



Applications Management Consulting Ltd.

Calgary & Area Labour Market Report

Employee Training and Development

Results from the 2015 Calgary & Area
Employer Survey

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Labour Market Trends and Employee Training and Development	2
Benefits of Employee Training and Development.....	3
Challenges with Employee Training and Development.....	5
Essential Skills Training.....	9
Apprenticeship Training.....	12
Best Practice Examples.....	13
Other Stakeholders.....	16
Calgary & Area Employer Survey Results	18
Economic Context	18
Survey Profile	20
Employee Training and Development - Top Priority.....	23
Employee Training and Development Budget.....	24
Employee Training and Development Challenges	26
Types of Training Offered.....	28
Response to Recruiting Difficulties: Training and Development	29
Canada-Alberta Job Grant	31
Conclusions.....	32
Appendix A: Survey Methodology.....	35
Appendix B: Employer Comments	38

Alberta Human Services has made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this report is reliable, but makes no guarantee of its accuracy or completeness. The user of any information in this report accepts full responsibility and risk of loss resulting from decisions made by the user.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a better understanding of employee training and development policies and practices of Calgary and area employers. This report summarizes the results of the 2015 Calgary and area employer survey conducted between January 1 and December 31, 2015 of more than 800 Calgary and area employers. In addition, some trends, benefits and challenges of employee training development are presented, along with some best practice examples and training and development resources available. The findings in this report are designed to help the various stakeholders reflect on current policies and practices surrounding employee training and development and identify key areas for improvement and change.

Labour Market Trends and Employee Training and Development

The Department of Finance Canada, in its *State of the Canadian Labour Market* report, outlines a number of trends that will shape Canada's labour market over the coming decades.¹

- ▶ Large shifts in the composition of the population, technological advancements and continued globalization will further raise skills requirements.
- ▶ Canadian labour force growth is projected to slow due to population aging, which may exacerbate skills and labour shortages.
- ▶ The competition for skilled workers will increase as Canada is increasingly tied to the international marketplace.
- ▶ Innovation and technology are driving stronger job growth in high-skilled occupations.
- ▶ Canadians will need to become more skilled, more mobile and more flexible in order to continue to prosper.
- ▶ In order for Canada to compete in the global economy, skills upgrading with an emphasis on education and training will be crucial.
- ▶ Improving Canada's productivity performance will become even more important in sustaining wage and income growth in the years ahead.

The report concludes that in order to be successful in the highly innovative and internationally competitive knowledge-based global economy, Canada must produce, attract, retain, and upgrade the skills of its workforce. This requires that all stakeholders, including government, educational institutions, training providers, employers and employees work together. Upgrading the skills of the

¹ The Department of Finance Canada, Jobs Report: The State of the Canadian Labour Market 2014, p.35.

existing labour force through employer sponsored training and development, while challenging in the current economic environment, is a very important piece of the puzzle.

Benefits of Employee Training and Development

Employee training and development is the planned activities to develop the skills and knowledge of workers. In this report, employee training and development is interpreted to encompass everything ranging from training in basic skills to advanced skills. These skills training areas are included but not limited to: management and supervisory skills; professional and technical training; occupational health and safety; new employee orientation; interpersonal skills; team building skills; product knowledge; equipment; executive development; information technology and computer training; customer service and relations; sales; quality; and basic skills (numeracy, literacy).

There are many strategies that employers can use to facilitate employee training and development. Strategies include training, self-directed learning, coaching and mentoring, job promotion, job enrichment, cross-training, lateral training, and written job aids. Types of training include orientation, on-the-job, classroom, e-learning, and train-the-trainer.²

Unfortunately, during times of economic uncertainty, employee training and development is one of the areas which is neglected as employers fight to keep costs down. However, research has shown that providing employees with appropriate training and development opportunities has a number of benefits, including:

- ▶ Increases productivity;
- ▶ Improves skills (essential, firm-specific, job-specific or technical skills);
- ▶ Improves safety and reduces error rates;
- ▶ Reduces absenteeism;
- ▶ Improves employee motivation, job satisfaction and morale;
- ▶ Empowers employees and decreases the need for constant supervision;

“Having a trained workforce means your workers are learning new skills that can improve production, cut time spent in creation of your product (or service), reduce production costs, reduce mistakes, build confidence in your workforce, and create a better working environment. An investment in your employees’ skill sets is an investment in your company.”

Autodesk Line/Shape/Space

² Alberta Human Resources and Employment (2005) Skills by Design: Strategies for Employee Development, 3.

- ▶ Promotes business growth through increased efficiencies in processes, increased capacity to adopt new technologies and increased innovation in strategies and products;
- ▶ Reduces employee turnover and recruitment costs;
- ▶ Gives seasonal workers a reason to return if they have the opportunity to learn and build on new skills each year;
- ▶ Improves brand image;
- ▶ Helps attract top talent;
- ▶ Develops future leaders;
- ▶ Enables knowledge transfer; and
- ▶ Prevents skills shortages

The Millennial Generation

In addition, research reveals that today's young workers want more than a paycheque - they are seeking employers that value continuous learning. Employers are more likely to attract and retain the best employees if they can offer development opportunities.

Consider the millennial generation. As the baby boomer generation³ continues to retire from the workforce, increasingly more employees will be hired from the ranks of millennials.⁴ In 2011, PwC⁵ commissioned Opinion Research to conduct an online survey of close to 4,400 graduates across 75 countries. All were aged 31 or under at the time of the survey and had graduated between 2008 and 2011.

“Millennials matter because they are not only different from those that have gone before, they are also more numerous than any since the soon-to-retire Baby Boomer generation – millennials already form 25% of the workforce in the US and account for over half of the population in India. By 2020, millennials will form 50% of the global workforce. [...] The particular characteristics of millennials – such as their ambition and desire to keep learning and move quickly upwards through an organization, as well as their willingness to move on quickly if their expectations are not being met – requires a focused response from employers.”⁶

Some interesting findings from the report reveal the following information around the millennial generation and their desire for training and development:

³ Born 1946-1964.

⁴ Born 1980 - 2000.

⁵ PricewaterhouseCoopers

⁶ www.pwc.com, Millennials at work, Reshaping the workplace, p.3.

- ▶ In terms of attracting millennials, the biggest draw is the opportunity for progression and the desire to keep learning. Fifty-two per cent of respondents said they felt the opportunity for progression made an employer an attractive prospect, while 35 per cent said excellent training and development programs was an attraction.
- ▶ When asked what factors most influenced their decision to accept their current job, the top response from millennials was the opportunity for personal development (65 per cent).
- ▶ When asked which benefits they would most value from an employer, respondents named training and development (22 per cent) and flexible working opportunities (19 per cent) over cash bonuses (14 per cent).
- ▶ Many millennials respond well to mentoring by older employees and would prefer managers and supervisors coach them rather than tell them what to do. When asked which training/development opportunities millennials would most value from an employer, the top response was working with strong coaches and mentors (28 per cent), followed by changes/rotations of role to gain experience (21 per cent), support for further academic training (19 per cent), collaborating with inspiring colleagues on key projects (18 per cent), formal classroom training (6 per cent) and e-learning (5 per cent).

Challenges with Employee Training and Development

When you look at the benefits training can bring both employees and employers, investing in employee training and development seems like an obvious choice. However, developing and implementing an employee training and development plan and budget does require a focused effort, and many employers admit they face challenges in terms of training employees. Some of the more common challenges reported by Calgary and Area employers as well as employers all over the world include: too busy, too costly/not in budget, turnover/employees leave once trained, managing employees' diverse learning needs/not knowing what training is available, and employees are not interested in training.

Many employers report that employees are just not interested in training. While this may be true in some instances (6 per cent of Calgary and Area employers said this was the biggest challenge they face in terms of employee training and development), research indicates that in many cases, employees *are* interested in training - just not the training the employer is offering.

In 2013, Skillsoft commissioned Opinion Matters, an independent research firm, to find out what value employees place on training. Over 1,000 U.K office workers were surveyed regarding what they really think about training.⁷

The report highlights reasons why employers cannot afford to ignore the gap between what employees want and what they receive in terms of employee training and development.

⁷ Skillsoft, Research Report, Seven Things Employees Want Most From Their Training, http://www.skillsoft.com/assets/white-papers/whitepaper_uk_seven_things.pdf

- ▶ Employees want to learn and continue learning throughout their careers. They see training as essential to becoming better at their jobs, developing as people and building their careers. Over 70 per cent of the workers surveyed rated training as being essential for developing skills that directly relate to their job.
- ▶ When asked what motivates them in relation to training, 63 per cent of the respondents said they'd expect to use the skills they acquire to do their job better.
- ▶ When it comes to employees deciding to leave a company, a lack of training and career development prospects is often a prime motivator. Only 48 per cent of the 16-24 year olds surveyed believed their training needs were being met by their current employer. Twenty per cent of this age group reported they were working towards a professional qualification outside of work at their own expense to further their careers.
- ▶ Employers that do not provide accessible training and development options risk losing valuable employees and expertise from all levels of their organizations. Fifty-four per cent of 16-24 year olds, 47 per cent of 25-34 year olds, 39 per cent of 35-44 year olds and 31 per cent of senior business leaders age 55 and older reported they would leave a company for better workplace training and development opportunities.
- ▶ Employers often fear that employees will leave once trained and take that expertise to a competitor. However, the survey revealed that employees are committed to extending their tenure with companies that give them the opportunity to take on new roles and gain new skills and work experiences. With almost 50 per cent of employees aged 16-24 looking to stay with their present company for up to five years, and 20 per cent looking to stay for six to eight years, investing in training and development is critical so employees are engaged, happy and want to grow with the company.
- ▶ Employees expect lifelong workplace training. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents felt access to training in the workplace is always relevant, no matter what your role in the company is or where you are in your career.
- ▶ The skills employees consider most critical to success in the workplace are *soft skills*, including interpersonal and communication skills and time management skills. While most respondents agreed with the need to develop their technical or job-specific competences, almost all confirmed that these need to be supplemented with essential soft skills.
- ▶ Employees want training that works with their individual learning style. Thirty-three per cent of respondents prefer to learn by feeling or experiencing, just 19 per cent prefer a classroom setting, 17

“Investing in people development is a powerful way to empower workers in their current role, support them in their career aspirations and ultimately keep employees for longer. In a world where key skills are likely to become more scarce – retaining talented individuals in the prime of their working lives maximizes overall organizational value.”

Skillsoft, Research Report, Seven Things Employees Want Most From Their Training

per cent said they are visual learners and 25 per cent are happy to take courses in their own time outside of work. Clearly, employers need to take a blended approach to learning, using different methods and platforms to deliver training content to ensure that learning is accessible and engaging for all employees.

Another fear for many employers is that they spend time and money training and developing staff, only to see them take that learning to another organization. Eight per cent of Calgary and Area employers reported this was the biggest challenge their company faces in terms of employee training and development. However, training actually can increase employee retention, when the training reinforces the value of the employee.⁸ In addition, contrary to popular belief, on average, workers in Alberta are not hopping between jobs with greater frequency these days. Data from Statistics Canada actually shows that the average tenure in a job⁹ has risen over the years, climbing from 63 months in 1981 to 89 months in 2015 for Albertans aged 15 years and over. Job tenure for Albertans aged 25 years and older rose to 100 months in 2015, from 83 months in 1981, while job tenure for Alberta youth aged 15 - 24 years rose to 19 months in 2015, from 16 months in 2001.¹⁰

According to IBM, organizations should thoroughly look at the impact of training on new hire recruitment and the impact of skills on career development and retention.¹¹ Its various research reports over the years have revealed the following about employee training and development:

- ▶ More than 65 per cent of global leaders report “*talent and leadership shortages*” as their number one business challenge.¹²
- ▶ People under the age of 35 are twice as likely to be looking for new work as older workers. In addition, the total costs of replacement can reach upwards of 200 per cent of an employee’s annual salary.¹³
- ▶ Eighty-four per cent of employees in best performing organizations are receiving the training they need, which is 68 per cent better than worst performing companies.¹⁴

⁸ Training Magazine, Training Increases Employee Retention, Lorri Freifield, April 18, 2013.

