Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce Regional Labour Market Needs Assessment

City of Grande Prairie | County of Grande Prairie | MD of Greenview
& Surrounding Communities

Chamber of Commerce
GRANDE PRAIRIE & DISTRICT

December 2020

Acknowledgements

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The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

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Executive Summary

of the Regional Labour Market Needs Assessment

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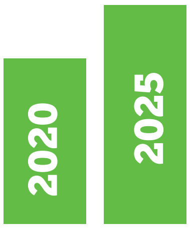
GRANDE PRAIRIE & DISTRICT

City of Grande Prairie | County of Grande Prairie | MD of Greenview | and Surrounding Municipalities

Labour Market



8%

Projected Population Growth

The Region imports approximately **5,148** workers to meet current demand.

Women, youth & Indigenous persons have the largest employment gaps.

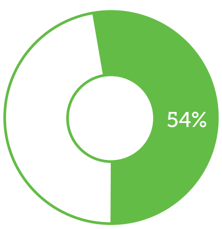
International immigration peaked over the past 3 census periods.

Immigrants came primarily from:

- Philipines
- India
- Mexico
- United States
- Nigeria
- South Africa
- United Kingdom

Housing and Cost of Living

Cost of living & affordable and adequate housing stock are both limiting factors for workforce attraction/retention.



Labour Force Development

54% of working age residents (ages 25-64) have a postsecondary education..

Most needed employment services*

- Getting information about careers and skills in demand
- Gaining access to internet and technology

As cited by the workforce

Labour Demand

Fastest Growing Business Sectors

- Finance & insurance
- Healthcare & social assistance
- Information & cultural indistries
- Arts, entertainment & recreation
- Real estate, rentals & leasing
- Utilities

Largest Job Posting Sectors

- Retail Trade
- Construction
- Professional, scientific & technical services
- Administration & support
- Healthcare
- Accomodation & food services

Executive Summary

of the Regional Labour Market Needs Assessment

Chamber of Commerce GRANDE PRAIRIE & DISTRICT

City of Grande Prairie | County of Grande Prairie | MD of Greenview | and Surrounding Municipalities

Top Qualifications in Demand

- Licenced practical nurse
- Hydrogen sulfide (H2S) training
- Professional engineer
- Commercial driver's license (CDL)
- Certified forklift operator
- Certified financial planner

Top Skills in Demand

- Communication
- Customer service
- Driving
- Sales/merchandising
- Management and operations
- Mechanics

Unmet labour demand grew most consistently between 2015 and 2019 for occupations in:

- Trades, transport, and equipment operators
- Business, finance, and administration
- Sales and services
- Natural resource and agriculture

Labour Supply

Most Common Fields of Study for Residents With Postsecondary Education

- Business, management, marketing and related support services
- Health professions and related programs
- Mechanic and repair technologies /technicians
- Education
- Construction trades
- Engineering technologies and engineering-related fields

Oversupplied Skills*

Apprenticeship:
- Precision production
- Engineering technicians
- Construction trades

College:
- Precision production
- Business, administration and management
- Construction trades

Those with the highest unemployment rates, indicating underutilized supply.

Undersupplied Skills*

Apprenticeship:
- Science technologies/technicians
- Visual and performing arts
- Agriculture operations and related sciences

College:
- Architecture and related services
- Communication, journalism and related technologies
- Biological and biomedical sciences

Bachelor Degree:
- Agriculture operations and related sciences
- Natural resources and conservation
- Social Science

Those with the highest employment rates, indicating a tight labour market.

Background

Responding to employer expressed needs, the Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce and its Partners *(City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, and Alberta Labour and Immigration)* commissioned a Regional Labour Market Needs Assessment *(LMNA)*. The LMNA sets out to fully quantify the labour force and generate an understanding of the labour market conditions faced by businesses, job seekers, and employees in the Region. Gathering this information is the first step towards developing a strategy to strengthen regional workforce competitiveness. In collaboration with McSweeney & Associates, a thorough analysis of the regional economy and workforce was completed.

"The Region" - City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District (MD) of Greenview, Town of Beaverlodge, Town of Fox Creek, Town of Valleyview, Town of Sexsmith, Town of Wembley, Village of Hythe, Grande Cache Co-ops and Enterprises, Horse Lake First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation

Photo Credit: Wendy Kempert

Methodology

Information was gathered on current and prospective gaps and opportunities related to the demand for skills, training programs, and crucial resources for workforce development.

1. Secondary data analysis: compiling and assessing existing population and labour market data to understand the demographics, skills, and knowledge supply locally. Every effort has been made to use the most current data. There are six major sources of information for this part of the research.

    - SuperDemographics 2020 from Manifold Data Mining Inc.
    - EMSI Analyst 2020.Q2
    - Statistics Canada - 2001 to 2016 Census Profiles
    - Statistics Canada - Job Vacancy and Wage Survey
    - Statistics Canada – Labour Force Survey
    - Canadian Business Registry (CBR) – Dec 2014 and Dec 2019

2. Primary data collection: after the secondary data analysis, qualitative data was collected through one-on-one interviews, then quantitative research was performed using data collected through online surveys.

Over 700 stakeholders were consulted throughout the entire consultation process.

52 key stakeholders were consulted via one-on-one telephone interviews:

(43) key businesses

(9) key workforce development and employment services agencies *(Employment Services Agencies, Community Futures Corporations, Indigenous Public Administration, Indigenous Research Institutes, Indigenous Employment Agencies, Provincial Government, Regional Postsecondary Education Institution)*

Regional Labour Demand

Examining the number of businesses by sector helps us to understand the composition of the Regional economy.

