

# Trends Opportunities and Priorities

## Research Report 2007



### **Peel - Halton - Dufferin Training Board**

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La Commission de formation  
de la main-d'oeuvre de  
Peel - Halton - Dufferin

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# Trends Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) Research Report 2007

"The need to adjust according to the dictates of the labour market cannot be over emphasized, as the issues of today may not be the concerns of tomorrow. The government needs to be continually proactive in its initiatives regarding this and I believe channels such as this survey are instrumental to the realization of the temperament of the labour market."

*Insight response from 2006 Labour Market Survey*

## Purpose

The TOP Report provides a brief summary of key labour market trends, opportunities and priorities for the Peel Halton Dufferin region and has been designed as a tool to facilitate community consultations and create appropriate actions to address local concerns.

## Report Methodology

### Consultations with Key Stakeholders

The Peel Halton Dufferin Training Board (PHDTB) sub-committee provided the consultant with a list of key labour stakeholders and decision makers. Representatives from government, non-profit agencies, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, youth and newcomers were all included. Consultations via telephone interviews were conducted with approximately 30 of these stakeholders from July through October 2006.

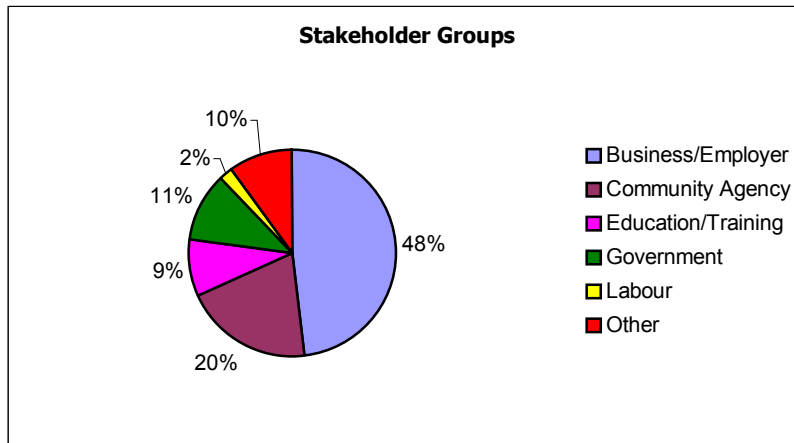
### Qualitative Research

As of October 1, 618 participants responded to an online survey. The Board is extremely pleased with the breadth of responses gathered. Last year's participation garnered 122 responses. This year's target was a minimum of 200 participants. All stakeholders identified last year were invited to respond to this year's survey. In addition, special emphasis was given to Human Resource specialists, as their expertise was deemed essential to providing a comprehensive assessment of local labour market needs. Finally, participants were encouraged to cascade the survey to all interested parties within the PHD region. As a result, the large number of respondents was a collaborative effort by many individuals. The 2006 survey included 13 questions. The respondents were asked to rank last year's priorities and identify new issues and potential trends. Finally, respondents were provided with 5 open-ended questions to encourage them to provide additional thoughts and suggestions.