⁹ Job tenure measures the number of consecutive months or years a person has worked for the current (or most recent) employer. The employee may have worked in one or more occupations or in one or more locations or businesses and still be considered to have continuous tenure if the employer has not changed. But if a person has worked for the same employer over different periods of time, job tenure measures the most recent period of uninterrupted work. A temporary layoff does not constitute an interruption.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 282-0038.

¹¹ IBM Training building skills for a smarter planet, The Value of Training, IBM Corporation 2014.

¹² Bersin & Associates TalentTrends®, Fall 2012.

¹³ Towers Watson July 2012.

¹⁴ In the IBM Smarter Workforce study, IBM looked at best performing companies and worst performing companies to see if skills had a part to play in performance.

- ▶ Increasing team skills by one-third increases likelihood of stakeholders meeting their objectives from 10 per cent to 100 per cent.¹⁵
- ▶ Three-quarters to 80 per cent of managers believe effective training is critical to project success. Skill levels linked to business value yield a 10 per cent increase in productivity.¹⁶
- ▶ Training and an investment in developing a skills building culture dramatically impacts employee retention. Only 21 per cent of new hires intend to stay at companies that do not offer training for their current jobs whereas 62 per cent of new hires intend to stay when training is provided.¹⁷
- ▶ Employees who do not feel they can achieve their career goals at their current organization are 12 times more likely to consider leaving than employees who do feel they can achieve their career goals. This figure jumps to about 30 times for new employees. Considering the amount employers invest in recruiting and the time lost to filling the same role again, the impact to performance and margin can be significant.¹⁸

Some of the most successful companies around today continue to invest in employee training despite the tough economic climate. They understand that failure to align employee development with the future needs of the company could result in increased turnover, lost productivity and lost opportunities.

Kim Janson,¹⁹ author of *“Demystifying Talent Management: Unleash People’s Potential to Deliver Superior Results,”* emphasizes that employers that have institutionalized the idea of continuous employee learning and improvement have the following beliefs:²⁰

- ▶ Talent development is necessary and non-negotiable.
- ▶ Training and development is a shared responsibility - managers are expected to invest in employees and employees are expected to continue to learn and remain marketable.

“The excuses—such as it’s too expensive and takes time—are all rubbish. The apathy toward this critical business imperative has a significant ability to damage a business and is doing so across the world.”

Training Magazine, Why is Employee Development so Elusive?

¹⁵ IDC’s Training Impact on Projects Survey, 2011.

¹⁶ i IDC MarketScape: Worldwide IT Education and Training 2013 Vendor Analysis, IDC, 2013.

¹⁷ Study by the IBM Institute for Business Value – A New Way or Working” 2010.

¹⁸ IBM Smarter Workforce 2013 Training and Tenure Report.

¹⁹ For more than 20 years, Kim Janson worked in 30-plus countries in her capacities as the Chief Talent Officer of H.J Heinz; SVP of Leadership Development at Bank of America; Head of Leadership, Learning, Org Effectiveness, and Diversity at Hasbro; and other senior roles at other Fortune 500 companies. Janson is a teacher/facilitator for Harvard University and provides executive coaching in programs for the Harvard Business School.

²⁰ Training Magazine, Why is Employee Development so Elusive?, Kim Janson, November 6, 2015. <https://trainingmag.com/why-employee-development-so-elusive>

- ▶ Hire winners - they continue to figure out ways to continue to win.
- ▶ Think long term about the ways people can contribute to the organization and hire beyond the needs of the specific role.
- ▶ Smart organizations promote employees early - they put people in positions ahead of when they are ready and help them to be successful through learning and development.
- ▶ Learning is continuous - don't measure a training and development plan completion; measure whether it has been developed.

A lack of feedback and coaching consistently tops the list of issues coming out of employee engagement surveys around the world, according to Janson. She believes employers need to develop a business strategy, ask themselves what are the skills, experience and capabilities needed to execute the strategy, and what is the gap.²¹

Essential Skills Training

Employers often do not identify employees' lack of essential skills as a major challenge. Yet many issues, including but not limited to low productivity, high turnover, high rates of absenteeism, poor safety records, high error rates, and poor customer service may mask underlying essential skills challenges.

Essential skills provide workers with a foundation for learning other skills as well as enhance people's ability to innovate and adapt to change in the workplace. The nine essential skills identified by the Government of Canada are: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning.²²

According to the OECD, about 13 per cent of workers on average are under-qualified for their jobs.²³ The Survey of Adult Skills asks workers to report the qualification they consider necessary to get their job today. The incidence of under qualification varies significantly across countries, from less than 10 per cent in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Japan,

"It is becoming more apparent that doing nothing to enhance essential skills and employability attitudes is not an option in most workplaces. Pressure on wages from a shrinking labour force, challenges from competitors to improve quality and cut costs, and rising skill requirements for all workers make investment in essential skills not only imperative but also, increasingly, irresistible."

*Employment and Skills Development Canada
- Building Essential Skills in the Workplace*

²¹ Training Magazine, Why is Employee Development so Elusive?, Kim Janson, November 6, 2015. <https://trainingmag.com/why-employee-development-so-elusive>

²² Employment and Skills Development Canada, Building Essential Skills in the Workplace, 2007.

²³ OECD Skills Outlook 2013, First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills, p.24.

Poland and Spain to over 20 per cent in Italy and Sweden. In Canada, approximately 15 per cent of workers report they are under-qualified for their jobs.²⁴

“Low literacy and essential skills is a compounding problem because low-skilled adults benefit less from other training that sits atop basic skills—and their skills remain weak or deteriorate over time.”²⁵

Research shows that workplace essential skills training that is well executed can provide a significant return on investment (ROI) to employers. One study in particular, the multi-year UPSKILL project, is a high quality study that measures the ROI for employers, employees and government of essential skills training. The research was conducted by Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) for Employment and Social Development Canada.²⁶

A total of 88 firms, primarily hotels in the Accommodations and Food Services Sector, were randomly assigned to a program group. Firms were either assigned to a group that offered employees a maximum of 40 hours of Literacy and Essential Skills training on-site during working hours, or to a control group whose employees did not receive the training.²⁷ Some results of the study are summarized below.

Overall Return on Investment

- ▶ **The average ROI for UPSKILL firms was 23 per cent.** Firms that received training through the UPSKILL program experienced gains in revenue, cost savings from increased productivity, and reductions in hiring costs totaling \$4,600 per participant. The net benefit to firms, after taking into consideration the full costs of training and release time for workers, is \$577 per participant, for an average return on investment of 23 per cent.²⁸

Effects on Workers

- ▶ **Increased literacy scores:** Participants’ document use scores on a standardized literacy test increased by 11 points immediately after training and by up to 18 points six months later, compared to the changes experienced by workers in the control group.
- ▶ **Improved job performance:** Training led to an increase of over 12 percentage points in the number of employees achieving industry certification standards of job performance, compared to the changes observed among the control group.
- ▶ **Increased job retention:** Ninety-one per cent of participants in the training group worked with the same employer up to a year after enrolment, compared to 83 per cent of those in the control group. In

²⁴ Ibid, p.171.

²⁵ CB Insights, How Essential Skills Training Unlocks Business Value, p.2.

²⁶ UPSKILL: A Credible Test of Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Training, Technical Report, August 2014.

²⁷ Ibid, p.3.

²⁸ Ibid.

addition, only 3 per cent of participants in the training group had an unemployment spell a year after enrolment, compared to 9 per cent in the control group. On average, participants worked close to four weeks more over the year compared to the control group, and were also slightly less likely to receive Employment Insurance benefits in the year after enrolment.

- ▶ **Improved health and well-being:** Members in the training group were nearly 25 percentage points more likely than the control group to have reported a reduction in stress levels experienced in the workplace since enrolling in the UPSKILL program.

Effects on firms

- ▶ **Increased customer satisfaction:** Over 70 per cent of training group firms reported significant increases in satisfaction of hotel guests compared to less than 40 per cent of the control group. In addition, over 75 per cent of firms in the training group reported reductions in the incidence of customer complaints compared to less than 25 per cent of control group firms.
- ▶ **Cost savings and productivity gains:** Nearly half of training group firms had significant reductions in error rates, compared to only 20 per cent firms in the control group, translating into cost savings of about \$1,000 per participating employee in the year after enrolment. Firms in the training group saved an additional \$1,200 per participant over the follow-up period - a result of reduced time spent by supervisors monitoring and correcting work of their staff. Finally, training group firms also experienced a reduction in hiring costs, arising from increased job retention. For the average employer with 15 employees, this translated into about one less hire that needed to be made during the year after enrolment.
- ▶ **Increased revenues:** Firms that participated in training were 22 percentage points more likely to report an increase in customer loyalty. About half of training group firms having experienced an increase in occupancy rates compared to about a third of the control group. These gains in occupancy rates, along with the increased spending on food and beverages, added approximately \$2,200 in incremental revenues per participant over the following year.
- ▶ **Benefits were achieved with modest investment of workers' time:** While the UPSKILL program offered a maximum of 40 hours of training, the amount of time that employers made available to participants to engage in training was, on average, just under 20 hours per participant.

While the firms that participated in this study were from the Accommodation and Food Services sector, benefits from essential skills training have been observed in other industries. BuildForce Canada, in its report titled, *The Business Case for Essential Skills in Construction*, established a link between essential skills upgrading during early apprenticeship training and ROI for employers.²⁹ Some results of the study are summarized below.

²⁹ The Construction Sector Council, BuildForce Canada, *The Business Case for Essential Skills in Construction*, January 2010.

- ▶ **Apprentices receiving essential skills upgrading achieved higher final grades in technical training than non-participants:** Level 1 apprentices who took part in essential skills upgrading achieved an average final grade of 83 percent compared to 78 percent among non-participants.
- ▶ **Participants in essential skills upgrading were positive about their experience:** Seventy-five percent of apprentices reported increased confidence in their ability to complete the apprenticeship technical training and 82 percent of participants reported increased confidence in their ability to perform on the job.
- ▶ **There is a substantial financial benefit from implementing essential skills upgrading - for every dollar invested, the return is at least \$26.34:** If employers spent \$132.90 per newly engaged apprentice on essential-skills training, the return was \$26.34 for every dollar invested, based on at least 80 per cent of apprentices completing their employment requirements. If *all* apprentices who passed training completed their employment requirements, for every dollar invested in essential skills upgrading, the return to employers is \$33.18.

Apprenticeship Training

In 2009, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum commissioned a study to gain a more accurate understanding of the cost and benefits of apprenticeship training and dispel the myth that investing in apprentices provides little financial benefit.³⁰ Data collected from almost 1,000 employers in 16 trades showed there is a strong business case for apprenticeship. Some of the key findings of the study include:³¹

- ▶ For every \$1 spent on apprenticeship training, an employer received an average benefit of \$1.47 or a net return of \$0.47.
- ▶ The net benefit of apprenticeship training increases in each year over the course of the apprenticeship period.
- ▶ The revenue generated by apprentices increases throughout the apprenticeship.
- ▶ Employers estimated that a “homegrown” journey-person is 29 per cent more productive.
- ▶ Other benefits to hiring apprentices include having employees which are a better fit with the organization and reduced risk of skills shortages.