Distribution of Businesses in the Region - 2019

Sector	Distribution in 2019
Real estate rental and leasing	15.5%
Construction	12.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	9.4%
Professional, scientific, and technical serv.	8.8%
Unclassified	8.7%
Other services (except public administration)	8.1%
Transportation and warehousing	5%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	6.1%
Retail trade	4.9%
Health care and social assistance	4.6%
Finance and insurance	3.8%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	3.4%
Accommodation and food services	2.1%
Wholesale trade	1.8%
Manufacturing	1.2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.9%
Educational services	0.7%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.6%
Information and cultural industries	0.4%
Utilities	0.1%
Public administration	0.1%

Source: EMSI 2020.Q2 based on Statistics Canada, Canada Business Registry, December 2019

Regional Labour Demand

Change in No. of Businesses in the Region – 2014 to 2019

Sector	No. of Businesses in 2019	Change in No. of Businesses in 2014-2019	% Change in No. of Businesses in 2014 - 2019
Real estate rental and leasing	2,496	331	13%
Finance and insurance	617	215	35%
Health care and social assistance	733	174	24%
Other services (except public administration)	1,303	79	6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	1,509	61	4%
Retail trade	792	51	6%
Transportation and warehousing	1,039	51	6%
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,418	48	3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	151	21	14%
Information and cultural industries	67	10	15%
Accommodation and food services	336	9	3%
Educational services	106	8	8%
Utilities	17	2	12%
Public administration	13	(1)	-8%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	551	(18)	-3%
Unclassified	1,392	(21)	-2%
Manufacturing	191	(30)	-16%
Construction	1,964	(35)	-2%
Wholesale trade	281	(75)	-27%
Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction	978	(100)	-10%

Source: EMSI 2020.Q3 based on Statistics Canada, Canada Business Registry, December 2014 to 2019. Note that the numbers in red indicate negative figures.

Potential for Local Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship: includes self-employed workers *(i.e. commission salespersons or professionals running unincorporated firms)* and incorporated self-employment. First, self-employed workers were estimated by Manifold SuperDemographics, as can be seen in the table. The Region has higher levels in this type of entrepreneurship compared to the province. Females have lower rates of self-employed workers compared to males in the Region.

Labour Force Aged 15 Years and Over by Class of Worker

Variable Description	The Region			Alberta		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total labour force aged 15 and over	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Class of worker - not applicable	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	3%
All classes of worker	99%	99%	99%	97%	98%	97%
Employee	86%	84%	88%	85%	84%	87%
Self-employed	13%	15%	10%	12%	14%	9%

Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

As a second proxy, Canada's Business Registry was used to examine owner-operated businesses *(i.e. those with an indeterminate level of employees)* as an indicator of entrepreneurial activity. This captured owner-operated businesses that either had earning less than thirty thousand dollars annually or owner-operated businesses that are incorporated. These small, owner-operated businesses are an important part of the Region's economy, as they account for 61% of all businesses. In the City of Grande Prairie, 56% of businesses are owner-operated *(businesses with no employees)* compared to 62% and 67% in the County of Grande Prairie and the MD of Greenview, respectively.

Job Posting Analytics

The following table illustrates occupations with the largest growth in the number of postings, as measured by the difference in unique job postings at two points in time: March 2019 and 2020.

Occupations with the largest number of postings and increasing demand over the past year

City of Grande Prairie	MD of Greenview	County of Grande Prairie
1. Restaurant and food service managers	1. General office workers	1. Administrative and regulatory occupations
2. Managers in customer and personal services	2. Labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities	2. Labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities
3. Oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers and related workers	3. Office administrative assistants - general, legal and medical	3. Home care providers and educational support occupations
4. Financial auditors and accountants	4. Managers in food service and accommodation	4. Retail and wholesale trade managers
5. Other medical technologists and technicians (except dental health)	5. Human resources and business service professionals	5. Automotive service technicians
6. Cooks	6. Administrative and regulatory occupations	6. Office administrative assistants - general, legal and medical
7. Human resources professionals	7. Cleaners	7. Machining, metal forming, shaping and erecting trades
8. General farmworkers	8. Utilities equipment operators and controllers	8. Agriculture and horticulture workers
9. General practitioners and family physicians	9. Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services	9. Occupations in front-line public protection services
10. Accounting and related clerks	10. Traincrew operating occupations	10. Corporate sales managers
11. Welders and related machine operators	11. Cashiers	11. Technical occupations in civil, mechanical and industrial engineering
12. Crane operators	12. Retail and wholesale trade managers	12. Contractors and supervisors, industrial, electrical and construction trades and related workers

Occupations with a large percentage of growth in job postings can be reflective of the fast-growing demand for a set of skills in a particular location. In the City of Grande Prairie over the past year (note that only occupations that had a minimum of 25 unique postings were considered), occupations related to food production and preparation; health services; computer and information systems; and manufacturing had the fastest growth in job postings between March 2019 and March 2020.

In the County of Grande Prairie, occupations requiring midlevel, technical skills saw fast growth, particularly those related to skilled trades and administration. Similarly, the MD of Greenview had a significant jump in the number of job postings soliciting labourers, carpenters, electrical trades, and mechanical trades. Furthermore, job postings for occupations in nursing, human resources, and business services also increased quickly over the past year in the MD of Greenview.

Qualifications and Skills

EMSI's job posting analytics software distinguishes between hard skills, common skills, and qualifications. Hard skills are specific, learnable, measurable, often industry-specific, or occupation-specific abilities related to a position (e.g. JavaScript, accounting). On the other hand, common skills are considered necessary across many industries and occupations (e.g. problem-solving, project management).

Qualifications and certifications are granted by a third-party entity (school, government, industry, etc.) and acknowledge a body of skills and abilities (e.g. MBA, Certified Registered Nurse). The following table illustrates, based on job posting analytics, the skills and qualifications with the highest demand in the Region, over 2020.

