



CANADIAN  
MANUFACTURERS  
& EXPORTERS

Manufacturing  
Insights for a  
Resilient Ontario  
Workforce



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
KEEP  
TRAINING**

---

MAY 2025

# WHO WE ARE

## ABOUT CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS

Since 1871, we have made a difference for Canada's manufacturing and exporting communities. Fighting for their future. Saving them money. Helping manufacturers grow.

The association directly represents manufacturers large and small, across all subsectors, from automotive, aerospace and food to the materials, technology and energy that support them. More than 85 percent of CME's members are small and medium-sized enterprises.

CME's membership network accounts for an estimated 82 percent of total manufacturing production and 90 percent of Canada's exports.

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**CME thanks all the following individuals who participated in the consultation process. Participation in roundtables does not necessarily mean interviewees endorse each individual statement or recommendation in this paper.**

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# INTRODUCTION – WHAT ARE TARIFFS DOING TO OUR WORKFORCE?



## CME MESSAGE

Vincent Caron, Vice President,  
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Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME)

This second Manufacturing Workforce Report comes at a critical moment for Ontario.

2024 began with momentum, with continued investment in new Ontario manufacturing production mandates (especially in electric vehicles and nuclear supply chains) and the prospect of lower inflation and interest rates fueling optimism for manufacturers. In this context, CME launched Regional Industry Councils in 5 regions – Eastern Ontario, Northern Ontario, West Toronto to Hamilton, Windsor to London and Kitchener to Bruce Peninsula. These were meant to support Ontario’s commitment, in its Fall Economic Statement, to establish an Advancing Ontario Made Manufacturing plan and grow our manufacturing workforce to 1 million workers by 2035.

Thanks to timely support from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development, we were able to hold 14 workforce discussions in 13 communities – Mississauga, Kingston, Kincardine, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Windsor, London, Waterloo, Brampton, Hamilton, Aylmer and Etobicoke. Over 80 organizations and 110 people participated. We also leveraged support from York Region as we held 8 one-on-one interviews with local manufacturing employers, which mirrored the themes of our roundtables.

As 2025 arrived however, the outlook quickly darkened. With a flat workforce growth year-over-year, the prospect of wide-ranging tariffs froze the decision-making of companies.

## WHAT IS A REGIONAL INDUSTRY COUNCIL?

A consultative group meeting regularly in a defined geographical area to improve the alignment of workforce development with the needs of local manufacturing employers.

Each group is facilitated by Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), and is composed of:

1. Manufacturers (often business owners, executives or senior human resources leaders);
2. Representatives of local schools (mainly high-schools, colleges and universities);
3. Other local workforce development advocates such as Workforce Planning Boards or Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program coordinators;
4. Observers from the federal or provincial government.

This mood was captured by two CME surveys. The first, held in December 2024, showed many manufacturers immediately paused investments and hiring. Additionally, our Winter Labour and Skills Survey, completed by 50 Ontario manufacturers between January and Mid-March 2025, at the height of the uncertainty that preceded President Trump’s so called ‘Liberation Day’, showed the chill persisted and deepened in the first quarter.

Where does this leave our manufacturing workforce? The first thing is – it is not getting any younger. If anything, the stress of ever-changing trade policy from the White House is only giving it more grey hair. Key workers supporting continuity of operations like electricians and millwright are still hard to find. And with post-secondary education institutions facing dramatic financial shortfalls, they are making difficult choices that are impacting the supply of much needed skilled and technology workers in our regions.

If we see past the current moment, to a world where Ontario and Canada are called upon to provide more processed critical minerals, more high value / low carbon goods and more energy, we will see that MORE urgency in workforce development is needed, not less.

**This is the call to action of this year’s report. Keep calm, carry on. And most importantly, keep training.**





# SECTION 1 - CHALLENGES FACING THE SECTOR

Ontario’s manufacturing sector faced severe labour shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic, with vacancies peaking at 30,100 in 2022, due in part to extensive and unprecedented government support for workers and businesses (see Chart 1). However, as supply chains stabilized, government support was withdrawn, and demand declined due to high interest rates. The manufacturing labour market returned to a more balanced state, with job vacancies falling to 13,900 in 2024, a ten-year low (Chart 2).

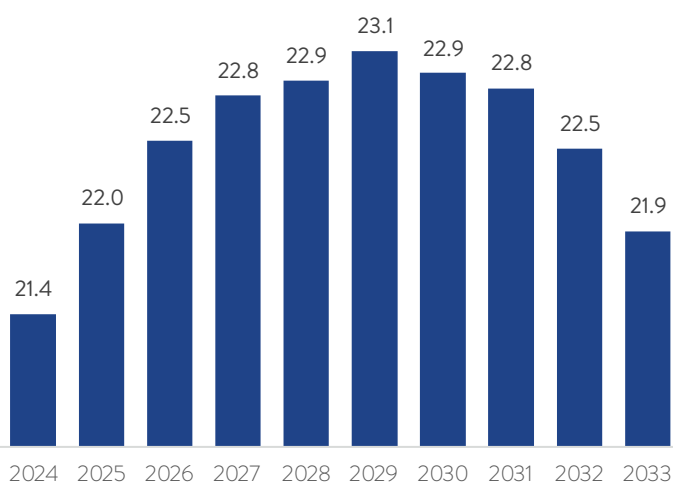
Ontario’s manufacturing sector employed 830,200 workers in 2024, accounting for 10.3 percent of the province’s total employment and underscoring its central role in the provincial economy. Ontario is also home to 45 percent of all manufacturing jobs in Canada, reaffirming its position as the country’s manufacturing heartland.

Although Ontario’s manufacturing sector has lost 232,700 jobs since 2005, it has regained momentum in recent years, with employment rising for four consecutive years from 2021 to 2024, reaching its highest level since 2008. One key driver of this recovery has been renewed initiatives from government and firms to reshore manufacturing to North America.

Unfortunately, the sector’s near-term outlook is highly uncertain, largely due to the volatile tariff environment with the U.S., which threatens to undo the progress made over the past few years. A prolonged trade dispute could trigger significant job losses in Ontario’s manufacturing sector, given its deep integration with the U.S. market. According to Statistics Canada, 825,000 jobs in Ontario are directly or indirectly tied to exports to the U.S.—many of which are in manufacturing.

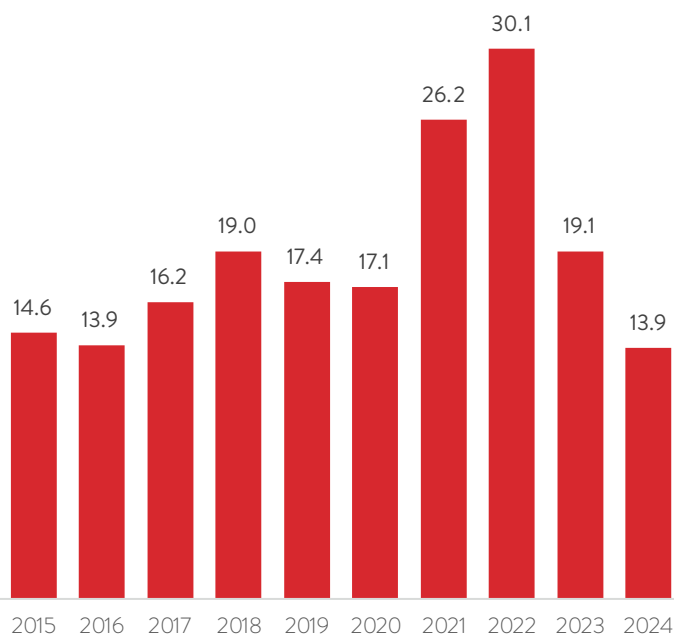
Beyond current trade tensions, Ontario’s manufacturing sector faces long-term workforce challenges, primarily driven by an aging population and a wave of impending retirements. In 2024, more than one in five workers in Ontario were aged 55 or older, up from about 10 percent in 2000. The manufacturing workforce is even older - one in four factory workers was 55 or older last year. Projections indicate the sector will face an average of 22,500 retirements annually through 2033, underscoring the growing urgency to address labour and skills shortages.

**CHART 1**  
**PROJECTED RETIREMENTS IN ONTARIO’S MANUFACTURING SECTOR**  
(000s)



Source: CME (based on national projections from Employment and Social Development Canada).

**CHART 2**  
**ANNUAL MANUFACTURING JOB VACANCIES**  
Ontario (000s)



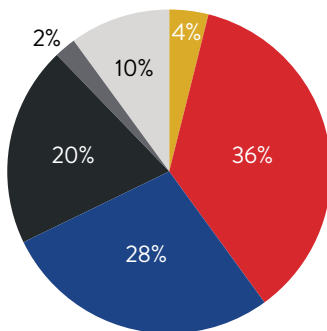
Sources: Statistics Canada; CME.