“Ongoing dialogue with industry about the value of apprenticeship and continued support for employers will be essential to ensure Canadians have the opportunities to train and to gain skills.”

Canadian Apprentice Forum, It Pays to Hire an Apprentice

³⁰ Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, It Pays to Hire an Apprentice, Calculating the Return on Training Investment For Skilled Trades Employers in Canada, Executive Summary, June 2009.

³¹ Ibid, p.3.

- ▶ On average, employers across all regions and employer sizes gained a positive return on their apprenticeship investment.

Best Practice Examples

Canada's Top 100 Employers

Leading edge companies continue to invest in employee training and development - regardless of economic conditions. Canada's Top 100 Employers project is a national competition to determine which employers lead their industries in offering exceptional workplaces for their employees. Employers are evaluated by the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers using the following eight criteria and are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offers the most progressive and forward-thinking programs:³²

- ▶ Physical Workplace
- ▶ Work Atmosphere & Social
- ▶ Health, Financial & Family Benefits
- ▶ Vacation & Time Off
- ▶ Employee Communications
- ▶ Performance Management
- ▶ **Training & Skills Development**
- ▶ Community Involvement

"The Top 100 companies are influencing Canadians every day, and our goal is to document these leaders in the hope that they will inspire change for others."

www.canadatop100.com

Following are the Alberta companies that made Canada's Top 100 Employers list based on the above criteria, particularly for their training and skills development offerings.

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation

- ▶ The New Graduate Hire Incentive Program helps new hires who are recent graduates offset the cost of post-secondary studies with annual payments of \$1,000 per year, to a maximum of \$4,000 over the course of five years.
- ▶ Enrolls new employees into an "Orientation Buddy Program," pairing them with senior personnel, and manages a unique "Farmin' 101" training program for all employees without an agricultural background. The two-day program includes classroom training and a bus tour to farm operations and a stop at a farm equipment dealership.

³² <http://www.canadastop100.com/national/>

Agrium Inc.

- ▶ Invests in employee education with tuition subsidies up to \$5,000 each year, as well as manages an academic scholarship program for children of employees who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education, up to \$1,600 per child.
- ▶ Apprenticeship programs (for instrumentation technicians, millwrights, steamfitters/pipefitters, heavy duty mechanics, industrial mechanics, electricians, and welders), engineer-in-training program for engineering graduates, succession management program for employees showing leadership potential early in their careers, international work opportunities.

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.

- ▶ Aboriginal apprenticeship program, leadership development program, financial bonuses for the completion of certain accreditation range from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

Enbridge

- ▶ Avidly supports ongoing learning and development and manages an in-house university, which includes training opportunities in areas such as business and financial acumen, project management, personal and interpersonal excellence, risk, leadership development, and energy related studies.

Enerflex Ltd.

- ▶ Supports employees with college-bound children with an academic scholarship program and summer employment, co-op and internship programs.
- ▶ Apprenticeship/skilled trades programs, mentoring, in-house training, online training, leadership training, paid internships, subsidies for professional accreditation, employer covers up to 100 per cent of tuition per year.

National Energy Board

- ▶ Along with tuition subsidies for courses at outside institutions, employees can apply for an educational leave of absence for up to one year in duration.

PCL Construction

- ▶ Offers new hires and current employees continuous opportunities to enhance their skills through the in-house PCL College of Construction and impressive Centennial Learning Centre, a LEED Gold Certified training facility with a capacity of 350 trainees.

Shell Canada Ltd.

- ▶ Women's career development program, diversity awareness program, head office training centre with five classrooms (home of the Shell University and Learn@Shell programs).

In addition, winners of the 2016 Top 70 Alberta Employers competition can be found at www.canadastop100.com/alberta/. The training and skills development offerings of the top employers in Alberta can be viewed by clicking on the individual companies.

Learning Leaders

Since 1991, The Conference Board of Canada has conducted the Learning and Development Outlook survey on a biannual basis. The 13th edition of the report, conducted in 2014-15, provides detailed information about: the types of learning and development activities undertaken by 152 Canadian organizations; the costs associated with employee training and development; trends and changes in learning and development practices; and broader employee training and development issues in Canada.

Survey results clearly show that some employers are way ahead of others in terms of their employee training and development programs and practices. One of the key findings in the report is that organizations with strong learning cultures³³ tend to have stronger organizational performance.

“These organizations indicated better performance in the areas of employee performance, employee engagement, customer satisfaction, overall productivity, and leadership performance compared with organizations with moderate learning cultures. The organizations also showed significantly better performance compared with organizations that have weak learning cultures. More dollars dedicated to learning and development, along with strategic allocation of the investment, was shown to greatly improve bottom line metrics for organizations.”³⁴

The report also offers benchmark comparisons to learning leaders and seven key drivers that can help employers strengthen the learning environment within their organizations. These include:³⁵

- ▶ Create and maintain a strong learning culture;
- ▶ Ensure learning is a top priority;
- ▶ Offer diverse learning delivery methods (i.e. conferences, coaching, peer information sharing, cross training, job shadowing, mentoring, train the trainer, networking, apprenticeship training, virtual simulations/gaming or web-based learning);
- ▶ Provide learning supports (i.e., resources and technology such as learning tools, specialized equipment, access to organizational documentation, and job aids);
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of learning programs;
- ▶ Align learning with organizational strategy; and

³³ The Conference Board of Canada defines learning culture as, “An organizational commitment to ongoing learning, and the processes of sharing, support, communication, and understanding that move the organization forward. A key component of a successful workplace is creating a culture of learning. It helps to ensure that an organization can adapt to changing technologies, work environments, and the marketplace, in general. A culture of learning happens when workplace leaders provide opportunities for learning in a supportive environment.” The Conference Board of Canada, Learning as a Lever for Performance, Learning and Development Outlook - 13th Edition, December 2015, p.6.

³⁴ The Conference Board of Canada, Learning as a Lever for Performance, Learning and Development Outlook - 13th Edition, Report December 2015, p.iii.

³⁵ Ibid, p.2.

- ▶ Make leadership development a priority.

Other Stakeholders

Many stakeholders have a role to play in producing, attracting, retaining, and upgrading the skills of the province's workforce. The Alberta government is taking action to stimulate the economy with jobs now and diversify the economy for the future. The Alberta Jobs Plan includes measures and programs to:

- ▶ Improve access to capital for entrepreneurs;
- ▶ Support employers in creating jobs;
- ▶ Support regional economies;
- ▶ Invest in infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads and bridges;
- ▶ Encourage innovation and diversification across a variety of sectors; and
- ▶ Increase access to markets for Alberta's products and services.

As part of Budget 2016, the Alberta government is committing \$250 million to support job creators and encourage business capital investment, attract new businesses to Alberta, support regional economic development and improve access to training opportunities.

Some new, as well as some existing government funded programs available to support employers and entrepreneurs in creating jobs include:

- ▶ **Apprenticeship and Training:** Over a two-year period, \$25 million has been allocated to support apprenticeship and training in Alberta. This includes \$15 million to support apprenticeship-focused training opportunities and \$10 million to provide workforce training opportunities.
- ▶ **Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP):** Designed to help students gain work experience and build transferrable skills in the labour market. STEP provides wage subsidies to eligible employers who hire students for work placements from May to August. Starting in 2016-17, \$10 million will be allocated for STEP each year to support approximately 3,000 summer jobs.
- ▶ **Canada-Alberta Job Grant:** Jointly funded by the federal government and employers; this grant allows employers to train current and potential employees to fill job vacancies. Employers choose the participants and what type of training is needed.

Community Based Training Programs

Those seeking to enter or transition in the labour market can access publicly funded training offered by a variety of service providers. A comprehensive resource on community based training programs is the Employment, Training and Career Services Directory. The Directory is updated quarterly by Alberta Human Services, and is designed to serve as a general guideline of programs and services on employment, training and related support services in Calgary and surrounding areas. The contents of

the Directory are based on information provided by service providers and institutions in the following areas:

- ▶ **Occupational Skills Training:** includes a variety of training programs, such as certificate and diploma programs. The training programs are typically short-term and some include work experience and job placement assistance.
- ▶ **Workplace Training:** includes information about organizations that arrange for training that is provided on the job site. This training is employer-delivered, work-site training for unemployed individuals who are having difficulty entering the workforce due to a lack of skills. They may also provide work exposure opportunities at a work-site for individuals with limited or no work experience. Individuals may receive a training allowance while attending these programs.
- ▶ **Pre-employment Programs:** includes information about programs that provide training and resources for unemployed individuals who are entering the labour market or re-entering after an extended absence.
- ▶ **Self-employment Programs:** includes information about programs designed for unemployed Albertans who have a viable business idea, personal attributes necessary to be successful at self-employment and who are in need of self-employment training.
- ▶ **Immigrant Bridging:** includes a list of programs for immigrants who have post-secondary education and experience in their field of training but require training in Canadian workplace culture, training in their field which may be different from country of origin and job search skills to bridge gaps in knowledge or skill in order to gain entry to their occupation. This training is appropriate for immigrant professionals who are underemployed.
- ▶ **Career and Employment Services:** includes information on career and employment services which may include workshops, job search services and job placement services. These service providers can provide referrals and information about training programs in the Calgary Region.

The Directory also includes information on academic upgrading, computer access and computer skills training, counselling and support services, English as a second language (ESL) programs, persons with disabilities, specialized assessment, temporary employment opportunities and youth programs.

The Employment, Training and Career Services Directory can be found at <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/2433.html>.

Other useful websites for those seeking training information include:

- ▶ **Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS):** An online career resource for Albertans to access services and information about employment and career planning including tips on writing resumes, job interview skills, job search resources and links to job postings. <http://alis.alberta.ca>
- ▶ **MyWorkQuest:** An employment portal that connects youth to services and information for careers and employment planning. <https://myworkquest.alberta.ca>

Calgary & Area Employer Survey Results

Economic Context

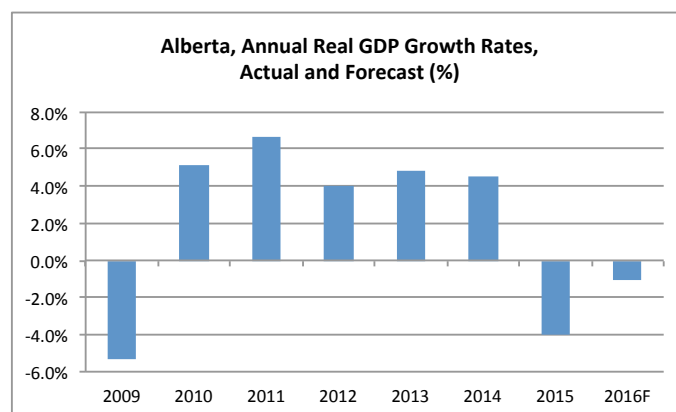
Before presenting the results of the 2015 Calgary and Area Employer Survey, it is important to understand the economic context in which the survey was conducted.

