



LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PLANNING COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic
Plan

April 2016-
May 2017



lepc

Local Employment
Planning Council

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Part 1: LEPC Strategic Plan Introduction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 3, 2015 the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities announced that London-Middlesex-Oxford-Elgin would be one of the eight Local Employment Planning Council pilots to be undertaken in Ontario. In this area, the Local Employment Planning Council is supported through a partnership of the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board and Literacy Link South Central.

The Local Employment Planning Council will have a focus on employment, training and the human resources that impact on employment. Our focus is on improving both employers' access to talent and opportunities for job seekers now and in the future to successfully participate in our local labour market.

Using a data-driven planning process, employment planning initiatives across the London Economic Region are invited to work together to encourage economic and workforce growth in our communities.

This strategic plan covers the duration of the pilot project, April 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017, although the issues that will be addressed will require a long-term commitment from all concerned.

In selecting the issues to be addressed immediately, the Central Planning Table chose to focus on some actions with immediate impact balanced with some actions that will lay the groundwork for future activity.

The ten actions selected are outlined in Part 3 of this strategic plan. Potential partners on any of the actions are invited to contact the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board or Literacy Link South Central for more information or to get involved in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot.

The Local Employment Planning Council will have a focus on the following strategic goals during the pilot project:

1. To develop a clear understanding of what are the new/changing skill requirements in the workforce and what are the future trends (**Performance Commitment 1**)
2. To improve attraction and retention of employees by identifying and understanding the differences between successful job attraction and retention strategies and communicating these strategies to employers without Human Resources departments (**Performance Commitment 2**)
3. To ensure employed and unemployed people have the essential skills needed for employment (**Performance Commitments 2 & 7**)
4. To support clients in the employment goals by improving the number of referrals to the most appropriate service (**Performance Commitment 10**)
5. To prepare the region to fill employment vacancies over the long term by discovering which jobs in the region are hard-to-fill and what specific skill-sets are required for those jobs (**Performance Commitment 4**)
6. To assist employers in developing and maximizing a skilled and productive workforce through the increase of the use of incentives and supports available to employers (**Performance Commitment 5**)
7. To improve employer access to available skills in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area in the short-term (**Performance Commitment 6**)

8. To gain and share a greater understanding of the causes of the current and predicted talent shortages in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area (**Performance Commitment 7**)
9. To identify changing entry-level requirements in occupations with potential progression within major sectors and among different-sized businesses (**Performance Commitment 8**)
10. To meet current and anticipated future demand for talent by identifying and sharing best practices for attracting external talent to the London Economic Region (**Performance Commitment 2**)
11. To support job seekers and employers by identifying and sharing best practices for communication among service providers (**Performance Commitment 10**)
12. To address the high number of clients on Ontario Works (**Performance Commitment 9**)

Update on the work undertaken on these strategies will be shared at regular intervals through newsletters, reports, fact sheets, in-person presentations, webinars and social media. To receive notice of these updates, please contact the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board or follow us on social media.

The Local Employment Planning Council will support the improvement of labour market conditions in our local communities through labour market information and intelligence, integrated workforce planning, service coordination for employers, research and innovation and sharing best practices found within our area and outside London-Middlesex-Oxford-Elgin. By working together, we will ensure that this area grows in prosperity for our local communities.

BACKGROUND AND MANDATE

The Local Employment Planning Council pilot for the London-Middlesex-Oxford-Elgin area is an eighteen-month project with the start-up phase from December 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 and the operating phase of the pilot from April 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017. This strategic plan covers the operating phase of the pilot.

Vision	A local labour market that works
Mission	To improve the local labour market through enhanced collection and distribution of labour market information and community engagement to drive innovation in service delivery based on solid evidence.
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve employer success with meeting their talent needs • To improve service coordination amongst local service providers • To improve integrated local planning
Who we help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers - today's workforce (employed and unemployed) • Groups - who are under-represented in the workplace • Employers - who value a skilled workforce • Educators/Trainers - who promote lifelong learning • Economic Developers - who attract employers and support their retention and expansion • Youth - who are tomorrow's workforce • Taxpayers - who expect accountability of public funds

The Local Employment Planning Council will use the customer statement of the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board.

Mandate:

The Local Employment Planning Council will have a focus on employment, training and the human resources that impact on employment.

Local Employment Planning Councils (LEPC) will support the improvement of labour market conditions in local communities through:

Labour Market Information and Intelligence: expanding current understanding of local labour market issues and needs and improving access to labour market information resources.

Integrated Planning: serving as a central point of contact and key facilitator for linking employers, service providers, other ministries and levels of government and other community and coordinating groups to identify and respond to labour market and workforce development challenges and opportunities, and gaps in employment, training, human, and social services, through collaborative planning.

Service Coordination for Employers: acting as a hub for connecting employers, industry associations, sector groups and other employer groups with appropriate employment and training services to address their workforce development needs. Working with local employment and training service providers, including those outside the Employment Ontario network such as Ontario Works Employment Assistance and Ontario Disability Supports Program - Employment Supports, to coordinate services to employers, such as job development and job placements.

Research and Innovation: collaborating with community stakeholders to develop projects related to the research and piloting of innovative approaches to addressing local labour market issues or opportunities.

Sharing Best Practices and Promising Approaches: working with provincial, regional and local communities , including other Local Employment Planning Councils, to identify and share local best practices.

Reporting Requirements and Review Dates:

Reports and information to the community will be provided as identified in Part 3 Performance Commitments of this strategic plan. In addition, there will be regular communication activities undertaken by the Local Employment Planning Council to keep individuals within the London Middlesex-Oxford-Elgin area informed and engaged in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot project.

Reports to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Quarterly Status Reports

Ten Financial Reports

Auditor's Report due July 31, 2017

Reports specified by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities from time to time

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB) and Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) have current capacity that positions us very well to achieve the objectives of the LEPC pilot. We have established credibility providing services and leading community planning, not just to the LEPC pilot area as a whole, but also at the grassroots, individual community level. We have demonstrated ability to manage multiple, large contracts with numerous and diverse stakeholders. Both EMOWPDB and LLSC, as legal entities, have current board policies and procedures. We recognize the importance of having strong governance that responds to changing needs in our communities.

Both the EMOWPDB and LLSC have solid organizational capacity developed over the last two decades, including numerous partnerships ranging from workplace literacy to apprenticeship to joint planning at the community level.

Since 1997, the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (EMOWPDB) has successfully delivered the MTCU Local Board contract - leading demand- focused workforce planning in the region, developing local labour market information and tools for the community, and facilitating the development of local partnerships (440+ partners since 1998). An emphasis on evidence-based workforce planning ensures that workforce planning facilitated by EMOWPDB responds to the real workforce needs of local employers.

Under previous contracts the EMOWPDB has developed expertise to conduct ongoing research with employers through partnerships, leveraging existing relationships and continuously cultivating new ones. The EMOWPDB's extensive networking results in broad reach to employers across the London Economic Region.

The EMOWPDB provides access to local labour market information through Worktrends.ca and a variety of labour market information publications highlighting workforce demand information from employers. Labour market information presentations are done for area service providers and as a precursor to community workforce planning meetings.