Skills and qualifications with the highest demand in the Region, over 2020

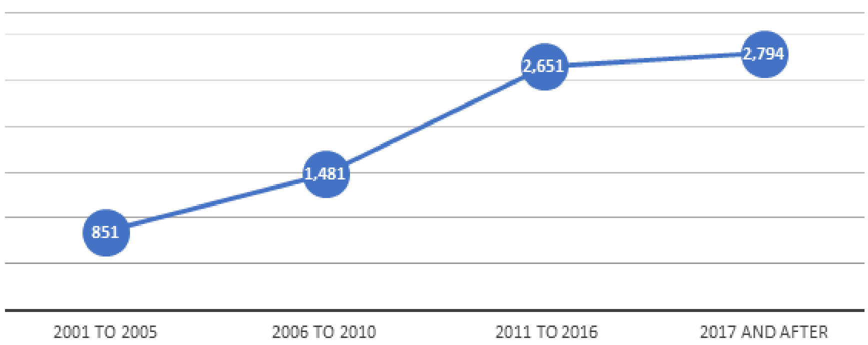
Top Qualifications	Top Common Skills	Top Hard Skills
1. Licensed Practical Nurse	1. Communication	1. Merchandising
2. Hydrogen Sulfide (H2S) Training	2. Customer Service	2. Mechanics
3. Professional Engineer	3. Valid Driver's License	3. Selling Techniques
4. Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	4. Sales	4. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
5. Certified Forklift Operator	5. Management and Operations	5. Accounting
6. Certified Financial Planner	6. Detail Oriented	6. Customer Experience
7. Registered Dental Assistant	7. Leadership	7. Accounts Payable
8. Certified Accounting Technician	8. Interpersonal Communications	8. Auditing
9. Operator Certification	9. Problem Solving	9. Warehousing
10. Certified Professional Coder	10. Time Management	10. Food Services
11. Food Safety Certification	11. Organizational Skills	11. Customer Satisfaction
12. Apprenticeship Certificate	12. Computer Literacy	12. Quality Control
13. Certified Nursing Assistant	13. Microsoft Office	13. Environment Health and Safety
14. Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer	14. Professionalism	14. Restaurant Operation
15. Project Management Professional Certification	15. Microsoft Excel	15. Occupational Safety and Health

Labour Market Characteristics

Demographics Highlights

- The Region:
  - has a larger share of its population within the age ranges of 0 to 15 and 25 to 40, compared to the province.
  - population is expected to grow by 8% over the next 5 years, which is comparable to Alberta's 8.4% projected growth. Over the past 15 years, factors affecting the Region's population growth were primarily natural increases.
- Although the Census agglomeration (CA) does not entirely represent the Region, it is a good indicator considering it captures the major population centre in the Region *(i.e. the City of Grande Prairie).* The area has been increasingly successful in attracting international migrants over the past 5 years, as well as migrants from Alberta and Canada at large. The CA saw a peak in net international migration between 2018/2019 relative to the last 15 years.
- The total international immigrant population has been steadily increasing over the past 20 years, albeit at a slower rate after 2016 *(note that the estimate for '2017 and After' does not capture a full census period).* Since 2016, immigrants came primarily from the Philippines, India, Mexico, United States, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

Total Immigrant Population in the Region by Period of Immigration, 2001 to 2020



Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

- Like Canada and Alberta, the Region relies on immigrants and non-permanent residents, particularly foreign temporary workers and foreign students, to fill jobs. The following table illustrates changes to net non-permanent residents[1] , over the past 15 years, for the two census divisions encapsulating the Region *(Division No. 18 and No. 19).*

Net Non-Permanent Residents in the Region 2006-2019

Net non-permanent residents	2006 / 2007	2007 / 2008	2008 / 2009	2009 / 2010	2010 / 2011	2011 / 2012	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	2014 / 2015	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019
Division No. 18	6	58	37	23	21	118	141	-54	-168	-87	-29	-10	6
Division No. 19	146	292	228	31	-48	214	292	182	-403	-471	-246	9	171
Combined	152	350	265	54	-27	332	433	128	-571	-558	-275	-1	177

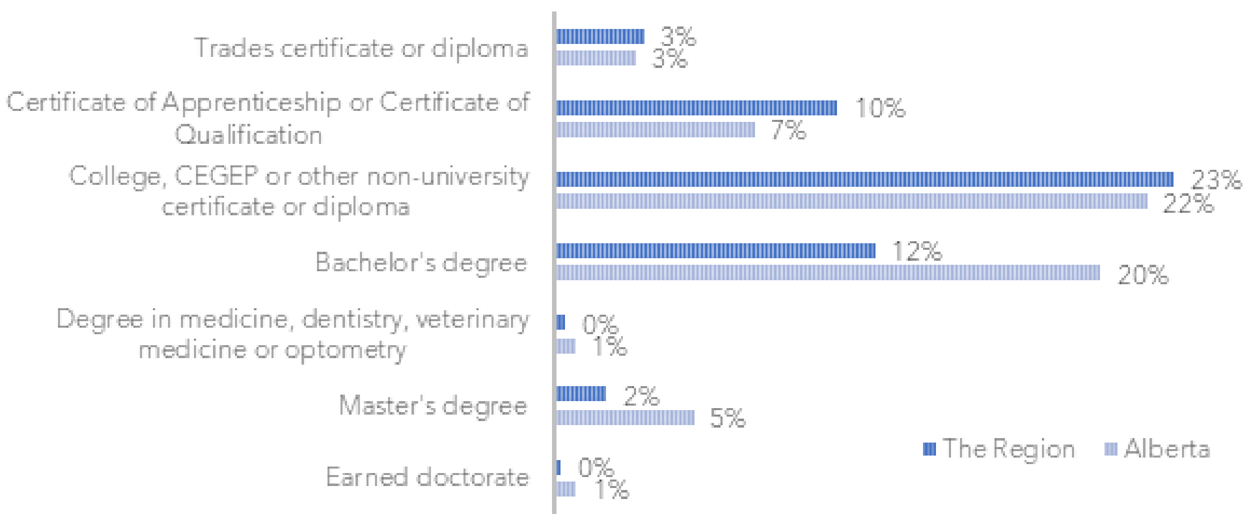
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0140-01 Components of population change by census division, 2016 boundaries

[1] Non-permanent residents (NPRs) are persons who are lawfully in Canada on a temporary basis under the authority of a temporary resident permit, along with members of their family. NPRs include foreign workers, foreign students, and refugees.