Canada started the year with two consecutive quarters of economic contraction in 2015. Overall, Canada's real gross domestic product (GDP) advanced just 1.2 per cent in 2015, down from 2.5 per cent in 2014 – the weakest increase since 2009. Low commodity prices resulted in an economic downturn in the oil producing provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 2015, while real GDP rose in the remaining provinces. The economies of Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta are forecast to contract in 2016, while economic growth in Saskatchewan is projected to be weak.³⁶

“With WTI and Brent oil prices this year expected to average US\$42/barrel and US\$43, down from the 2015 averages of US\$49 and US\$54, the growth dichotomy between the major oil-producing regions and the other seven provinces is expected to persist in 2016.”³⁷

Alberta's economy contracted by an estimated 4.0 per cent in 2015, following strong growth of 4.8 per cent and 4.5 per cent in 2013 and 2014 respectively.³⁸ Energy companies continued to layoff workers and cut capital spending in the final quarter of 2015, as oil prices fell further to an average of \$US37 per barrel in December. In 2015, 116 Alberta employers informed the provincial government of group layoffs.³⁹ Over 17,500 Albertans were affected by the group layoffs, up substantially from 2014 when the government received 35 notices affecting 7,500 people. Over three-quarters of the group layoffs in 2015 involved terminations in the oil and gas sector and related businesses.⁴⁰

Alberta had an average of 148,000 unemployed people in 2015, up 36,300 or 33 per cent from



Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM table 379-0030.

³⁶ CIBC Economics, Provincial Economic Outlook, May 13, 2016.

³⁷ Scotiabank, Global Economics, Provincial Flash, May 12, 2016.

³⁸ Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 379-0030.

³⁹ Employers are required to provide the government four weeks' notice of their intention to layoff 50 or more employees at a single-location within a four-week period.

⁴⁰ Job Bank, Job Market Trends and News, Alberta.

2014. In addition, the average number of Albertans receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in 2015 increased 67 per cent per cent to 50,427 from 30,242 in 2014.⁴¹ The province's unemployment rate rose to an average of 6.0 per cent in 2015, from 4.7 per cent the previous year. In December 2015, Alberta's unemployment rate hit 7.0 per cent, a rate not seen since April 2010.⁴²

The Conference Board of Canada and the Alberta government project real GDP in the province to contract by 1.1 per cent in 2016.⁴³ ⁴⁴ The last time Alberta experienced two consecutive years of economic decline was in 1982-83.

“The steep decline in oil prices means that the downturn in Alberta's economy will be deeper and longer than forecast at Budget [2015]. [...] Weaker economic conditions continue to weigh on incomes, including wages and salaries, corporate profits, and Government of Alberta revenue. [...] Though the outlook for 2016 has deteriorated, there are some factors that remain supportive of growth. Oil sands output will continue to expand, driving exports. As costs moderate, a lower Canadian dollar will support non-energy exports and boost revenue. Increased public capital spending will help offset some of the declines in private sector investment.”⁴⁵

Among the Conference Board of Canada's 28 major Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), the Calgary CMA's economy was the hardest hit in 2015. Following robust growth of 5.1 per cent in 2014, real GDP in the Calgary CMA declined by 2.4 per cent in 2015, the first contraction since 2009. The Calgary economy is forecast to contract by a further 1.2 per cent in 2016.⁴⁶

The average number of unemployed people in the Calgary CMA increased from 42,300 in 2014 to 55,600 in 2015, pushing the unemployment rate up from 5.0 per cent in 2014 to 6.4 per cent in 2015. The unemployment rate for men increased significantly to 7.0 per cent in 2015 from 4.8 per cent in 2014, while the unemployment rate for women increased to 5.6 per cent, from 5.3 per cent in 2014. Among the major age categories, youth aged 15 - 24 years had the highest unemployment rate in Calgary in 2015 at 11.2 per cent, up from 10.1 per cent the previous year.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 276-0022.

⁴² Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 282-0087.

⁴³ Conference Board of Canada, Metropolitan Outlook 1, Winter 2016.

⁴⁴ Government of Alberta, 2015-16 Third Quarter Fiscal Update and Economic Statement, February 2016,

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 282-0129.

Survey Profile

In 2015, telephone surveys were conducted with 802 Calgary and area employers (201 large-sized companies with 100+ employees; 200 medium-sized companies with 50 - 99 employees; 200 small-sized companies with 10 - 49 employees; and 201 micro-sized companies with < 10 employees).⁴⁸ Employers were surveyed on their recruitment and retention practices, including questions about company expansions and downsizes, layoffs, vacant positions, future employment, recruitment methods, recruiting difficulties, employee turnover and retention strategies. Supplemental questions on employee training and development were added to the survey and results form the basis of the remainder of this section.

The 802 employers surveyed employed approximately 161,013 people. Of this total, 64 per cent were full-time employees, 22 per cent were part-time employees, and 14 per cent were either contract, seasonal, casual, temporary or relief staff.

How many people does your company employ in the Calgary region?

Industry	Total Employees	Number of Companies
Mining & Oil & Gas	16,522	80
Construction	11,191	80
Manufacturing	6,929	80
Wholesale & Retail Trade	17,301	82
Transportation & Warehousing	11,820	80
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7,062	80
Health Care & Social Assistance	48,198	80
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	7,566	80
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	7,875	80
Other	26,549	80
Total	161,013	802

"Other" represents companies in any of the following industries: agriculture, utilities, information & culture, management of companies, administrative & support services, educational services, other services or public administration.

General Highlights from the 2015 Calgary and Area Labour Market Employer Survey

- ▶ Thirty-eight per cent of the employers reported they had difficulty recruiting qualified employees in the 12 months prior to their survey.
- ▶ Forty-two per cent of the employers had vacant positions that needed to be filled at the time of their survey. The employers reporting vacancies had approximately 2,850 positions that needed to be filled.

⁴⁸ See Appendix A for additional details.

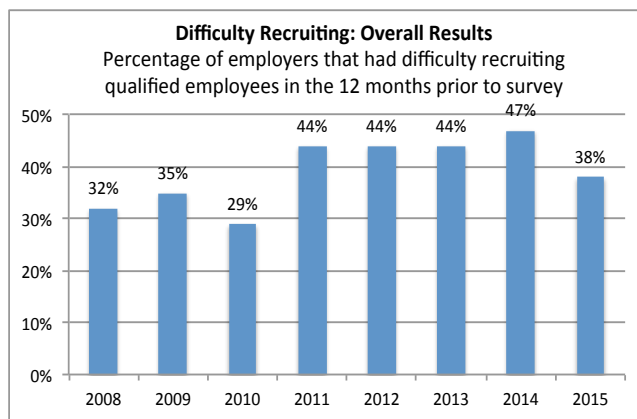
- ▶ Sixty-six per cent of the employers reported approximately 11,900 employees had left their company in the 12 months prior to their survey as a result of voluntary turnover. This equates to an average turnover rate of 7.0 per cent.
- ▶ Twenty-three per cent of the employers reported they laid off a total of 3,660 employees in the three months prior to their survey. This equates to an average layoff rate of 2.3 per cent. The average layoff rate was significantly higher for mining and oil and gas employers (11.7 per cent) and construction employers (9.3 per cent).

Calgary and area employers have been surveyed since 2006 about their labour market practices. A roll up of results since 2008 is captured in the Annual Review Report.⁴⁹ Throughout the years, skills and labour shortages have challenged many of the employers, from micro-sized to large-size, and across the various industry sectors. Even with the slumping economy in 2008-2009 and 2015, employers in Calgary continued to deal with vacancies and had difficulty recruiting qualified employees.

Regardless of the economic times, investment in employee training and development is important to helping employers adjust to labour and skills shortages.

The most recent results indicate that the percentage of employers that had difficulty recruiting qualified employees in the 12 months prior to their survey had eased somewhat to 38 per cent, from a high of 47 per cent in 2014. Even during the last recession, difficulty recruiting qualified employees was a concern, affecting approximately one-third of the employers between 2008 and 2010.

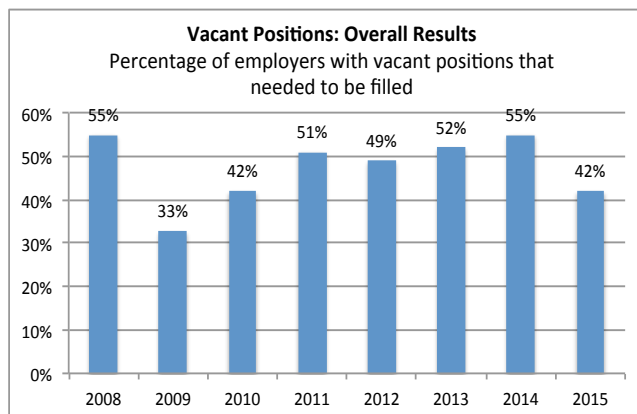
When asked to specify the occupations that were the most difficult to fill, 36 per cent of the occupations usually require college education or apprenticeship training (Skill Level B), 34 per cent of the occupations usually require secondary school and/or occupation specific training or on the job training (Skill Level C and D), and 30 per cent of the occupations usually require a university education (Skill Level A). Truck drivers was the top occupation, reported by 8 per cent of the employers, followed by food counter attendants and kitchen helpers (4 per cent), cooks (4 per cent), construction managers (3 per cent), wholesale trade sales reps (3 per cent), light duty cleaners (3 per cent) and construction trade helpers and labourers (3 per cent).



⁴⁹ Alberta Human Services, 2015 Calgary & Area Labour Market Annual Review, <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/2395.html>

In addition, over the years, employers continued to have vacant positions that needed to be filled. Again, the most recent results indicate that the percentage of employers with vacant positions had declined to 42 per cent, from a high of 55 per cent in 2008 and 2014. Even during the last recession, approximately one-third to 55 per cent of the employers said they had vacant positions that needed to be filled.

During boom times, employers often recognize the importance of up-skilling their current employees when they are unable to find qualified applicants and it is much easier for organizations to justify spending on training and development. But during tough economic times, training and development budgets are often the first to get cut. Research shows that slower economic times do not diminish the need for investment in employee training and development.



Questions Specific to Employee Training and Development

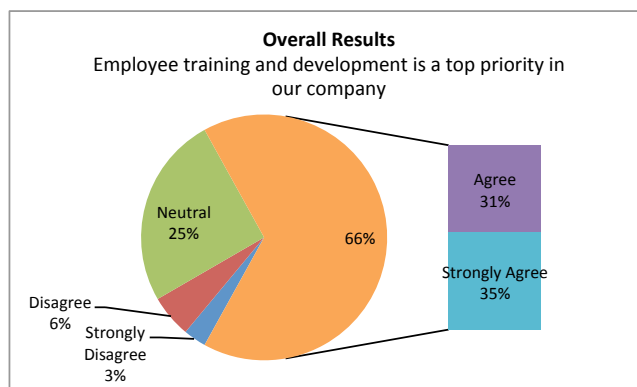
Employers were asked the following specific questions about their employee training and development practices:

- ▶ On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please evaluate the following statement: Employee training and development is a top priority in our company.
- ▶ Does your company currently have a budget *specifically* for employee training and development?
- ▶ If your company has a budget specifically for employee training and development, do you anticipate you will be spending more, less or the same on employee training and development in your next budget?
- ▶ What is the *biggest* challenge your company faces in terms of training employees?
- ▶ In terms of learning content, which of the following areas does your company either provide training or pay for training? (Employers were given a list)
- ▶ How has your company responded to the difficulty recruiting qualified employees? (Only answers specific to employee training and development and the Canada-Alberta Job Grant are highlighted in this report).
- ▶ Has your company *ever* applied for or received or does your company have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant?
- ▶ If your company has never applied for or received or have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant, what is the reason.