The EMOWPDB consults with employers on an ongoing basis through the annual EmployerOne Survey, focus groups, regular attendance at meetings of employer associations and one-on-one consultation. Technology is used to facilitate these interactions, allowing for employer input on their terms and increasing the opportunity for employer engagement in labour market discussions.

Staff previously working on other projects funded through the EMOWPDB have been transferred to the Local Employment Planning Council as it ramps up activity. These include a Data Analyst, London Project Director, part-time Oxford Project Director, and administration person.

In order to facilitate increased employer engagement and labour market information sharing through the Local Employment Planning Council, two full-time Project Officers for Elgin and Middlesex have been hired along with a Communications Officer.

The Communications Officer has developed the communications strategy for the Local Employment Planning Council pilot project. The plan addresses the importance of frequent communications to a variety of audiences, including the use of social media. Technology programs and platforms (e.g., GoToWebinar) have been acquired to facilitate communications. The communications strategy includes targeted messages to the various audiences for the pilot and includes both internal and external communications streams. An intranet attached to the Local Employment Planning Council website will house information for the governance members. Working committees will use available software such as Base Camp or Google Docs for document sharing any materials that are in development.

Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) has served the LEPC pilot area since incorporating and achieving registered charitable status in 1991. Over this time, LLSC has developed an understanding of both the issues affecting these local areas as well as the local organizations that work within these areas. LLSC has managed more than 75 projects with strong fiscal responsibility, multiple partners and funding from all levels of government. Succession planning, risk protection and mitigation management strategies ensure high-quality results.

Through funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), LLSC facilitates literacy service planning by looking at client pathways - employment and academic routes that lead to employment. LLSC's long-time association with MTCU gives staff a strong understanding of what MTCU means when it talks about "integrated planning" and of the partners that need to be included in the planning processes and discussions. LLSC has also learned about the importance of relationship building, data collection, data analysis and the reporting of results - not just at the level of individual programs, but at the community level - and how to translate this information into actions at the local level. LLSC, along with community partners, plans for significant changes in the labour market environment.

The planning that LLSC facilitates happens at the local level. LLSC staff schedule, prepare for, facilitate, record minutes for and follow up on 24 planning meetings per year in Elgin, in Oxford and in London/Middlesex, producing a Literacy Services Plan for each of these communities annually.

LLSC promotes the sharing of best practices and promising approaches - through face-to-face sessions, and, more recently, through the increased use of technology, facilitating the sharing of information and best practices locally, regionally (across the Western Region) and provincially.

LLSC has played a key role in research and innovation. Often, the result of a research and innovation project is the dissemination of information/training/best practices - as was the case with LLSC's MTCU-funded project on literacy service planning training - literacyserviceplanning.ca. In 2014, LLSC introduced and awarded to two local agencies its own "Innovation Fund" - to recognize and support innovation within our networking area.

A full-time Service Planning Coordinator and part-time GIS data specialist will work under the direction of the Executive Director of LLSC in partnership with the Executive Director and staff at the EMOWPDB to form the Secretariat for the Local Employment Planning Council pilot.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The model constructed for the Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) pilot project incorporates existing expertise and local employment planning tables into a more robust regional model

Central Planning Table:

The Central Planning Table is comprised of representatives from each of the local Workforce Committees, which have been in place for up to seven years and which cover the geographic area of the local LEPC pilot project. Where possible, representatives were elected by their respective tables as representatives to the Central Planning Table. It is intended that as the model matures, all representatives from the Workforce Committees and the designated Subject-Matter Working Groups will elect future representatives to the Central Planning Table. Until the model matures, representatives have been appointed on an interim basis until such time as the newly-established sub-committees choose to elect representatives. In addition, representatives from the private sector have been invited to participate on the Central Planning Table based on their expertise in planning, understanding of the labour market and interest in community-based initiatives. Current members of the Central Planning Table are employers, employment service providers, government representatives, economic development representatives and education representatives.

This process took longer up front in creating the full Central Planning Table, but we have found that this approach creates real buy-in at the local level for the Local Employment Planning Council pilot - establishing the Local Employment Planning Council as a local movement toward integrated workforce planning rather than being perceived as belonging to just one organization.

Workforce Committees:

Established workforce development committees are collaborating as Local Employment Planning Council partners in outreach to employers, local service coordination for employers, data collection from employers and the broader community, and input to local service planning as the goals of the Local Employment Planning Council at the regional level align with the goals of the individual workforce committees at the local level. This community willingness to collaborate on the Local Employment Planning Council will ensure a pilot project that ties directly into the local communities. These multiple avenues of employer engagement will position the Local Employment Planning Council pilot to address labour market adjustment activities across the region. The composition of the Workforce Committees mirrors the composition of the Central Planning Table within their respective geographies.

Subject-Matter Working Groups:

The Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford pilot has five additional working groups.

A Francophone Working Group discusses issues related to local employment for the francophone community from both the opportunities and the shortages perspectives.

We have chosen to take a slightly different approach to developing a Service Provider Working Group. The London Economic Region has far too many service providers to make a single working group with representation from all sectors and interest groups feasible. Instead, we have chosen a Service Provider “workshops” approach, which enables us to provide full access to planning for all Service Providers in our area. Holding open workshops for all service providers allows us to gather pertinent information for the Central Planning Table and to ensure information flows between the Central Planning Table and the full range of service providers across the pilot area

The Inter-governmental, Inter-ministerial Committee brings the municipal, provincial and federal perspectives to the Local Employment Planning Council.

The Labour Market Information Committee provides advice on what local labour market information research is available, as well as providing advice and expertise to the Central Planning Table on labour market information during the pilot project.

The Employer Engagement Working Group ensures that the LEPC works with local employers and employer groups to identify workforce development needs and issues.

Secretariat:

The governance structure of the Local Employment Planning Council is supported by the Secretariat comprised of staff through the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board and Literacy Link South Central. The Secretariat has responsibility for managing the day-to-day operations of the Local Employment Planning Council, including ensuring proper financial management of the Local Employment Planning Council pilot, completed contract deliverables for the project and communication of activities and results of the pilot project across the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area

Part 2: Strategic Plan Development

BACKGROUND ON LOCAL LABOUR MARKET CONDITIONS

The London Economic Region (LER) is a geographical entity defined by Statistics Canada as area 3560, which includes the counties of Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford. The purpose of the regional delimitation is to offer a portfolio of demographic and economic statistics for a diverse geography including the urban centres of London, St. Thomas, and Woodstock in the case of LER. This geography matches the coverage and mandate area of the Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) pilot.

