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Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark Fall 2020 Newsletter



Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we live is the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnabek peoples.

This acknowledgement is a way of showing respect for the guardians of these lands and to honour our shared history and the relationship built on peace and friendship that exists between all peoples. We further recognize and commit to breathe life into the Indigenous "Seven Sacred Teachings" of Bravery, Respect, Honesty, Wisdom, Truth, Humility and Love.

Learn more about Indigenous culture and history through the free online University of Alberta Indigenous Canada course [here](#).



Good News For Vulnerable Communities

As a Workforce Development Board, we have learned through our engagement with employers that diverse workforces and employees have unique challenges and needs when it comes to the employment market.

As a result, we would like to highlight some of the work that upper levels of government and community organizations have been doing to support accessibility and inclusivity within the employment and business sectors.

1. In early September 2020, the Government of Canada announced new programs to assist Black entrepreneurs and business owners through the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. This announcement included up to \$221 million in partnership with Canadian financial institutions – including up to \$93 million from the Government of Canada over the next four years – to launch Canada's first-ever Black Entrepreneurship Program. Learn more about the program [here](#).
2. The province's COVID-19 fall preparedness plan, *Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19*, was announced publicly in late September 2020 with the goal to increase capacity in the health care system and address the workforce development deficiencies that have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Totalling more than \$28 billion dollars, this financial investment is a significant investment in Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and nurses across the province:
 - \$18 million for Ontario's Nursing Graduate Guarantee program, which provides full-time salary and benefits for over 600 new nursing graduates;
 - Up to \$8 million to add over 800 nurses to the health system in areas of need across the province; and
 - \$10.3 million into the new Personal Support Worker Return of Service Program, to recruit and retain 2,000 recently graduated personal support workers (PSW) to work in long-term care facilities and in the home and community care sectors.

Learn more about the new funding initiatives [here](#).

3. The Government of Ontario is also supporting personal support workers (PSWs) and direct support workers in the home and community care, long-term care, public hospitals, and social services sectors by investing \$461 million to temporarily enhance wages. Learn more about this announcement [here](#).



About Us

The Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark (LMG) represents one of 26 workforce planning areas in the Province of Ontario. Funded by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the group works to provide accurate and timely labour market information to employers, job seekers and organizations that use labour market data for strategic planning purposes. The group also provides annual labour market reports that outline trends in the local labour force using statistical data from several sources, as well as intelligence gathered from local employers and employment agencies.

Our Purpose: Help to build a skilled workforce in Renfrew and Lanark Counties that contributes to a prosperous Ontario.

Our Mission: To work collaboratively with community partners on the creation of innovative labour market solutions that meet local workforce development needs.

To obtain information about our past work on local labour market trends, please visit our website at www.renfrewlanark.com or send us an email with your questions, comments, concerns, requests and ideas.

How Did You Enjoy our Fall 2020 Newsletter?

Please click on the smiley face photo below to access the short one-question survey. It'll take less than one minute to complete and help us to develop more helpful and informative bulletins in the future.



Very Unsatisfied



Unsatisfied



Neutral



Satisfied



Very Satisfied

Meet The Team



Hellen Lavric, Project Assistant

Hellen Lavric is a Human Services Specialist with a focus in Research, Program Design, and Facilitation. With over 20 years of service delivery experience, Hellen has become an expert in relationship and community building, career development, and service delivery. Spending her early years developing employee training curriculum for the City of Etobicoke, Hellen progressed through leadership positions in recruitment and training, and developed skills in delivering large scale programs and events.

A gifted and dynamic presenter, Hellen brings a wealth of knowledge and clarity to employers and job seekers alike. Her work with the Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark includes the development and delivery of in-demand manufacturing, healthcare, and skilled trades research projects, receiving continued funding due to demonstrated competence in project outcomes and capacity building. She embodies the values and skills associated with inclusion, advocacy, coaching, and the development of healthy



Oliver Jacob, Project Assistant

Oliver Jacob takes immense pride in serving his community. Since December 2018, Oliver has served as one of the youngest municipal councillors in the history of the Township of McNab/Braeside.