## SECTION 1 - CHALLENGES FACING THE SECTOR (continued)

### CHALLENGE #1 – KEEPING WORKFORCE AMID UNPREDICTABLE DEMAND

With the introduction of tariffs by the new Trump administration, manufacturers paused expansions, and many began implementing hiring freezes (see Chart 4). Most directly impacted firms, especially in the steel and automotive sectors, as these companies were faced with new costs at the border and uncertainty on the ability to claim ever-changing tariff exemptions, requiring them to downsize in the short-term. If replicated on a large scale, this introduces risks related to loss of key personnel and reduced ability to implement new production mandates or technology improvements. Global uncertainty could also impact the pace at which an already aging workforce approaches retirement, as we have seen during the pandemic.

**CHART 3**  
WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR COMPANY'S CURRENT BUSINESS OUTLOOK AND WORKFORCE SITUATION IN ONTARIO?



- Very high demand and severe labour shortages
- Steady demand with modest labour shortages
- Stable demand and workforce
- Moderate decline in demand and workforce
- Significant decline in demand and workforce
- Relocation or closure (0%)
- Uncertain outlook

Source: CME.

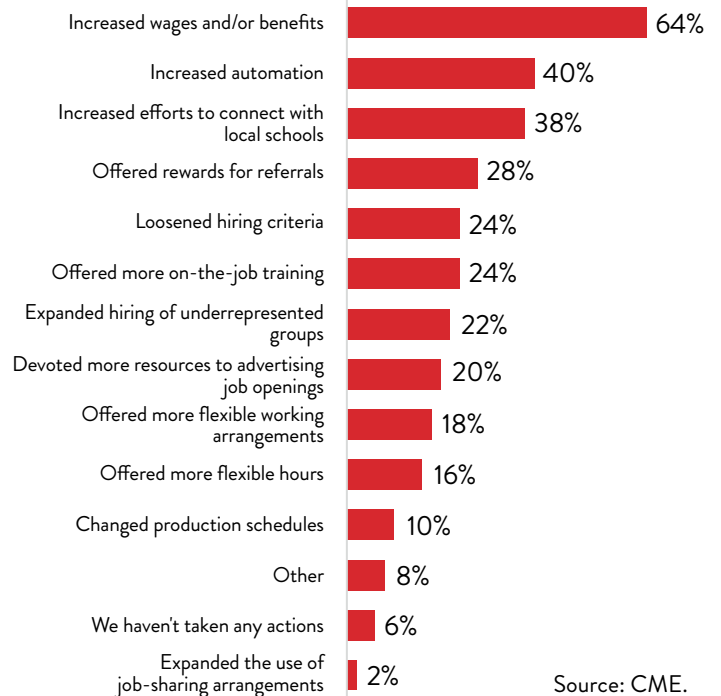
To address these challenges, manufacturers are adopting several strategies to enhance employee engagement and retention. Those include adjusting compensation, investing in upskilling programs, leadership development, flexible work schedules and job sharing.

**CHART 4**  
IS YOUR BUSINESS ALREADY TAKING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING POTENTIAL U.S. TARIFFS ON CANADIAN EXPORTS?



Source: CME.

**CHART 5**  
IN THE PAST YEAR, WHICH ACTIONS HAS YOUR COMPANY TAKEN TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MORE TALENT?

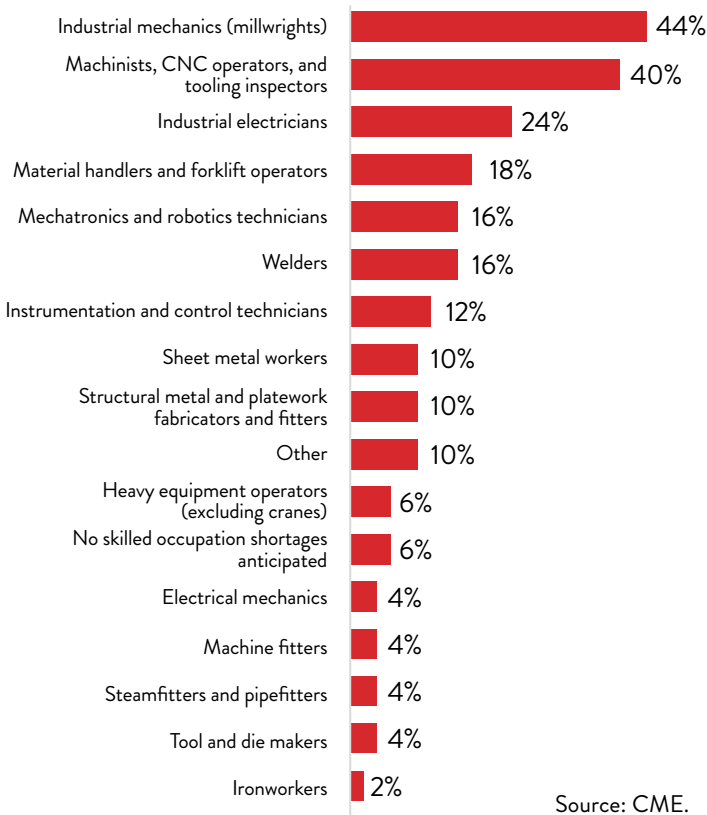


Source: CME.

## CHALLENGE #2 – ENDURING SHORTAGES IN TARGETED AREAS

Our discussions with manufacturers revealed persistent challenges in finding skilled labour for certain occupations. Labour shortages primarily persist in the skilled trades, such as millwrights, electricians, and machinists, with companies, especially in Northern Ontario, struggling to fill these roles, even amidst a more general decline in vacancies. Worker retention is another challenge, with some companies introducing mentorship programs to help retain workers from underrepresented groups.

**CHART 6**  
**IN WHICH SKILLED OCCUPATIONS WILL YOUR COMPANY FACE THE MOST URGENT LABOUR AND SKILLS NEEDS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?**



Source: CME.

## CHALLENGE #3 – FINANCIAL PRESSURES IN POST-SECONDARY IMPACTING SUPPLY

Following deep cuts to international study permits, all post-secondary institutions in Ontario faced significant financial pressures. Nearly all of Ontario’s 24 publicly funded colleges are at risk of operating deficits by 2026, facing a combined deficit that could exceed \$1 billion in the worst-case scenario. 13 Ontario universities are forecasting total operating deficits of \$338 million in 2024-25.

One of the core challenges is the financial model underpinning post-secondary education in Ontario. Colleges lose money on most domestic students, with per-student losses typically ranging between \$2,000 and \$3,000. In high-cost programs, especially in smaller or northern communities, these losses can be far greater—for instance, up to \$20,000 per-student in specialized trades. Similarly, Ontario universities are the lowest funded per student in the country, with university operating grants per student in Ontario two-thirds of the national average. Meanwhile, the cost of delivering education continues to rise annually due to inflation and increasing demands for student supports and infrastructure.

As Ontario faces growing international threats to its economy, addressing manufacturing labour gaps and growing commercialization capacity is more needed than ever. Post-secondary institutions partner with firms to achieve these objectives in key manufacturing areas like life sciences, automotive, engineering and materials sciences.

If Ontario is to remain competitive, critical investments are required to support post-secondary institutions, so that they can continue to address Ontario’s workforce needs, support job creation and attract investment across the province. Critical as we address funding shortfalls will be to select programs and occupations that support employers, giving them the workers they need now or will need as cutting-edge technologies continue to improve productivity in the sector.