In 2015, the LER region was home to a working age population of about 553,500 people involved, or not, with the regional labour market (Statistics Canada, 2016a, January). Among this population, 351,100 people were actively participating in the labour market (labour force), which produced a participation rate of 63.4 percent, leaving 202,400 people “not in the labour market.” During the same year, the LER had 330,400 people employed, leading to an employment rate of 59.7 percent, and 20,800 people unemployed but actively seeking work, producing an unemployment rate of 5.9 percent. A longitudinal view over the same statistics for the past five years reveals a few interesting facts, e.g. the working age population showed a slight increase year-to-year, while the labour force remained almost unchanged at around 350,500 people over these years with marginal fluctuations; employment improved between 2011 and 2015 from 319,600 to 330,400 people respectively while unemployment reduced between the same years from 29,700 people in 2011 to 20,800 people in 2015; the unemployment rate showed a major improvement between these years dropping from 8.5 percent in 2011 to 5.9 percent in 2015. However, although tremendous improvement has been achieved on the LER labour market conditions a major point of concern remains the significant deterioration of the participation rate, from 65.6 percent in 2011 to 63.4 percent in 2015, in concert with the contraction of the employment rate in the region from 60 percent in 2011 to 59.7 percent in 2015, see the graphs attached within the appendices.

Several hypotheses have been put forward in the literature to explain the current trends. Among these, “the aging population” and the impact of the “Baby Boomers' generation” stands as a broadly-accepted reason for the current challenges facing the labour force in Canada (Fougere, Harvey, Mercenier, & Merette, 2009). In 2011 some of the “Baby Boomers' generation” achieved the retirement age (65 years old) and presumably they initiated their transition to retirement. For the next 18 years, starting in 2011, it is expected that we will see a large change of the demographic structure in Canada, and consequently in the LER as well. Some of this population transition is compensated by the entry into the labour force of the iGeneration (1996-present).

However, the compensation is not equivalent, considering that a large proportion of the iGeneration will remain involved with training and education for many years to come, as well as the fact that the “Baby Boomers' generation” is the largest cohort of population in the Canadian population.

A second, broadly shared reason regarding the decreasing participation and employment rates is attributed to long-term unemployment (Kroft, Lange, Notowidigdo & Katz, 2014, June). There is a fairly large proportion of the total unemployed in Ontario that have been out of work for 27 consecutive weeks or longer, 20 percent in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2016b, January). This group is classified as being on long-term unemployment. Although the proportion of this group to the total unemployed decreased from 24.13 in 2011 to 20 percent in 2015, the value is still around twice the pre-economic crisis of 2008-2009 levels (see chart in the Appendix). It is thought that some people from this group are entering and exiting the labour force from time to time resulting in their skills and education not keeping pace with changing employment requirements and making them more at risk for future unemployment. Males age 55 and older in this group are most affected by this trend. (see Statistics Canada, 2016b, January).

A third, broadly shared hypothesis is that during hard economic times, e.g. after the economic crisis of 2008-2009, numerous unemployed people choose to change their career, pursuing different educational paths, or participated in education and training to gain more skills in the same field or a related field. Therefore, it is suggested that more people choose to educate themselves during recessions than during economic booms (Long, 2014). This group might also have contributed somewhat to the current participation and employment results in the regional labour market. The easy access and low cost of consumer credit after 2008-2009 recession supported the interest in higher education.

The Local Employment Planning Council will investigate and identify the factors contributing to these labour market results at the regional level. The complexity of the regional economy suggests that numerous other factors have played their part in our local labour market. A balanced approach will look closer at the demand side too, as well as to the interaction between the supply and demand.

Briefly, the LER has 18,273 employers and 37,017 businesses with no payroll employees, some of which could become employers in the near future if business growth occurs. From the business size perspective, 50% of the employers fall under the category Micro (1-4 employees), 48% of the employers are classified as Small (5-99 employees), between 1% and 2% of the employers are Medium (100-499 employees) and less than 1% are Large employers (500+ employees), see attachments.

The top regional economic sectors with the largest number of employers are: "Retail trade" with 2,533 employers; "Construction" with 2,171 employers; and "Health care and Social assistance" with 2,117; "Other services (except public service)" with 1,748 employers; and "Professional, scientific and technical services" with 1,556 employers; "Accommodation and food industries" with 1,213 employers; and "Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting" with 1,198 employers (see the attachments).

The top five regional employment sectors are: "Manufacturing" with 49,100 employed; "Trade" with 47,200 employed; "Health care and Social assistance" with 43,600 employed; "Educational services" with 25,700 employed; and "Construction" with 24,900 employed.

The 2015 regional media news were dominated by major consolidations in large retail chains. Some of the changes started in 2014 with Target announcing their withdrawal from the Canadian market, but Home Depot announced hiring more people to expand their operations during spring and summer of 2015, while Walmart also announced intentions of expansion and Loblaw continued its integration of Shoppers Drug Mart into its operations. Best Buy has been able to absorb the Future Shop stores into its operations, whereas Tiger Direct has been opening and closing big box stores in the London Economic Region (LER). The Canadian based groceries chain, Farm Boy, has been developing a strong presence in the LER during the past year, opening three locations in London. Ikea announced its presence in London during 2015.

During the same time in the manufacturing sector, Toyota Boshoku Canada and General Motors - Cami have been receiving government support to re-tool and revamp their manufacturing facilities in the LER (Woodstock and Ingersoll respectively). Smaller regional manufacturers such as Artisan Metal Finishing, Attica Manufacturing Ltd., Armo Tools and Centennial Windows and Doors were following the trend of modernizing their production capacity by investing in machinery and equipment - improving their productivity. In the same spirit, Cargill Added Value Meats and McCormick Canada Inc. have been expanding their production operations. Kellogg's closure was a significant loss for London's labour market.

General Dynamics Land Systems, the largest manufacturing employer in LER (approx. 2,200 employees), has been continuing to hire and expand its production capacity during 2014-2015 to meet its contractual obligations. Other local employers have been receiving federal and provincial support for retooling and improving productivity, e.g. Canada Tubeform and Starlim North America. At the end of 2015, Arva12 Industries won a large contract with Potash Corporation for developing specialized mining equipment.

The change in the price of oil and consequently, of the Canadian dollar on the international markets have been driving regional exports, and thus a revival of employment within the manufacturing sector occurred during 2015. Between 2014 and 2015 the “Goods-producing sector” added around 9,500 jobs, while the “Services-producing sector” shed around 4,000 jobs in the region for a net increase of 5,500 jobs (Statistics Canada, 2016c, January).

The strength in the construction sector at the beginning of 2015 was partly due to various infrastructure, repair and maintenance projects. The demand for residential development was steady due to the low mortgage rates. The below average precipitation levels during January 2015 kept many construction sites going.

As mentioned earlier, government support helped during 2014-2015 in the development of niche industries in the LER, e.g. Voices.com - the online market place that connect businesses with voice over talent. Closely related, consolidations and splits have been happening across the digital creative industry in LER. ATMOS Marketing and ecommerce of Inspiratica merged to become the Northern Commerce (Northern.co). rTraction Canada Inc. split into two divisions - Ellipsis Digital and Engine SevenFour - in order to provide more focused marketing and web development services. Arcane Digital Ltd. and Big Viking Games also have been expanding and transforming their operations during 2014-2015.

Regional transformations were also seen in the education sector, where government involvement lead to expansions and contractions in several areas, particularly in restructuring of health care and higher education (colleges and universities). Statistics Canada (2016c, January) has been successful in capturing some of these changes at a higher level through its Labour Force Survey.