As a young community leader and advocate for youth involvement in politics, Oliver brings proven leadership experience through both professional and volunteer roles including the Chair of the Acadia University Students' Union, a Youth Facilitator with the Ontario Ministry of Education and the inaugural Co-Chair of the Renfrew County Youth Network. Responsible, dedicated and hard-working, Oliver also brings a wealth of knowledge about governance and leadership as a result of employment with the Town of Arnprior and as a former member of the Town of Wolfville's Planning Advisory Committee. He also currently serves as a Board Director at Arnprior Regional Health and he serves on the local board of the United Way East Ontario - Renfrew County branch.

professional relationships. Her vast experience in research, engagement, and training design allows her to critically analyze economic and social trends in the labour force and facilitate critical solutions to labour market problems.

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Telephone: (613) 401-1274

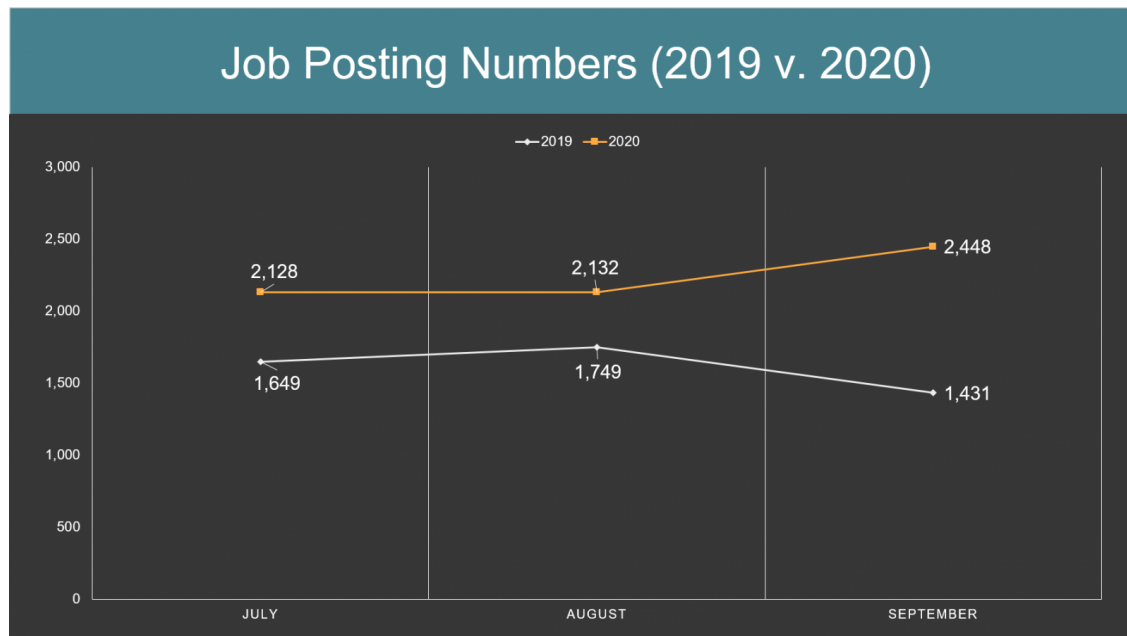
Most recently, Oliver was also selected to participate as a Rural Change Maker under a pilot project of the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) focusing on community development and citizen engagement in his community.

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Labour Market Information Update

To view the job posting data for the second quarter (July to September 2020), click [here](#) or on the image below. The link will open to a Google Drive folder.



Resilience in Unprecedented Times

Over the past several months, we've been hearing your stories of partnership, caring and perseverance. In this edition, we wanted to highlight some great stories about resilience among job seekers. We acknowledge that it can be tough during 'normal' operations, but these stories of Mason, Carole and Jeff highlight workers who managed to stay motivated during these trying times.