# SECTION 2 – WORKFORCE DISCUSSION THEMES

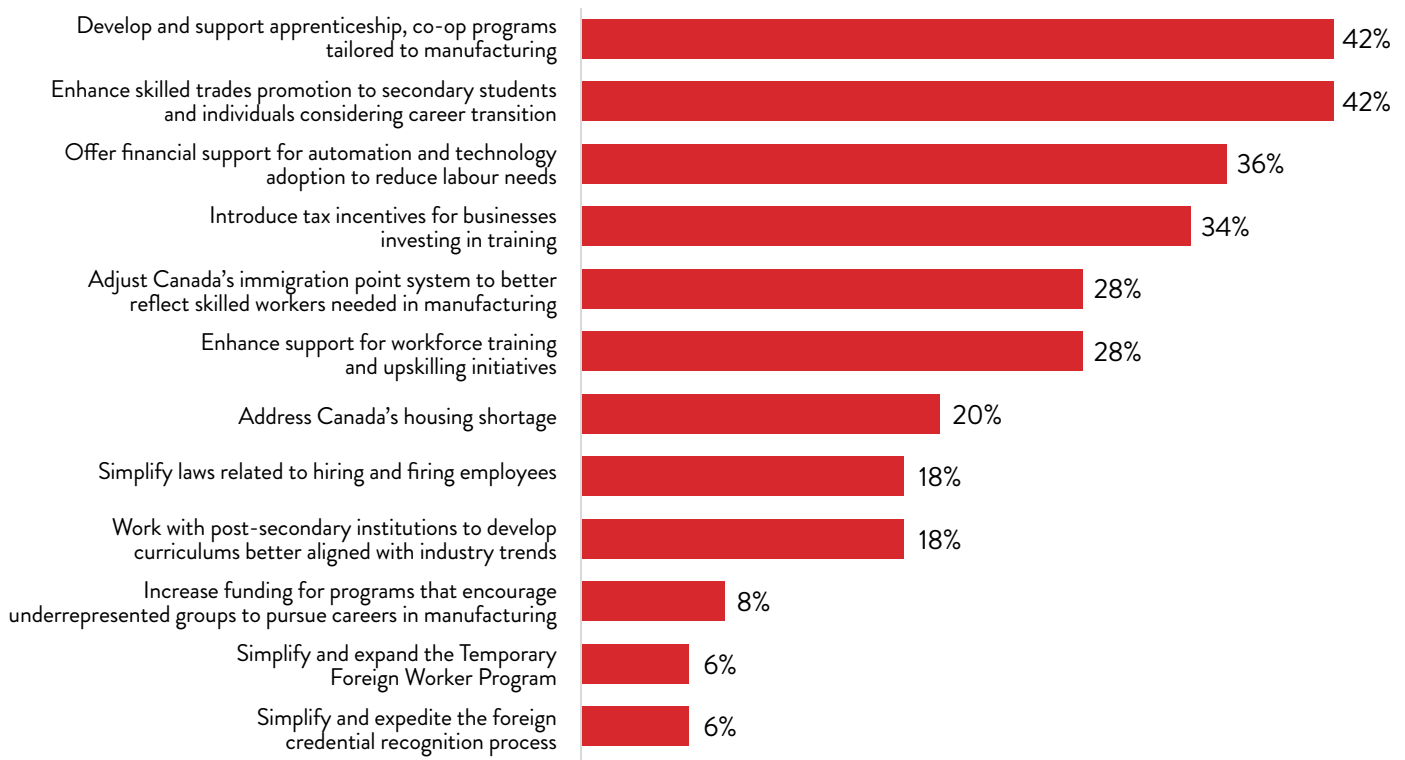
## 1. SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESSES

Ontario’s manufacturing sector has experienced many shifts and transformations over the last two decades, withstanding economic downturns, a prolonged investment slump, operating during a pandemic, subsequent labour shortages and inflation, and adapting to government policies around carbon emissions.

As they described their challenges to hire the right employees, many manufacturers participating in roundtables described gaps in government and learning institution support measures. Challenges were most acutely experienced with regard to the skilled trades, which continue to drive labour shortages. Business also pointed to possible solutions and measures they would like to see (see Chart 8).

The current section focuses on those challenges and solutions.

**CHART 8**  
**WHAT SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES OR POLICIES WOULD MOST EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS IN ADDRESSING LABOUR AND SKILLS NEEDS IN BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM?**



Source: CME.

## SECTION 2 – WORKFORCE DISCUSSION THEMES (continued)

### Skilled Trades and Apprenticeships

The problem of finding skilled workers in the trades is not exclusive to manufacturing. The average age of apprentices in Ontario is 29,<sup>1</sup> despite efforts to attract more young people to the trades. Apprenticeships require a desire for a worker to join a trade, but also a willingness on the part of an employer, union or association to sponsor that worker.

But many challenges exist for employers. Throughout Regional Industry Council discussions, many expressed apprehensions around sponsoring first and second year apprentices due to the cost of training and risks associated with employing inexperienced staff in jobs requiring the handling of expensive equipment while maintaining safety and adherence to a production schedule. Some employers were worried about university and college internships being too short to take on. In addition, some employers were concerned with losing trained apprentices to competitors and seeing high-quality candidates drop-out due to lack of continuous support, leading to a lack of return on investment. This is reflected in survey results showing that 46 percent of Ontario manufacturers do not operate an apprenticeship program—a response more commonly reported by smaller manufacturers with fewer than 100 employees (56 percent).

Proposed solutions were focused on de-risking employer participation and promoting completion by students. While several government incentives currently exist (see Appendix C), employers are often unaware, have difficulty accessing them, or the incentives do not appropriately offset costs associated with the potential disruption to business in the first two years, when the risk is highest. Most importantly however, employers demonstrated significant appetite and enthusiasm to attract Ontario's youth to manufacturing (for example, see the 3M Canada highlight on p.29). A strategy that builds awareness, reduces training costs and encourages employment opportunities is key to breaking down barriers for Ontario employers.

**CHART 9**  
**WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY CHALLENGES YOUR ORGANIZATION FACES IN ESTABLISHING AND OPERATING AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM?**



Source: CME.

### IDEAS FOR RESILIENCE:

1. Review, improve, publicize, and integrate delivery of incentives delivered by the provincial and federal governments for manufacturing employers to provide co-op student and apprenticeship opportunities.
2. Work with Skilled Trades Ontario, Ministry of Education and post-secondary institutions to help them keep up with advanced manufacturing technology as they develop programs, including by promoting their attendance at industry trade events, Regional Industry Councils and technology showcase events.
3. Work with the Ontario Skilled Trades Advisor to identify the most common areas of drop-out for apprenticeship students and work collaboratively with employers, government and schools to plug those leaks in our skilled talent pipeline.

<sup>1</sup> Final Report of the Apprenticeship Youth Advisors, April 2021

## 2. RESOURCING INDUSTRY-ALIGNED LIFELONG EDUCATION

Advanced technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and 3D printing are transforming manufacturing, yet these developments are not highlighted enough in Canadian education systems. When they are mentioned, schools face significant capital costs if they seek to equip themselves with advanced equipment to go beyond theory and get students ready with fundamental skills to use tools once in the workplace.

Furthermore, there remains work to do to encourage youth to consider professions in manufacturing. When surveyed, employers, and educators consistently identified educating more “influencers” – guidance counsellors and parents – as key to acting early and removing misconceptions around manufacturing careers.

### A Strategy for K-12-Starting Early

Many discussions centered on the education policy needed in elementary and high school to meet the opportunities provided by the manufacturing sector. In CME’s latest Labour and Skills Survey, nearly one-third of respondents reported being somewhat or very dissatisfied with how local schools are developing programs aligned with their company’s labour needs.

In several roundtables, the discussion around exposing young people to manufacturing careers went beyond information and awareness. Companies argued that we need to foster hands on mechanical, technology, electrical and scientific experience on youth. All agreed most high-school shop classes are not sufficiently equipped to showcase and train students with the more sophisticated equipment manufacturers work with today. There was a consensus that those classes should be a streamlined offering, accessible in all schools, with a focus placed on careers in manufacturing. Some suggested streamlining shop class teaching education to facilitate the transition of mentors from shop floor to classroom. Finally, there was continued support for programs that act as competitive training grounds, such as Skills Ontario competitions and *FIRST* Robotics.

### The Appeal of a Technologically Advanced Sector

Many employers called for greater flexibility and collaboration between universities, colleges and skilled trades training programs to meet the needs of a more technologically sophisticated sector. Several participants highlighted the need for more degrees like mechatronics, that provide exposure to skills needed in today’s advanced manufacturing environments and attracting more graduates from computer sciences to handle programming needs for connected equipment. At the same time, there was also a caution that too much focus on specialized skills often produces graduates who cannot always use their learnings in workplaces where well-rounded workers are valued. General programs providing faster entry to the manufacturing workforce and adaptable skills are still required.

### Apprenticeship In-School Training – The Value of Proximity

In all regions outside the Greater Toronto Area, manufacturers were frustrated by the lack of seat capacity at colleges when apprentices from their companies were ready for in-school training. Many gave anecdotal evidence of apprentices leaving their companies and the trades in general due to a lack of access. This not only negatively impacts their career trajectory, but it also slows down production and discourages employers from supporting apprenticeships.

Roundtable participants called on Ontario to focus on employer demand over controlling supply and removing red tape from apprenticeship planning and access at colleges. The concern was more pronounced in rural parts of the province such as Bruce County and Northern Ontario where distance was a factor in accessing available training.

### Urgent Need to Rectify Funding

Education partners spoke at length about funding constraints for apprenticeship training in the wake of the dramatic fall in the number of international students accepted in 2024 and onward. While government funding cannot be reasonably expected to completely fill the gaps, more generous support for more costly technology programs at publicly funded colleges and universities will ensure institutions no longer deliver these programs at a loss, which is constraining their ability to offer seats.

