

	
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28 10:00 - 11:30 AM	Webinar Career Ladders

Welcome everyone and thank you for joining us today to talk about the Career Ladder project.

My name is Sara Gill. I'm the Executive Director of the Adult Basic Education Association. ABEA is the lead on this project. I'll be co-hosting the presentation today and I'm joined by Sophie Auger, the project manager who has been instrumental in the design of the tools that you will see today.

We absolutely encourage you to participate throughout the session by adding comments in the chat or raising your hand to comment or ask question. We will also be using some polls at the end of the session to get your feedback. The slide deck will be available on ABEA's Career Ladder project page after the session. Please stay on mute while not speaking to decrease background noise.

Project Partners



This Employment Ontario project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

This project relied on great contributions of our partners from the learning networks and planning boards in the region as well as from Fedcap, the Service System Manager for Hamilton, Niagara and Grand Erie.

I'd like to extend a huge thank you to Workforce Planning Hamilton, the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie and the Niagara Workforce Planning Board for their contributions to the local labour market information that was used to determine the in-demand entry-level jobs. Workforce Planning Hamilton was also the lead on the employer consultations, and we'll be sharing the results of that with you this morning.

I'd like to thank Literacy Link South Central and Literacy Link Niagara for their work on the career ladder frameworks and their contributions to the guides for specific audiences as you'll see when we tour the site.

Thank you to Fedcap as well for ensuring that the frameworks developed will be useful to Employment Service practitioners and job seekers.

We'd also like to recognize that this project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

The Project

- Develop career ladder frameworks for in-demand, entry-level positions in manufacturing and health care
- Seek to reach individuals with multiple barriers to employment
- Focus on Hamilton, Niagara & Grand Erie
- Identify current training opportunities for entry-level and mid-level jobs
- Find gaps in current training offered and create a training response

Our goal with this project is to help people explore local, in-demand jobs and the skills and training needed to get those jobs. We want to highlight the critical link between labour market information, skills and education to help people find and keep sustainable employment with advancement opportunities.

At the best of times, jobseekers who have barriers to employment are challenged to identify the broad range of job opportunities available to them based on their education, skills and experience. The 2016 Census information shows that across the Hamilton, Niagara and Grand Erie there are over 215,000 individuals working at C level jobs (requiring a high school diploma) and D level jobs (requiring less than high school). Many of these jobs would be classed as entry level. Regional census information also tells us that individuals at these skill levels are more likely to be unemployed with over 20% of the workforce being unemployed at the time of the Census compared to the regional workforce as a whole at 7% unemployed.

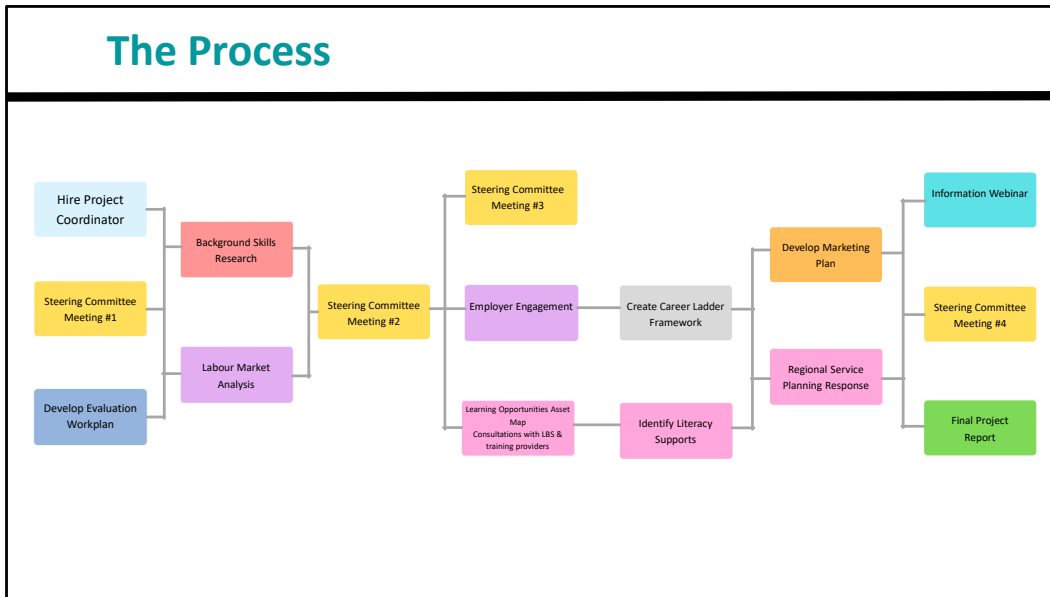
The recent pandemic has added additional pressure on these C and D level jobs. For example, in Hamilton, 42% of job loss was in these skill levels and while some of these workers may have been recalled, we would still anticipate that many workers will be permanently displaced. In jobs at this level, we find a high degree of churn, with jobseekers moving in and out of employment. Workers experience greater precarious employment signaled by contract and part-time work. Anecdotally, we know through our community consultations with service providers that many jobseekers are experiencing increasing and significant barriers to employment including mental health concerns, addiction and homelessness, to name a few.