Twenty-one year old, Mason was interested in pursuing a carpentry career, but as many of us know, finding work during COVID 19 shutdowns was difficult at best. Once the employment offices were able to offer online support for job seekers, Mason connected with the Community Employment offices in Pembroke to continue his search for an apprenticeship opportunity. As many youth struggle with various barriers; transportation, limited education and experience, trying to find any work during a global shutdown seems impossible. In Mason's case, he also has a child to provide for so tapping into CERB or remaining unemployed was not an option. Mason took an interim job but continued accessing employment services to find a carpentry opportunity. After two months of job development, training and support, the right fit was found. A local employer met Mason, saw his potential, and wanted to help him gain carpentry skills and experience. Mason was successful in reaching his employment goal. We salute Mason for his perseverance!

"During the Covid-19, I was forced to refocus my job search efforts, and this resulted in re-training in a new line of work. My initial choice was to be in a classroom setting but due to the pandemic, courses were moved to an online platform. With the support of Andrea and Julie, from ontrac Employment Resource Services, I was able to get the guidance and support needed to move forward in my new chosen career path. I am looking forward to continue with my studies and transition to my new career even in these uncertain times." - Carole

"Starting over in a new career was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made and in the Covid pandemic it all seemed that much worse. With 25 years working in the Aerospace industry, I was very secure in my job but knew it wasn't where I needed to be. With the determination of change on my mind, I felt confident. I decided to pursue a career in construction. This has long been a passion of mine as I enjoy building and creating. A little confused where to start, I called ontrac Employment Services. They happily helped me with a resume and gave me the tools to search for jobs. Three weeks later, I was connected with an employer who took a chance on me working in the construction trades! It was that easy! I know this seems too good to be true but that's how it happened. Now in my new job we do all aspects of the building and I have quickly realized that all construction jobs are not ideally what I want to do; however, this is the start of a new career and it will give me the experience I need to grow so I can narrow down my field of expertise. Thank you ontrac!" - Jeff

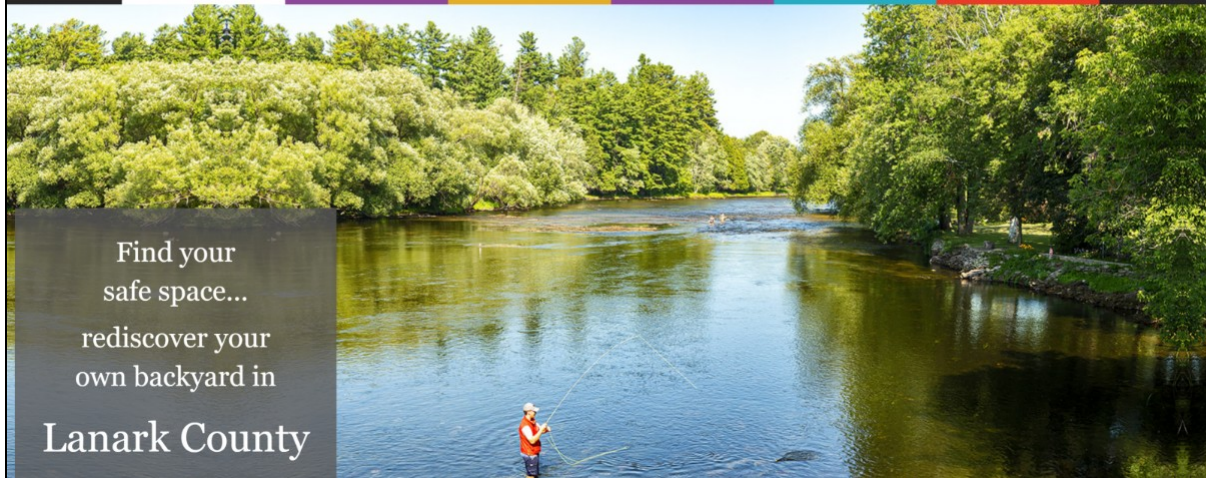
Shop Local and Explore Your Own Backyard

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of supporting local businesses, where possible, and continuing to explore our own communities. Travel restrictions and safety concerns have prevented Ontarians from their typical vacations around the province and across the world. However, both Lanark County and Renfrew County have launched new programs and advertising campaigns to support local industries in the path towards recovery. This column will speak to some of the most recent announcements on local tourism and economic development across the region.