## SECTION 2 – WORKFORCE DISCUSSION THEMES (continued)

For instance, a 2024 Colleges Ontario review of program clusters revealed that while the average cost to deliver a college program is approximately \$11,100 per student, combined government funding and tuition only amount to around \$8,100, leaving a significant funding gap, which is pronounced for the more expensive but in-demand skilled trade programs (see Table 1).

Similarly, to help address a growing demand for STEM talent, universities graduated over 37,000 workers in STEM in 2022 alone. They also increased enrolment in those fields by just over 74 percent since 2010. The Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security recently announced an investment of \$150M per year, for five years to fund STEM spaces at colleges and universities. This will help address increasing need for talent, which has been significant in recent years. However, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) is projecting that by 2030, more than 100,000 Ontario high school students will be at risk of not getting into the program or university of their choice, posing a barrier to access for students. To meet growing demand, the province will need to increase operating funding by approximately \$860M a year by 2030<sup>2</sup>.

**TABLE 1  
AVERAGE REVENUES AND COSTS FOR TARGETED  
MANUFACTURING-RELATED PROGRAMS IN  
ONTARIO COLLEGES**

	Electro-Mechanical Engineering	Welding
Direct Revenue	\$ 7,628	\$ 8,525
Direct Operating Expenses	\$ 6,506	\$ 9,225
Annualized Capital Equipment	\$ 2,293	\$ 633
<b>Contribution Margin</b>	<b>\$ (1,171)</b>	<b>\$ (1,333)</b>
Net Indirect Costs	\$ (4,934)	\$ (4,934)
<b>Overall Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (6,105)</b>	<b>\$ (6,267)</b>

Source: Colleges Ontario, September 2024 Program Costing Review, September 2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://ontariosuniversities.ca/wp-content/uploads/Backgrounder-Equipping-Ontario-Universities-to-Help-Grow-Ontarios-Economy3.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See details at: <https://ocip.ecampusontario.ca/>

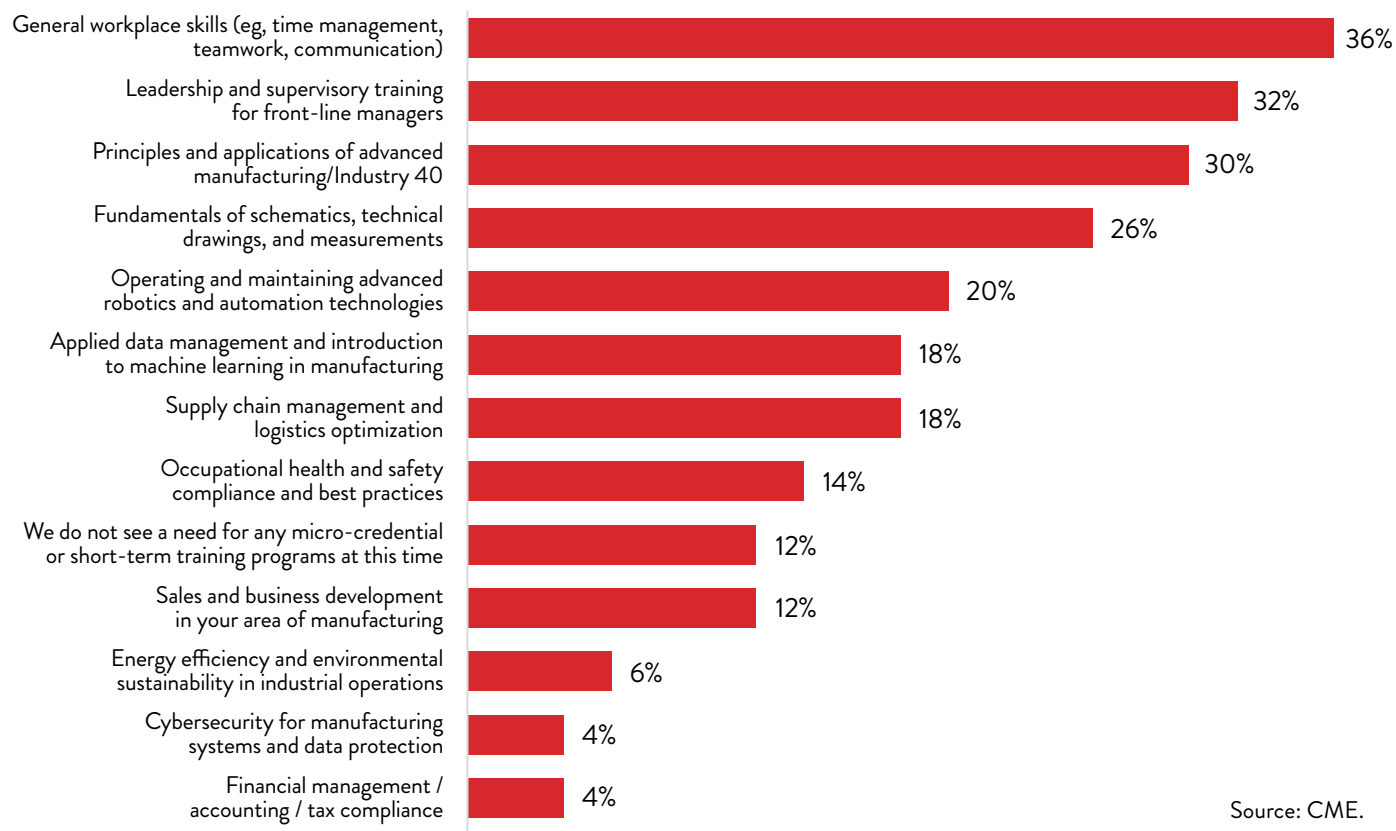
### Maintaining a Competitive Advantage with Lifelong Learning

Ontario manufacturers often tap into ongoing upskilling and micro-credentialing programs through post-secondary partners. The offerings are becoming more robust and convenient for workers to pursue. For example, eCampusOntario operates the Ontario Micro-credentials Portal, offering businesses and individuals with curated access to over 2600 upskilling courses offered by the provinces higher education institutions. Businesses can get additional assistance for research and development and new technology adoption through the Ontario Collaborative Innovation Platform (OCIP)<sup>3</sup>, a new matchmaking program that connects Ontario companies with expert researchers at Ontario’s post-secondary institutions to help businesses innovate. It creates opportunities for institutions to bring their vast research capabilities to work on real-world challenges.

Manufacturers were clear that continuous training was important to their workforces’ success, but the ability to use such a program is not always easily predictable. One successful approach witnessed at Humber College was offering continuous improvement courses under the ‘bootcamp’ model - very short, one-off programs that can be provided in a few days, alleviating the need for workers to be away from work for long. Manufacturers expressed a desire for multiple options, and 40 percent of companies surveyed said their participation depended on costs and return on the investment. Our survey of preferences for upskilling courses seemed to reveal a preference for general workplace and leadership skills (for example, schematics, technical drawing and measurements) and application of advanced manufacturing technologies (see Chart 10).



**CHART 10**  
**WHICH TYPES OF MICRO-CREDENTIAL OR SHORT, FOCUSED TRAINING PROGRAMS WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL FOR UPSKILLING YOUR EMPLOYEES IF OFFERED BY A LOCAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR THIRD-PARTY ORGANIZATION?**