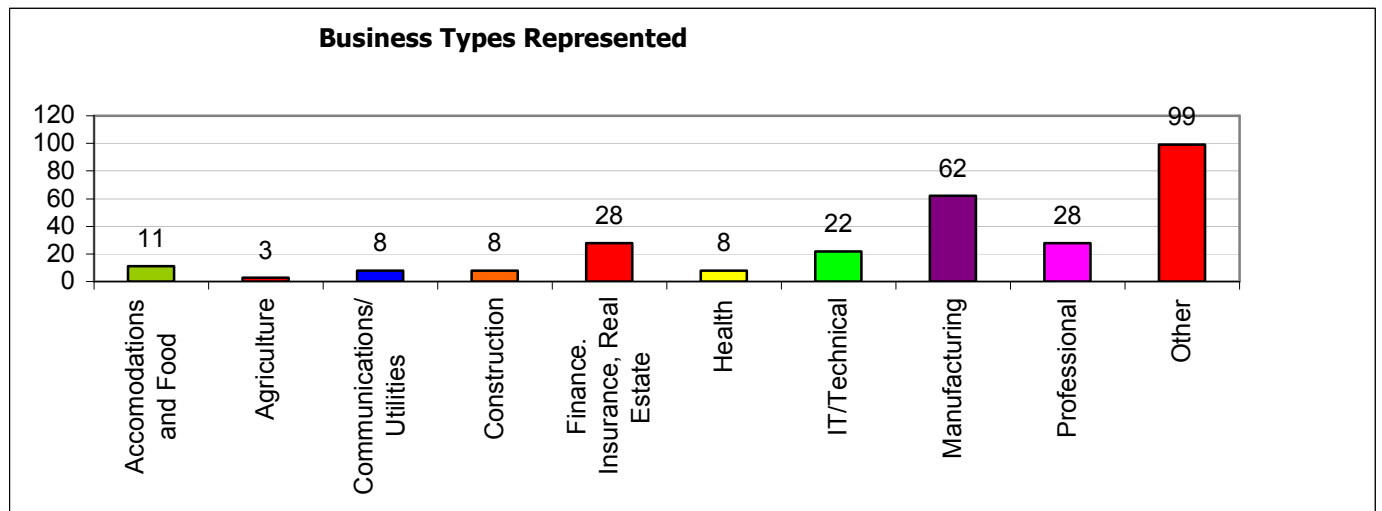
### Secondary Data Research

Secondary sources of data included websites, reports, publications, and discussions with economic development personnel.

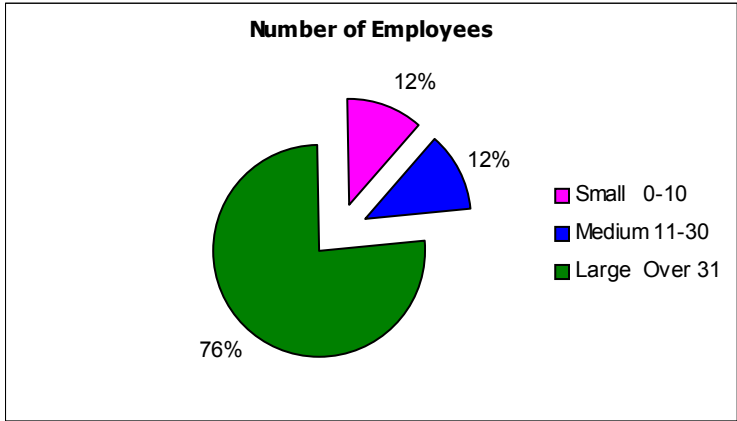
## Survey Results



Businesses and community agencies were the predominant respondents of the survey. Both have strong labour market intelligence on which to base their analysis of training needs and skills requirements.

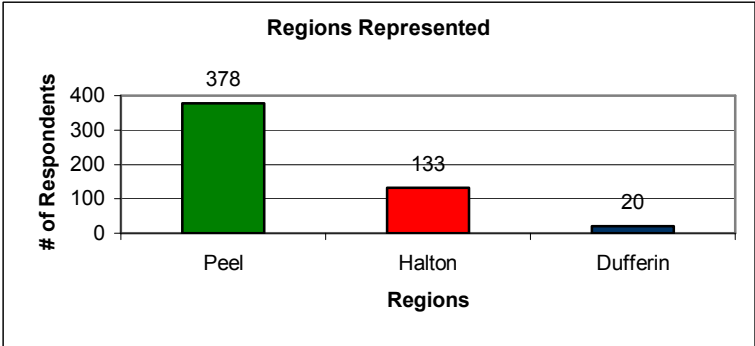


A cross section of businesses responded to the survey with a significant response from large manufacturers and professional/financial services. 'Other' includes responses such as retail, a chemical distributor, analytical testing services and logistics.

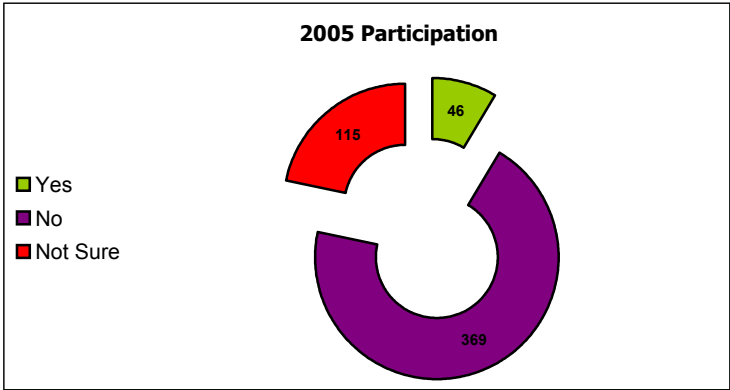


This year, we had an excellent response from large organizations and businesses. Over ¾ of the respondents had more than 31 employees.