Did You Know? According to an analysis completed by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 60% of Canadian restaurants could be forced to close by November due to the public health restrictions that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. With restrictions on operating capacity inside the restaurant and on outside patios, restaurants have seen their typical profit margins disintegrate. With the start of cooler weather, it is more important than ever to support our local restaurants and food service providers through ordering take-out, purchasing gift cards and encouraging family and friends to do so. #ShopLocal. Learn more on the Our Restaurants campaign website at <https://www.ourrestaurants.ca/>.

With **over 95% of local businesses having less than 20 employees**, we can all support the small and medium sized businesses that make our local economies run smoothly. As our largest employers, their contributions to the local economy are enormous and it is important to continue to support them where we can. The following nine (9) tips are provided to give a sense of how you can contribute locally.

1. We know that many restaurants are offering delivery and pickup, but be sure to connect with other retailers for delivery and pick up options. Also consider purchasing gift cards from salons, stores, spas for use once it is safe to do so.
2. Like, share and follow your favourite small businesses on social media.
3. Support online services like counsellors, tutors, yoga instructors, or music teachers.
4. Tip service workers extra.
5. If you can, continue paying your memberships and subscriptions, even if they've been temporarily suspended.
6. If you've prepaid for cancelled services, consider donating those funds instead of asking for a refund.
7. If you are a website designer, developer, or a social media expert, perhaps you could provide a local business with some help so they can create an online presence and market their products/services online.
8. Spread the word about innovative small business ideas on social media. One of our favourites is "Bubbles and Bites" from Artizen in Perth where local businesses partnered to create yummy and fun combos! Check it out [here](#).
9. If you have a steady income and can spare a few dollars, simply donate to your favourite small business.

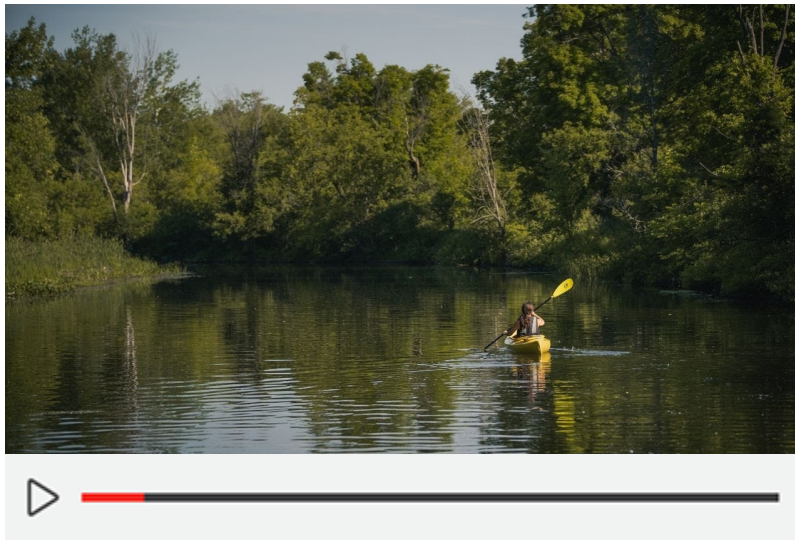


Earlier this summer, Lanark County Tourism launched an innovative hyper-local tourism campaign promoting Lanark County as a place to “Explore your Own Backyard.” The campaign targets residents of Lanark County and encourages locals to re-discover places and experiences close to home. Given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on inter-provincial and international travel, the campaign provides local residents and visitors with new audio clips and videos to share the cultural and historical significance of each community. Local experiences include outdoor offerings such as llama walks, cider tastings, haunted walks, equine yoga and more.

The tourism campaign is launched in partnership with municipal partners of Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond/North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth, Smiths Falls, Tay Valley and will also support promotions by tourism partners at Destination Ontario and Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization.

Lanark County’s campaign, launched on July 1, 2020, leverages marketing momentum initiated by the Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization’s Love Letter campaign, posting a video inviting residents to share what they love about Lanark County on Instagram using the hashtag #LanarkLoveLetter. Social media amplification will continue to support the local economy in Lanark County by highlighting businesses that are open and operating through editorial, while also providing ideas for local excursions and information needed, such as public restroom locations and availability.