**IDEAS FOR RESILIENCE:**

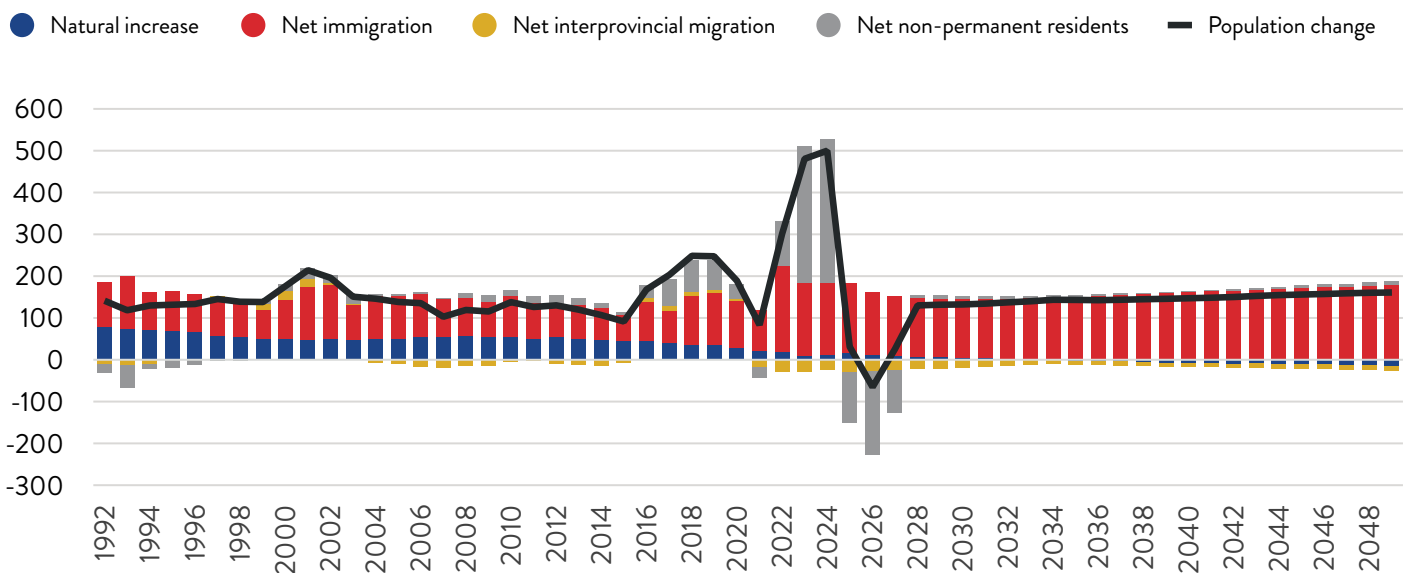
4. Identifying areas of economic significance where government may prioritize funding for high-schools, public colleges and universities to acquire advanced equipment, make retrofits, hire shop class teachers or offer special, tuition-discounted programs to meet regional demand for key occupations. This could include (but not limited to):
  - a. critical mineral and metal processing in Northern Ontario
  - b. aerospace, defense and life sciences in Western GTA
  - c. advanced manufacturing engineering / mechatronics in London, Kitchener and Windsor
5. Educate more “influencers” (guidance counsellors and parents) with manufacturing tours, more regionalized Level Up! Fairs, and direct marketing during middle school and high school events, as well as through employment offices for older applicants.
6. Connect regional assessments of current demand (not historical trends) for manufacturing occupation to seat planning and curriculum updates by post-secondary institutions and Ministry of Education.
7. Identify and fund community hubs and training grounds for schoolteachers and guidance counsellors to participate in programs like *FIRST* Robotics, instilling more confidence to promote STEM skills in a competitive and fun way.

## SECTION 2 – WORKFORCE DISCUSSION THEMES (continued)

### 3. RECRUIT TODAY’S WORKFORCE: DIVERSITY AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

All Regional Industry Councils reflected the belief that workforce planning and development is a continuum; one that begins with Ontario’s youth but persists through to attracting, upskilling and retaining the workforce. This includes immigrants as well as under-represented groups. To keep Ontario’s edge in advanced manufacturing, our workforce planning and skills development must be flexible and inclusive, leaving no worker behind. Given Canada’s aging population and low fertility rate, natural population growth (births minus deaths) is projected to turn negative in the next decade. As a result, Ontario’s population growth will be driven entirely by immigration (See Chart 11).

**CHART 11**  
**ONTARIO’S POPULATION GROWTH TO BE DRIVEN ENTIRELY BY IMMIGRATION**  
 Contribution to annual population changes, medium-growth scenario (000s)



Sources: Statistics Canada, Demography Division; CME.

We define underrepresented groups in manufacturing as women, Indigenous Peoples – people who are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit – persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

Women represent just 30 percent of Ontario’s manufacturing workforce, well below their 47.5 percent share of the province’s overall labour force, and account for only 13 percent of Board Positions at manufacturing firms.<sup>4</sup> In discussions, manufacturers engaged with organizations such as Build a Dream and others that help women and girls meaningfully connect with opportunities and find role-models. Supporting retention was highlighted as a key challenge, as often, the minority position of female workers undermines their long-term position within organizations. Site visits organized by CME in Ontario plants, for example, classes of female students visiting Algoma Steel and Tenaris, have been mentioned as a best practice, and something we need to do more of.

<sup>4</sup> Future Skills Centre (2025), <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/manufacturing-best-practices/>

While the sector performs relatively better in other areas of demographic representation, there is still room for improvement.

In 2022, immigrants accounted for 40.6 percent of the manufacturing workforce, compared to 34.4 percent across all industries. Similarly, visible minorities made up 35.7 percent of manufacturing workers, slightly above their 34.5 percent share of the total workforce. We heard several anecdotes of successful hiring strategies using tight-knit cultural communities as primary pools of high-quality and dedicated workers. But the recent immigration reforms were cited as a challenge, as many temporary residents employed in manufacturing facilities were suddenly unable to stay in Canada. This was often done without federal immigration authorities giving any thought to the economic ramifications where co-op students or other part-time workers with relevant skills could have found pathways for permanent residence and employment in Canada.

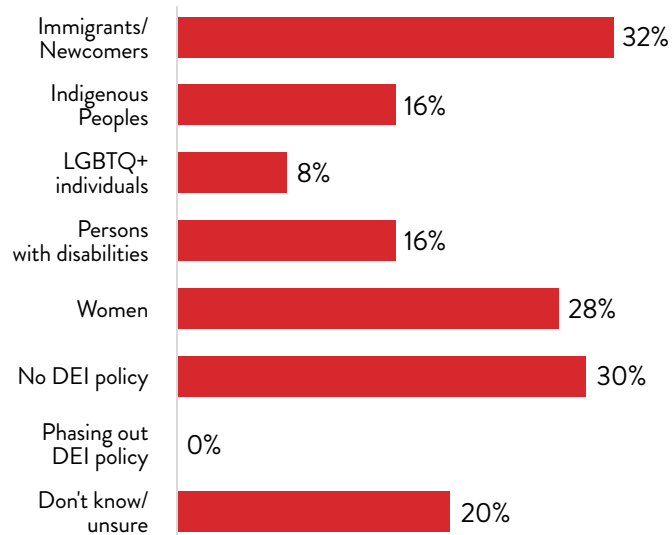
Many employers, especially in the North, requested more language supports that were industry focused, citing safety concerns on the job for non-English-speaking immigrants. English as a Second Language (ESL) government programs are underfunded, and some companies are providing their own training, but this cannot sustain the scale of needs for the future, especially if new resource and mineral processing opportunities result in more immigrants seeking opportunities in Northern Ontario.

Finally, 2.1 percent of factory workers identified as Indigenous—slightly above their 1.6 percent representation in the overall workforce. In the city of Thunder Bay, an important hub for Northern Ontario fly-in communities, people identifying as indigenous make up 14 percent of the overall population. In roundtable discussions, attracting and retaining these workers was presented as a challenge. Several employers requested supports to bridge gaps in their people management strategies and form relationships with communities, creating more inclusive work environments where the individual can thrive and find a sense of belonging.

Finally, while our survey took place around the inauguration of the new U.S. administration and amid significant media coverage of the rollback of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies in this country, Ontario manufacturers surveyed

expressed continued commitment for outreach with underrepresented communities. More than ever, Ontario’s attitudes toward diverse talent are a competitive advantage we need to leverage.

**CHART 12**  
**WHICH POPULATIONS ARE SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY YOUR COMPANY’S ACTIVE INCLUSION POLICIES OR RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES?**



Source: CME.

### IDEAS FOR RESILIENCE:

8. Position regions to benefit from the ‘Trump Brain Drain’ by creating new pathways for workers with in-demand skills to obtain permanent residency if they obtained meaningful manufacturing work experience or diplomas in in-demand STEM and skilled trades programs. Intake could be linked to employer consultations, or time-limited assessments of regional demand to avoid labour market distortions.
9. Establish mentorship initiatives that pair experienced workers with new hires from underrepresented groups, and outreach where groups of students from targeted populations visit manufacturing sites together, so they can ask questions and see themselves represented.
10. CME to establish a dedicated Regional Industry Council with representatives from Indigenous communities across Ontario.

<sup>5</sup> Learn more at <https://gotothunderbay.ca/>



# SECTION 3 – ALIGNING REGIONAL GOALS WITH SOLUTIONS

## EASTERN ONTARIO

### HIGHLIGHT 1 – REGIONAL SUMMARY



**Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):**  
61,600 (-7.5 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 5.7 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021)<sup>6</sup>:

1. Food and beverage
2. Computer and electronic product
3. Transportation equipment

## Key Discussion Challenges



Eastern Ontario has significant assets for food, metals and consumer products, with several communities providing excellent trade connectivity to large Quebec, Ontario and Southeast United States population centers and beyond through the St. Lawrence Seaway. During the pandemic, 3M Canada significantly expanded its footprint in the area with the establishment of a new N-95 plant.

However, the region is not as densely populated as Southwestern Ontario, often leaving it in a position to fight for investment and talent. The current trade war also provides significant uncertainty, especially with regards to levies on steel and aluminum, key manufacturing inputs for the region's trade-exposed industries.

At our Kingston roundtable, manufacturers were heavily focused on hiring and retaining youth and under-represented groups. Notwithstanding this need, employers highlighted concerns with apprenticeship participation, citing costs and risks associated with work on the production line.