Low literacy skills are an additional barrier to employment and in many cases will limit opportunities for advancement. While over the past twenty years we have seen literacy levels increase, across the Hamilton/Niagara/Grand Erie region, approximately 50% of our population have a high school diploma or less compared to the province as a whole with 47% (2016 Census, Statistics Canada). Yet, employers are increasingly requiring more advanced education and training.

In many cases, employees can work toward a mid-level job from an entry-level job if they continue to increase their skills and training. The dream of course is to create a system where job seekers have the tools they need to find, keep and advance in a job, creating vacancies for others to follow along the same path.

We focused on the Healthcare and Manufacturing sectors. These sectors are strong in Hamilton, Niagara and Grand Erie. There were a number of entry level positions for us to explore in terms establishing our career pathways models and they tend to be sectors that are of interest to jobseekers in our respective communities. In some cases, these sectors have entry level positions with quite low unemployment rates (especially in the Healthcare sector), signaling high demand.

Early in the project we developed a comprehensive asset map of training opportunities for these sectors in the region. We focused on foundational skills, general training, specific training for the in-demand positions as well as additional training opportunities like CPR, drivers license, and health and safety training. One of the pillars of this project was consultation. We gathered feedback from literacy practitioners, trainers, employers and job seekers. From this consultation we wanted to examine if there were any training gaps and potentially, how they could be addressed by the employment and training network. More on this later...

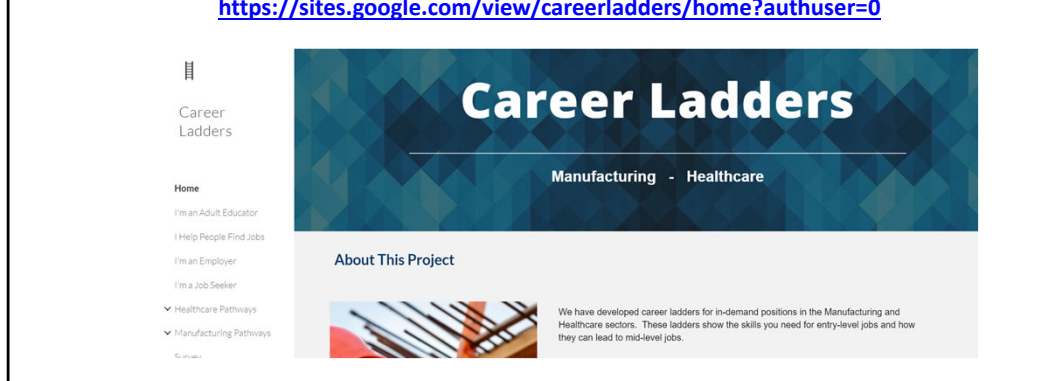


Again, it takes a village to pull something like this off within a very short 12 months. The success of this project has really been because of dedicated partners and a very clear and realistic workplan to drive the project forward. However, with all projects, there has to be room for innovation and flexibility. The initial concept of this project was to gather the data, complete the consultation with key stakeholders and develop the frameworks – the end-user experience was to come later. However, early on it became apparent that digitizing the information along the way and creating a resource that could be used, “out of the gate” so to speak, was going to be of great value to adult educators, employment practitioners, job seekers and potentially employers as well. So, that’s what we did.

