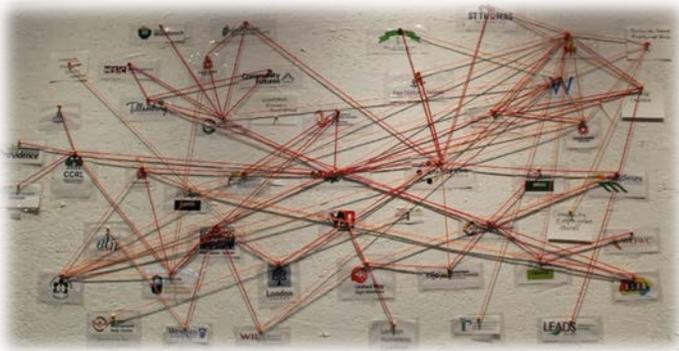


Figure 1: After

Conclusion

The Workforce Summit was intended to bring local workforce planning initiatives together to explore common connections and develop increased synergy across the LEPC area. Feedback from participants indicated that the event was successful with 96.43% of respondents indicating the Summit provided information they would be able to use.

The Summit achieved the intended result as 92.86% of respondents felt the Summit will help to increase coordination between workforce planning bodies with 78.58% of respondents identified at least one workforce development issue they plan to work on in partnership with another planning body.

Participants also indicated that they would like to meet again in six months in order to continue the discussion and broaden connections between the various planning initiatives. This renewed commitment from key stakeholders in workforce planning that will support the true integration of workforce planning across the LEPC area, as our area addresses our local workforce issues.

Prior to the Summit, participants had identified other agencies with which they connected for workforce planning purposes. Those connections were highlighted visually on a board, and the immediate reaction of many participants was to realize the numbers of agencies that they had failed to mention. As the afternoon unfolded, and the puzzle matching activity concluded, the connections from that activity were captured on the board as well.

The objective was to draw attention to the number of connections that agencies have and to encourage them to think of the full breadth of their potential partners on workforce planning in the future.

Participants were encouraged to follow-up with their new connections over the next six months at which time the LEPC staff would connect with participants to see if any new or expanded workforce activity had come about as a result of connections made at the Workforce Summit.

Appendix A: Agenda

Workforce Planning Summit May 17, 2018

Registration and light lunch	12:30 – 1:00 PM
Welcome and Introductions	1:00 – 1:15 PM
Panel Discussion	1:15 – 1:45 PM

Panellists

- ❖ **Shelley Harris**, Director of Education and Settlement
YWCA St. Thomas–Elgin
- ❖ **Jeff SurrIDGE**, Chief Executive Officer
Community Employment Services Oxford
- ❖ **Lee Smithson**, General Manager
The Small Business Help Centre (Middlesex County)
- ❖ **Robert Collins**, Director of Workforce Development
London Economic Development Corporation

Group Q & A	1:45 – 2:30 PM
Networking Break *Meet your Match*	2:30 – 3:00 PM
Puzzle Activity	3:00 – 3:55 PM
Next Steps & Wrap Up	3:55 – 4:00 PM

Appendix B: Workforce Summit Evaluation Summary

May 17, 2018

1. Did the Summit provide information you are able to use?

Not at all	Somewhat useful	Unknown	Very useful	Absolutely	Total
0	4	1	15	8	28
0%	14.29%	3.57%	53.57%	28.57%	100%

Results:

- 96.43% of respondents believed the Summit provided information they'd be able to use.
- 82.14% of respondents think the information provided was very useful or absolutely useful
- 1 respondent was uncertain if they will be able to use the information provided

2. Do you feel the Summit will help increase coordination between workforce planning bodies?

Not at all	Somewhat useful	Unknown	Very useful	Absolutely	Total
0	2	2	18	6	28
0%	7.14%	7.14%	64.30%	21.42%	100%

Results:

- 92.86 of respondents feel the Summit will help increased coordination between workforce planning bodies
- 85.72% of respondents feel the Summit was very useful or absolutely useful in increasing coordination between workforce planning bodies
- 2 respondents were uncertain

3. At today's Workforce Planning Summit, did you identify at least one workforce development issue you plan to work on in partnership with another planning body?

Yes	No	No response	Total
22	3	3	28
78.58%	10.71%	10.71%	100%

Results:

- 78.58% of respondents identified at least one workforce development issue they plan to work on in partnership with another planning body
- 3 respondents did not provide an answer to this question

If so, can you provide an example?

- Coordinate training for staff
- Reminded me of the interconnectedness
- Opportunities for entrepreneurship workshop
- Enlightening immigrant about what literacy really entails
- Soft skills
- Work together to provide better information for our staff and clients about what each other does
- Apprenticeship (2)
- Homelessness
- Engaging with mental health and immigration – talk to Jeff Surridge
- Who should be at the table that isn't?
- Provide data for French language workforce summit
- Reinforce existing priorities
- Reframing language to an asset-based model
- I want to hear about a few programs mentioned by partners, so I will contact them after

4. What would you recommend for next steps in coordinating workforce planning across the region?

- Clarify roles: what are organizations doing that is unique and respect and promote these, rather than duplicate.
- Another one of these in six months
- Synergizing services available in the community. Identifying common grounds to assist efforts of job seekers and attending to employer needs.
- Connecting with more events; connecting local planning and information to the LEPC
- Continue discussions with each other; more events to bring people together
- Share email lists and slides
- Just keep sharing
- Deeper dive into future issues – labour shortage, AI, robotics, electric cars, solar energy, etc.
- Case study on positive outlier (Oxford) to map possible best practices
- More service mapping – outcomes – results; perhaps use Design Thinking Model/Method
- Facilitating more days like this
- A broader audience with private sector – maybe even some Assistant Deputy Ministers from various government ministries
- Continue the dialogue to next steps/working groups



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