While employers here were not as concerned with youth attraction, they focused on the need for more relevant entry-level post-secondary education programs, such as mechatronics, to enable a more flexible and technologically mature workforce.

<sup>6</sup> Reflects Ottawa and Kingston economic regions, as recorded in the 2021 Census.

## SECTION 3 – ALIGNING REGIONAL GOALS WITH SOLUTIONS (continued)

### NORTHERN ONTARIO

#### Key Discussion Challenges

Northern Ontario faces unique workforce development challenges shaped by its geography, industrial makeup, and demographic trends.

In this initial exploration of northern challenges, CME held three discussions, one in the northwestern city of Thunder Bay, and two in the Northeast, in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. The economies and concerns encountered in the three areas differed in many ways (explored below), but everywhere, discussions revealed great appetite for more collaboration to occur on ‘Made in the North’ solutions and developing longer planning enabling regional partners to coalesce on common objectives. With the population getting older, and youth retention an issue, this is urgent.

A key theme emerging was the idea that the economy of Northern Ontario is a “closed one”, in that there is relatively little movement of workers when compared to Southern Ontario. Often, skilled workers leave for Southern Ontario due to limited long-term job certainty. Industries struggle to attract new talent, with companies relying on immigration programs like the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) to fill gaps. Employers also compete with local projects, such as mining and infrastructure development, which can pull skilled trades away from manufacturing.

The opportunity that critical minerals provide may represent an opportunity for more value-added industries to grow, especially in the Sudbury area which already boasts the only nickel refinery in North America. As investments flow to the region to reduce Canada's dependency on Chinese critical mineral processing, there is an opportunity to expand the industrial and population base.

#### HIGHLIGHT 2 – REGIONAL SUMMARY – NORTHEAST



**Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):**  
18,100 (+4.0 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 6.6 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021):

1. Wood, pulp and paper
2. Primary metal
3. Machinery



### Long-Term Buy Local Policies as a Catalyst for Workforce Development

In Thunder Bay, several attendees highlighted the importance of procurement policies to provide predictable work for the local Alstom plant, which supplies train cars for large public transit agencies like Metrolinx or the Toronto Transit Commission. This was seen as a precondition for longer-term workforce development to occur. Without certainty on production mandates for regional industries, companies hesitate to invest in training. As a result, workers pursue other opportunities, parents do not see a future in the region for their kids and schools are left without the certainty needed to commit to training programs.

There was strong interest in a regional workforce strategy that links school enrollment numbers with forward-looking industry needs. Currently, collaboration is often limited, with companies working in silos rather than pooling resources to train workers in high-demand fields like welding and engineering. Participants were supportive of Ontario's commitment to establish a Manufacturing Plan over a ten-year period and expressed appetite for strong input from regional stakeholders.

### Economic Reconciliation

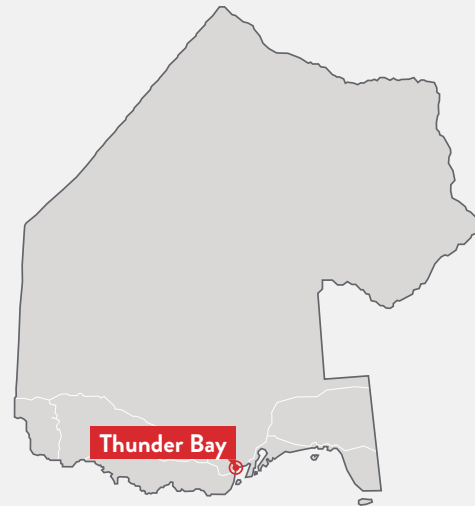
Everywhere in Northern Ontario, there was great emphasis on building focused strategies to attract Indigenous workers to manufacturing, which is often not on the radar of youth. There is also often a preference to work at Indigenous-owned businesses. Sponsoring plant tours and better supporting indigenous-led training centres, schools or Ontario's nine Indigenous Institutes<sup>7</sup> were mentioned as potential solutions.

Comments supported the relevance for CME to establish a dedicated groups for more purpose-built collaboration between manufacturers and Indigenous workers, communities and owners, building on the successful experience of CME Manitoba<sup>8</sup>. This will be an objective for our 2025-26 work.

<sup>7</sup> For more details, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/indigenous-institutes>

<sup>8</sup> More on CME's work can be found at <https://cme-mec.ca/innovation/indigenous-workforce-development-strategy/>

### HIGHLIGHT 3 – REGIONAL SUMMARY – NORTHWEST



**2024 Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):**  
4,400 (-20.0 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 4.2 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021):

1. Wood, Pulp and Paper
2. Transportation Equipment
3. Food and Beverage



## SECTION 3 – ALIGNING REGIONAL GOALS WITH SOLUTIONS (continued)

### WEST TORONTO, PEEL AND HAMILTON

#### Key Discussion Challenges

Manufacturers west of Toronto form a significant manufacturing pole, drawing strength from the transportation hub that is Pearson International Airport and key 400-series highways to connect with other provinces, the U.S., and the rest of the world (see highlight).



#### HIGHLIGHT 4 – REGIONAL SUMMARY



**2024 Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):**  
466,500 (-0.2 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 9.6 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021):

1. Food and beverage
2. Transportation equipment
3. Fabricated metal product



In Mississauga, it was suggested that the Japanese model of economic development be emulated to enable aerospace workers to be trained in specific skills as part of a network of businesses working towards common sectoral objectives. In the context of the current trade war, CME sees significant opportunity to connect workforce development in the region with the efforts of federal, provincial and municipal governments to better leverage procurement, especially when it comes to rebuilding Canada's defence capabilities.

The other key manufacturing sector highlighted was Life Sciences, which has a critical concentration in both the Peel region as well as Hamilton. The Commercialization Incubator at the University Health Network was highlighted as a model initiative to grow the pipeline of cutting-edge scientific talent for manufacturers. The leadership role of McMaster University and Mohawk College were also highlighted.

At the Hamilton session held in early 2025, the role of the private sector in augmenting earlier education efforts was discussed. Our host ArcelorMittal Dofasco has been designated one of Hamilton-Niagara's Top Employers for several years, in part due to their ongoing support of local STEM education, including plant tours for students as early as Grade 8. The Hamilton School Board and Skills Ontario highlighted their exploration trailers and competitions showcasing today's manufacturing technologies. Currently, all 13 local high schools have robotics equipment, but not all have manufacturing classrooms. There is room to improve capital in schools, educating kids earlier in life, removing bureaucratic obstacles to private sector collaborating with educators, and better explaining to parents what technology means, beyond computer science.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.uhncommercialization.ca/>





## HIGHLIGHT 5 – PEARSON ECONOMIC ZONE – CANADA'S ECONOMIC RUNWAY



The Pearson Economic Zone (PEZ) is a 200-square-kilometre area around Toronto Pearson and a pivotal manufacturing hub in North America. The PEZ hosts more than 2,000 factories, employing approximately 92,500 workers and contributing \$13.6 billion to Canada's GDP annually. Notably, the zone accounts for nearly 12 percent of Ontario's manufacturing output and 5 percent of the national total.

Local areas of strength include food and beverage (18,000 jobs), automotive (12,500 jobs), construction and infrastructure (12,300 jobs), aerospace (6,600 jobs) and life sciences (5,500 jobs). Major companies include Bombardier, Pratt & Whitney, Apotex, and Maple Lodge Farms.

The PEZ is one of only two places in North America that does both full-scale vehicle and aircraft assembly. Proximity to other manufacturers and the airport are advantages for many firms – in Bombardier's case, they are literally on Pearson Airport's property. Several large packaging and logistics companies in the area supply the nearby manufacturers. And the zone's machinery and tooling companies supply most of the other major economic sectors.

Despite the significance of the zone, pressure is mounting on several fronts. As surrounding municipalities deal with housing challenges, there is increasing demand to convert employment lands to residential use. While housing needs need to be addressed, the loss of strategically located employment land threatens the long-term viability of the manufacturing and logistics base that underpins Ontario's export capacity.

Workforce availability is another consideration. Toronto Pearson's LIFT (Long-term Investment in Facilities and Terminals) plan will bring the construction of major new airport infrastructure over the next decade, intensifying the need for skilled trades and technical talent in an already challenging labour market. Access to local talent and training opportunities must be scaled up significantly to meet demand for the growth plans of both the airport and other businesses in the Pearson Economic Zone.

## SECTION 3 – ALIGNING REGIONAL GOALS WITH SOLUTIONS (continued)

### KITCHENER TO THE BRUCE PENINSULA

#### Key Discussion Challenges

Much like Hamilton and Mississauga, Kitchener provides distinctive manufacturing offerings; ones that are focused on advanced manufacturing and are the envy of the world. Kitchener-Waterloo is a powerhouse for robotics, AI and other technologies that can feed the province’s advanced manufacturing. The city of Cambridge is an important automotive centre with two Toyota Assembly plants routinely winning the highest quality awards from J.D. Power. The city is also home to BWXT, one of the most established metal fabrication companies specialized in custom parts for nuclear reactors – a key source of employment and economic opportunity for Ontario in coming years (see highlight below).