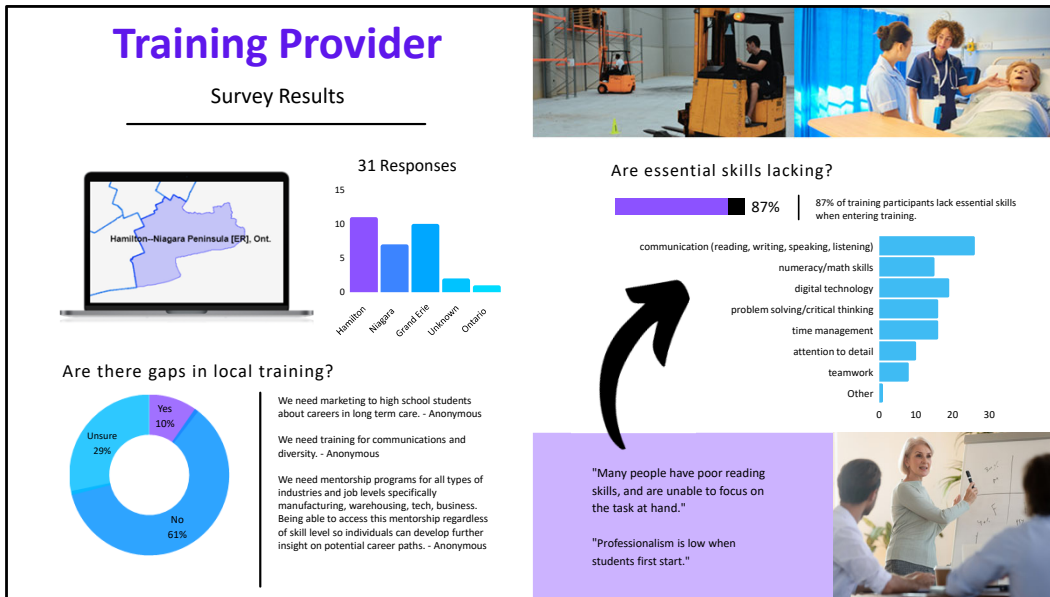
Website

<https://abea.on.ca/career-ladders/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/careerladders/home?authuser=0>



- the career ladder frameworks can be found at <https://abea.on.ca/career-ladders/>
- there are 4 user pathways - adult educator, employment counselors, employers, job seekers
- can also navigate through the pathways
- describes how to use the website, and how to use it for each end-user
- pathways
- occupation profiles and what they include



The following consultation feedback slides are available on the ABEA Career Ladders project page.

31 training providers reviewed the website and provided feedback. They provided us with critical updates to the information we had about their programs to ensure it was accurate and up-to-date.

87% of respondents said that trainees lack essential skills to be successful in the program such as communication, numeracy and digital technology skills. Soft skills were also identified as lacking such as problem solving, time management and attention to detail. This certainly speaks to the importance of essential skills upgrading to ensure successful training outcomes that can lead to employment.

Trainers identified a few gaps such as

- Marketing career pathways to high school students
- Training programs specific to communications and diversity
- Mentorship programs for all types of industries and job levels

One trainer commented, "In my experience, almost every job seeker who enters the... program... requires both hard and soft skills development to assist with future, gainful employment. The enhancement of their technology and communication skills has proved to be extremely important..."



We were thrilled with the responses from job seekers about the site.

