

Workforce Trends in Innisfil Helping Employers Navigate Today's Hiring Challenges and Plan for Tomorrow's Talent



1. Executive Summary

Innisfil's economy is growing, and with it, the demand for talent is evolving. To support future growth and help local employers succeed, we've examined the most pressing labour force trends shaping the community today and in the years ahead.

Structural Sector Trends

Innisfil's priority growth sectors, like advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, healthcare, and tourism, are transforming the local job market. These sectors are creating new roles, shifting skill requirements, and presenting opportunities for career growth.

- **Manufacturing** is moving toward lean, tech-enabled operations.
- **Agriculture** is embracing innovation across vertical farming and food processing.
- **Healthcare** is expanding rapidly, with the Royal Victoria South Campus as a major anchor.
- **Tourism and hospitality** continue to drive seasonal demand, while creative and digital industries are emerging as a future growth pillar.
- **Logistics and clean-tech** are increasingly crucial to the regional economy.

Cross-Cutting Workforce Challenges

Local employers are also facing common hiring and retention challenges across industries. Survey findings support these and reinforce what many communities across Ontario are experiencing:

- **Skilled trades shortages** remain critical, particularly in construction, HVAC, and electrical roles.
- **Soft skills gaps**—such as punctuality, problem-solving, and communication—are hindering productivity.
- Many **entry-level roles lack clear advancement** opportunities, making retention more challenging.
- **Transportation barriers** are quietly limiting access to jobs, particularly for young people and new residents.
- Employers often identify **mismatches between training and job needs**, particularly in the trades and service sectors.
- There is a rising demand for **digital skills across all sectors**, not just technology roles.

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2. Methodology

This report is designed to support workforce-related decision-making by identifying the employment trends shaping Innisfil's economy and by presenting a curated list of the Top 25 In-Demand Careers, both current and emerging.

- Address hiring and retention challenges.
- Align programming and support with future needs.
- Strengthen Innisfil's capacity for long-term, inclusive economic growth.

Geographic Scope

While the primary focus is on the Town of Innisfil, the analysis takes a nested approach to labour market data. Due to limitations in hyper-local datasets, we included broader regional and provincial sources to help anticipate workforce pressures and opportunities.

Research Process

The project followed a multi-step research process, integrating quantitative analysis, qualitative employer feedback, and strategic alignment with economic development priorities.

A. Workforce Trends Analysis

- Job Postings Analysis: Over 400 Innisfil-based job postings (Jan–June 2025) were analyzed by sector, role type, and posting frequency.
- Labour Market Intelligence: Regional and national trends were reviewed using data from Statistics Canada, workforce development boards, and sector-specific reports.
- Cross-Sector Validation: Emerging themes were evaluated for alignment with Innisfil's 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan.

B. Identifying the Top 25 In-Demand Careers

To identify the Top 25 In-Demand Careers in Innisfil, we triangulated three core inputs:

- Job Postings revealed the frequency of roles, demand trends, and sector distribution.
- Labour Market Trends provided insight into long-term pressures and future skills needs.
- The Employer Survey, conducted by the Town of Innisfil in Spring 2025, provided local validation and identified challenges such as skills gaps, hiring barriers, and training priorities.

This combined analysis allowed us to prioritize roles with persistent or growing demand and ensure the final list was grounded in both data and real-world employer experience.

C. Career Prioritization and Final Validation

- **Career Profiling:** A list of 25 in-demand careers was developed based on observed patterns, validated through employer feedback, and aligned with economic development priorities.
- **Top 10 Prioritization:** A short list of 10 high-priority careers was drafted and reviewed with the Town's Economic Development team.
- **Final Adjustments:** Revisions were made to reflect local expertise, sector growth priorities, and anticipated workforce needs.

3. The Local Employment Landscape

Understanding Innisfil's workforce challenges starts with a clear picture of the town's economic structure, labour force characteristics, and how people work and commute.

This section grounds the trends identified later in the report in the lived realities of local businesses and residents.

Innisfil's Economic Footprint

Innisfil's economy is evolving, anchored by a mix of traditional and growth-oriented sectors:

- **Manufacturing** remains a cornerstone of Innisfil's export economy, with strengths in plastics, transportation equipment, and machinery. The sector accounts for more than 25% of exports, and there is growing interest in lean manufacturing.
- **Construction and skilled trades** support rapid growth in residential and commercial development. The sector is a major employer and a pipeline for trades careers, yet it faces ongoing recruitment pressures.
- **Tourism and hospitality** are driven by assets like Friday Harbour Resort, Lake Simcoe, and Georgian Downs. These generate year-round activity but rely heavily on seasonal, service-based roles.
- **Healthcare and social assistance** are expanding, particularly with the planned Royal Victoria Hospital South Campus. This project is expected to create over 3,000 new jobs.
- **Retail and personal services** are widely available across Innisfil's commercial nodes, providing employment opportunities but often in roles with limited upward mobility.