#### HIGHLIGHT 6 – REGIONAL SUMMARY



#### 2024 Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):

158,900 (4.0 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 15.1 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021):

1. Transportation equipment
2. Food and beverage
3. Fabricated metal product

While technology is clearly a regional strength (including for our roundtable host Samuel Automation and other local leaders like ATS and Accenture), Ontario and Canadian companies are often lagging in adopting those technologies to innovate and improve productivity, especially when compared with their U.S. counterparts. This will need to change as Canada's manufacturing sector retools for improved resilience.

In discussions, manufacturers highlighted challenges when it comes to reskilling existing workers. One manufacturer noted having aging maintenance staff, struggling to navigate new technologies like predictive maintenance. New graduates tend to be more open minded but have gaps in their knowledge of concrete manufacturing operations. Some believed that technology-focused programs at colleges were too theoretical. One example given was mechanical design, too often taught as a university-style instruction class rather than applied, hands-on technical training.

A related theme was the disconnect between government funding priorities for post-secondary education and the needs of manufacturers—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A college representative explained that while their research department used to have great success securing government funding for smart manufacturing initiatives, they are now struggling. Government grant programs now prioritize trendy topics like AI or quantum computing, leaving more applied projects behind.

During our Kincardine roundtable at the Nuclear Innovation Institute (NII), situated minutes away from the Bruce Power site, the difficulty accessing apprenticeship training was a key issue. Like many other regions, apprenticeship seat capacity was identified as a major problem in retaining apprentices. At Bruce Power, and across the region, alternative training models were suggested; the use of local facilities such as the Nuclear Innovation Institute, for example, to “stretch” access to training, the use of modular training facilities such as trailers was also discussed as well as granting Training Delivery Status to employers to offer more capacity in certain regions.

Finally, challenges with the immigration system were discussed. In Kitchener, manufacturers indicated that many immigrant workers wanted to commit to their companies, but the system does not enable pathways to long term employment for those on temporary status, even when currently employed by a manufacturer. There were concerns about the early expiration of work permits, and a lack of recognition of foreign credentials. However, there was consensus that immigrants would continue to be an important element for workforce development in the region.

#### HIGHLIGHT 7 - ATOMS AND STEEL - LEVERAGING NUCLEAR POWER TO TRAIN AND GROW



Nuclear energy is critical to Ontario's ability to meet its growing demand for electricity. It is also an important job creator. Provincially, 65,000 jobs are supported by Ontario's nuclear industry. But our plants are aging, and they require updating to power growth for decades to come. Those refurbished facilities need components of the highest quality and specification, creating significant opportunity for Ontario manufacturers.

Bruce Power is a major driver of the economy in the Clean Energy Frontier region of Bruce, Grey and Huron counties. More than 60 supplier partners have moved into the area, continuing to support the local economy and provide good local jobs. Bruce Power's Life-Extension Program, which includes Major Component Replacement on six of its nuclear units, is Canada's largest private sector clean energy infrastructure project, with about 95 percent of purchasing done in Canada, supporting hundreds of businesses

throughout the country. With this program, it also secures a clean-energy future for Ontario while sustaining 22,000 jobs across the province and generating billions in economic activity each year.

The Nuclear Innovation Institute<sup>10</sup> is dedicated to fostering a resilient, future-ready workforce by improving access to training—especially in rural communities—through flexible, local delivery models aligned with a "learn where you earn" approach. Located in Ontario's Clean Energy Frontier, NII is responding directly to employers' talent needs by offering targeted, innovative training at its Advance Technology Campus. Most notably, NII is investing in the future by engaging local youth with hands-on STEM learning, sparking early interest in careers across manufacturing, skilled trades, and emerging technologies, thereby strengthening the regional talent pipeline.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nuclearinnovationinstitute.ca/>

## SECTION 3 – ALIGNING REGIONAL GOALS WITH SOLUTIONS (continued)

### LONDON TO WINDSOR

#### Key Discussion Challenges

The corridor between London and Windsor is a great industrial hub for Ontario, with strategic proximity to Canada's busiest border crossings and the U.S. automotive centers in Detroit. Despite the uncertainty generated by tariffs, there remains great critical mass in food, defence, metal fabrication and momentum in automotive from recent large-scale electric vehicle supply chain investments, including for new battery and research facilities being established by Stellantis and PowerCo. There is a longstanding and concerted push by the local community to foster graduates qualified in manufacturing occupations. For example, CME's local volunteer Southwestern Ontario Board has awarded more than \$300,000 in scholarships to 275+ students pursuing manufacturing careers, since 1995.

#### HIGHLIGHT 8 – REGIONAL SUMMARY



#### 2024 Total Manufacturing Employment (2024):

120,600 (+1.7 percent Year over Year)

**Manufacturing Percentage of Overall Employment (2024):** 15.6 percent

#### Top Sub-sectors (2021):

1. Transportation equipment
2. Food and beverage
3. Machinery



The discussions in this region confirmed labour shortages for some trades and difficulties in securing enough graduates, especially in the context of the major expansions recently announced. While this pressure will abate to an extent as the short-term impact of tariffs is felt, general concerns with the aging of manufacturing workers highlight the need for long-term regional coordination.

Many participants brought up the lack of available apprenticeship seats at local colleges, requiring students to commute outside the region. This was compounded by the financial shortfall discussed in section 2 of this report, limiting the ability of learning institutions to offer programs with enough consistency. Some expressed a desire for special tuition-free classes, which could be offered by colleges and universities in high-demand occupations, like industrial mechanic (millwright), electrician or engineering. Any ramp up in program offerings would need to be paired with appropriate resourcing for colleges and universities to maintain capital for the long-term.

Finally, significant discussion was dedicated to involving students in manufacturing earlier in their education journey. One participant raised the possibility of funding experiential learning opportunities for guidance counsellors for the long-term, and pooling Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program resources regionally, allowing more capacity to do larger events in larger venues. Other suggestions included bringing more predictability earlier in the calendar year for the recurring Level Up! Fairs, and targeting students below Grade 8 closer to smaller population centres (i.e. not just in downtown London).

## HIGHLIGHT 9 – 3M CANADA AND THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING



96 percent of Canadians believe that having role models is an effective way to encourage young people to pursue STEM careers. Research also indicates that Canadians believe spotlighting stories of real people who have successful skilled trade careers will help improve perceptions about entering the sector<sup>11</sup>.

With manufacturing facilities in London, Brockville and Perth, 3M Canada has a long history of investing and supporting Ontario economic development and future jobs in STEM, skilled trades and manufacturing. Thanks to strategic investments in regional partners – the company will have created 300,000 STEM experiences in Canada, from kindergarten to post-secondary, by the end of 2025.

To encourage youth at an early age by showcasing the variety of career options in skilled trades, 3M supported FIRST Robotics, Skills Ontario, St. Lawrence College Mobile Training Lab and the London Children’s Museum. With its ‘Mind Over Metal’ program, the company

collaborated with the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) Welding Foundation to host a skilled trades camp for elementary and high school students, nurturing curiosity for STEM at an early age. It also supported the 3M Safety Road Show and the Skills Ontario Tech Truck experience, helping to bring hands-on learning opportunities directly to youth across Canada and beyond.

Finally, the company has remained committed to apprenticeships and internships to create direct employment and learning opportunities for the next generation of STEM workers, continuing a long history of offering student employment, including in the London area. The company has demonstrated that integrating students into the workplace is not only a valuable tool for building a talent pipeline, but it also drives innovation and learning across the entire workforce.

<sup>11</sup> 2023 3M State of Science Index



# SUMMARY – ROADMAP TO 2035

Ontario faces an uncertain economic outlook due to trade instability and demand for labour in targeted areas - especially millwrights, electricians and adaptable workers able to engineer solutions using AI, robotics and other advanced manufacturing technologies. But Ontario's manufacturing regions have incredible economic assets and there is historic, cross-partisan political commitment to improve Canada's economic self-reliance. If Ontario uses those assets and addresses the following areas, CME remains optimistic about the prospects of meeting its stated target to have 1 million manufacturing workers by 2035.

## SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESSES

1. Review, improve, publicize, and integrate delivery of incentives delivered by the provincial and federal governments for manufacturing employers to provide co-op student and apprenticeship opportunities.
2. Work with Skilled Trades Ontario, Ministry of Education and post-secondary institutions to help them keep up with advanced manufacturing technology as they develop programs, including by promoting their attendance at industry trade events, Regional Industry Councils and technology showcase events.
3. Work with the Ontario Skilled Trades Advisor to identify the most common areas of drop-out for apprenticeship students and work collaboratively with employers, government and schools to plug those leaks in our skilled talent pipeline.