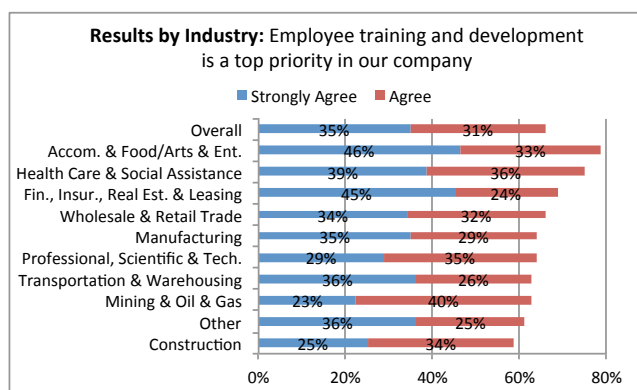
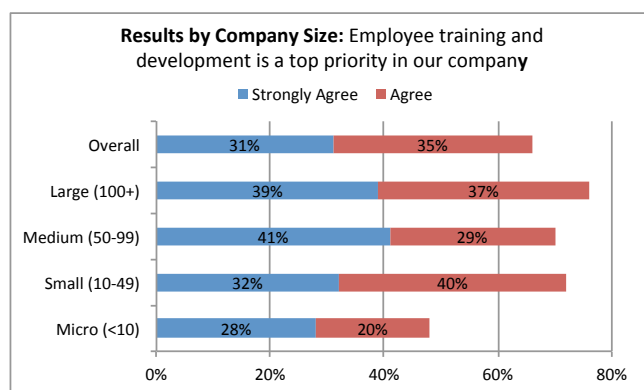
Employee Training and Development - Top Priority

Two-thirds of the employers agreed that employee training and development is a top priority in their company.

Overall, 66 per cent of the 802 employers agreed that employee training and development is a top priority in their company. Thirty-five per cent of the employers strongly agreed and 31 per cent of the employers agreed. Nine per cent of the employers either strongly disagreed or disagreed that employee training and development is a top priority and one quarter of the employers were neutral.



The larger the employer, the more likely they were to agree that employee training and development is a top priority. Seventy-six per cent of the large-sized employers agreed training and development is a top priority, compared to 48 per cent of the micro-sized employers. Results also varied by industry. Employee training and development is a top priority for 79 per cent of the accommodation and food services/arts and entertainment employers, 75 per cent of the health care and social assistance employers and 69 per cent of the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing employers, compared to 59 per cent of the construction employers.



Employer Comments

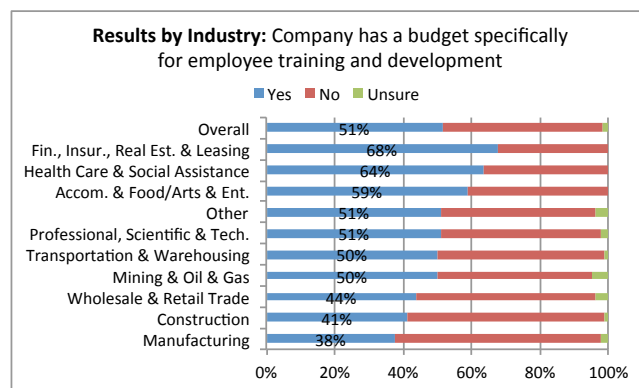
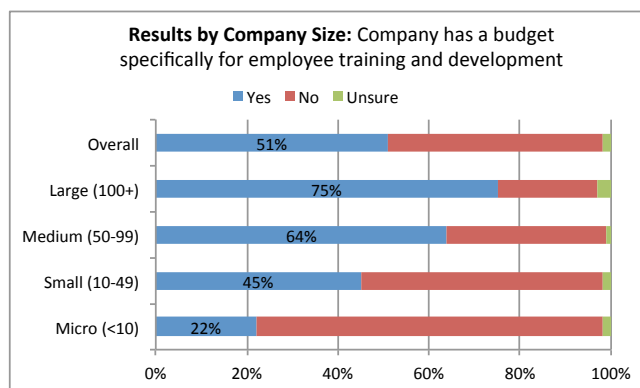
- ▶ “Due to budget cutbacks, employee training and development is no longer a top priority for us.” - Construction (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have a full time educator on board plus we send staff outside the company for training. Certainly continuing education is a priority for me.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Medium-sized employer)

- ▶ “It's important. I'm constantly training people on the safest way to tie and saddle a horse. Everyday includes on the job training here.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “It's a priority, but I wouldn't say top priority. There is a budget, but it has been cut significantly. Actually, all of our budgets took some cutbacks in 2015. We're hoping to re-establish our training budget in 2016.” - Other (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “We've always had a strong belief in training, but it costs money. There's no money for that right now.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “We ensure our employees have the training that they need to do their jobs, but it's not a high priority.” - Other (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ “People who need to train come in and job shadow. That's what works for us because we're so small.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have three sub-committees within the larger company doing things to not only train but also modernize, make things fun and offer different rewards.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Micro-sized employer)

Employee Training and Development Budget

Just over half of the employers have a budget *specifically* for employee training and development.

Overall, 51 per cent of the employers said they have a budget *specifically* for employee training and development, 47 per cent said they do not, and 2 per cent were unsure. The larger the employer, the more likely they are to have a budget specifically for training and development. Three-quarters of the large-sized employers said they have a training and development budget, compared to 64 per cent of the medium-sized employers, 45 per cent of the small-sized employers and 22 per cent of the micro-sized employers. Sixty-eight per cent of the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing employers, 64 per cent of the health care and social assistance employers and 59 per cent of the accommodation and food services/arts and entertainment employers reported they have a training and development budget. In contrast, only 38 per cent of the manufacturing employers said they have a budget.

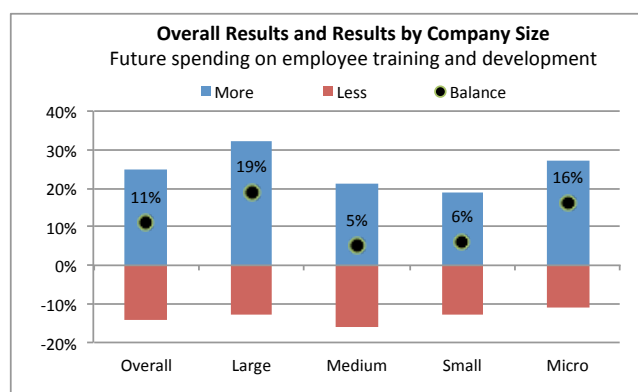


Employer Comments

- ▶ “We normally do have a budget for training and development, but not this year.” - Construction (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have had a budget for training in the past, but we will not have one for 2015.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We did, but it was recently cancelled during our downsizing.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “Yes, we have a budget for internal training needs, but we have no budget for external training and development.” - Other (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “There's no standard amount spent. Training is on an as needed basis.” - Manufacturing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “Yes, but the budget has been dramatically reduced due to poor company performance. Our discretionary spending is very restricted now.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have a small budget for training and it's not enough.” - Other (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “Each department has its own training budget.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “If we need to spend money on training, we would. However, it's usually not necessary.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ “Our training budget has been completely cut.” - Other (Micro-sized employer)

Eleven per cent of the employers on balance anticipate they will be spending more on employee training and development in their next budget.

Of the 51 per cent (413 employers) that have a budget specifically for training, 25 per cent anticipate they will be spending more on employee training and development in their next budget, 14 per cent anticipate they will be spending less, and 61 per cent anticipate they will be spending about the same, for a positive balance of 11 per cent. More large-sized employers (19 per cent) and micro-sized employers (16 per cent) on balance anticipate they will be spending more on training and development in their next budget. Results varied significantly by industry. More health care and social assistance (31 per cent), other (29 per cent) and accommodation and food services/arts and entertainment employers (26 per cent) on balance anticipate they will be spending more. In contrast, and not surprising given the drop in oil prices, 7 per cent of the professional, scientific and technical



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

services employers and 28 per cent of the mining and oil and gas employers on balance anticipate they will be spending less on employee training and development in their next budget.

Future Spending on Employee Training and Development
Percentage of companies that anticipated they would be spending more or less
on employee training and development in their next budget

		2015	
	More	Less	Balance
Overall Results	25%	14%	11%
Results by Industry			
Mining & Oil & Gas	15%	43%	-28%
Construction	18%	15%	3%
Manufacturing	30%	13%	17%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	28%	11%	17%
Transportation & Warehousing	35%	20%	15%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	15%	22%	-7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	31%	0%	31%
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	28%	2%	26%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	17%	9%	7%
Other	37%	7%	29%

Note: 413 employers currently have a budget specifically for employee training & development.

Employer Comments

- ▶ “We will be spending more on training and development with our Canada-Alberta Job Grant.” - Transportation & Warehousing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “The size of our training budget going forward depends on oil prices.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “We will be spending less on training based on the current profitability of the company.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (Micro-sized employer)

Employee Training and Development Challenges

The top challenges employers face in terms of training employees are time constraints and managing employees’ diverse learning needs.

Twenty-two per cent of the employers said time constraints/too busy is the biggest challenge they face when training employees. Managing employees’ diverse learning needs and knowing what training is relevant and available is the next biggest challenge, mentioned by 13 per cent of the employers. Another 11 per cent of the employers said training is too costly or not in the budget. Time constraints/too busy was the top challenge for all the company sizes and all the industries, with the exception of mining and oil and gas and accommodation and food services/arts and entertainment employers. The top challenge for mining and oil and gas employers is too costly/not in budget, and the top challenge for accommodation and food services/arts and entertainment employers is turnover/employees leave once trained.

What is the biggest challenge your company faces in terms of training employees?

Biggest Challenge	Employers %
Time constraints - too busy	22%
Managing employees' diverse learning needs - knowing what training is relevant and available	13%
Too costly/not in budget	11%
Turnover - employees leave once trained	8%
Employees aren't interested in training	6%
Employees don't need training - they are fully trained	6%
The locations where employees work are not near the training	3%
Finding employees to train	3%
English is a second language for many of our employees - language barrier	2%
The labour force is uneducated/unskilled	2%
Lack of internal trainers to administer the training	1%
The length of training that is required	1%
Other	2%
Unsure	8%
None	12%
Total	100%

Employer Comments

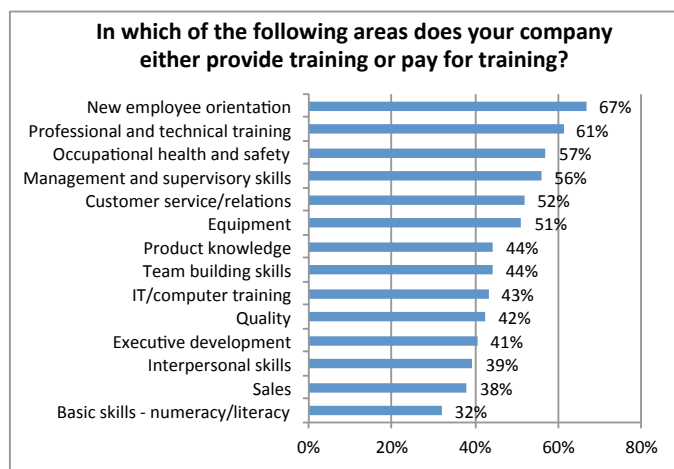
- ▶ “The English language skills of the people in health care typically coming out of places like NorQuest or other community colleges. They don't have a grasp of the English language and that becomes more problematic when they're serving our target senior demographic. They needed more ESL training before they proceeded on to health training.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have about 800 employees (about 73% of our staff) who don't have access to things like webinars or email. That eliminates the whole of computer possibilities for training.” - Manufacturing (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “Front line employees are not very motivated when it comes to training. They would like to learn as they work. Another challenge we have is that different employees learn at different speeds and comprehension.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “There's not a lot of very specific job related training for us out there. Our service is seismic so it is highly specialized, but we often end up doing more general training because that's what's available to us.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “The biggest challenge is finding employees that are willing to work and learn. People think they know everything.” - Transportation & Warehousing (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “It's just not the right economy for investing in training.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ See additional comments in Appendix B.