Labour Skills Supply

Approximately 47% of residents 15 years and older have completed postsecondary education in the Region, compared to 55% in Alberta. When looking at residents ages 25 to 64 (prime working age) the percentage increases to 54% in the Region, which is ten percentage points lower than in Alberta (64%). The following table shows the difference in postsecondary attainment levels between the Region and Alberta and illustrates the fact that the Region's talent supply is oriented towards mid-level/technical skills (usually requiring trades, apprenticeships, or college certificates and/or diplomas).

Postsecondary Attainment[2] Levels in the Region - 2020



Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

Today, a high school diploma is considered sufficient qualification for basic entry-level occupations. For some time now, youth have been encouraged to stay in school longer, with the growing perception that a post-secondary certificate has become the new minimum.

[2]Trades certificate or includes trades certificates or diplomas such as pre-employment or vocational certificates and diplomas from brief trade programs completed at community colleges, institutes of technology, vocational centres and similar institutions. Certificate of Apprenticeship or Certificate of Qualification' also includes Journeyperson's designations.

Labour Skills Supply

Although the statistics above make it seem like the Region might be falling behind in terms of higher education, it is important to recognize that Canada has the most educated adult population in the world, with the highest proportion of persons ages 25 to 64 years with a college diploma or university degree[3]. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that a diverse workforce is needed for a diverse economy, and at this point, there appears to be an imbalance in the region with very little supply of university degrees and trade certificates, and an oversupply of college students.

In Alberta, and most of Canada, business, management, and marketing; health professions and related programs; and education programs are typically the three most common major fields of study for persons completing postsecondary education. In the Region, skills related to mechanic and repair technologies/technicians are within the top three major fields of study and represent a larger share of resident postsecondary graduates, compared to Alberta and Canada.

[3]*OECD, Education at a Glance 2017. Among Canadians ages 25 to 64 years of age, 56% have a college diploma or university degree. Two countries are tied for second place, Israel and Japan, at 50%*

Labour Skills Supply

Most Common Major Fields of Study in the Region vs Alberta - 2020

The fields of study that are concentrated in the Region *(i.e. attained by a larger share of the residents),* relative to the province, represent strengths in the Region and are highlighted with bolded text.

	Total in the Region	% Region	% Alberta
Total population ages 15 years and over in private households.	**81,079**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
No postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	42,559	52.5%	44.3%
Business, management, marketing and related support	6,733	8.3%	10.5%
Health professions and related programs	5,204	6.4%	7.7%
Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians	**4,263**	**5.3%**	**3.2%**
Education	3,130	3.9%	3.9%
Construction trades	**2,655**	**3.3%**	**3.1%**
Engineering technologies and engineering-related fields	**2,209**	**2.7%**	**2.6%**
Precision production	**1,635**	**2.0%**	**1.6%**
Personal and culinary services	**1,502**	**1.9%**	**1.8%**
Engineering	1,051	1.3%	3.4%
Family and consumer sciences/human sciences	**875**	**1.1%**	**0.9%**
Agriculture, agriculture operations and related sciences	814	1.0%	1.0%
Transportation and materials moving	**789**	**1.0%**	**0.6%**
Visual and performing arts	758	0.9%	1.4%
Computer and information sciences and support services	709	0.9%	1.7%
Social sciences	681	0.8%	1.7%
Natural resources and conservation	**580**	**0.7%**	**0.5%**
Security and protective services	**480**	**0.6%**	**0.5%**
Public administration and social service professions	441	0.5%	0.6%
Psychology	391	0.5%	0.9%
Legal professions and studies	383	0.5%	0.9%
Biological and biomedical sciences	360	0.4%	0.9%
Theology and religious vocations	**358**	**0.4%**	**0.3%**
Parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies	322	0.4%	0.6%
Liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities	240	0.3%	0.7%
Communication, journalism and related programs	222	0.3%	0.5%

Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

Excess Labour Supply

The following shows which skills *(by major field of study)* have the highest unemployment rates *(i.e. excess supply)*, and which skills have the highest employment rates *(i.e. tight labour supply)*. Although this data is from 2016[4], it represents a somewhat similar scenario to the current day since the price of oil had recently crashed the previous year (2015) as it did in November 2019[5].

For apprenticeships certificates and trades, underutilized/underemployed major fields of study include:
• Precision production
• Engineering technicians
• Construction trades

Meanwhile, at apprenticeships certificates and trades level, the following major fields of study had the highest employment rates/tightest labour markets:
• Science technologies/technicians
• Visual and performing arts
• Agriculture, agriculture operations and related sciences

At the college level, the most underutilized/underemployed major fields of study, based on a substantial number of persons unemployed (>30) and a high unemployment rate include:
• Precision production
• Business, administration and management
• Construction Trades

Meanwhile, at the college level, the highest employment rates were related to:
• Architecture and related services
• Communication, journalism and related technologies
• Biological and biomedical sciences

Lastly, at the bachelor level, engineers and business degrees had the largest total number of unemployed people (<55), while degrees related to natural resources, agriculture, and social sciences have the highest employment rates.

4 Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016283. {Division 19, Alberta}
5 WTI: U.S. Energy Information Administration (Jan 1986 to present). WCS Source: Alberta Energy (Jan 2009 to present). Online: https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/OilPrice#:~:text=Western%20Canada%20Select%20(WCS)%2C,US%2411.20%20in%20September%202020.