Enhancements to the tourism website include fresh content and imagery that builds on the “Explore Your Own Backyard” theme by highlighting local travel. The homepage also features a new, locally designed, interactive county map image which links to community profile pages that share “Things to Do” to make a memory in each municipality.

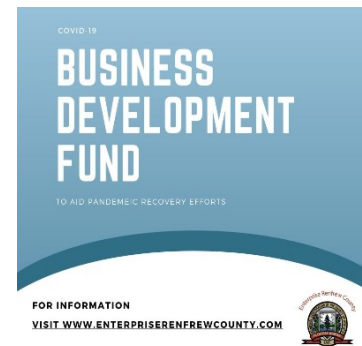


Renfrew County



Earlier this summer, the [County of Renfrew](#) and the [Ottawa Valley Tourism Association \(OVTA\)](#) launched the "Shop the Valley Contest", a local economic development campaign intended to encourage residents to shop local and support the local business community during one of the most challenging crises of our age. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced local businesses to adapt to the changing needs of the community. With outdoor dining, in-store customer limits and new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs for employees, Renfrew County residents have continued to support their favourite local small and medium-sized businesses. Learn more about the Shop The Valley Contest at <https://investrenfrewcounty.com/>.

In June 2020, the [County of Renfrew](#) and the [City of Pembroke](#) partnered with [Enterprise Renfrew County \(ERC\)](#) to launch the COVID-19 Business Development Fund that will provide aid to local businesses amid the recovery. The COVID-19 Business Development Fund will assist businesses that have been forced to pivot their business, and help them find new technologies, methodologies, or procedures that would assist them with adjusting to a new model of serving their customers. The fund will provide a grant of up to \$5,000 per business and will focus on transformation strategies including E-business solutions, marketing and customer engagement, service delivery improvements, and other creative solutions/ideas for expansion and sustainability. Learn more at www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com.



Ninety-four (94) businesses from all sectors and from across the County of Renfrew and the City of Pembroke are being awarded funding of up to \$5,000 each. The funding will enable the recipients to adapt to the on-going challenges of COVID-19 to make their business more sustainable and profitable in challenging local and global markets, and to be able to effectively weather future health, economic and competitive business challenges by adopting and creating best practices. With \$200,000 from the County of Renfrew and \$50,000 from the City of Pembroke contributed to the Business Development Fund, ERC will be able to distribute a quarter of a million dollars to businesses across their service area. Read the County's media release [here](#).

The [Ottawa Valley Tourism Association \(OVTA\)](#) has also launched a new marketing video in coordination with the Ontario's Highlands Tourism Association to highlight the unique natural and cultural attractions that Renfrew County has to offer. Watch the video and share on social media to spread the message that Renfrew County is an exceptional place to live with nature at your doorstep and urban amenities close at hand. We offer the perfect balance between work and play for residents and visitors alike.



Q2 Highlights

COVID-19 Testing Delays in Rural Communities

As we enter the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the key concerns that has been identified in our local communities is the backlog in COVID-19 test processing in provincial laboratories and the long delays in receiving test results. On September 22nd, 2020, Renfrew County Warden Debbie Robinson wrote to Minister John Yakabuski to request the provincial government's immediate assistance to improve service delivery in this area. Her letter can be found [here](#).

In response to increasing community needs, the Government of Ontario announced the COVID-19 Fall Preparedness Plan, which included \$1.376 billion to enhance and expand efforts to test, trace and isolate new cases of COVID-19. As part of this funding, \$1.07 billion will be used to expand laboratory capacity, reduce testing backlogs, support existing assessment centres, and add more testing locations and capacity. The provincial government is also actively working with Ontario Health, local public health units and hospitals to expand testing locations based on local needs, while offering more convenient and less invasive testing options and increasing testing capacity. Up to 80 pharmacies in Ontario are currently offering free COVID-19 testing by appointment only. The province has also added over 1,700 staff to assist with case and contact management. Learn more about the province's announcement [here](#).