Types of Training Offered

Employers indicated they provide training or pay for training in a variety of areas.

The top areas in which employers either provide training or pay for training are new employee orientation (67 per cent), professional and technical (61 per cent), occupational health and safety (57 per cent), management and supervisory skills (56 per cent) and customer service/customer relations (52 per cent). Thirty-two per cent of the employers either provide or pay for training in basic skills (numeracy/literacy). New employee orientation and management and supervisory skills were the top areas large and medium-sized employers either provide or pay for training. New employee orientation and occupational health and safety

were the top areas for small-sized employers, and professional and technical training and new employee orientation were the top areas for micro-sized employers. New employee orientation was the top area in which most of the industries either provide or pay for training, with the exception of three industries. The top area for mining and oil and gas, professional, scientific and technical services, and finance, insurance, real estate and leasing employers is professional and technical training.



Employer Comments

- ▶ “We will be looking at basic skills training for our new program to hire Aboriginal operators coming from reserves.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We just rolled out a new learning and development team with a whole customer service, communication, and decision-making component.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have our own online university and we are partnered with universities, so we have many training resources.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We offer a lot of informal coaching and counseling on a daily basis for interpersonal and team building. Our management team averages 13 years experience, so training there is minimal. Customer service and relations is very important.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have a strong focus on training. We recently implemented a tuition policy up to \$6,000 per employee that can cover any relevant training.” - Manufacturing (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ “We hire people with no experience and train them in-house. They end up being licensed insurance brokers.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing (Small-sized employer)
- ▶ See additional comments in Appendix B.

Response to Recruiting Difficulties: Training and Development

Some employers have responded to the difficulty recruiting qualified employees by increasing investment in training.

As mentioned previously, 38 per cent of the employers surveyed in 2015 (305 employers) said they had difficulty recruiting qualified employees in the 12 months prior to their survey. Employers have responded to the difficulty recruiting qualified employees in a variety of ways. In terms of training, 40 per cent of the 305 employers reported they increased investment in in-house training, 12 per cent increased investment in third-party training, and 8 per cent applied for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant. The Canada-Alberta Job Grant offers funding toward the cost of training provided by eligible third-party trainers. The total cost of training is shared between the Government of Canada and employers.

How has your company responded to the difficulty recruiting qualified employees?

Response to hiring difficulties	Employers %
Increased recruiting efforts	77%
Did not fill the job opening	60%
Increased workload for current workers	53%
Increased investment in training provided by in-house staff	40%
Hired a less qualified applicant	30%
Hired contingent workers, including temps, contractors and freelancers	29%
Targeted underutilized or new talent pools*	23%
Redeployed employees to new roles where their skills were more needed	21%
Increased wages/benefits to attract more applicants	20%
Applied for/hired temporary foreign workers	18%
Partnered with educational institutions to ensure programs develop candidates with the right skills	16%
Increased investment in training provided by a third-party	12%
Outsourced the work	11%
Redesigned the job to change the required skills	9%
Applied for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant	8%
Implemented an employee referral program	2%
Other	2%
Started actively hiring out of province/country	2%
Increased networking opportunities	2%
Downsized the company	1%
Nothing	3%

Note: 305 employers reported having difficulty recruiting qualified employees.

** Mature workers, stay at home parents, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, etc.*

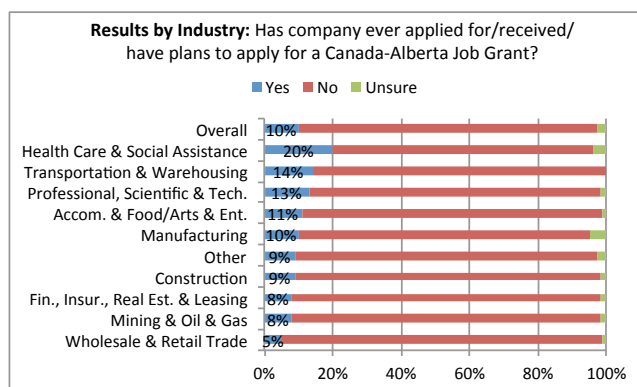
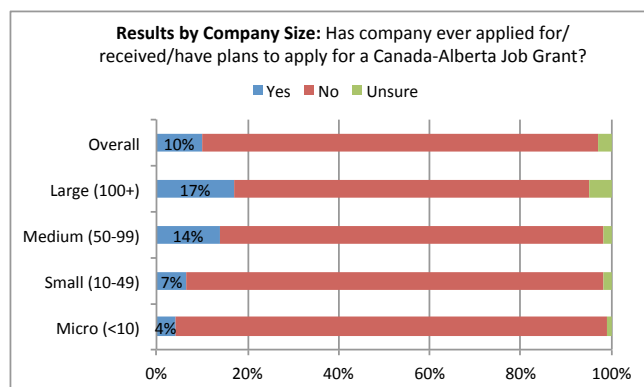
Employer Comments

- ▶ “We will wait to hire the right candidate, rather than hiring someone who is not qualified. All of our training is done in house.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We will hire a less qualified applicant and then spend more time on in house training than we were hoping on putting in. We used to apply for temporary foreign workers, but not anymore.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We focus on training our people and paying for their education internally.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We're a custom shop and very project driven, so we focus on in-house training. There are also specialty roles that we have to bring in outside consultants for in order to train our employees.” - Manufacturing (Large-sized employer)

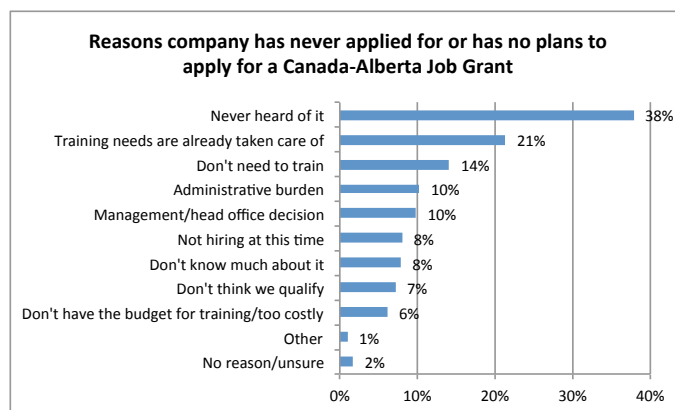
- ▶ “We have been growing our own mentorship program. We hire new grads out of NAIT and SAIT and train them ourselves.” - Mining & Oil & Gas (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We're working with universities such as MRU and SAIT to help groom the right kind of candidates. We're also bringing in greenhorns and training them from the ground up.” - Other (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We spend a lot of time and effort on training and offer external courses for our environmental professionals.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have increased our focus on internal training and development to create succession plans for existing employees to move into management roles.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We have worked with SAIT to develop talent for our meat cutting and bakery departments. We focus on internal development and internal succession planning with existing employees. Our training objective is to grow internal talent and offer cross training.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We join job fairs. We hire unskilled people and train them.” - Construction (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We are usually hiring people who just graduated from university and we have very good relationship with those schools. Tax is a specialized field though, so we go to recruitment agencies and we offer a better package. All our people have to go through training modules to get their designation and we have internal training too.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We try to train people in house, but it's difficult finding the right employee to invest in.” - Manufacturing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We're still looking to be honest. We have done internal training to get our current employees up to a higher level, but we still need the senior roles.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We're looking at expanding our training programs. We applied for the Canada-Alberta Job Grant to help with training. We bring in third party trainers now.” - Transportation & Warehousing (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “I think where we maybe differ from other companies in our industry is going above and beyond with internal training. We will hire people straight out of class 1 driving schools with no experience and we will work with them to make them road worthy.” - Transportation & Warehousing (Medium-sized employer)

Canada-Alberta Job Grant

All 802 employers were asked if they have *ever* applied for or received or have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant, regardless of whether or not they had difficulty recruiting qualified employees in the last 12 months. Ten per cent of the employers reported they have applied for a grant in the past, or have plans to apply, 87 per cent said they have not applied or have no plans to and 3 per cent were unsure. More large-sized employers (17 per cent) and more employers from the health care and social assistance industry (20 per cent) reported they have applied for or received or have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant.



Of the 87 per cent (698 employers) that have never applied for or do not have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant, 38 per cent said they have never heard of it and 8 per cent said they don't know much about it. In addition, 21 per cent said their training needs are already taken care of, 14 per cent said they don't need to train, 10 per cent believe it is too much of an administrative burden and 10 per cent said is a management/head office decision.



Employer Comments

- ▶ “I go after every grant I can get. We are big on youth employment, so we draw from technologist fields from post-secondary schools. With the 3D transition going on in the industry, we need to train the young 3D modelers. I also apply for the research and design grants.” - Manufacturing (Large-sized employer)
- ▶ “We haven't applied for this, but we do apply for Canada Summer Jobs every year. With this training grant, I would say the reason we haven't applied is just lack of awareness.” - Other (Large-sized employer)

- ▶ “We have plans to apply. We only found out about this in June through linking with Alberta Works.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade (Medium-sized employer)
- ▶ “We apply annually for summer jobs, career placement and STEP funding. However, we’ve never come across this one.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ “We don't have the funds to match.” - Health Care & Social Assistance (Micro-sized employer)
- ▶ See comments in Appendix B.

Conclusions

Continuous investment in employees, particularly in the area of training and development, is becoming increasingly important for a number of reasons. Labour force growth is projected to slow in the coming years as the population ages, and organizations can no longer rely on a large influx of youth to renew the skills of the workforce. In addition, the rapid pace of change in technology and continued globalization will further raise skills requirements. Employers worldwide, and especially in Alberta, will need to have a more skilled, more mobile and more flexible workforce in order to continue to prosper. Finally, while many employers in Calgary had difficulty recruiting qualified workers in some occupations and some industries in 2015, layoffs were also occurring, particularly in industries tied to mining and oil and gas. Workers that have been laid off are more likely to be successful in finding new employment if learning has been a top priority and their skills and knowledge are up to date.

Employers that do not align employee development with the future needs of their organizations could potentially experience lost business opportunities, lost productivity and increased turnover. Research shows that providing employees with appropriate training and development opportunities has a number of benefits, including improved safety and reduced error rates, reduced recruitment costs, reduced absenteeism, and improved employee motivation, job satisfaction and morale. In addition, employers are more likely to attract and retain the best employees, especially from the younger generations, if they can offer ongoing development opportunities.

Investing in employee training and development seems like an obvious choice. However, developing and implementing an employee training and development plan and budget does require a focused effort, and many employers admit they face challenges in terms of training employees. Some of the biggest challenges reported by Calgary and area employers include: time constraints/too busy (22 per cent), managing employees’ diverse learning needs (13 per cent), too costly/not in budget (11 per cent), and turnover/employees leave once trained (8 per cent). For employers with limited budgets, e-learning can be very cost effective - often no printed materials or physical locations are necessary. Other strategies for employers with time or budget constraints include: embedding learning in everyday work, job shadowing, mentorships, or learning from peers through online forums.

Employers often do not identify employees’ lack of essential skills as a major challenge (2 per cent of Calgary and area employers reported their biggest challenge is “English is a second language for many

of our employees/language barrier” and 2 per cent reported “the labour force is uneducated/unskilled”). In addition, only 32 per cent of Calgary employers reported they either provide training or pay for training in basic skills. Essential skills - such as reading text, numeracy, writing, oral communication, and computer use - provide workers with a foundation for learning other skills as well as enhance their ability to adapt to change in the workplace. Many issues, including low productivity, high turnover, high rates of absenteeism, poor safety records, high error rates, and poor customer service may mask underlying essential skills challenges. Research shows that workplace essential skills training that is well executed can provide a significant return on investment (ROI) to employers. One study in particular, the multi-year UPSKILL project, concluded that organizations enrolled in essential skills training experienced an average ROI of 23 per cent.