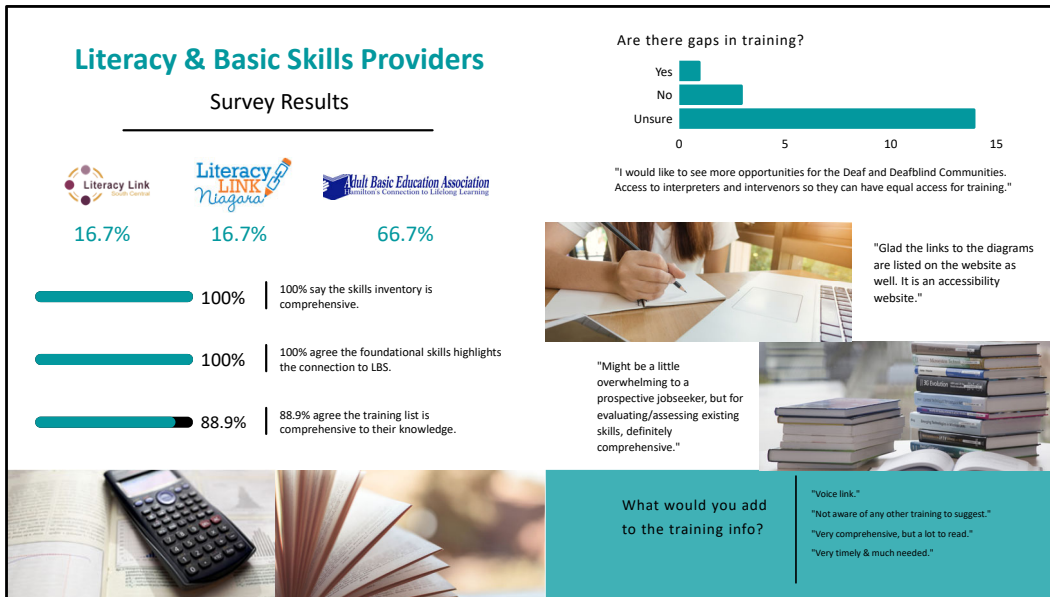
100% of the participants said that the career ladders would help them advance their careers.

100% also said that they would use this tool, that the information about entry-level jobs is useful and they found the training and education options helpful.

They found the site easy to use and easy to understand.

A few quotes from job seekers

- "There's a lot of useful information for people that don't know much about what they want to do."
- "The website seems like a really good way to get an idea of a potential career path and ways that you can get into [that] career."
- "Prepares you for what you need to know and learn before taking on a job. Excellent information."



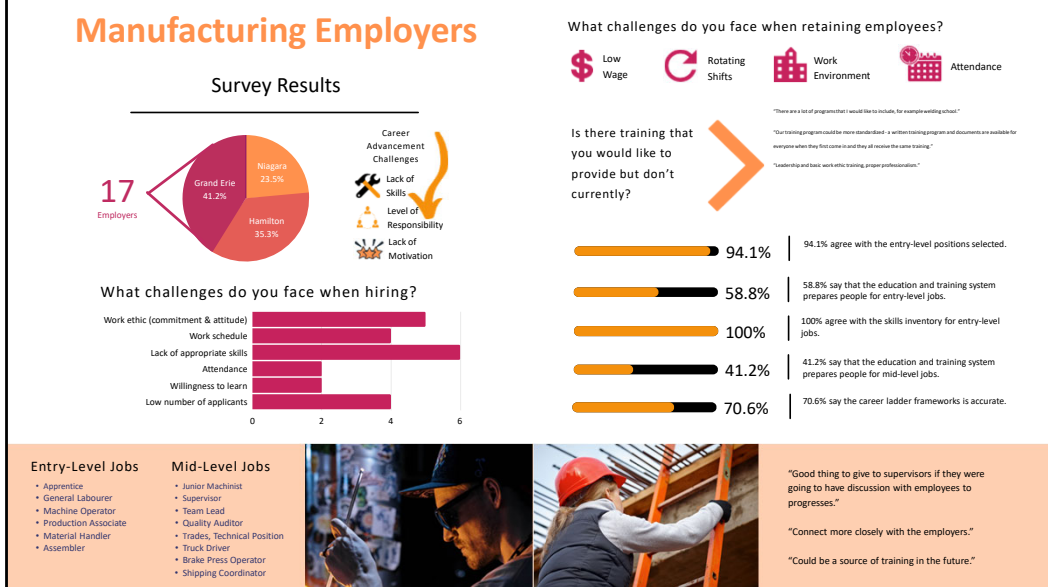
Literacy and Basic Skills providers are the experts when it comes to the development of foundational or essential skills. We primarily wanted to get feedback on the foundational skills page.