The examples provided here suggest the intense dynamics of the labour market in the London Economic Region. The direction and new developments in various sectors of the regional economy have to be well understood and assessed by the LEPC in order to facilitate and speed up the match between the supply and demand of labour in the region.

Through its annual survey, EmployerOne, the EMO Workforce Planning and Development Board has been able to capture the voice of the employers from the region concerning human resources challenges, hiring and firing practices, and educational and training needs. The 2015 and 2016 EmployerOne survey results indicate that regional employers experienced some difficulty in finding people for specific occupations. In the January 2016 survey, an increased proportion of employers (38%) compared to 2015 (27%) indicated that they had some difficulty in filling jobs (see Attachments). ManpowerGroup (2015) also revealed that 32% of the Canadian employers they surveyed agreed they experienced difficulty filling jobs. These results indicate that there is some mismatch of skills between the demand and supply of the regional labour market. LEPC has the mandate to further investigate this issue and identify jobs that are “hard-to-fill,” the skills in demand, as well as the factors leading to this skills gap in the LER market.

Regional employment service providers play a pivotal role in addressing the skills gap. In the process of matching the existing skills to the demanded skill in the region, private and government- funded employment service providers play their role of facilitating and speeding the connection process. The LEPC will investigate and understand where any efficiencies could be gained through further integration, better communication and coordination among the regional employment and other assisting services.

In order to gather data on labour market trends that had already been identified by various planning groups within the London Economic Region, we engaged a consultant to conduct an environmental scan. Through this e-scan process, we reviewed the labour market trends, issues and opportunities from over 30 planning documents. From this review, a list of the following labour market issues were presented to the Central Planning Table for their consideration.

- Issue # 1 - Promotion of a culture of entrepreneurship
- Issue # 2 - Rise of part-time employment
- Issue # 3 - Lack of essential skills for job seekers and current staff
- Issue # 4 - Apprenticeship - low (*apprentice*) completion rate and shortage of opportunities
- Issue # 5 - High numbers of clients on Ontario Works
- Issue # 6 - Underrepresentation of equity groups in the labour market (*ie persons with disabilities, youth, newcomers, aboriginal*)
- Issue # 7 - Changing skill requirements for introductory jobs
- Issue # 8 - High proportion of people lacking essential employment skills
- Issue # 9 - Need to increase coordination and collaboration among service providers to assist job seekers and employers
- Issue # 10 - Lack of people with industry specific or sector specific skills to fill available positions
- Issue # 11 - Skills gap, especially in hard to fill positions (*ie applicants do not have necessary skills*)
- Issue # 12 - Limited opportunities to advance from entry level to higher paying positions (partially skills issue, partially changing nature of business hierarchies, and retention issues)
- Issue # 13 - Communication and understanding between community services
- Issue # 14 - Participation rate in the labour market is dropping
- Issue # 15 - Age issues in the labour market - a need to understand demographic issues
- Issue # 16 - Need for employer and community strategies for talent attraction and retention
- Issue # 17 - Lack of transportation around the local region (*to get to training or work*)

Through a facilitated discussion, the Central Planning Table grouped the issues where appropriate and then selected the top three issues using four different criteria: most urgent; greatest impact on the community as a whole; most achievable during the pilot; greatest impact for employers; and greatest impact for job seekers. Through these filters eleven issues rose to the top and a twelfth was added as a call for proposal for an innovative demonstration project.

Plan Development

The strategic plan development began with a review of labour market documents from individual communities within the London Economic Region, documents that span the region, and additional documents that looked at Provincial and National Labour market trends. From this review, a list of issues was generated with the intent that the list be shared with the Central Planning Table. All of the issues on the list were supported by local data.

The Data Specialist for the Local Employment Planning Council also developed a labour market presentation, drawing upon data from a variety of sources. This presentation was shared with the Central Planning Table on February 17, 2016, along with exercises to develop a vision, mission and value statements and a draft terms of reference.

A webinar on the pilot project was delivered on February 16 and archived to be used as a background piece for the local community.

To gain additional perspective in the development of the strategic plan, feedback was gathered from service providers from the London Economic Region. The issues that had been identified through the e-scan were reviewed by Service Providers to identify the top three most urgent issues, and to state the

top three issues which, if we worked on them as a community, would have the biggest impact. Finally, wanting to show some tangible results at the end of our pilot, we asked service providers to identify the top issue that they would see as achievable in the next 12 months. There were 36 responses from the service provider survey, representing 8 different sectors across the London Economic Region.

The Central Planning Table met on March 1, 2016 to review the labour market presentation and refine the list of 17 issues down to 11 to be addressed (all of which are supported by local data). This list of 11 issues was determined by the Central Planning Table as the priorities to be addressed in the pilot project. An additional issue was added to the list as the area to be addressed through a call for proposal for a demonstration project by a third-party organization or consortium.

The service provider survey results were shared with the Central Planning Table, showing significant parallels between the priorities as determined by the Central Planning Table and those by Service Providers.

The list of issues were edited into potential goal statements by the LEPC secretariat and were shared with the Central Planning Table for confirmation and inclusion in the strategic plan along with the identification of research areas. Through this process, it became clear which areas should become the topic of the research projects that will be conducted through the LEPC.

The newly prioritized goals were divided into one of three categories: those that could be addressed by service providers (supply focused); those which were employer-related (demand focused); and those which were areas for further research to be executed internally by the LEPC or externally through a call for proposals.

Those goals which were identified as within the domain of service providers were a topic of discussion at the March 10th service provider workshop, which drew 40 attendees, representing a variety of sectors from throughout all of the LEPC service area.

Goals that were employer facing were developed by the LEPC secretariat based on previous workforce planning discussions conducted in each of the four geographies: London, Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford during 2015-2016.

All available strategic planning data was reviewed by the LEPC secretariat for inclusion in the strategic plan on March 14th, and shared with the Central Planning Table on March 15th for feedback and approval.

The following are the strategic goals during the pilot project.

1. To develop a clear understanding of what are the new/changing skill requirements in the workforce and what are the future trends (**Performance Commitment 1**)
2. To improve attraction and retention of employees by identifying and understanding the differences between successful job attraction and retention strategies and communicating these strategies to employers without Human Resources departments (**Performance Commitment 2**)
3. To ensure employed and unemployed people have the essential skills needed for employment (**Performance Commitments 2 & 7**)
4. To support clients in the employment goals by improving the number of referrals to the most appropriate service (**Performance Commitment 10**)
5. To prepare the region to fill employment vacancies over the long term by discovering which jobs in the region are hard-to-fill and what specific skill-sets are required for those jobs (**Performance Commitment 4**)
6. To assist employers in developing and maximizing a skilled and productive workforce through the increase of the use of incentives and supports available to employers (**Performance Commitment 5**)
7. To improve employer access to available skills in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area in

the short-term (**Performance Commitment 6**)