Apprenticeship training can also provide a significant ROI to employers. A study commissioned by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum concluded that for every \$1 spent on apprenticeship training, an employer received an average benefit of \$1.47 or a net return of \$0.47.

Over 800 Calgary and area employers shared their opinions, experiences and policies with respect to employee training and development. The strength of the survey is the ability to examine results specific to Calgary and area by company size and industry. Encouragingly, many employers understand the importance of employee training and development, with 66 per cent of the employers overall agreeing that employee training and development is a top priority in their companies and 51 per cent having a budget specifically for employee training and development. The vast array of employer comments from Calgary and area employers that are committed to training and developing their employees clearly supports the results of other research that supporting employees with learning opportunities makes good business sense.

However, there is room for improvement. For the remaining one-third of the employers surveyed, employee training and development is not a top priority and just under half do not have a budget specifically for training and development. This suggests that more can be done to understand employers' concerns and provide more information and encourage employers to consider making employee training and development a top priority. This is especially important in the case of micro-sized employers, as only 48 per cent of Calgary employers with less than 10 employees agreed employee training and development is a top priority and only 22 per cent have a budget specifically for employee training and development.

Somewhat discouraging is the fact that the economic downturn has prompted many Calgary employers to reduce spending on employee training and development. On balance, 28 per cent of the mining and oil and gas employers that have a budget specifically for training and development and 7 per cent of the professional, scientific and technical services employers anticipate they will be spending less on employee learning in their next budget. This pressure on resources, combined with shortages of key skills in certain occupations and industries, highlights the need for all stakeholders to develop more effective, targeted employee learning strategies.

An important part of developing an effective training and development strategy is being aware of available resources. Of the nearly 700 Calgary employers that have never applied for or do not have

plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant, 38 per cent said they have never heard of it and 8 per cent said they don't know much about it. Many training and development resources and supports are available to employers and employees in Alberta - there is a need to close the information gap.

Some of the most successful companies around today continue to invest in employee training and development despite various challenges and a tough economic climate. Several Alberta-based organizations have made Canada's Top 100 Employers list based on their training and skills development offerings. Employers that have institutionalized the idea of continuous employee learning and improvement understand that training is necessary, non-negotiable and a long-term investment. Research shows that organizations wanting to strengthen their learning environment should create and maintain a strong learning culture, offer diverse learning delivery methods, provide learning supports, evaluate the effectiveness of learning programs, align learning with organizational strategy, and above all ensure learning is a top priority.

Appendix A: Survey Methodology

In 2015, telephone surveys were conducted with 802 Calgary and area employers. Results are published in the 2015 Quarterly and Annual Calgary and Area Labour Market Reports on the Alberta Human Services website. <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/2395.html>

The purpose of the quarterly survey is to gather information from Calgary and area employers on their recruitment and retention practices, as well as various other employment issues they are facing. In 2015, employers were asked questions about company expansions and downsizes, layoffs, vacant positions, future employment, recruitment methods, recruiting difficulties, employee turnover and retention strategies. Over the course of the year, employers were divided into four categories based on the number of employees in the company and results of the survey were reported on as follows:

- ▶ Q1 2015 Calgary and Area Labour Market Report: 201 large-sized companies with 100+ employees
- ▶ Q2 2015 Calgary and Area Labour Market Report: 200 medium-sized companies with 50 – 99 employees
- ▶ Q3 2015 Calgary and Area Labour Market Report: 200 small-sized companies with 10 – 49 employees
- ▶ Q4 2015 Calgary and Area Labour Market Report: 201 micro-sized companies with <10 employees
- ▶ 2015 Annual Calgary and Area Labour Market Report: Summary of Results of 802 companies

In addition to the general questions about recruitment and retention practices, employers were asked the following specific questions about employee training and development:

- ▶ On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please evaluate the following statement: Employee training and development is a top priority in our company.
- ▶ Does your company currently have a budget *specifically* for employee training and development?
- ▶ If your company has a budget specifically for employee training and development, do you anticipate you will be spending more, less or the same on employee training and development in your next budget?
- ▶ What is the *biggest* challenge your company faces in terms of training employees?
- ▶ In terms of learning content, which of the following areas does your company either provide training or pay for training? (Employers were given a list)
- ▶ How has your company responded to the difficulty recruiting qualified employees? (Only answers specific to employee training and development and the Canada-Alberta Job Grant are highlighted in this report).
- ▶ Has your company *ever* applied for or received or does your company have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant?

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ If your company has never applied for or received or have plans to apply for a Canada-Alberta Job Grant, what is the reason.

The Q1 2015 Calgary and Area Employer Survey is based on responses to a telephone questionnaire conducted in January, February and March 2015 of Calgary and area employers with 100+ employees (large-sized employers). Following are the number of respondents from each industry sector.

Q1 2015 Survey Respondents

Industry	Number of Respondents
Mining & Oil & Gas	20
Construction	20
Manufacturing	20
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21
Transportation & Warehousing	20
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	20
Health Care & Social Assistance	20
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	20
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	20
Other	20
Total	201

The Q2 2015 Calgary and Area Employer Survey is based on responses to a telephone questionnaire conducted in April, May and June 2015 of Calgary and area employers with 50 - 99 employees (medium-sized employers). Following are the number of respondents from each industry sector.

Q2 2015 Survey Respondents

Industry	Number of Respondents
Mining & Oil & Gas	20
Construction	20
Manufacturing	20
Wholesale & Retail Trade	20
Transportation & Warehousing	20
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	20
Health Care & Social Assistance	20
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	20
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	20
Other	20
Total	200

The Q3 2015 Calgary and Area Employer Survey is based on responses to a telephone questionnaire conducted in July, August and September 2015 of Calgary and area employers with 10 - 49 employees (small-sized employers). Following are the number of respondents from each industry sector.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Q3 2015 Survey Respondents

Industry	Number of Respondents
Mining & Oil & Gas	20
Construction	20
Manufacturing	20
Wholesale & Retail Trade	20
Transportation & Warehousing	20
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	20
Health Care & Social Assistance	20
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	20
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	20
Other	20
Total	200

The Q4 2015 Calgary and Area Employer Survey is based on responses to a telephone questionnaire conducted in October, November and December 2015 of Calgary and area employers with <10 employees (micro-sized employers). Following are the number of respondents from each industry sector.

Q4 2015 Survey Respondents

Industry	Number of Respondents
Mining & Oil & Gas	20
Construction	20
Manufacturing	20
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21
Transportation & Warehousing	20
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	20
Health Care & Social Assistance	20
Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment	20
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	20
Other	20
Total	201

The 'Other' industry category includes a variety of companies from the remainder of the industry categories: Agriculture, Utilities, Information & Culture, Management of Companies, Administrative & Support Services, Educational Services, Other Services and Public Administration.

Appendix B: Employer Comments

Employee Training and Development Challenges

Large-Sized Employers

- ▶ “The challenge is the sheer volume when you have hourly staff in a seven days a week, 16 hours a day operation. You try to make sure you’re updated on any changes on a regular basis but it's hard to manage that.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “I think the biggest thing is getting the employees to understand how valuable training is to them.” - Construction
- ▶ “It’s hard finding the right courses.” - Construction
- ▶ “Basic skills is where we're lacking. We need to partner up with schools because of the nature of the workers we're getting coming out of those schools. They're missing the English as a second language training.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “It's location. Most of our bases are all over Alberta and our training centre is in Red Deer, so that makes it hard to bring in people for training. It's costly because not only are they away from their jobs, but we have to put them up in hotels.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “I would say it's finding training that's going to be pertinent. We don't want to throw our training dollars to the wind. We want something with a lasting effect.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “It's having the security guards actually show up for their training.” - Other
- ▶ “The biggest thing that affects our organization is the funding cuts coming from the government. I've been here for two years and I've seen the funding be a constant issue. Within the past two years, we have increased professional development training, but the funding will remain an issue.” - Other
- ▶ “The juniors are learning everyday with the seniors. We've had trouble getting our managers to go for management training at the university because of a time factor.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “It's the commitment from the employee to the training process. For example, our driver training is 10 days of their time and it's difficult to get that time commitment from people.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “To be honest, this is a private company and the owners don't feel it's important.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “I wouldn't say we have any challenges. We offer a lot of in house training. For example, we have developed our own supervisor and leadership programs. We also rely on educational reimbursement for full time staff where they can apply for external training through any accredited training institution.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

- ▶ “I guess the biggest challenge is that the programs, policies, and procedures are changing so rapidly. It's having the resources to be able to create training programs. We have so many employees and not as many resources for all these individuals to receive training on a one-on-one basis, so we have to do mass group training. It's also difficult to determine what programs are needed and developing those, and training the facilitators for programs so they can train the employees.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Medium-Sized Employers

- ▶ “The biggest challenge is employees’ attitudes towards training.” - Construction
- ▶ “The company has a training centre but they don't always use it or give consistent training.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “The challenge with training is just the rapid rate of change in the industry. It can be difficult keeping up with those changes.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We have a variety of specialized positions, so it's hard to know what training will be suitable for those. We know what they have to do to get their designations, but not how to advise employees to pursue training for their position after that. That's the challenge of the new CPA program. The CPA Western School of Business is the main school right now, but it looks like other universities in Alberta will start offering Master's programs for accounting soon. We won't know which programs at which other schools will be good for a few years. We don't know how to advise our students during the progression of these changes. We are in a transition period right now because of that.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “It's difficult to say because we have branches at numerous locations. The training at this location is pretty good. The problem is when we get someone from another location that doesn't receive the same training.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We're a non-profit, so it's budget. That's why we're using the Canada-Alberta Job Grant.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “When I put an individual through training, I book them in for the free online course and sometimes they don't activate their registration or take the course in the allotted three months. That can be a problem because I have to keep asking them to do it and in three months that registration expires so I have to re-register them.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “The way our structure and contract is designed with Alberta Health Services, their expectation is because we have a full time educator on staff all of our training will be in house and on work time. However, there are certainly outside courses staff could benefit from. Our challenge is having the financial resources to be able to send them for continuing education.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “The cultural background and language comprehension of candidates can make training difficult.” - Health Care & Social Assistance

- ▶ “We have a job shadowing process of learning, which is a pretty good system that doesn't present a lot of other challenges. It allows employees to ask co-workers questions over the supervisors, so they're not as embarrassed to learn.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “A lack of geomatics training facilities, so a lack of industry specific training for us to send employees to.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “I can honestly say we've been doing this for 30 years and language is probably the only challenge to training our employees.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “With multiple trainers, the challenge becomes consistency in training.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Commodity prices have severely limited our training.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Employees don't even want to work, much less go to training.” - Other
- ▶ “I would say the job specific applications of training. We hire a range of positions that need customized training.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “There's no school of rail car repair. The training is hands on and it takes a lot of time.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “We are governed by the federal government, so it's not difficult because there's a rigid training program already in place for us.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “Truck driving needs to be recognized as a Red Seal trade and skilled labour. It's not an unskilled job at all and the responsibility and liability is high. It's so important to our economy. If there is nobody pulling consumer product nobody will have anything to buy in the store. The youth don't want to do it because it's hard work and long hours in this industry. The immigrants we respect greatly, but they must be assisted in learning written and spoken English before they're out there on the road.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “The devotion employees want to give to the job. If they don't like it first day, they don't bother to show up for the second day. That is a waste of training resources.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Small-Sized Employers