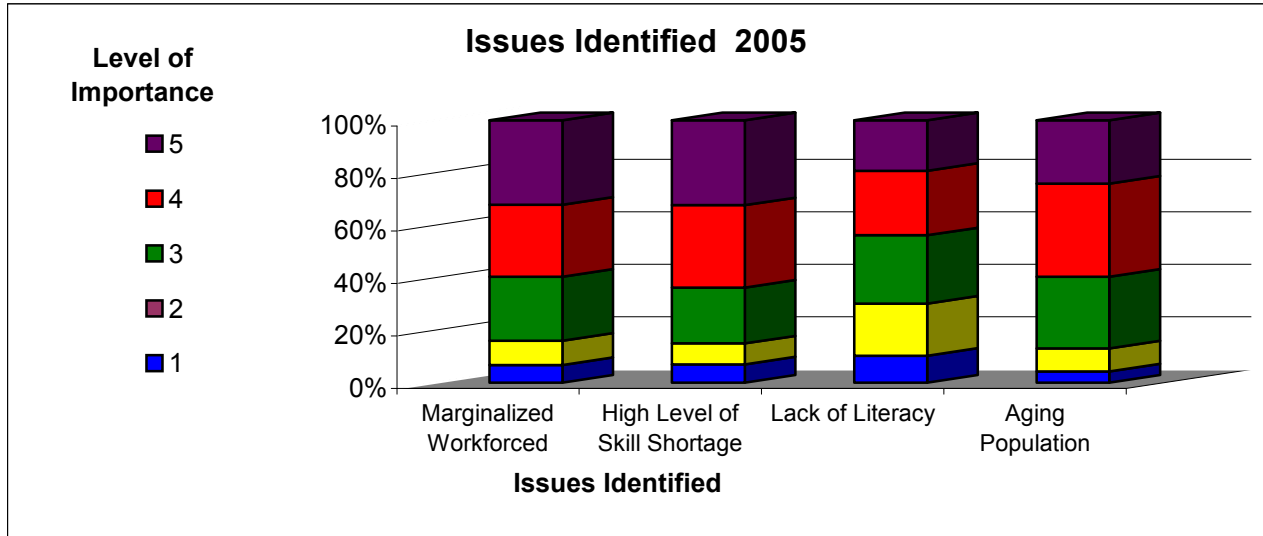
Peel region’s response was significantly higher than Halton and Dufferin (despite a focused effort to draw additional responses from the Dufferin region).



Regional identification for this year does not reflect a number of agencies, organizations or businesses that operate in more than one region (Based on last year’s statistics, and additional comments, a strong number of agencies are represented in two or more regions.)



Participants were asked if they participated in the 2005 survey. Of the 530 responses to this question, 46 remembered participating; 363 did not recall the survey; 115 answered they were unsure.

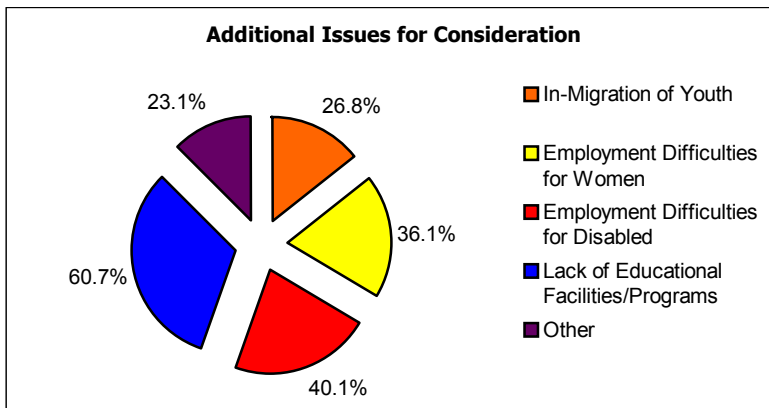


\* Level 5 (at the top) represents highest level of importance with 1 (at the bottom) representing the lowest level of importance

### Issue Level of Importance Identified This Year (2006)

Level of Importance	1	2	3	4	5
Marginalized Workforce	33	45	119	<b>134</b>	<b>157</b>
High Level of Skill Shortage	34	39	104	<b>153</b>	<b>158</b>
Aging Population	21	43	<b>133</b>	<b>173</b>	118
Lack of Literacy	50	97	<b>127</b>	<b>120</b>	94

Note: 2006 over 2005 data was collected using different methodology and a wider survey sample. The results shown above display the actual number of responses by level of importance as opposed to a percentage of the survey sample.



The need for additional education and training programs and services was a constant in response to all survey questions. This chart shows about 61% of respondents consider this a priority issue.