8. To gain and share a greater understanding of the causes of the current and predicted talent shortages in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area (**Performance Commitment 7**)
9. To identify changing entry-level requirements in occupations with potential progression within major sectors and among different-sized businesses (**Performance Commitment 8**)
10. To meet current and anticipated future demand for talent by identifying and sharing best practices for attracting external talent to the London Economic Region (**Performance Commitment 2**)
11. To support job seekers and employers by identifying and sharing best practices for communication among service providers (**Performance Commitment 10**)
12. To address the high number of clients on Ontario Works (**Performance Commitment 9**)

Part three: Performance Commitments

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE

Strategic Goal 1	According to industry research and consultation with area business associations during 2015, there are new businesses that are emerging, and changing jobs that are associated with them (e.g., drone technology, food analytics, artificial intelligence, corporate wellness). There is a need for students and job seekers to be made aware of the emerging and changing skills requirements in each sector to be better prepared for employment		
Deliverable	Produce a series of research reports by sector for service providers, educators and other stakeholders, on changing and emerging skills requirements		
Expected Outcome	Increased understanding of the new jobs/emerging sectors in the workplace will assist education and service providers to better prepare current and potential job seekers for new jobs/emerging sectors Job seekers and students will be better informed of the skills requirements in each sector Performance Measure		
Performance measure	70% of survey respondents (job seekers and students) indicate increased awareness and/or understanding of the new jobs in the workplace. 70% of survey respondents say they will use the information to prepare clients/students over the next year		
Start Date	April 16 th 2016	Complete Date	April 28 th 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from local economic development offices		
Rationale for proposed activities	On October 13, 2015, CBC news reported that Ontario would be the first province to allow road test of automated vehicles while the Toronto Star reported, "Most major automakers, including Ford, GM, Toyota, Audi and Tesla, are developing autonomous vehicles while tech companies, like Google, see huge opportunities to expand their reach..... Meanwhile, Google Inc., envisions a world in which fleets of driverless vehicles replace private cars, providing taxi-like services." Testing of these vehicles is expected to be taking place in the local area as Waterloo, Stratford and London have companies active in this new direction in the transportation industry. In the January 2016 EmployerOne Survey, employers reporting a shifting preference in level of education towards a more educated workforce for all occupational groups. Greater local insight is needed into the current and future skill requirements within sectors identified by the economic development offices in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area as emerging in order to better prepare current and future job seekers for changing demands in occupations.		
Methodology	Sectors will be identified through discussion with local economic development offices. Interviews with employers and key informants will be conducted and responses recorded by Local Employment Planning Council staff using standard questions. In order to ensure consistency, a third-party evaluator will review the questions and the methodology.		

	<p>While the employer sample will not be random, effort will be made to ensure that the sample used reflects employer size, geography and sector that is consistent with our local employer breakdown according to Canadian Business Count.</p> <p>Products to be reviewed by a third-party evaluator</p>
Milestones	<p>Identify sectors for series - June 13, 2016</p> <p>Create first set of standard questions for employer interviews - June 20, 2016</p> <p>Electronic publication of first report in series - September 30, 2016</p> <p>Complete interviews with employers and key informants - January 31, 2017</p> <p>Electronic publication of final report in series - March 31, 2017</p> <p>2 Presentation sessions (1 webinar, 1 in-person) for service providers and educators held - April 30, 2017</p>

Strategic Goal 2	<p>Small business employers (5-99 employees) need new strategies to improve employee attraction and retention. In the 2016 EmployerOne Survey, employers identified expansion as the number one reason for anticipated hires in 2016. This, coupled with 36% of employees 'quitting' their employment, indicates the potential for a great deal of movement in the local labour market in 2016.</p>		
Deliverable	<p>Develop 2 research reports (one attraction and one retention) to identify strategies and best practices that address these issues affecting small business.</p>		
Expected Outcome	<p>Increased understanding by small employers of factors affecting job attraction and retention and best practices they may wish to use to address these issues</p>		
Performance measure	<p>60% of survey respondents indicate increased understanding of factors affecting job attraction and retention</p> <p>50% of survey respondents indicate they expect to use a best practice to address job attraction or retention issues</p>		
Start Date	April 16th 2016	Complete Date	April 28th 2017
LEPC role	<p>Lead with possible partners from Business organizations and other workforce planning groups</p>		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>The high number of employees quitting work reported by employers supports employers' concerns about retention issues and also emphasizes the need for strong attraction strategies. Discussion with local Human Resources specialists suggests that different generations of workers have different expectations of employers and are attracted to some work for different reasons. These generational attraction and retention needs may not be well understood or acted on by all employers. Knowledge of successful attraction and retention strategies used by like-sized businesses will assist local employers in adapting strategies for use in their workplace for the benefit of both employer and employees.</p>		

Methodology	<p>Staff will conduct a literature review to be used as the basis for the creation of common questions to be used for qualitative research. Staff will conduct 8 key informant interviews and 4 focus groups. Results of this research will be captured in two reports (one attraction, one retention).</p> <p>Products to be reviewed by a third-party evaluator</p>
Milestones	<p>Literature review completed - May 20, 2016</p> <p>Local key stakeholder interviews re: employee attraction - May 31, 2016</p> <p>Hold 2 employee attraction focus groups - June 16, 2016</p> <p>Completion of electronic Attraction Study - June 30, 2016</p> <p>Key stakeholder interviews re: employee retention - July 31, 2016</p> <p>Hold 2 employee retention focus groups - August 15, 2016</p> <p>Completion of electronic Retention Study - August 31, 2016</p> <p>14 monthly articles about Attraction and Retention in LEPC newsletter - May 31, 2017</p>

INTEGRATED PLANNING

Strategic Goal 3	<p>There is a need for a more coordinated, effective and integrated system to connect job seekers and employers across the four local areas (London, Elgin/St. Thomas, Middlesex and Oxford). Through community consultation with employers from all four areas in the region, employers have reported frustration at not being able to easily access the talent they need in their immediate area, despite a large pool of unemployed workers within the four areas.</p>		
Deliverable	<p>Create an integrated digital portal to allow employers to communicate directly with job seekers across at least two of the four geographic communities</p>		
Expected Outcome	<p>Stakeholder (employers, service providers, educators and government) awareness of a new digital portal connecting job seekers and employers</p> <p>Partners across at least two of the four local areas will be committed to the new digital system connecting job seekers and employers</p> <p>Employer and job seeker awareness and participation in the digital portal</p>		
Performance measure	<p>Minimum of 40 employers and 100 job seekers participate in the digital portal</p> <p>Minimum of 2 of the 4 Workforce Committees in the London, Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford areas (see rationale) support the integrated digital portal</p> <p>65% of survey respondents (discussions/web./symp.) indicate satisfaction with the community collaboration exhibited around the digital portal</p>		
Start Date	April 16th 2016	Complete Date	May 26th 2017
LEPC role	<p>Lead with possible partners from economic development offices, Social services departments, community futures, Chambers of Commerce/business associations, EO agencies, workforce planning groups, United Way, LIP projects, Literacy services or</p>		

