

# 2003 EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ISSUES



Social Planning Council  
of Cambridge and North Dumfries

Social Issues Forum Series

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## Background

Welcome to this 2003 Employment & Training Issues paper which provides a summary of the discussion which took place at the October 15<sup>th</sup> 2003 Employment & Training Forum at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts as well as some supplementary employment and training information.

The forum on employment and training issues furthered the Social Planning Council's commitment to better understand and prioritize local social issues and assist the community in mobilizing the community to address unmet needs. The Social Planning Council has a rich history of providing data and information to social service organizations, policy makers and funders. The Social Planning Council believes that research on the health and well being of communities, with an emphasis on measuring progress being made and where more work is needed, is critical for long-term community sustainability.

## Employment and Retraining in Cambridge Forum

In March 2002 the Social Planning Council's Social Issues Advisory Committee (SIA) hosted a community forum on Poverty and Basic Needs that examined the issues of: working poor, employment and retraining, Special Needs, Housing & Homelessness, Food, and Youth. Of the many recommendations that came out of that forum, was the need to examine further the employment and training issues in Cambridge specifically.

The Employment and Training Forum was held on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts.

Close to 30 people attended the event with representation from numerous community stakeholders.

The goals of the forum were to:

- identify employment and training needs in Cambridge,
- to highlight existing community initiatives addressing those needs,
- to provide a venue to discuss strategies for engaging individuals who need training and employment assistance locally, and
- to identify individuals or agencies that could provide some leadership in implementing these strategies.

Participants in the Forum were divided into three groups. Each group discussed five questions: Are there other employment and/or training needs in Cambridge that should be addressed, what is going on in the community to address the needs/issues as identified, how do we engage people who need training and/or employment assistance to make sure we are meeting their needs, What strategy should be put in place to build our local capacity to address needs or issues as they emerge, and who could provide some leadership in developing and implementing a strategy? Summaries of this discussion are outlined below.

### What employment and/or Training needs in Cambridge need to be addressed?

- Training and services are often located outside of Cambridge
- Lack of accessibility
- Barriers for new immigrants
- Lack of training and opportunities for older workers
- Programs for youth with no work history
- Employer Education on issues of accessibility, cultural awareness
- Advocacy for those facing barriers
- Under-employment

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- Educating public about services available
- Need for one central service for information/planning/referral
- Inadequate services for Cambridge

A recurring theme was the need to break down barriers between employment and training services and the people needing to access those services.

#### **What is going on in the community to address the needs/issues identified?**

- Burnett Career Services
- Bridging Employment Supports
- Community Employment Services (CMHA)
- YMCA Immigrant Services
- YMCA Speaking Circles
- ODSP – employment supports can be accessed through ODSP with out being on income supports
- Langs Farm Villiage Association
- Lutherwood CODA
- Francophone Centre
- Cambridge Career Connections
- Information Cambridge
- Northern Lights

It is recognized that the above is not an exhaustive list, for more information on programs and services please contact Information Cambridge or see the electronic Inventory of Programs and Services.

Underlying themes were the need to find better ways to get appropriate information to clients and the need to support people using services with childcare and transportation needs.

#### **VALUABLE RESOURCE**

The Inventory of Programs and Services (IPS) is a bilingual web sit providing access to a comprehensive searchable data base of local, provincial and federal employment programs and services.

Visit the website at [www.ips.iwin.ca](http://www.ips.iwin.ca). This web site is a project of the local boards of Ontario and is funded by HRDC and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities.

#### **How do we engage people who need training and/or employment services?**

- provide good service with good processes
- make sure systems are responsive (such as processing EI applications on-site when there are massive layoffs)
- have information readily accessible in multiple! formats (pamphlets, payroll slips, mailouts...)
- include support for childcare and transportation for those who need these services
- evaluate services and programs regularly
- get into the community
- have one centralized location for service and information

#### **What strategy should be put in place to build our local capacity to address needs or issues as they emerge?**

- Have providers of employment and training services meet regularly for the purpose sharing information and improving linkages between services
- Establish a centralized first point of contact for clients with trained staff who are aware of all services
- HRDC-WWTAB Cambridge only job expo (as done in Guelph and Waterloo)
- Form a linkages group or focus group to provide regular and ongoing opportunities to discuss issues and share information
- Engage clients as customers
- Create Cambridge only posters/pamphlets
- Have annual forum on issue