- **Emerging sectors** such as agri-tech, food processing, clean tech, and creative industries hold promise, especially with targeted investment and training.

Population Growth & Workforce Demographics

Innisfil is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Simcoe County, but that growth brings workforce complexity:

- The population grew by 11.5% from 2016 to 2021 (Census), outpacing provincial averages.
- The aging workforce is putting pressure on skilled trades and healthcare employers, with many retirements expected by 2030.
- Youth underemployment remains a concern, especially among high school graduates without clear postsecondary or trades pathways.
- Immigrants and second-career workers represent a growing share of Innisfil's population, but they remain underutilized due to credentialing barriers, training gaps, or a lack of local job connections.

Labour Force Participation & Commuting Patterns

- Innisfil has a high labour force participation rate, but a significant share of residents commute out of town for

work, especially to Barrie, Vaughan, and the GTA.

- Out-commuting reduces the available local labour supply and highlights gaps in mid- to high-skilled job opportunities in town.
- A lack of public transit options creates an invisible hiring barrier, particularly for entry-level or shift-based roles in manufacturing, retail, and hospitality.

Understanding Innisfil's employment landscape helps explain many of the challenges raised by local employers, including why:

- Entry-level roles are challenging to fill despite population growth.
- Skilled trades shortages are intensifying.
- Retention is a growing concern across sectors.
- Tapping new labour pools is a top priority.

Current Hiring Challenges

Despite population growth and economic potential, many employers continue to struggle to recruit and retain a workforce. Across industries, several types of roles were consistently identified as difficult to recruit for:

- General Labourers, especially in construction, landscaping, warehousing, and manufacturing.

- Skilled Tradespeople, including electricians, HVAC technicians, carpenters, and heavy equipment operators.
- Truck and Delivery Drivers, particularly AZ/DZ licensed drivers, and those available for shift work.
- Cooks and Kitchen Staff are cited by tourism, recreation, and hospitality businesses.
- Personal Support Workers (PSWs) in long-term care and home care settings.

Recruitment Barriers

Local employers report several consistent barriers that limit their ability to hire effectively:

- **Small or unqualified applicant pools:** Many employers receive few applications, and fewer from candidates who meet baseline qualifications or have reliable transportation.
- **Soft skills gaps:** Issues with punctuality, communication, accountability, and teamwork were more frequently cited than technical skill deficiencies.
- **Wage competition:** Small and medium-sized employers often struggle to match wages offered in Barrie, Vaughan, or the GTA.
- **Lack of awareness about local opportunities:**

Employers note that some residents don't consider "career-path" roles available right in Innisfil.

Retention and Turnover Pressures

Even when roles are filled, keeping staff is a growing concern:

- **Entry-level churn:** Short-term or seasonal roles often face high turnover, especially when there's limited room for growth.
- **Competition from out-of-town jobs:** Many Innisfil residents, who commute, are often drawn back to higher-paying roles in other communities.
- **Limited HR capacity:** Smaller employers lack dedicated HR staff to implement structured retention or advancement programs.

Gaps in Training Access and Awareness

While training programs exist, many employers feel disconnected from the postsecondary system:

- **Misalignment with industry timelines:** Employers may need talent immediately, while training programs take 6–18 months to complete.
- **Limited co-op or placement awareness:** Many businesses are unaware of how to connect with

students through co-ops or internships.

- **Credential confusion:** Employers and job seekers alike are uncertain about the value and requirements of different training paths, including apprenticeships.

4. Key Workforce Trends to Watch

To plan for Innisfil's future workforce needs, it is crucial to understand both the structural shifts happening within key sectors and the broad-based challenges employers face across all industries.

Structural Sector Trends

These trends reflect the evolution of Innisfil's priority growth sectors. They are creating new jobs, reshaping skill demands, and offering opportunities for long-term career development.

1. Advanced Manufacturing Is Going Lean and Tech-Enabled

Manufacturers in Innisfil are modernizing. Automation, digitization, and lean processes are now the standard, not the exception.

- High demand for machine operators, QA technicians, and skilled trades with familiarity with technology.
- There is a growing need for troubleshooting, equipment

maintenance, and safety compliance.

- Digital fluency in systems like inventory control and diagnostics is a new baseline.