	could be the network, colleges, school boards, private business, OMAFRA
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>Over the last 7 years, in the London Economic Region, there have been Workforce Development Committees established in the four areas of Elgin-St. Thomas (2009), Oxford (2010), Middlesex (2013) and London (2016). These committees consist of representatives from municipal Social Services Departments and Economic Development Offices, Chambers of Commerce, private sector employers, Employment Ontario and non-Employment Ontario service providers, education (elementary through post-secondary), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, literacy network and workforce planning organizations. Numerous projects, approaches and activities related to workforce development are coordinated through these committees and all of the committees are recognized and endorsed by the upper tier municipality in which they live and work. A unique feature of these committees is that the municipal endorsement of the Labour Force Strategy by the municipality has allowed the community partners to respond to requests for proposal from a collaboration with municipal support in a 2 to 4 week time line.</p> <p>However, the committees are all at differing levels of development with only the Oxford Workforce Development Partnership having developed a partnership brand, web presence, cooperative job posting website and numerous activities, which were developed through dedicated staff support. There is an opportunity to build upon past work and leverage the learning from one community to another under the Local Employment Planning Council. The Local Employment Planning Council will foster and promote the development of the Workforce Development Committees to increase their capacity to address workforce development issues at the local level as community partners (service providers and educators) prepare job seekers (present and future) and employed individuals with required core and technical skills. Collaboratively developing a regional digital platform will improve access to talent for employers and at the same time strengthen ties between Workforce Committee areas in the London Economic Region.</p>
Methodology	
Milestones	<p>Inventory of current workforce initiatives and platform tools - August 31, 2016</p> <p>Community discussion, sharing workforce activities across the London Economic Region - September 30, 2016</p> <p>Begin development of digital platform, based on community feedback - October 31, 2016</p> <p>Launch of digital platform - February 27, 2017</p> <p>Share analytics data report with Workforce Committees - May 15, 2017</p>

SERVICE COORDINATION FOR EMPLOYERS

Strategic Goal 4	Better understanding is needed in each Workforce Committee area (London, Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex) of where and how to support employers that have hard-to-fill vacancies. In the 2016 EmployerOne Survey results, hard-to-fill positions were identified as a key issue for 40% of employers.
Deliverable	Prepare a research report including recommendations for London, Middlesex, Oxford

	and Elgin-St.Thomas, to support employers in filling job vacancies that are pervasively hard-to-fill.		
Expected Outcome	Targeted strategies in each of the four communities (London, Middlesex, Oxford Elgin) of where and how they can support employers that have hard-to-fill vacancies and may need to draw new talent into their communities		
Performance measure	70% of London, Middlesex, Oxford and Elgin Workforce Committee members identify increased understanding of where and how they can support employers with hard-to-fill vacancies		
Start Date	April 16th 2016	Complete Date	March 31st 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from employers, unions, workforce planning boards, schools, Workforce Committees		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>Hard-to-fill positions were identified as a key issue on the Employer One Survey (40% of surveyed employers), as well as through the Central Planning Table of the LEPC Project. Hard and soft skills both contributed to difficulties with hard-to-fill positions. Unlike previous years for the EmployerOne survey where primarily technical skills were identified as hard-to-fill positions, the 2016 results ranged from low or semi-skilled positions to high skill positions. It is unclear why some of these jobs are hard to fill when there are many job seekers in our communities. Each of the four Workforce Committee areas (London, Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford) are at different stages in addressing this issue and the needs of employers in their communities vary considerably. For example, the Oxford Workforce Development Partnership has formed an advisory body with the 30 largest employers in the county providing advice and has also been able to assist a local employer by connecting with Employment Ontario agencies in the Greater Toronto Area to find specific talent. The London Economic Development Corporation has been leading external job fairs with interested employers, setting up job fairs in other communities to attract talent.</p> <p>Note: Workforce Committees are comprised of staff from economic development offices, municipal social services departments, Employment Ontario organizations, community colleges, university, non-Employment Ontario service providers, libraries, Chambers of Commerce, entrepreneurial and business support organizations, literacy network, private sector businesses, government, local United Way and workforce planning organizations.</p>		
Methodology	<p>Standardized questions to employers surrounding hard-to-fill roles as approved by a third party, 1-on-1 conversations with employers, analysis of job postings and vacancies in region & Employer One data & existing data from other sources (including sectoral reviews on national, provincial and local levels), amalgamation of all sources of data, conclusions and recommendations</p> <p>Products to be reviewed by a third party.</p>		
Milestones	<p>Develop standardized questions for employers about hard-to-fill positions - May 31, 2016</p> <p>Engage 200 employers over the course of the project - December 15, 2016</p>		

	Analyze data gathered from employers - February 28, 2017 Develop tailored, targeted recommendations for each area and the region - April 30, 2017 Share results with communities - April 30, 2017
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Strategic Goal 5	Employers need to be more aware of and using existing incentives and supports, so they can provide specific education and training for their employees. The 2016 EmployerOne and Hard to Fill Jobs Report 2016 both indicated two of the top four challenges to providing training or education for employees as "relevant training is not offered locally" and "awareness of existing training programs".		
Deliverable	Create a resource guide that will be used as a tool for speaking with employers about local training incentives and supports that will meet their specific education and training needs		
Expected Outcome	Employers have increased information on local training incentives and are better able to provide specific education and training for their employees		
Performance measure	60% of survey respondents indicate increased awareness of local training incentives and supports		
Start Date	April 16th 2016	Complete Date	March 15th 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from employers, not-for-profits, schools, workforce planning committees, etc.		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>The 2016 EmployerOne and Hard to Fill Jobs Report 2016 both indicated the top four challenges to providing training or education for employees as: cost (score 583); loss of productivity (score 485); relevant training is not offered locally (score 303); and awareness of existing training programs (score 231). The 2015 report, "London Regional Manufacturing Labour Market System " by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and Canadian Skills Training and Employment Council stated, "Employment in manufacturing is characterized by an older average</p> <p>age. High replacement demand is expected during the next decade. Potentially low levels of net migration may pose challenges in recruitment." The London Economic Region is also currently seeing a decrease in the unemployment rate as part of the recovery from the economic downturn that severely impacted this area. In addition, the participation rate for employment in the London Economic Region is below the rates for both Ontario and Canada, with the gap continuing to widen. This recognition of the tightening of the labour market in the London Economic Region makes it imperative that employers train current employees to be able to address skill and productivity issues for their businesses.</p>		
Methodology			
Milestones	<p>Resource Guide created - May 30, 2016</p> <p>Determine options for establishing a baseline employer participation rate in the use of local funded training programs - May30, 2016</p>		