#### **Who could provide some leadership in developing an implementing a strategy?**

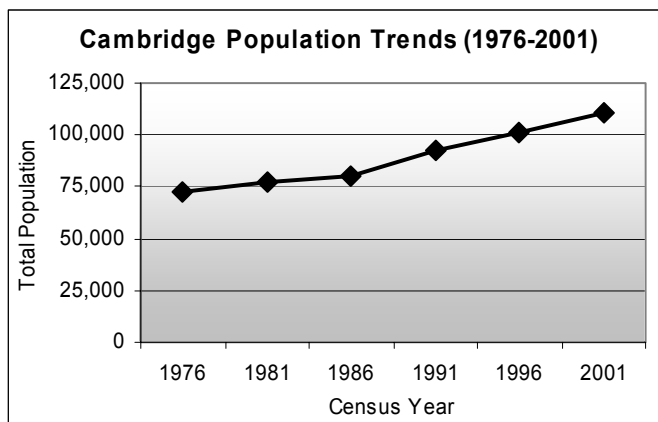
- Strike a committee with representation from various employment services led by the Social Planning Council
- WWTAB take lead with such a committee
- WWTAB organize and host local job expo

## Local Context

The following 2001 Census data from Statistics Canada provides a foundation for the rest of this report on local issues and trends<sup>1</sup>.

### Population

- In 2001, the population of Cambridge was 110,370.
- Between the 1996 and 2001 census the population of Cambridge grew by 8.8%. In the same period, Waterloo Region grew by 8.2% and in Ontario the average growth rate was 6.1%.
- It is projected that the population of Cambridge will grow from just over 110,000 in 2001 to over 130,000 in the year 2016. These 2016 [footnote -projections were made by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in their *1998 Region of Waterloo Statistical Profile: Population and Households*. It is based on the 1996 census population rather than the 2001 census data).



- 28.7% of the population of Cambridge are 19 years and under, while 11.0% are seniors aged 65 and over.
- The number of those aged 45 to 64 is expected to increase by 30%, while those 65 to 69 are expected to increase 31%, highlighting an aging workforce, which has implications for training and employment. over 80 years of age are projected to increase 43%.
- The median age in Cambridge is 35.2 years. Across Waterloo Region the median age is 35.3 years, and across Ontario it is 37.2 years.

### Diversity

- 17.9% of the population first learned and still understands a language other than English or French. This is slightly higher than the 17.1% in 1996. The language a person first learned and still

understands is often called their mother tongue. 1.6% of the population's mother tongue is French.

- 79.1% of the population of Cambridge was Canadian-born compared to 72.3% of the population of Ontario being Canadian born or 80.9% across Canada.
- 3.5% of the population of Cambridge (3790 individuals) immigrated to Canada in the previous five years.
- There were 775 people of Aboriginal origin – this is an increase from the last census in 1996 from 0.4% to 0.7% of the population.
- 9.1% of the population was a visible minority, with the largest groups being South Asian (3,150 persons), Black (1,745 persons), Southeast Asian (1,090), Chinese (1,030) and Latin American (950). The amount of visible minorities increased from 7.5% in 1996.

### Income Trends

The 2001 Census data reveals interesting trends in income over the past decade.

The rich got richer in the 1990's, while the lower and middle classes stayed roughly the same, including the number of children living in low-income families. Census data from 2001 reveals that income from 8 371 020 families across the country was virtually unchanged from 1999-2000 (footnote - CBC News. "1990's a good decade for the rich: Statistics Canada." On-line at [http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2003/05/13/census\\_income\\_030513](http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2003/05/13/census_income_030513))

- The families in the top 10 percent made 28 percent of all the money earned in 2000 – up from 26 percent in the 1980's.
- The bottom 10 percent accounted for approximately two percent of all money earned, the same as they were in 1990.
- 18.4 percent of children were living in low-income families in 2000 this number has declined only slightly from the 1981 level of 19.4 percent.
- The minimum wage rate in Ontario (\$6.85/hr) has been frozen for the last eight years (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, February 2003). In our previous issue on Poverty & Basic Needs, the need to address this issue with the provincial government was identified.
- The majority of minimum wage workers in Canada are adults. Four in ten minimum wage earners work on a full-time basis.<sup>2</sup>

## Labour Trends

From the 2001 Census we know the following employment trends for Cambridge:

- 71.3% of the population (15 + years) participated in the work force.
- 4.8% reported working at home, while 87.5% worked at a usual place of work.
- 38.1% of the experienced labour force in Cambridge was involved in the manufacturing and construction industry, 16.1% in wholesale and retail, 14.1% in business services, and 11.5% in health and education.

As revealed in 2001 Statistics Canada data, Ontario had a total labour force participation rate of 67.8 percent, of which 74.1 percent were men and 61.9 percent were women. These rates are only slightly different compared to the Canadian participation rate of 66.9 percent.

According to the Ontario Labour Market Report produced by the province's Labour Market Information and Research Unit<sup>3</sup> the unemployment rate for Ontario edged up in September 2003 to 7.3% from 7.1 % for the previous month. The unemployment rate has been gradually increasing in the province since 2000 when the rate was 6.3%. This is despite the growth in full-time jobs. The national unemployment rate in September 2003 was 8%. The Ontario Labour Market Report is developed using Statistics Canada data.

## Labour Market Information

In August of this year the Waterloo Wellington Training and Adjustment Board (WWTAB) released its Interim Labour Market update. It identified numerous training and employment issues for the following labour market sectors as summarized below<sup>4</sup>.