Opportunity: Connect industry stakeholders with local training institutions to build the right mix of mechanical and digital skills.

2. Agriculture Is Evolving into Agri-Tech & Food Processing

Across Ontario, agriculture is integrating technology, sustainability, and value-added processing to enhance its operations.

In Innisfil, however, the sector remains predominantly a cash crop. While there is interest in agri-entrepreneurship, significant barriers exist, particularly high land costs, which limit new entrants.

- Vertical farming, robotics, and automation are reshaping traditional farm roles in other parts of the province.
- Food processing offers new industrial jobs with stable, year-round employment, though local opportunities remain limited.
- Younger farmers and tech-savvy entrepreneurs are leading innovation where conditions allow.

Opportunity: Support precision agriculture skills and

agri-food entrepreneurship through education and land-use policy, while recognizing the local barriers to market entry.

3. Healthcare Expansion Is Driving Long-Term Talent Demand

Healthcare is already a significant employer in Innisfil, and the potential development of the Royal Victoria Hospital South Campus could strengthen future growth. While the project is still in early planning and its timeline is uncertain, it signals the roles and skills the community will need to support expanded healthcare services.

- Strong demand for PSWs, nurses, technicians, and support staff.
- Employers also need admin roles (e.g., billing, records, reception).
- Cultural competence and soft skills are increasingly valued.

Opportunity: Leverage the potential RVH expansion to attract related life sciences investment and training partnerships.

4. Tourism & Hospitality Fuel Seasonal Workforce Needs

Tourism anchors, such as Friday Harbour and Georgian Downs, create peaks in demand for food service,

housekeeping, and recreational roles.

- Many roles are seasonal and face high turnover.
- Soft skills and customer service remain top priorities.
- Employers cite challenges in recruiting reliable staff for evening and weekend shifts.

Opportunity: Provide pathways from seasonal jobs to long-term roles in tourism, events, and hospitality leadership.

5. Creative & Digital Industries Are an Emerging Pillar

Innisfil's creative economy, including digital media, design, and cultural events, is gaining momentum.

- Freelance and small business models dominate.
- Skills include graphic design, web development, content creation, and arts admin.
- Strong connection to entrepreneurship, remote work, and youth retention.

Opportunity: Support business development programs tailored to creative entrepreneurs and digital freelancers.

6. Logistics, Transportation & Clean-Tech Are Rising in Importance

As e-commerce and infrastructure continue to expand, so

does the demand for related roles.

- Strong demand for truck drivers, AZ/DZ license holders, and dispatchers.
- Clean-tech opportunities exist in HVAC, renewable energy, and waste remediation.
- Growing emphasis on environmental compliance and energy efficiency.

Opportunity: Position Innisfil as a clean logistics and green building leader through workforce development initiatives.

Cross-Cutting Workforce Challenges

These are the challenges faced by employers across sectors, regardless of the specific industry. Many are long-standing issues now reaching a critical point.

7. Skilled Trades Shortages Are Limiting Growth

The demand for electricians, HVAC technicians, plumbers, and equipment operators remains consistently unmet.

- Shortage of Red Seal-certified workers.
- Delays in apprenticeship pathways.
- Youth engagement in the trades remains low.

Local Insight: Employers are willing to train, but once workers are certified, they lose them to poaching or

out-of-town competition.

8. Soft Skills Gaps Are Hurting Performance

Employers consistently cite issues such as attendance, time management, and interpersonal skills as the top barriers, even more so than technical ability.

- Affects retention, productivity, and team morale.
- Common across customer-facing and back-of-house roles.
- Not often addressed in current training programs.

Opportunity: Provide soft skills training, particularly for young people and entry-level workers.

9. Entry-Level Jobs Lack Advancement Pathways

Many of Innisfil's most commonly posted jobs (retail, food service, warehousing) don't offer clear career paths.

- Employees view these as "bridge jobs," not long-term.
- High turnover and limited upskilling discourage loyalty.
- Employers struggle to create internal pipelines.

Solution: Promote microcredentials, mentorship, and stackable training to support internal advancement and career growth.

10. Transportation Barriers Quietly Limit Hiring

Especially for youth and new Canadians, a lack of reliable transit is a significant barrier to accessing work.

- Affects shift work, tourism, and industrial job sites.
- Increases absenteeism and turnover.
- Limits participation in training programs and job fairs.

Innisfil Transit, delivered in partnership with Uber, offers a unique rural mobility option. While it provides some access to employment, it does not fully meet the needs of all workers, particularly those in shift-based or industrial roles.

Opportunity: Explore shared mobility solutions, employer shuttles, and transit partnerships.