- ▶ “The resources that we have are lacking. We don't have the training materials such as video or online that we would like. Our physical training and on the job training is fine, but the corporate training is lacking because we're a small location.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “I think the biggest challenge is balancing the time employees are training versus their actual project work.” - Construction
- ▶ “We allocate a budget every year for employees and we leave it for most part up to each employee to determine how and when to spend it. We encourage them to go to the training, but the majority never do spend their allotted yearly training amount.” - Construction

- ▶ “We use an accounting software system that is not well known in Canada. It's hard to find recruits that know it. The software company itself has a poor manual and the online training is haphazard.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “I would say time to get up to speed. We are training people at least 6 months until they know enough to be useful and we have to pay them while they're training.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “Having enough opportunities for staff to attend training. Because we have a limited number of staff, we can only allow 1 or 2 to be freed up at a time to attend training sessions. That means it takes a lot longer to get everyone through training because we need our staff for the daily work schedule. We don't have extra people to fill their slots when they're away at training.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “Just getting programs that are relevant to what we do. Most of what we do is on the job training, but sometimes there are specific things we would like to access externally and it's hard to find those.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “Finding courses or resources that are specific to the areas where we need the training. We're in a bit of a unique industry and sometimes we can't get the training we would like on a cost effective basis.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Probably keeping up with technology.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “Finding training that's fit for our purposes because one size doesn't fit all. We can't have one program for everybody. Our training needs to be individualized.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “Actually having them do the training. We encourage it, but not everyone wants to do it. I would say those aged 50+ are less willing to undertake new training.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “It's to get the experienced people to train the new people. Some of them have a hard time with it so it's getting them to show them what it's about, for example, how to lift properly and handle goods properly. In the warehouse that's the things I try to do first before putting them in the field. Then they get the more hands on training in the controlled warehouse environment and that's easier for them to learn than out in the field and on the street right away.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “Access to appropriate training in this field. The only motorcycle school is in Fairview, Alberta, but for automotive there's a local program at SAIT. The cost of going for an eight week program out of the city means that our employees can't go.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Micro-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We're a non-profit. We don't have the ability to plan ahead because we don't know what funding is coming up. For instance, we have two grant applications that we'll hear back about between Christmas and New Year's for our 2016 budget. The jobs will start January 1. With professional

development, if the funds don't exist or aren't for sure then we can't register for courses.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment

- ▶ “I think the biggest challenge is that it takes two seasons for a good employee to be completely versatile. They can't learn it all in one season. Typically virtually all of the staff from the previous year returns. Some years when that doesn't happen it's a problem.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “This is a niche industry, so they don't have the skills we need until after we hire and train them.” - Construction
- ▶ “Finding a good institution without having the knowledge of their training quality.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “I guess the challenge lies in the intelligence level of the employees.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “It's difficult to find the high level training courses for dental in Calgary.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “The biggest problem is we train them and put the time in, and then they leave us for oil and gas.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “We have specific skill sets in a niche market, so it's finding the training.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “The training out there is not customized to our needs, so sending them away for something doesn't make sense when we can teach them how we want it done. Training seems easier when it is a customized way of doing things rather than a generic course.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “The biggest challenge is making sure we have the appropriate safety training before going on certain sites. If they don't tell us in advance, we're left taking courses last minute.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “The challenge is finding decent technical training programs.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Our employees are fully interested in upgrading their skills. However, finding training that is applicable to their jobs and not just upgrading their personal skills is a challenge. It can be hard to find courses that are practical and useful in adding to company and job performance.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “We're a software development company, so we need to keep current with the field and that depends on any changes in the IT world.” - Other
- ▶ “A lot of it is the English language skills. People have very poor written skills nowadays and they're unable to present themselves by email or in proposals. This is true of new Canadians, but that's understandable. The texting generation is the real issue.” - Other
- ▶ “It's an industry specific problem. There's so much to learn and people need to be trained on the job by someone higher up in the industry.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

- ▶ “The challenge is trying to get everybody together in the same location. Everybody is an owner-operator and they're usually out on the road.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “I've been in this industry for 40 years. People have to have people skills and be the right personality to succeed. The courier business is a percentage business and if one person's paycheck is bigger than another's there are reasons for it. I don't know until I've worked with them for a while if they're the right person for the job because my best contractors come from all walks of life. This is a service business, so you have to be honest and a people person to garner clients. My clients get to know the individual that comes to their door and often they will phone the driver direct with future business.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “Keeping them motivated and buying into what the brand philosophy is is always a challenge. Also, getting the ideal candidate can be very elusive.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “Training them to how I want them to be is challenging. I can't make someone great at customer service if they don't have that type of personality.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Types of Training Offered

Large-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We've created a training program where our employees get certificates from a university and/or our restaurant group. We use some of our own facilitators and we bring in external facilitators in conjunction to teach these courses. We've tailored all courses specifically for our employees and the overall organization.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “We pay for all types of training through a reimbursement program. For example, we will reimburse people who go into trades programs and attend post-secondary schools.” - Construction
- ▶ “We don't want to spend a lot on our employees due to the uncertainty in the markets.” - Construction
- ▶ “Computer training will be a focus in the future as our company becomes more and more reliant on computers.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “Professional and technical training is paramount. We do shadowing and we train as needed, but there is the new employee orientation as well. We are ISO certified, so do need to do a lot of training to keep that designation.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “They get \$2,500 per person for training on whatever they want.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “We supply every one of our job classifications with a set continuing education allowance. How much is dependent on the level of job. Upkeep of skills, attending seminars, and continuing education are very important.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “They come with professional and technical training, but everyone is offered \$400 yearly for any courses. We also have a lot of in house training on software and new technology.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

- ▶ “Each employee has \$2,000 per year to use towards courses, seminars, educational advancement, and professional development. Employees can have their certifications paid for from other budgets within the company.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “We do provide occupational health and safety, but there could be more focus on that. We don't provide training on any of the soft skills, just the hard skills.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “Everybody has a yearly review where a dollar amount is determined to be put toward training, as long as it relates to their job function.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Medium-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We can't pay our employees while they're training, so we do none of this.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “We offer management and supervisory skills, professional and technical training, team building, executive development, and computer training internally and externally. The rest we offer internally and only as required.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “We offer first aid and confined space training. Team building is really only for management. With all of the temporary foreign workers we employ, we focus a lot on basic skills. If you had asked me 10 years ago, basic skills would not have been a consideration.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “This year, there's not the budget for this.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Our training could potentially be across the board. For employees who wish to go to school or do a course, we pay 50%. In any areas of interest in sales, we will train. We will also train in specialty areas within their current position. We focus on supporting continuing education that will benefit their position and therefore the corporation.” - Other
- ▶ “We have employee spending accounts for training.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “We go through a thorough training process to make sure they understand rules of the road, safety, and standards. It's really about public, personal and company safety.” - Transportation & Warehousing

Small-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We spend a lot of time in our accounting area familiarizing our new hires with the software.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We have vendor training, partner training and regular training. That's all available and we use it all time.” - Other
- ▶ “We have leadership training, Safety Management System, TGD, WHMIS, Onboard computer log and trip sheet training, Fatigue Management Program, Road Training, HOS for drivers and payroll training for office.” - Transportation & Warehousing

Micro-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We're developing a new technology that would make it easier for the consumer to purchase insurance online. This is very new to Canada, so it's exciting to be a part of it.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “Our training and development is research-focused.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “I would say safety. We have to focus more and more on that. That's the main area.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “All I try to do is keep up to date with new trends and computer technology.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “We certainly train across all areas when considering the company as a whole.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “Due to downsizing, we're just focusing on the sales aspect.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “It's mainly the customer service and meat wrapping that we focus on.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Canada-Alberta Job Grant

Large-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We did apply for something like that a long time ago. We have no current intentions of applying though. Honestly, there are a lot of hoops to go through. It takes too long. We do a lot of training ourselves.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “I've never heard of that one, but we do apply annually for the summer student program. It used to be known as the STEP program.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “Yes we applied, but we got denied. We wanted to move the funding to another position and we couldn't do that.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “We just haven't needed to apply at this point. However, I do have an appointment with a government representative in a few weeks to learn more about it.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “With some more information, we would certainly be interested in pursuing the grant. I just don't know anything about it yet.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “I have the information right here in front of me, so I think we will submit.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “I hadn't heard of this, but I would certainly appreciate some more information.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “We have applied for it for our class 1 operator training. We have completed a few of those applications.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “I've never heard of it. That depends, perhaps if we had more information we possibly would apply if we go into a new area. Training is always the best thing for our employees.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “The Summer Student Job Grant funding is not available to us, so we would love more information about the Canada-Alberta Job Grant.” - Other

- ▶ “I’m hoping we will apply. We have a training program we’re preparing to launch and we would be applying for the grant after that.” - Other
- ▶ “We just discussed applying today actually.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “Yes I applied, and I expect to be successful.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
- ▶ “Yes, we’re in the process of applying for mechanic positions.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “We have no plans to apply. I am not sure we qualify. We have checked into it and it does not fit with what jobs we want to fill. We want to develop a journeyman program and our understanding is that the Canada-Alberta Job Grant doesn’t apply to that.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “We have applied for apprenticeship grants for our millwrights. We have never heard of this other grant.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade

Medium-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We are in the process of applying for a school grant. I don’t think we’ve heard of this one.” - Construction
- ▶ “Our head office is not local, so they might not know about it.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We are aware of it. Perhaps we will apply next year.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We might consider it with more information.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “I would have applied had I heard of it.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “I received the information. Our company doesn’t qualify. Our production learning curve is next to nothing because the work is simple.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “It does not apply to us. We just need labourers. We only have one department, welding, where we need journeymen.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “I didn’t know about it, but would like to find out more about this.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “In our belief, we just haven’t qualified for those types of things in the past. We don’t want to take the time to look into that again.” - Other
- ▶ “Back in 2007-08 we did get a Making Spaces grant, but haven’t applied for grants since then.” - Other
- ▶ “No, but we received a Canada Summer Jobs grant for one position this year.” - Other
- ▶ “Generally speaking, as an engineering firm we recruit straight out of university for junior roles. Senior roles are highly specialized and technical, so it’s more of a matter of convenience to hire people with training and experience.” - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

- ▶ “We just do all of our training in house, so we have no need to use it. We also have company flight simulators and a company university for pilots.” - Transportation & Warehousing
- ▶ “The owner has asked me to look into it.” - Transportation & Warehousing

Small-Sized Employers

- ▶ “I dislike the grant. I think it's a bad thing. The government should know that it can't just create jobs. Jobs have to evolve. If it's needed in the marketplace, that job will emerge.” - Construction
- ▶ “We don't have the budget to take on more training because we're downsizing.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “I just haven't had chance to research it. I do have information on it.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “We are trying as hard as we can but it's very difficult to apply for that because the criteria is so prohibitive.” - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing
- ▶ “I've heard of it but I'm not familiar with it. We're a small non-profit, so we would be very interested in applying.” - Health Care & Social Assistance
- ▶ “I don't know anything about it. I wonder if that's something we could apply for.” - Manufacturing

Micro-Sized Employers

- ▶ “We get a summer student grant through Canada Summer Jobs. Beyond that, I don't know what's available for funding.” - Accommodation & Food Services/Arts & Entertainment
- ▶ “The topic of the Job Grant has come up and we're certainly considering it.” - Manufacturing
- ▶ “We're unsure about the future of the company in Alberta.” - Mining & Oil & Gas
- ▶ “We have downsized considerably, so we won't be applying for that.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade
- ▶ “Training is not a priority for us.” - Wholesale & Retail Trade