## RESOURCING INDUSTRY ALIGNED LIFELONG EDUCATION

4. Identifying areas of economic significance where government may prioritize funding for high-schools, public colleges and universities to acquire advanced equipment, make retrofits, hire shop class teachers or offer special, tuition-discounted programs to meet regional demand for key occupations.
5. Educate more “influencers” (guidance counsellors and parents) with manufacturing tours, more regionalized Level Up! Fairs, and direct marketing during middle school and high school events, as well as through employment offices for older applicants.
6. Connect regional assessments of current demand (not historical trends) for manufacturing occupation to seat planning and curriculum updates by post-secondary institutions and Ministry of Education.
7. Identify and fund community hubs and training grounds for schoolteachers and guidance counsellors to participate in programs like *FIRST* Robotics, instilling more confidence to promote STEM skills in a competitive and fun way.

## RECRUITING TODAY'S WORKFORCE: DIVERSITY AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

8. Position regions to benefit from the ‘Trump Brain Drain’ by creating new pathways for workers with in-demand skills to obtain permanent residency if they obtained work experience in a manufacturing business or diplomas in in-demand STEM or skilled trades programs. Intake could be linked to employer consultations, Regional Industry Council discussions, or time-limited assessments of regional demand to avoid labour market distortions.
9. Establish mentorship initiatives that pair experienced workers with new hires from underrepresented groups, and outreach where groups of students from targeted populations visit manufacturing sites together, so they can ask questions and see themselves represented.
10. CME to establish a dedicated Regional Industry Council with representatives from Indigenous communities across Ontario.

# APPENDIX A

**TABLE 2**  
**MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC REGION**

Ontario (000s)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Ontario</b>	783.0	772.4	767.8	767.2	782.6	799.9	798.8	776.8	738.9	782.2	797.7	828.5	830.2
<b>Ottawa</b>	34.7	32.1	35.2	35.3	32.6	33.9	34.4	33.9	30.5	34.5	36.8	41.5	40.6
<b>Kingston-Pembroke</b>	21.5	18.6	21.0	14.8	15.5	14	20	16.7	16	21	23.2	25.1	21
<b>Muskoka-Kawarthas</b>	18.6	18.7	18.5	15.4	11.4	14.4	18.3	21.9	18.4	20.1	17	21.8	22.4
<b>Toronto</b>	349.8	349.9	345.6	334.2	348.8	349.4	334.1	334.6	310.4	337.6	330.4	345.2	354.2
<b>Kitchener-Waterloo- Barrie</b>	119.8	113.9	112.1	115.1	125.3	126.7	127	113.7	122.5	122	131.5	131.9	137.3
<b>Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula</b>	90.7	93.0	92.6	93.5	88.8	99.2	97.6	97.8	90.8	95.1	97.3	100.5	89.9
<b>London</b>	47.6	46.2	44.1	51.0	53	51.8	53.6	54.6	47.5	53.4	54.4	57.4	58.9
<b>Windsor-Sarnia</b>	54.6	54.6	55.7	56.6	64.1	62.5	65.5	59.4	55	52.3	57.8	61.2	61.7
<b>Stratford-Bruce Peninsula</b>	22.2	22.0	21.7	24.7	20.4	22.4	22.3	23.9	24.9	24.1	25	20.9	21.6
<b>Northeast</b>	16.8	18.0	17.7	19.8	16.6	18.6	19.6	14.6	18.1	17.1	19.1	17.4	18.1
<b>Northwest</b>	6.8	5.4	3.5	6.9	6	7	6.2	5.9	4.8	5.1	5.1	5.5	4.4

Source: Statistics Canada.



# APPENDIX B

**TABLE 3  
MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC REGION**

Ontario (000s)

	Ontario	Ottawa	Kingston-Pembroke	Muskoka-Kawartha	Toronto	Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie	Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula	London	Windsor-Sarnia	Stratford-Bruce Peninsula	Northeast	Northwest
<b>Manufacturing</b>	601.7	30.2	15.7	13.0	258.3	97.2	67.2	42.0	42.4	17.3	14.6	3.8
Food and beverage	103.4	4.5	2.8	2.2	49.7	13.8	13.4	8.0	3.9	3.9	0.9	0.3
Apparel and textile	11.3	0.9	0.2	0.1	6.6	1.1	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.0
Wood, pulp and paper	32.3	2.0	2.3	1.3	11.8	3.2	2.5	1.8	0.5	0.8	3.7	2.2
Printing and related support activities	20.1	1.9	0.2	0.4	11.1	1.8	1.2	0.6	2.0	0.5	0.4	0.1
Petroleum and coal product	3.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	1.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	1.2	0.0	0.1	0.0
Chemical	37.6	2.0	1.1	0.9	21.4	3.6	3.3	1.0	3.7	0.3	0.4	0.1
Plastics and rubber products	39.0	0.8	1.4	1.4	19.0	6.3	2.6	2.2	3.4	1.3	0.5	0.0
Non-metallic mineral product	15.9	1.0	0.6	0.4	6.4	2.7	2.2	1.2	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.1
Primary metal	24.8	0.8	0.5	0.5	5.5	1.8	8.8	1.4	1.4	0.5	3.5	0.0
Fabricated metal product	54.3	2.2	1.0	1.1	21.4	9.7	7.5	3.8	4.0	2.0	1.3	0.2
Machinery	46.3	1.4	0.9	0.9	15.5	9.4	4.9	3.6	6.7	1.4	1.6	0.1
Computer and electronic product	24.3	5.0	0.3	0.3	13.6	2.4	1.7	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.0
Electrical equipment and appliance	12.8	1.2	0.4	0.4	5.2	3.3	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.0
Transportation equipment	117.5	2.3	2.3	1.5	38.5	30.7	11.5	14.0	12.3	3.6	0.6	0.4
Furniture and related product	27.4	1.4	0.7	0.6	16.1	3.2	2.3	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.1
Miscellaneous	31.1	2.7	0.9	1.0	15.3	4.3	2.8	1.9	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.1

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.

# APPENDIX C

## EMPLOYER INCENTIVES<sup>12</sup>

### Ontario Incentives

- **Achievement Incentive Program** - Up to \$17,000 to eligible employers when apprentices meet training and certification milestones.
- **Registration** - \$1,000 initial registration payment for each apprentice newly registered to Skilled Trades Ontario under the age of 25 and/or self-identifies as part of an under-represented group (maximum of \$2,000, if applicable).
- **In-Class Training Progression** - \$1,000 milestone payment for each level of in-class training completed, up to 4 levels of schooling (where applicable).
- **Completion** - \$1,000 milestone payment to employer when your apprentice achieves the highest certification in their trade. Additional \$1,000 for each apprentice under the age of 25 and/or apprentice that self-identifies as being part of an under-represented group (for a maximum of \$3,000).

### Canada Incentives

- **Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit** - Tax credit is equal to 10 percent of the apprentice salary, payable to eligible employers with a maximum of \$2,000 per year, per apprentice for the first 2 years of the apprenticeship in Red Seal trades.
- **Federal wage subsidies and Other Programs** - Look up the federal Business Benefits Finder for more targeted supports: [https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/innovation/s/?language=en\\_CA](https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/innovation/s/?language=en_CA)

## Worker Incentives

- **Tools Grant** - \$600 for industrial trade
- **Apprentice Development Benefit** - Financial assistance for apprentices while they are attending full-time, in-class training at a ministry-approved training delivery agent (including commuting, basic living expenses, dependent care).
- **Support for Apprentices with Disabilities** - Covers accessibility, individualized services and other expenses when attending college training in Ontario
- **Canada Apprentice Loan (Red Seal Trades)** - Up to \$4,000 in interest-free loans for apprentices training in a Red Seal trade
- **Apprenticeship Completion Bonus (Non-Red Seal Trades)** - \$2,000 taxable cash grant to those out of high school who have completed their training in a non-Red Seal trade.

## Key Organizations and Programs

- **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)** - Helps high school students begin working toward an apprenticeship while completing their Ontario Secondary School Diploma: <https://www.oyappajo.com/>
- **Skilled Trades Ontario (STO)** - Oversees the apprenticeship process in Ontario from start to finish: <https://www.skilledtradesontario.ca/>
- **ApprenticeSearch** - A portal connecting employers and potential apprentices: <https://www.apprenticesearch.com/>
- **Edge Factor** - An experiential learning platform bridging the gap between the classroom and the shop floor: <https://www.edgefactor.com/>
- **Skills Ontario** - Delivering competitions and outreach initiatives across Ontario: <https://www.skillsontario.com/>

<sup>12</sup> For more details, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/financial-supports-apprentices-and-sponsors>





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