Labour Force Status & Activity

Between February and July 2020, COVID-19 induced economic recession had a strong negative impact on employment, particularly within the following service industries in the Economic Region (ER) of Banff-Jasper-Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca-Grande Prairie-Peace River Economic Region (based on the North American Industry Classification System)[6]:

- Professional, scientific and technical services *(33% decline in employment)*
- Manufacturing *(33% decline in employment)*
- Public administration (*32% decline in employment)*
- Other services (except public administration) *(32% decline in employment)*
- Accommodation and food services *(30% decline in employment)*

Between September 2019 and September 2020, total employment declined by 12% in the ER. Over the past year, at least partly due to the collapse in oil prices, the goods-producing sectors in the ER had the largest declines in employment in the following sectors: construction; and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. However, not all industry sectors declined in employment over the past year.

The following industries had the absolute largest year over year gains in employment (for September 2019/2020):

- Business, building and other support services
- Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Educational services
- Health care and social assistance

Manifold SuperDemographics estimated the labour force status for the Region in the second, third and fourth quarter of 2020. The participation and employment rates have bounced back in the Region.

Females appear to be underutilized in the labour force with participation rates nearly 11 percentage points lower than for males. Young female adults *(ages 15 to 24)*, group suffered the highest unemployment rate throughout 2020. This may reflect the fact that young female adults are more likely to be working part-time, in sales and services industries *(heavily impacted by forced closures due to COVID-19)*, while they are more likely to be enrolled in postsecondary education.

In comparison, younger male adults are more likely to be working in construction, mining, and oil and gas, as they are more likely to start working directly after high school *(55% of males 15 and older have no postsecondary education compared to 51% females 15 and older)*. Unemployment rates for mature adults *(25 and older)* remain slightly higher than in the province, with male adults having slightly higher unemployment rates compared to females.

[6]*Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0091-01 Employment by industry, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, provinces and*

Labour Force Status & Activity

Labour Force Status by Age and Gender – Q4.2020

	The Region			Alberta		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Population ages 15 to 24						
Participation rate	67.72	74.42	60.57	63.49	63.61	63.36
Employment rate	57.04	62.89	50.79	49.61	47.87	51.44
Unemployment rate	15.77	15.49	16.14	21.86	24.75	18.82
Population 25 years and over						
Participation rate	74.82	81.06	68.31	70.51	77.3	63.83
Employment rate	66.03	70.06	61.83	63.88	69.49	58.35
Unemployment rate	11.75	13.57	9.49	9.41	10.1	8.58

Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

The following are the top employment sub-sectors (by 3-digit NAICS) of the Regional labour force, and as such represent the most readily available types of industry knowledge:

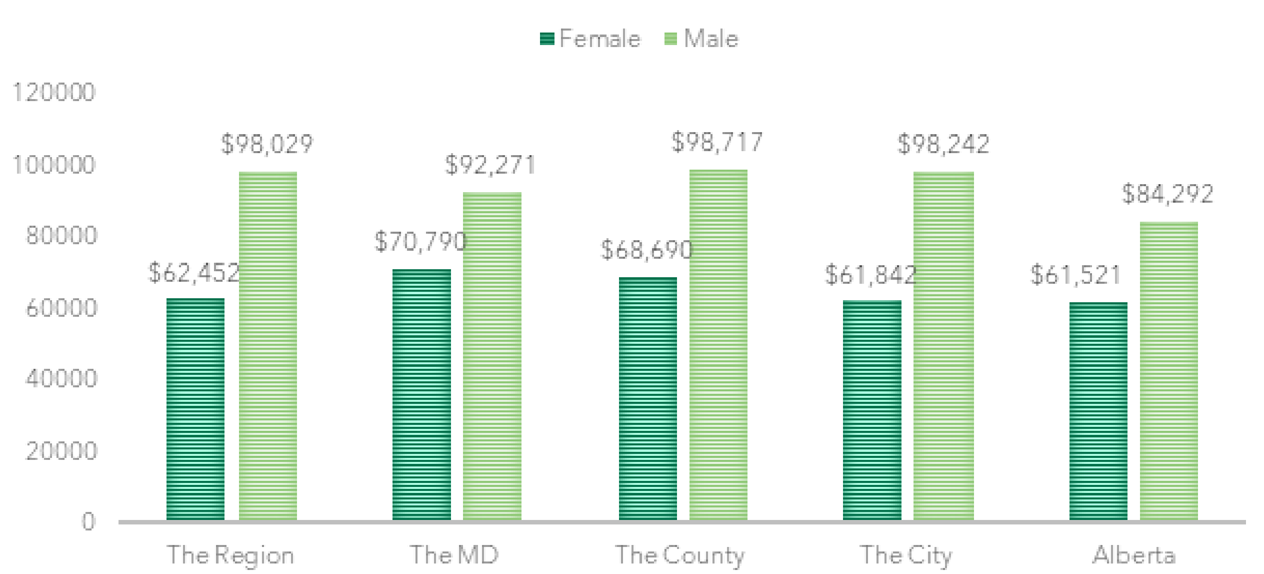
1. Support activities for mining and oil and gas extraction
2. Educational services
3. Specialty trade contractors
4. Professional, scientific and technical services
5. Food services and drinking places
6. Oil and gas extraction
7. Ambulatory health care services
8. Truck transportation
9. Farms (111 to 112)
10. Administrative and support services

Employment Income

Approximately 81% of the resident population in the Region has employment income, compared to 77% of Alberta's residents. As previously established, income levels are also higher in the Region, compared to the province. The figure below paints a picture of who the labour market benefits the most, not only in the Region but in general. Males are more likely to work full-time/full-year jobs and have higher median employment income levels.

In the Region, the median employment income for all work activity *(full-time and part-time combined)* represents more than double for men than for women *($38,003 for women, compared to $81,599 for men),* which is a larger wage gap than what is seen in the province, where men's median employment income is only 64% higher than for women.