	<p>Begin conducting individual and group conversations - June 1, 2016</p> <p>Public release of resource guide to community - August 15, 2016</p> <p>Complete individual (200) and group conversations (25-30) - December 15, 2016</p> <p>Improve employer participation rate in the use of local funded training programs - April 30, 2017</p>		
Strategic Goal 6	Employers need an easy and coordinated way to quickly access a wide range of talent from across the region (all of Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex and London). EmployerOne 2016 showed 38% of employers are having difficulty finding the right staff to fill current positions - an increase from 27% in 2015 and 59% say they expect to hire in 2016.		
Deliverable	Host a fall regional Job Fair for employers who are hiring, to enable them to quickly source employees from across the region		
Expected Outcome	<p>Employers who have current openings will be able to draw talent from a wider area - across the region, not just locally, to fill vacancies</p> <p>Job seekers will have increased access to opportunities with employers that they would not normally access in a local Job Fair</p>		
Performance measure	<p>55% of employer survey respondents indicate satisfaction with their ability to draw talent from a wider area to fill vacancies</p> <p>55% of job seeker survey respondents indicate increased access to opportunities with employers that they would not normally access in a local Job Fair</p> <p>4,000 London and Area Works page views</p>		
Start Date	April 16 th 2016	Complete Date	December 23 rd 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from CTV London, London Economic Development Corporation, City of London, Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex, MTCU, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board (London & Area Works Partnership).		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>Job Fairs have always been part of the employment service landscape, but they have been primarily organized by individual service agencies and employers are inundated. Job fairs are the most time consuming method of looking for employees for business and there is no guarantee that the talent they need will be attracted to the job fair. Having multiple employers present increases the odds of success for all employers as it raises the profile of the job fair for job seekers. Having the local television station as one of the partners guarantees promotion and coverage of the job fair as part of the successful London and Area Works partnership. One of the agencies that was featured in a segment of London and Area Works reported receiving 85 enquiries about the program they offered from people who were currently unemployed and not attached to any services.</p> <p>The Local Employment Planning Council proposes to work collaboratively and innovatively to address this issue. In the January 2016 EmployerOne Survey, 190 of the 320 respondents reported that they anticipate hiring in 2016. This represents 59% of the</p>		

	employers who answered this question and is up slightly from the 56% of the respondents who anticipated hiring in 2015. The regional Job Fairs will provide rural employers with the opportunity to expand their reach to attract potential candidates from within London and will provide London employers with the opportunity to reach a greater number of potential candidates than they might have been able to do via a London-specific Job Fair. Employers have confirmed that they need to seek talent from across the London Economic Region.
Methodology	The survey questions will be vetted by the third-party evaluator. The products will be reviewed by a third party.
Milestones	Weekly London and Area Works segments - September 12 - December 5, 2016 Communications campaign to promote London and Area Works segments and website - September 6 - December 5, 2016 Updates to website - September 12 - December 5, 2016 Fall Job Fair - October 4, 2016 Report on Job Fair - October 28, 2016 Report on London and Area Works campaign - January 31, 2016

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION:

Strategic Goal 7	Statistics Canada data shows the labour force participation rate in the London Economic Region continues to drop (65.6% in 2011 to 63.4% in 2015) despite improvements in local labour market conditions. This drop is occurring in the primary working group age (25-54). There is a need to understand why the participation rate is down so communities can determine how to re-engage these potential workers.		
Deliverable	A third party researcher will conduct a research study to analyse the specific causes and contributing factors in the drop in the labour force participation rate in the London Economic Region.		
Expected Outcome	Increased understanding of the drivers of the labour force participation rate drop to better inform the members of the LEPC governance structure, employers, service providers and other stakeholders of the drivers to inform workforce planning both within the individual communities of Elgin, Oxford, Middlesex and London, and across the region as a whole		
Performance measure	80% of Central Planning Table and other members of the LEPC governance structure indicate an increased understanding of the drivers of this local labour market issue (who is and isn't participating and why/trends)		
Start Date	March 30 th 2016	Complete Date	September 30 th 2016
LEPC role	Funder for a steering committee, developed specifically for this project, will drive the direction and effective completion of this research		
Rationale for	about market research and key issues identified through other planning documents		

proposed activities	<p>showed that labour market participation is an issue across the London Economic Region. Despite a labour market that continues to show growth in jobs, the London Economic Region has a lower participation rate than that shown provincially and federally, and the gap continues to widen. Of particular concern is the participation rate for those 25 to 54 years of age - considered the prime working age group. In 2011 their participation rate was 84.9% and rose in 2012 to 86% as the local economy showed signs of the start of recovery from the economic downturn. However, since 2012, the participation rate for the 25 to 54 years of age cohort has been steadily dropping to sit at 83.7% in 2015. A clear understanding of the drivers at work behind the local drop in labour force participation will provide the Local Employment Planning Council and local communities with the information needed to develop strategies to encourage people who have become despondent about their labour market opportunities to re-enter the labour force leading to increased economic health in our local communities.</p>
Methodology	<p>The research team will prepare a focused literature review regarding latest findings on Canadian, provincial and local participation rates for various demographic groups and will conduct quantitative data research and analysis. The team will then facilitate dialogue to gather primary data by engaging job seekers and those not in the labour force through a variety of approaches including 20 field interviews, survey distribution and 9 focus groups. Engagement will be targeted to reflect geographic, demographic and labour force population diversity within the Region. There will be a particular emphasis on meeting with the Indigenous communities through one of the research team members who will act as Indigenous advisor for those stakeholder consultation. The information collected will be summarized in a report prepared for the Local Employment Planning Council and the broader community.</p> <p>Products to be reviewed by a third party.</p>
Milestones	<p>Distribute request for proposals - March 21, 2016</p> <p>Select successful candidates - March 31, 2016</p> <p>Conduct a literature review - May 18, 2016</p> <p>Quantitative analysis of data - June 12, 2016</p> <p>Conduct 20 interviews, 9 focus groups September 12, 2016</p> <p>Draft report - September 30, 2016</p> <p>Final report - October 30, 2016</p> <p>Share the report with the community - November 30, 2016</p> <p>Create 2 strategies - February 27, 2017</p>

Strategic Goal 8	<p>The London Economic Region Vicinity Jobs Report for the fourth quarter of 2015 and the 2016 EmployerOne Survey indicated that entry-level requirements are changing for manufacturing, construction, agriculture, tourism, technology and healthcare sectors. Service providers, employers and job seekers need easy to understand and industry specific information to help them post and apply for jobs successfully using current entry-level requirements.</p>
Deliverable	<p>Develop fact sheets and YouTube videos detailing entry-level requirements for</p>