## Regional Trends

### Newcomers

With the declining birth rate and the expected baby boomer retirements over the next 5 to 10 years, employers are recognizing that steps need to be taken now to review their hiring practices, including removing inherent barriers in their recruitment process of qualified foreign trained individuals and trades people who are already in Canada.

A number of businesses highlighted, as accomplishments, a significant increase in the number of newcomers that they had hired this past year and their sensitivity to meeting the needs of their staff. One business shared that in their effort to provide a welcoming environment, they have implemented a 'prayer room' for their Muslim employees. As well, several highlighted hiring a significant number of newcomers in higher paying professional positions.

Although businesses recognize the need to hire more newcomers, as they are currently impacted by skilled labour shortages, they are concerned with language barriers, comparable qualifications, and industrial requirements (i.e. legal and regulatory issues). Other concerns include the ability of newcomers to fit into the current business and work cultures and their business communication skills for presentations/meetings. Some trade associations are taking on the challenge by developing 'in-house' programs to train potential new employees. There is a desire by those associations to work in partnership with government, educational institutions and agencies to collaborate on 'best practices' and required needs for their industry.

It was also acknowledged that newcomers face numerous challenges when they uproot their life, their extended families and their natural support system to move to a new country. For some, who are proficient in English, the transition may be focused on identifying living accommodations, employment and adapting to new culture expectations. For many, language is a major roadblock to meeting employment requirements. Without intense language training, as well as employment standards and cultural expectations, full productivity is delayed. There is still a need to a coordinated approach both locally and within the various levels of government.

### Youth

Skill training is slowly making its way into the mainstream notion of career options for youth and parents. Respondents suggested that more attention should be paid to promoting all apprenticeship opportunities and not be limited to construction, auto mechanics and electrical. This would maximize the range of skills training for youth and allow them to find the best avenue to match their abilities and interests.

A positive initiative that has been developed over the past 12 months is the Future Force Halton Initiative developed by the Halton Industrial Education Council. It is a response to getting out more accurate information on local business labour market requirements for short term and long term local planning. From an employment perspective, business is able to clearly articulate their current and future labour market needs. Also, young people and educational institutions have a better understanding of future employment opportunities. The Future Force Halton Initiative recently held a very successful event in which businesses, youth, parents and educational institutions participated. The goal was to promote a cultural shift from seeing the various educational institutions from a hierarchical perspective to a continuum. Currently 85% of parents promote university as a first option. The goal of the event was to promote universities, colleges and trade schools as all equal and valuable.

## Experienced Workers

According to respondents to this year's labour market survey, the skills and experience of the baby boomer generation is a resource that should be utilized. Several suggestions were put forward, including mentorship possibilities with youth, promotion and inclusion in apprenticeship programs (see below), entrepreneurship programs for aging workers and extension of the retirement age, to keep experienced workers engaged and earning in our labour force.

Many mature and talented (50+) labourers, who get caught in downsizing, are unable to secure employment with other larger corporations. These individuals are motivated and committed to working but face discrimination and lack of interest by employers who see them as expensive, less productive and less adaptable than their younger counterparts.

Employers need to be aware of advantages in working with and hiring experienced workers and integrating them into existing training and internship programs currently targeted at younger workers. Employers are increasingly recognizing that they are facing a labour shortage and will need to develop Human Resource strategies to address the emerging trend.

## Apprenticeship

This year's survey/consultations highlighted the continual need for skilled trades. Comments showcased a multi-sectorial approach which not only included promoting the skilled trades and apprenticeship programs to youth, but also to newcomers, experienced workers, disabled and women as viable employment or future business opportunities.

In addition, some of the respondents felt that apprenticeship programs should focus on unemployed ('at risk') youth by providing them with access to employers in the skilled trades while others felt the focus should be on promotional activities such as a 'trades worker mentorship' program, 'on-the-job training' programs, or 'apprenticeship-trades shows' which would create a buzz for the industry as well as providing youth with meaningful opportunities.

Employers still feel that there is lack of communication around the benefits and support provided through the apprenticeship program. They also highlighted the need for apprenticeship programs in many sub-trades; e.g. framing in new home construction.

Educational facilities and agencies working with young people feel that there is still a large gap between individuals accessing apprenticeship training and companies willing to employ them, especially within the major industrial sector. Several respondents stated that apprenticeship opportunities are still difficult to obtain. It was suggested that there may need to be additional incentives offered to employers.