Median Employment Income for Full-Year Full-Time Workers ($) - 2020



Source: Manifold SuperDemographics 2020 (based on 2019 incomes)

This labour force data highlights the reality that females (and particularly young female adults) are significantly more likely to be unemployed and underutilized in the labour force. Moreover, a recent report by Rupertland Institute (2019) highlights the fact that there continues to a significant employment gap between Métis/Indigenous populations and non-Indigenous populations *(employment gap of 7.2/9.1 percentage points)* in Northwest Alberta[7]. The report also highlights the fact that there is an overrepresentation of Métis/Indigenous workers found in the lowest occupational skill level, which reflects the need for Indigenous-specific programming for skills upgrading.

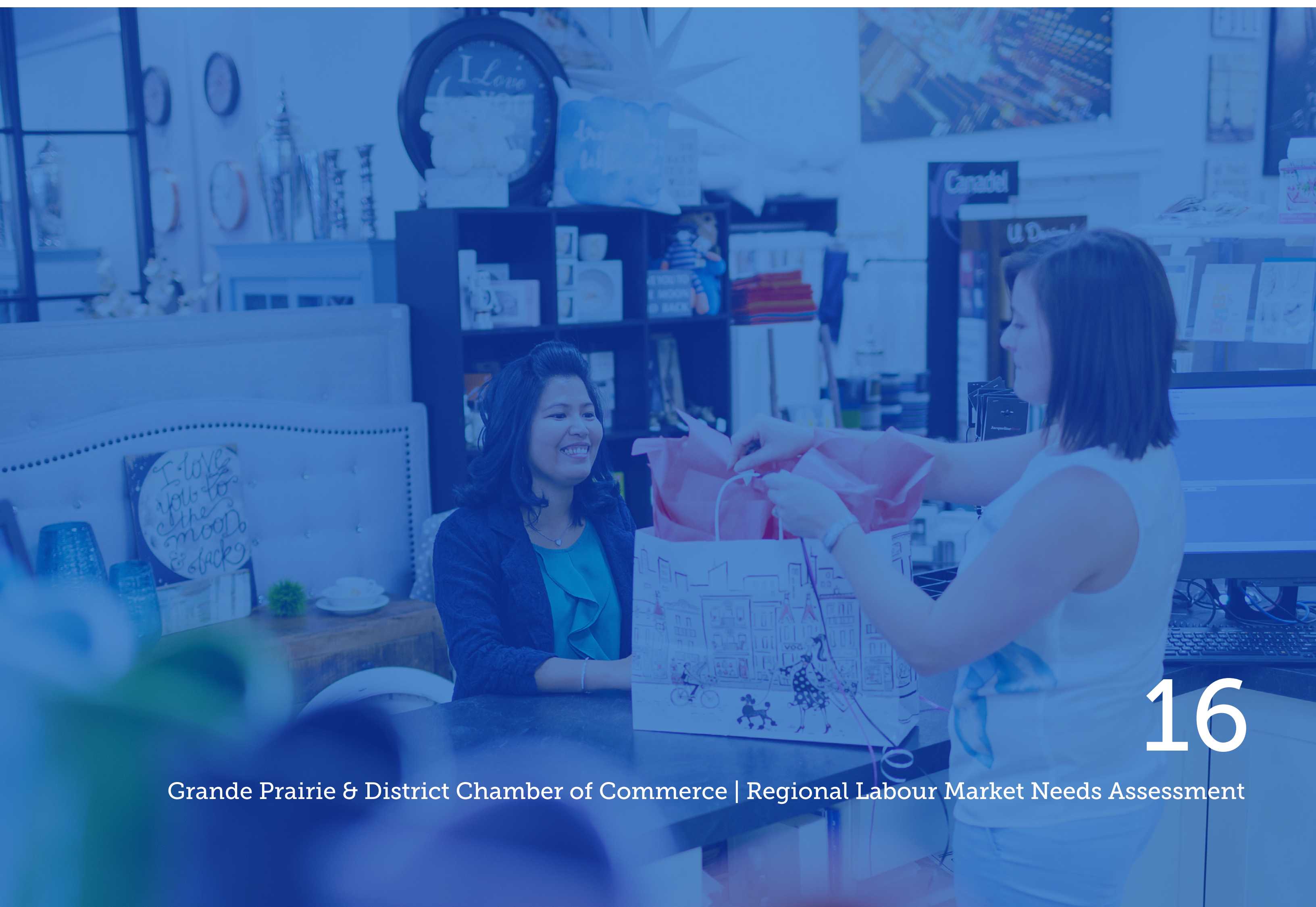
7 Big River Analytics LTD. 2019 Labour Market Information Report. Rupertsland Institute (2019)

Labour Market Gaps & Surpluses

Labour market gaps/surpluses provide a measure of how well labour supply meets local demand. The total number of jobs in 2019 can be used as a proxy for current demand. The resident labour force that has worked over the past year can be used as a proxy for local supply. The labour market gap/surplus is defined here as the difference between the number of existing jobs *(i.e. current demand)* in the Region and the number of persons living in the Region that worked/work (*i.e. local supply)*. There are more jobs than workers in the Region, making it a net importer of labour. **The Region has a net gap of approximately 5,148 workers.**

The gaps/surpluses estimated are only an approximation since local demand could be higher than the total number of jobs *(i.e. there may be unfilled positions or jobs that have been terminated as a result of the recession caused by the pandemic).* Nevertheless, the results are useful as they indicate the direction and magnitude of local labour market imbalances.

The table on the next page illustrates labour market imbalances by occupation in the Region.