	targeted sectors in the London economic region.		
Expected Outcome	Increased employer, job seeker and service provider understanding of selected entry-level requirements for six major sectors within the London Economic Region		
Performance measure	60% of survey respondents who reviewed the factsheets report that they are better prepared to hire and/or apply for entry-level positions within the six sectors 6 YouTube videos available through the LEPC website - hits will be monitored (goal - 30 hits per video).		
Start Date	April 16th 2016	Complete Date	March 30th 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from Workforce Development Partnerships / Committees from throughout the LEPC service area, employers from targeted sectors		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>From the quarterly London Economic Region (LER) Vicinity Jobs data and local consultations with employers, it has been identified that there are job postings that ask for a level of education not necessary to perform the job. There are also sectors and job categories that are legitimately increasing in terms of skills required for entry-level jobs. Confusion exists around which skills are required for which entry-level positions, making it difficult for service providers to prepare their clients with lower skill levels for current labour market opportunities without doing extensive research. A successful local model of the type of fact sheet proposed, Workforce Focus will be used as the model for this new addition to local labour market information. The research will allow the Local Employment Planning Council to engage employers in a discussion about the "real" level of skills required for employment. Since we are facing potential labour market churn with "quits" leading separations for both labourers and service workers according to 2016 EmployerOne data, it is critical that we match job seekers to entry-level positions effectively. Providing this additional labour market information to employment services should allow them to increase their efficiency and effectiveness by limiting the need for additional individual labour market research.</p>		
Methodology	<p>Resources: Statistics Canada data - National Household Survey 2011 - identify entry-level positions within the London Economic Region in the selected sectors; review Vicinity jobs data; review Analyst data via OMAFRA; review NOC and NAIC data on skill-sets required for occupations; identify questions to ask of employers and receive feedback on the questions from the third-party evaluator; collect primary data through consultation with employers and employer organizations; code employer responses, identify trends</p> <p>Research techniques: data review; individual consultations with employers (qualitative interviewing) and focus groups</p> <p>Risks: Employers are difficult to reach to gain the primary data; data is difficult to get within one or more of the six sectors; questions are asked and interpreted differently by interviewers</p> <p>Mitigation strategies: The London Economic Region LEPC has staff designated for Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex and London - these workforce development staff are dedicated to outreach/discussion with employers; a target of at least 5 employers</p>		

	<p>will be sought within each of the selected sectors; workforce development staff will receive training and the survey for employers will be piloted before full implementation</p> <p>Products to be reviewed by a third party.</p>
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific sub-sectors, geographies - May 31, 2016 • Review existing data - May 31, 2016 • Review lists of job vacancies, and hard to fill positions - November, 2016 • Conduct focus groups and 1-on-1 discussions with employers - December 15, 2016 • Complete factsheets - February 1, 2017 • Complete and host 6 YouTube videos - Feb 28, 2017 • Distribute information and gather feedback/complete evaluation - March 31, 2017

Strategic Goal 9	<p>The Central Planning Table identified a need to reduce the continued heavy reliance of unemployed workers on Ontario Works support post-economic downturn. According to municipality case load data, the number of individuals and families who receive Ontario Works support increased during and immediately after the recent economic difficulties, and remains high despite local unemployment rates dropping and job opportunities increasing.</p>		
Deliverable	<p>Call for Proposal for a Community Stakeholder to develop and pilot innovative solution(s) to reduce reliance on Ontario Works</p>		
Expected Outcome	<p>Innovative solution identified and piloted to reduce reliance of unemployed workers on Ontario Works</p>		
Performance measure	<p>Conduct an open, transparent and evidence-based assessment and selection process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop project funding agreements with clear deliverables, payment schedules and legal accountability • Ensure project funds are spent appropriately and represent value for money through audit and accountability measures 		
Start Date	July 11th 2016	Complete Date	May 19th 2017
LEPC role	Funder		
Rationale for proposed activities	<p>Ontario Works clients have been a priority for local employment and training services for many years. Various programs and approaches have been tried, many with good results. Yet, the number of clients in receipt of Ontario Works in communities' remains higher than expected, given labour market conditions. Data is not available, however current case loads (15,905 in April 2014) are anecdotally reported by the municipal Social Service Departments in the London Economic Region to be twice or more the volume prior to the 2008/2009 recession. Addressing this issue is important to all levels of government, as well as to</p>		

	community stakeholders. The London Economic Region Local Employment Planning Council pilot would like to offer the communities it serves the opportunity to demonstrate innovation, with the possibility of replication, in addressing this community issue. Many employment and pre-employment programs have been developed, but there still appears to be a gap.
Methodology	A variety of Calls for Proposal will be reviewed to develop the local Call for Proposal to be issued by the Local Employment Planning Council. The Call will be launched as broadly as possible in the Local Employment Planning Council pilot area through Local Employment Planning Council communications and through the existing networks of planning groups connected to the Local Employment Planning Council. The Local Employment Planning Council Secretariat will meet with the successful applicant to sign the contract and review expectations on time lines for the interim and final project reports. The financial payments to support the project will be based on the successful completion of milestones identified in the project proposal. Expectations for funding acknowledgement for both the Local Employment Planning Council and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities/Employment Ontario will be documented and signed off by the successful applicant prior to the start of the project and the first installment of payment.
Milestones	<p>Develop a Call - May, 2016</p> <p>Launch the Call - June 1, 2016</p> <p>Opportunity for questions and answers - June 15, 2016</p> <p>Call closes - July 25, 2016</p> <p>Select applicant - July 31, 2016</p> <p>Review interim report - December, 2016</p> <p>Monitor the project - August 1 - May 31, 2017</p> <p>Final report received and innovative solution developed and piloted by third party local stakeholder - May 15, 2017</p> <p>Report publicly available - May 22, 2017</p>

SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND PROMISING APPROACHES

Strategic Goal 10	There is a need for more effective communication between and among Employment Ontario and non-Employment Ontario service providers to better support employers and job seekers. There is currently little or no regular communication between or among Employment Ontario and non-Employment Ontario service providers making it difficult to gain accurate data.
Deliverable	A guide and assessment tool to be used for developing best practices for effective communication between and among Employment Ontario and non-Employment Ontario service providers
Expected Outcome	<p>An increase in effective communication among service providers both in and outside of Employment Ontario</p> <p>Staff at all levels throughout organizations in the LEPC service area improve their</p>

	understanding of service integration		
Performance measure	65% of service providers report an increase in effective communication as a result of the pilot activities 70% of service providers report an increase in understanding of service integration		
Start Date	April 1 st 2016	Complete Date	May 31 st 2017
LEPC role	Lead with possible partners from employment, education, human/social services, public & mental health, settlement services, employers, economic development, indigenous support organizations, unions, etc.		
Rationale for proposed activities	There are numerous service providers within the London Economic Region. In the past, it has proven difficult to launch initiatives that are understood and participated in by all staff. Through this strategic goal, organizations will be provided with the tools, supports and best practices they need to enhance communication both within their own organizations and externally with other service providers. Anecdotally, there continue to be reported differences in how agencies record their data in CaMS. In some cases Employment Ontario services may communicate a great deal among other Employment Ontario agencies but do not necessarily connect with non-Employment Ontario agencies who are also part of the workforce planning effort. The Local Employment Planning Council will bring them all together and provide a vehicle and/or set expectations for planned and effective communication.		
Methodology			
Milestones	<p>Catalogue of planning processes in place within Municipalities, Local Immigration Partnerships, OW, EO, etc. – July 16, 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute visual continuum chart for effective communication – October 31, 2016 • A guide that outlines best practices for effective communication – December 15, 2016 • Sample Memorandums of Understanding, policies and/or referral protocols – January 31, 2016 • Service providers discuss best practices & their implementation – May 31, 2017 		

Conclusions:

The Local Employment Planning Council project wishes to acknowledge the leadership of the members of the Central Planning

Table and thank the members of the sub-committees for participation, review and feedback in the preparation of the strategic plan. This strategy has been built upon the work within the London-Middlesex-Oxford-Elgin area that has preceded it.

This Local Employment Planning Council pilot project looks forward to continuing and growing these strong partnerships across our area.

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