## Disabled

Two areas of accomplishments were identified for this past year:

- ❑ One large business highlighted that they were in the process of providing abilities and awareness training from the Peel Halton Dufferin Coalition for Persons with Disabilities;
- ❑ Another organization shared that they have opened, this fall, the only Practice Firm in Canada geared exclusively for Persons with Disabilities. They have successfully placed over 200 clients in employment over the past year and are now in the client-testing phase of research for a blended learning curriculum for cross disabilities in employable skills.

Some challenges that were identified included an ongoing chasm between the availability of training and counselling services for persons with disabilities, and the willingness of companies to make the accommodations required for their employment.

There was also concern regarding the disconnect between the job placements secured for the disabled and their actual medical and physical requirements and limitations. Their disabilities, variations of energy levels, doctor's appointments and fluctuating levels of illness affected their productivity and therefore the employer/employee relationships.

Finally there is a concern that major funding cuts in programs designed for the disabled may have negatively affected the training levels of Ontario Disability Support Program providers.

## Issues

### Funding

Respondents shared a great deal of frustration regarding the number of programs, timelines, constant changes, complex funding criteria and funding shortfalls. Examples cited were well-established, successful programs losing funding while the same programs was awarded to new services providers, resulting in inconsistent and possibly unreliable source of services for the clients.

Another concern regarded the increasing levels of 'red tape' and reporting requirements to meet provincial and federal commitment announcements without adequate lead-time. Funding cutbacks are not in alignment with increased demands/needs for outreach and training.

Finally, it was noted that after school program funding is limited making it difficult for women in full-time employment to properly supervise their children. Extended parental absence could potentially impact child safety and the levels of youth violence.

### Multi-Sector Partnerships

The need for an improved multi-sector partnership is critical for the success of any strategic implementation in the areas of employment creation and skills development. The survey results demonstrate a need for a coordinated program strategy across the region and the establishment of benchmarks to measure progress.

### Referrals/Client Support

Respondents would like to see more consistency in program mandates and requirements (such as intake processes); centralization of services (one commented that persons with disabilities already have a hard time with transportation and should not be referred from one place to another); and more continuity of programs.

### Industrial

#### Construction

***The Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA)***, which is located in Mississauga and works closely with their members from the Peel Halton Dufferin region, was able to distinguish labour



market issues in their sector including shortages in the availability of project managers, estimators, site supervisors, and engineers, in addition to the already recognized shortage in the skilled trades. Current OGCA initiatives include:

**In-house Training:** A training and accreditation program called 'Gold Sealed Certified' The intention is to have a recognized standard of qualifications for their members.

**Career Opportunities:** A partnership with local schools to increase awareness of management opportunities within construction.

**Educational Partnership:** A 4-year Management Program in Construction at George Brown College.

**New Committee:** An education committee is currently in discussions regarding methods to access the labour resources provided by immigrants. One of their current initiatives is the development of a communications program to decrease language and literacy barriers. The association would like to create partnerships with educational facilities and non-profits that work with the immigrant sector and are willing to source and fund trainers within the industry.

Resource documents include:

A Study of Assessment and Recognition of Foreign-Trained Workers Credentials in the Construction Industry. [www.csc.ca.org/pdf/ForeignWorkerSummary-e.pdf](http://www.csc.ca.org/pdf/ForeignWorkerSummary-e.pdf)

An Internet site with national construction industry career information was created by the Construction Sector Council. It contains information on job descriptions, apprenticeships, job prospects, education and training as well as audio and video presentations. The site provides links to 600 other related sites in Canada. [www.careersinconstruction.ca](http://www.careersinconstruction.ca)

Construction Looking Forward: Labour Requirements for 2005 to 2013 for Ontario  
[http://www.csc.ca.org/pdf/CSC\\_ontario\\_report\\_revised.pdf](http://www.csc.ca.org/pdf/CSC_ontario_report_revised.pdf)

## Regional Highlights

### Methodology

Secondary source research – websites, reports, publications, discussions with economic development personnel in:

- City of Brampton
- Town of Orangeville
- Halton Region
- Town of Oakville – Oakville Economic Development Alliance
- Town of Halton Hills
- City of Mississauga
- City of Burlington
- Greater Dufferin Area Chamber of Commerce
- City of Mississauga
- Service Canada
- Town of Milton

## Key Findings

### Regional

Accurate regional labour market statistics have been constrained by a reliance on the 2001 census report. Although the 2006 census has been completed, results have not yet been released. Another limiting factor is that Peel Halton Dufferin is included as part of the Greater Toronto Area for the collection of monthly Labour Force Survey data by Statistics Canada making a local breakdown very difficult.