The responses to the website content were very positive with 100% of respondents agreeing that the skills inventories were comprehensive and that the foundational skills page highlights the connection to Literacy and Basic Skills.

Almost 89% of respondents agreed that the training list is comprehensive.

One respondent said, "Excellent resource for assessment... & training plan development for learners."

Manufacturing Employers



We broke down the employer feedback by sector. Almost all of the manufacturing employers agreed with the entry-level jobs chosen and they all agreed with the skills inventories of the entry-level jobs. However, only about 60% of the employers surveyed believe that the education and training system prepares people for entry-level jobs and only 41% believe that the system prepares people for mid-level jobs.

Quotes from Employers

- “Forklift needs to happen on-site to understand the hazards of the worksite.”
- “Some need upgrading, couldn't read a blue-print, tools and equipment training needed.”
- “The soft skills are lacking example motivation, problem-solving skills.”
- “Training has to be done in the workplace so they understand the workplace processes.”

When asked about challenges they face when hiring they cited lack of appropriate skills, work ethic, work schedules and number of applicants as the most significant.

As for challenges with retention, they said low wages, rotating shifts, work environment and attendance play major roles.

Employers want, ““Reliable candidates who will work everyday,” says one employer. Another said, “Sometimes it’s a boring job and they don't see the career path and especially younger employees want to move to other jobs.” So career ladders become an important retention tool.

Training that’s provided by employers to entry-level employees include

- Machinery, technical, hands-on training
- Job shadowing
- Health and safety
- Orientation

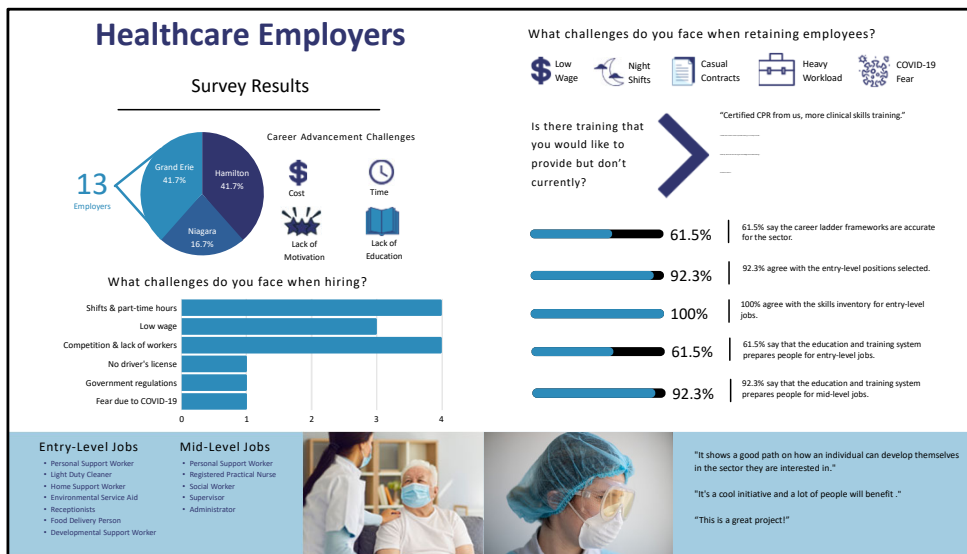
When asked if there is training they would like to provide, one employer said, “Leadership and basic work ethic training, proper professionalism.”