11. Training and Job Needs Are Not Aligned

Employers often perceive a disconnect between the skills taught in local programs and the skills they currently need.

- Some programs are too long or theoretical.
- Employers want more awareness of co-op and placement options.
- Sector-specific needs (e.g., QA in food processing) go unaddressed.

Solution: Strengthen partnerships between colleges, employers, and economic development teams.

12. Digital Fluency Is Becoming Essential

Digital skills are needed in nearly every role—from trades and admin to hospitality and healthcare. This includes:

- Basic technology such as POS systems, scheduling apps, and CRM software.
- Software supporting advanced roles like design tools, social media, diagnostics, and data entry.

Workers who lack technical comfort are often excluded from consideration.

Opportunity: Embed digital literacy into high school, college, and workplace training programs.

25 In-Demand Careers

This list has prioritized roles that fit within the following target sectors:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agri-Tech / Food Processing
- Creative Industries
- Tourism
- Life Sciences
- Clean-Tech Supply Chain

It also included critical enabling or support roles that showed strong local job posting data or were mentioned by employers and that support one or more target sectors or broader community functions.

Advanced Manufacturing & Clean-Tech

1. Machine Operator (NOC 73401)
2. Quality Assurance Technician (NOC 22100)
3. Maintenance Technician / Millwright (NOC 72400)
4. Electrician (NOC 72200)
5. HVAC Technician (NOC 72402)
6. Production Supervisor / Lead Hand (NOC 72024)

7. Industrial Mechanic / Technician (NOC 72401)

8. Welder / Fabricator (NOC 72106)

Agri-Tech & Food Processing

9. General Farm Labourer (NOC 85100)

10. Food Production Worker (NOC 95106)

11. Heavy Equipment Operator (NOC 73400)

Creative Industries

12. Graphic / Digital Media Designer (NOC 52120)

13. Content Creator / Social Media Coordinator (NOC 51111)

14. Marketing Coordinator (NOC 11202)

Tourism

15. Food & Beverage Server (NOC 65200)

16. Tourism Service Staff (Front Desk Agent / Recreation Attendant / Kitchen Helper) (*Combined NOCs: 64300, 65201, 65210*) (*Consolidated*)

Life Sciences

- 17. Personal Support Worker (NOC 44101)
- 18. Registered Nurse (NOC 31301)
- 19. Early Childhood Educator (NOC 42202)

Core Enabling Roles (Support Multiple Sectors)

- 20. Human Resources Professional (NOC 11201)
- 21. Truck Driver (NOC 73300)
- 22. Administrative Assistant (NOC 13110)
- 23. IT Support Technician (NOC 22221)
- 24. Construction Labourer (NOC 75110)
- 25. Skilled Trades Helper / Apprentice (e.g., NOC 75119)

Essential Support Roles – "Watchlist"

These roles were considered for inclusion and remain important for community functioning or employer support, but are not core to strategic growth sectors:

- Customer Service Representative (NOC 64409)
- Retail Supervisor (NOC 62010)
- Bookkeeper / Accountant (NOC 12200 / 11100)
- Warehouse Labourer / Shipper-Receiver (NOC 75101)
- Educational Assistant (NOC 43100)

Appendix A - Research and Methodology Details

This appendix provides a detailed breakdown of the research process used to define Innisfil's local employment landscape, identify key workforce trends, and develop the Top 25 In-Demand Careers list.

The methodology combines quantitative data analysis, qualitative employer engagement, and strategic alignment with the Town's economic development priorities.

Step-by-Step Research Process

Step 1: Local Job Postings Analysis

Sequence analyzed more than 400 Innisfil-based job postings from January to June 2025, representing over 150 unique positions.

Data sources included:

- WorkInSimcoeCounty.ca
- Indeed.ca
- Career pages of 25+ major local employers

Each job posting was categorized and coded by:

- Employer name
- Industry sector
- Job title and National Occupation Classification (NOC)
- Frequency of postings

This provided a foundational understanding of real-time demand in Innisfil's local labour market. Roles with repeated postings were flagged for persistent hiring demand.

Step 2: Role Clustering and Thematic Grouping

To interpret demand beyond isolated job titles, roles were grouped by functional category. This enabled cross-sector comparisons and the identification of skills in demand across multiple sectors.

Functional clusters included:

- Skilled Trades
- Production and Technical Roles

- Customer Service and Sales
- Health Care and Education
- Administrative and Support Services

This clustering helped expose shared hiring needs and skill gaps that are often hidden when reviewing jobs in isolation.