Labour Market Gaps/Surpluses by Occupation, 2019/2020

(2-digit NOC) Major Occupation Groups	Jobs in the Region	Workers in the Region	Gaps (-)/ Surpluses (+)
06 Middle management occupations in retail and wholesale trade and customer services	1,739	2,629	890
44 Care providers and educational, legal and public protection support occupations	864	1,478	614
40 Professional occupations in education services	1,376	1,828	452
30 Professional occupations in nursing	586	979	393
01-05 Specialized middle management occupations	1,017	1,324	307
12 Administrative and financial supervisors	2,709	3,015	306
00 Senior management occupations	98	398	300
84 Workers in natural resources, agriculture and related production	920	1,160	240
41 Professional occupations in law and social, community and government services	739	959	220
76 Trades helpers, construction labourers and related	910	1,102	192
14 Office support occupations	2,556	2,741	185
34 Assisting occupations in support of health services	710	877	167
65 Service representatives and other customer and personal services occupations	2,027	2,173	146
07-09 Middle management occupations in trades, transportation, production and utilities	2,483	2,620	137
15 Distribution, tracking and scheduling co-ordination	1,122	1,246	124
92 Processing, manufacturing and utilities supervisors and central control operators	1,470	1,311	-159
64 Sales representatives and salespersons - wholesale and retail trade	2,479	2,270	-209
21 Professional occupations in natural and applied sciences	1,182	957	-225
94 Processing and manufacturing machine operators and related production workers	627	354	-273
11 Professional occupations in business and finance	1,073	780	-293
66 Sales support occupations	1,931	1,585	-346
13 Finance, insurance and related business administrative occupations	1,514	1,019	-495
72 Industrial, electrical and construction trades	4,833	4,064	-769
63 Service supervisors and specialized service occupations	2,252	1,372	-880
75 Transport and heavy equipment operation and related maintenance occupations	5,147	3,924	-1,223
62 Retail sales supervisors and specialized sales occupations	2,319	953	-1,366
73 Maintenance and equipment operation trades	5,006	2,736	-2,270
82 Supervisors and technical occupations in natural resources, agriculture and related production	4,342	1,910	-2,432

Source: EMSI Analyst 2020.Q2 and Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

Labour Market Surplus by Sub-Sector, 2019/2020

The table on page 19 illustrates labour force gaps and surpluses by industry sub-sectors in the Region to speak to broad clusters needing support. The sub-sectors that currently have the largest labour surpluses are support activities for mining, oil and gas extraction; oil and gas extraction; and farms. These reflect industries that have faced production cut back, downsizing, or automation over the past year.

Labour Market Surplus by Sub-Sector, 2019/2020

(3-digit NAICS) Sub-Sectors	Jobs in the Region	Workers in the Region	Gaps (-)/ Surpluses (+)
213 Support activities for mining, oil and gas extraction	4,218	5,517	1,299
211 Oil and gas extraction	1,313	2,221	908
111 Farms (111 to 112)	1,352	1,885	533
622 Hospitals	1,158	1,573	415
221 Utilities	299	683	384
911 Federal government public administration	454	743	289
621 Ambulatory health care services	1,875	2,086	211
913 Local, municipal and regional public admin	1,309	1,440	131
212 Mining and quarrying (except oil and gas)	62	165	103
912 Provincial and territorial public administration	506	591	85
324 Petroleum and coal products manufacturing	73	156	83
322 Paper manufacturing	231	290	59
311 Food manufacturing	57	105	48
336 Transportation equipment manufacturing	194	107	-87
115 Support activities for agriculture and forestry	387	299	-88
446 Health and personal care stores	535	443	-92
562 Waste management and remediation services	329	235	-94
416 Building material and supplies wholesalers	525	426	-99
454 Non-store retailers	256	155	-101
333 Machinery manufacturing	267	163	-104
914 Aboriginal public administration	261	156	-105
713 Amusement, gambling and recreation	839	720	-119
524 Insurance carriers and related activities	621	493	-128
485 Transit and ground passenger transportation	511	360	-151
236 Construction of buildings	1,332	1,162	-170
812 Personal and laundry services	894	688	-206
415 Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories merchant wholesalers	429	187	-242
113 Forestry and logging	809	428	-381
561 Administrative and support services	2,382	1,801	-581
532 Rental and leasing services	1,342	624	-718
484 Truck transportation	2,793	2,049	-744
237 Heavy and civil engineering construction	2,433	1,586	-847
417 Machinery, equipment and supplies wholesalers	1,819	932	-887
811 Repair and maintenance	2,588	1,651	-937
721 Accommodation services	1,564	559	-1,005
722 Food services and drinking places	3,435	2,222	-1,213

Source: EMSI Analyst 2020.Q2 and Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

Employer Survey Results

An online survey was used to gather mass input from the business community across the Region. The Employer Survey was designed to identify labour force strengths, but also identify gaps and opportunities in skills, training, and workforce services. The survey was open to all businesses in City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, Town of Beaverlodge, Town of Fox Creek, Town of Valleyview, Town of Sexsmith, Town of Wembley, Village of Hythe, Grande Cache Co-ops and Enterprises, Horse Lake First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation. **The survey received a total of 152 responses from across the Region, from businesses of all employment sizes and every industry sector.**

What Employers Had to Say

- 45% of respondents experienced a decline in the level of employment over the past two years.

- Of respondents that saw their employment levels decline, 89% experienced declines related to the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The next most common factor associated with declines in employment were commodity *(energy, metal, agriculture)* prices.

- Interestingly, the recession caused by COVID-19 is also cited as a key factor for employment growth.

- Technological advancements and automation had a significantly higher association with growth in employment *(relative to decline in employment)*!

- 56% of all employers say they have, at minimum, identified training needed for staff within their business, over the past two years. Meanwhile, 75% of all employers have provided training internally, while 70% have paid/employed an external organization. This indicates that employers are invested in skills development.

- Employers indicated that they most commonly employ external organizations to provide safety training (59%) or increase the number of staff with specialized training (42%). Much less often employers use training to bring new services in-house (22%) *(diversification)* or decrease staff turnover (4%) *(improving job quality).*

What Employers Had to Say

- 40% of all employers feel that training programs that would benefit their business are not available in the Region or accessible online, and 46% of all employers said they would be willing to partner with a postsecondary institution to develop skills training programming.

- The most commonly cited training programs desired but missing/not available online include software development, social media marketing, arboriculture training, heavy-duty mechanics/equipment operator, sales, culinary, social work, and physiotherapy.