### **Construction**

Continued growth in this sector is expected as the housing market continues to be strong. However, builders have identified a worsening skilled labour shortage. This is a theme that is repeated in other sectors.

### **Tourism**

The tourism sector has been in decline in the Waterloo region and is not considered a leading employer in the region.

### **Transportation and Warehousing**

This sector is expected to see continued growth over the long term, particularly trucking, which supports the large amount of manufacturing activity in the area. Skill demands are also

increasing as the industry strives to provide more technical and professional customer skills. In addition many existing transportation workers are reaching retirement age.

### **Manufacturing/Automotive**

As many as 1 in 4 jobs in the Southwestern Ontario economy are related to the auto industry, and this sector is a major employer in the area. It too is a sector that faces shortages in skilled trades and other technically skilled occupations.

### **Agriculture**

This sector is dealing with an aging workforce that has resulted in labour shortages, and also is also facing many challenges as a result of rapidly evolving global economic and market conditions. In addition the number of farms has decreased in the Waterloo Region by approximately 12% in the past five years. It would be interesting to explore local opportunities and employment needs in this sector as well; skilled trades are also an identified shortage in this sector.

### **Education**

The education services sector in the Kitcheners Waterloo Census Metropolitan Area is one of the top four growth sectors in the region, with an increase of approximately 5000 positions in 2002.

### **Health Care**

There is a significant shortage of workers with the medical profession and supporting technicians that is complicated by an aging health care workforce, funding issues and other systemic issues.

### **Other**

The Interim Labour Market Update highlights that while many efforts are being made across Canada to improve and attract individuals to skilled trades, there is still a real need to have more employer participation in programs. The Employer Recruitment Strategy Task Force (ERSTF) is identified as working towards increasing employer involvement in the Waterloo Region.

The report describes a study by Larry Smith, a University of Waterloo professor which notes that one of the challenges identified by employers is that there is not necessarily a shortage of apprentices for the skilled trades, but a shortage

of apprentices with both technical skills and “soft skills”, such as work ethic, discipline and motivation.

Similarly, the report notes a persistent downward trend in the participation rates of older workers in Canada, who may have fewer financial incentives and supports to participate in learning and skills upgrading. Other issues highlighting a need for further supports for training and employment services are persons with disabilities, programs targeted to youth and the need to continue focusing on literacy levels in the region.

The full report is available through WWTAB or at their website [www.wwtab.com](http://www.wwtab.com).

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## Summary and Recommendations

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From the trends data and forum comments the following summary comments can be made:

- That Cambridge’s population is increasing and the face of the population is changing – it is older and more diverse than in the past. This results in similar changes to the Cambridge workforce and to the population seeking employment or training assistance.
- There seems to be an increasing number of people receiving low-income – either through low wages or income support programs.
- Despite the rising unemployment over the last few years, there continues to be shortages in skilled trades and professions.
- It seems there are many employment and training programs and services to assist people wanting to find employment or increase their employability. However, it seems that people continue to be unaware of these services or unable to access them due to barriers. It is important to note that barriers to work and training were also identified at the Poverty and Basic Needs Forum in 2002 and have been identified throughout other community research activities.
- Currently, there is little opportunity for Cambridge based employment and training organizations to meet, network and share information. It seems that these organizations would benefit from such a forum.

Based on the information in this paper, the Social Planning Council makes the following recommendations:

- That copies of this report be forwarded to appropriate governing, policy and funding bodies including Human Resources Development Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo’s Employment and Social Services Departments and the City of Cambridge for use in their policy, planning, funding and programming decisions.
- That copies of this report be forwarded to Waterloo Wellington Training and Adjustment Board as well as all other local employment and training organizations for use in their planning and programming decisions.
- That the Social Planning Council explore possible funding opportunities to creatively address community needs and barriers that continue to be identified (e.g. childcare, transportation, living wages).

This paper was compiled by Karen Suk-Patrick and Wendy Adema and the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries. The paper contains a summary of the discussions that occurred at the October 15<sup>th</sup> Employment and Training forum and complementary secondary data.

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The Social Planning Council has also published other research reports on topics such as:

- Housing and Homelessness: The Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities (2003)
- Developing a Cambridge Model of Supportive Housing for Youth (2003)
- Volunteerism (2002)
- Childcare (2002)
- Poverty & Basic Needs (2002)
- Social Issues and Trends (2002)

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For more information about this paper or about other related research, please contact:

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<http://www.socialplanningcouncil-cnd.org>

## Sources

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2001 Census. Note that all census data is for approximately June of the census year.

<sup>2</sup> Caledon Institute of Social Policy, *Ontario's Shrinking Minimum Wage*. February 2003, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, *Ontario Labour Market Report, Vol. 3, 9*, September 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Waterloo Wellington Training and Adjustment Board, *Interim Labour Market Update*, by Todd Gorden, August 2003.