Step 3: Employer Survey (Conducted by Town of Innisfil)

In Spring 2025, Innisfil's Economic Development team conducted a targeted survey of 18 local employers across priority sectors.

The survey gathered qualitative insight into:

- Roles that are hardest to fill
- Retention and recruitment barriers
- In-demand soft and technical skills
- Perceived training gaps and workforce pressures

Survey results were provided to Sequence for integration with other datasets. This employer voice was a critical component in verifying the relevance of roles and trends

identified through job postings and broader labour data.

Step 4: Trends and Forecast Integration

To assess long-term relevance, job posting and survey results were compared against:

- Labour market data from Statistics Canada, ESDC, and Job Bank
- Regional forecasts from Simcoe County and Workforce Development Boards
- National and provincial outlooks on automation, skills shifts, and demographic change

This cross-referencing ensured that emerging roles and trends were supported by broader evidence and not solely driven by short-term hiring patterns.

Step 5: Development of Role Profiles

Using insights from the job postings, employer feedback, and external labour data, Sequence developed preliminary role profiles for 25 high-relevance occupations.

Each profile included:

- Job description and core responsibilities

- Required qualifications and skillsets
- NOC code and industry classification
- Typical local employers and workplace settings
- Education and training pathways
- Wage range (where available)

Profiles were also linked to relevant post-secondary options (e.g., Georgian College, Lakehead University) to support workforce planning.

Step 6: Prioritization and Top 10 Identification

Roles were evaluated and prioritized based on:

- Frequency of appearance in job postings
- Validation by local employers through the survey
- Alignment with Innisfil's target growth sectors

From this process, a shortlist of 10 priority careers was drafted and presented to the Town's Economic Development team for review.

Step 7: Strategic Alignment and Final Review

The proposed roles were reviewed and refined to ensure

alignment with Innisfil's **2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan**, with particular attention to:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agri-Tech and Food Processing
- Clean-Tech
- Life Sciences
- Tourism and Creative Industries

This helped ensure that the final selections supported both labour market demand and long-term strategic goals.

Step 8: Finalization of the Top 25 In-Demand Careers

The final list reflects a diverse range of roles, including:

- Entry-level and skilled positions
- Public and private sector employment
- Roles with both immediate hiring needs and emerging strategic importance

Each career was validated using local, regional, and national labour data and employer insight to ensure both

current relevance and future potential.

Data Triangulation and Quality Assurance

To maintain accuracy and rigour:

- **Quantitative triangulation:** Job posting frequency was verified against broader labour datasets (Job Bank, ESDC, Statistics Canada).
- **Qualitative triangulation:** Employer feedback was compared to public data to identify any disconnects or confirmations.
- **Strategic triangulation:** Roles were mapped to Innisfil's growth sectors to ensure alignment with community development goals.

Outputs and Deliverables

Each of the final 25 in-demand roles is presented in a consistent format, with details including:

- NOC code and job title
- Sector alignment and local relevance
- Core duties, qualifications, and advancement

potential

- Typical employers in Innisfil
- Wage ranges and training opportunities

Appendix B - Data Sources

Government of Canada Job Bank - Labour Market Information (LMI)

- Offers real-time and forecasted job trends across Canada.
- Provides employment outlooks by province, territory, and occupation.
- Includes wage data, job openings, and employment demand.

Statistics Canada - Labour Force Survey (LFS)

- Monthly reports on employment trends, job vacancies, and unemployment rates.
- Breaks data down by industry, region, and demographic groups.
- Includes data on wages and workforce participation.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) – Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS)

- Provides a 10-year forecast of labour market trends for over 500 occupations.
- Offers insights into job openings driven by expansion and retirements.
- Identifies fields experiencing shortages or surpluses.

LinkedIn Workforce Insights

- Uses real-time job postings and employer-demand-based hiring trends.
- Tracks job openings, required skills, and regional employment trends.
- Offers insights into remote work trends and emerging industries.

Work in Simcoe County – Job Demand Report

- Offers monthly reports analyzing job postings across Simcoe County, including Innisfil.
- Identifies trends in job demand, top employers, and in-demand occupations.

Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board – Labour Market Information

- Publishes annual Local Labour Market Planning (LLMP) reports detailing employment trends, occupations, wages, and demographics in Simcoe County and Muskoka.
- Provides evidence-based data to understand labour market challenges and opportunities.

Statistics Canada – Census Profile for Innisfil

- Offers comprehensive demographic and labour force data specific to Innisfil.
- Includes information on employment rates, income levels, and industry sectors.

Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development – Labour Market Reports

- Provides provincial labour market information, including employment trends and job outlooks.
- While broader in scope, it offers valuable context for regional analysis.



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