When asked, “What challenges do you face when trying to move entry-level employees into mid-level positions?”, many employers identified lack of skills and learning curves to advance as a challenge as well as employees not wanting more responsibility. Employers also noted COVID-19, lack of work ethic, limited availability and mid-level positions not being available as challenges to advancement.

When asked, “Do you think some of your employees would benefit from the career ladder frameworks we are developing?” one employer said, “Yes, we have done internal surveys and younger employees want to know a career path.”

In terms of how the project could move forward from their perspective employers said they

- “Would be able to direct employees to this if they are looking for employment assistance...”
- “It is super helpful, specifically for newcomers to let them know that manufacturers like ours exist and we are always hiring.”
- “Good thing to give to supervisors if they were going to have discussion with employees to progress.”



100% of healthcare employers agreed with the skills inventory for the entry-level jobs. Most agree with the entry level jobs chosen.

Almost all agree that the education and training system prepares people for mid-level jobs but only about 60% say that the system prepares people for entry-level jobs.

One employer said, "More coop would really help the high school students because they are not prepared especially with their reading comprehension and writing skills."

Among the top challenges faced when hiring include shifts and part-time hours as well as competition and lack of workers and low wages. One employer commented that they don't "... hav[e] enough funding for a competitive wage for [the] nonprofit sector." Another employer said, "Employees [are] looking for full time hours, [there are] not enough applicants out there." Challenges for retaining employees include low wages, night shifts, casual contracts, heavy workloads and a fear of Covid-19.

Some examples of training that entry-level employees include orientation, job shadowing, health and safety training, first aid, client care and clinical practice, non-violent intervention training, anti-racism and oppression training and positive space training for the LGBTQ community.

Some employers surveyed offer training to their employees through professional development days, online learning, job shadowing and specific training such as CPR and infection control. A few employers also mentioned providing financial support to employees to pursue further education outside the workplace because to move up in the medical field, they would need formal education.

When asked if there is training they would like to provide but don't they said in-house CPR, clinical skills, diversity and inclusion and customer service training.

When asked about challenges when trying to move entry-level employees into mid-level positions they said that the lack of education and training that their employees have limits them from going to mid-level occupations. Many would have to go to school independently, outside of the job. So, time and financial restrictions can also cause a challenge for employees to advance in their careers. They also cited motivation of the employee and how fast they can complete the training. One employer stated that there are not a lot of opportunities in their organization for their employees to advance.

10 healthcare employers state that they think their employees would benefit from the career ladder frameworks to help them advance in their career but also to fill vacant positions.

One employer said, "... it can show them how to develop their career" and another said, "... it can show them what skills are required and education to advance."

In terms of how this project could move forward, the employers surveyed would like to see this project shared with educational institutions, Ontario Works and employment-based services to present people with information on training and skills to progress in their career and fill vacant positions. A few employers mentioned that it would be useful to share with their employees to move up in the organization. There were also comments to develop services to help employees take advantage of training to advance but also support them through job coaching when entering the job. Two of the employers mentioned they would like to see this project expanded to all the sectors. One employer said, "It's a great project, the website is really good, giving people information about school, skills and needs for each job."

Key Learning

- The Career Ladder frameworks are accurate and useful for a number of audiences - adult educators, employment practitioners, job seekers and employers
- Job seekers and employers think the career ladder frameworks could help people advance in their careers and could help with retention of employees
- Many employers face challenges when trying to fill entry-level jobs due to factors such as work ethic, flexible work schedule, lack of appropriate skills and low number of applicants
- Several employers noted that advancement greatly depends on an employee's motivation to apply to other internal positions, performance and attitude

Next Steps

- Promote the career ladders website tool
- Look into phase II of the project to work on additional sectors
- Address some of the feedback with existing and possibly new programming through Literacy and Basic Skills and Learning Networks

Discussion Questions

How could you use the career ladders tool in your work?

How can we use the career ladder frameworks to address current labour market issues?

How would you like to see this project move forward?

Poll

Please fill out the Zoom poll on your screen.
Thank you for your feedback!



Thank you!

Questions?

We appreciate your time and feedback.