- 62% of employers experienced difficulty with employee recruitment or retention for a position over the past two years. Lack of qualified or experienced candidates were the most common reasons cited for these difficulties. Interestingly, work seen as undesirable was a significantly bigger challenge for the accommodations and food services industry than for the construction industry. This could reflect accommodation and food services in remote camps.

- The ability to attract new employees to the Region was the lowest-ranked workforce factor for the Region. On the other hand, employers rate the local workforce's communication, literacy, and numeracy skills well, with digital literacy skills falling being these skills.

- Subsidized housing and childcare services were considered the largest gaps in infrastructure/programming to support the workforce by employers.

The following word cloud illustrates what employers perceive as the most difficult to find skills/knowledge/qualifications. Although the specific skill types needed vary by industry, at the centre of what employers desire is experience.

Job Seeker and Employee Survey

Parallel to the Employer survey, a Job Seeker and Employee Survey was conducted. The Job Seeker and Employee Survey was designed to gather critical information from employees and jobseekers about their job expectations, needs, and challenges. The survey's target audience were individuals who are currently working, those who are unemployed, those who consider themselves underemployed, and those who are looking for their first job.

Like the Employer Survey, the Job Seeker and Employee Survey was open to anyone who lives and/or works in the Region. **The survey received a total of 533 responses from across the Region, with residents from all age groups and employment statuses responding.**

What Jobseeker and Employees Say

- 40% of respondents had a change in their employment status in the last 12 months due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

- Respondents with only high school or less education are significantly more likely to be looking for work, work part-time, or are unemployed.

- Journeypersons had significantly higher layoff rates over the last 12 months not related to COVID-19, compared to persons completing a bachelor's degree, college, or high school diploma only. This reflects the economic downturn in the oil extraction industries in 2019.

- Approximately 20% of respondents are looking for work, and 16% have changed their employment status over the past year in search of a new career or job opportunity.

- Reasons to stay in a job vary depending on the age group. Benefits packages matter most for persons ages 40 to 64; career growth opportunities matter most for persons ages 25 to 39; fair pay matters most for persons 65 and older; and a good manager/supportive boss, and a great work environment and work culture matter most for persons ages 15 to 24.

- As a whole, respondents identified a supportive manager/good boss, fair pay, and career growth, learning and development opportunities as the top 3 reasons to stay at a job, which reflects a need for quality jobs, where people are supported/respected, paid fairly, and given an opportunity to grow.

What Jobseeker and Employees Say

- Nearly 25% of respondents feel that their job or current skills set could be automated; however, nearly 85% of all respondents would like to gain new skills or re-train, which clearly illustrates why education needs to be accessible and affordable.

- Over 60% of respondents described their preference for gaining new skills to include a work-based component, while 27% would prefer to re-train/up-skill completely online, and only 9% prefer a classroom setting only.

- 83% of respondents have never had career counselling or met with a professional to talk about finding a job (e.g. accessed career services). Paradoxically, residents from the City of Grande Prairie and the County of Grande Prairie agree that getting information about careers/skills in demand is the most needed employment service, which reflects the need to better promote counselling services, increase personalized counselling for youth, and create awareness of local industries and future careers.

- On the other hand, access to technology was identified as the most needed service for residents in the MD of Greenview, which speaks to existing gaps in access to the internet and computers.

- Barriers to gaining and keeping meaningful employment vary between communities; however, access to good-paying jobs and available relevant postings in their field rank highest for the residents of all municipalities. After these, the City of Grande Prairie residents see skills training available and transportation as the next most important barriers; the MD of Greenview residents find internet connectivity and access to childcare as their biggest barriers, and the County of Grande Prairie residents see transportation and housing options as their biggest barriers.

- When asked what program(s) and/or course(s) respondents would like to see delivered locally or made available online, respondents asked for increased variety in the types of education *(i.e. web-\ based, work-based, graduate-level courses, and micro-credentials)* and an increase in accessibility *(affordable courses, Indigenous-led and specific, and flexible times)*. Course content answers could be grouped into 10 general categories:

1. **Computer skills:** basic skills, information systems, programming, and GIS.
2. **Health-related:** occupational therapy, psychology, physiotherapy, lab techs, mental health/counselling, and ALS therapy.
3. **Trades:** instrumentation, mechanics, carpentry, heavy equipment operator, electrician and plumber.
4. **Safety:** H2S, First Aid, WHIMIS, Food safety, Emergency Medical Technician (both primary and advanced), and NFPA 1001 Training.
5. **Advertising:** social media marketing, web design, and graphic design.
6. **Energy:** power engineering, renewables energy asset maintenance and installation, and energy efficiency.
7. **Agriculture and Forestry:** botany, horticulture, apologists, and veterinary.
8. **Management:** leadership, diversity training, and virtual supervision/management.
9. **Communications:** English, ESL, and technical writing (proposal and grant writing).
10. **Finance and Accounting:** bookkeeping, investments, budgets, money management.

Next Steps

The Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce Labour Market Needs Assessment quantifies the Region's current labour market and gaps in skills, training and workforce development. The study is a critical and necessary tool to better understand the Region's labour market, and the issues and opportunities that the Region and local communities face today and in the near future. It provides project partners, the community, and a range of stakeholders with reliable, useful, accurate, and up-to-date labour market intelligence to support evidence-based decision-making. Detailed data and analysis about the current and future state of the labour market in the Region is critical to understanding how to best plan for and develop a labour force that is healthy, balanced, and equipped to adapt and take advantage of emerging opportunities to support sustainable economic growth. The participation of several local stakeholders in this study was invaluable and will be vital to the success of the next steps in this project.

Planning is underway to develop a Regional Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan. The resulting Plan will better position the Region (City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, and surrounding communities) to ensure the long-term growth of local businesses and target sectors. It will assess and provide guidance, direction, and strategic actions related to labour gaps, training needs and workforce development to strengthen the Region's target sectors/clusters.

The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

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