Minimum Wage Increase

Minimum wage rates in Ontario increased on October 1, 2020. Under the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act*, this increase is tied to the Ontario Consumer Price Index for 2020. The increase to the general minimum wage is 25 cents, which brings the new rate to **\$14.25** an hour. The general and specialized minimum wage rates that also take effect on October 1, 2020 are detailed in the chart below. To learn more about the minimum wage, visit the Ontario government website [here](#).

	Rates from January 1, 2018 to September 30, 2020	Rates from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021
General minimum wage	\$14.00 per hour	\$14.25 per hour
Student minimum wage	\$13.15 per hour	\$13.40 per hour
Liquor servers minimum wage	\$12.20 per hour	\$12.45 per hour
Hunting and fishing guides minimum wage	\$70.00 - Rate for working less than five consecutive hours in a day	\$71.30 - Rate for working less than five consecutive hours in a day
	\$140.00 - Rate for working five or more hours in a day whether or not the hours are consecutive	\$142.60 - Rate for working five or more hours in a day whether or not the hours are consecutive
Homeworkers wage	\$15.40 per hour	\$15.70 per hour
Wilderness guides minimum wage	\$70.00 - Rate for working less than five consecutive hours in a day	\$71.30 - Rate for working less than five consecutive hours in a day
	\$140.00 - Rate for working five or more hours in a day whether or not the hours are consecutive	\$142.60 - Rate for working five or more hours in a day whether or not the hours are consecutive



Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Update

The Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA) has put together a promotional video outlining the successes that they have seen through literacy and basic skills education partnerships with school boards.





Work Matters Project

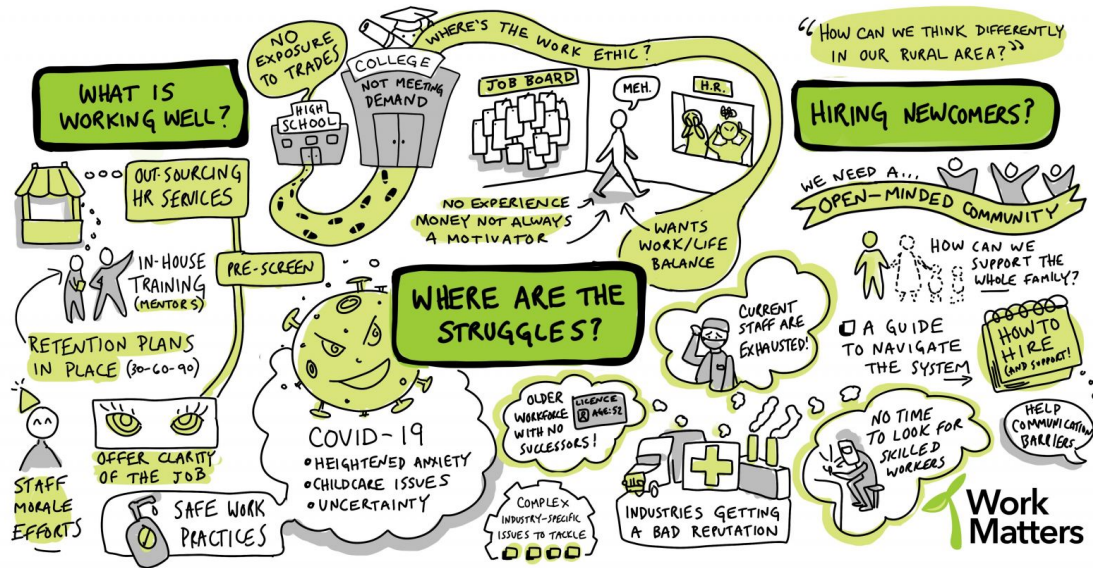
Work Matters is an Employment Ontario funded project designed to bring together employers and community partners to develop and improve Human Resources and recruitment practices in Lanark and Renfrew Counties.



Work Matters is thrilled to announce the conclusion of our roundtable discussions. With over 50 participants, we had a lot of great discussion and were able to really work through the challenges and identify some of the best practices in Health Care, Transportation and Manufacturing in Lanark and Renfrew Counties. This will directly impact the development of the Work Matters Toolkit, which will be launched at the first Future of Work Summit to be held the last week of November. Stay tuned for more information on the Summit by visiting www.work-matters.ca.

ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

AN INSIGHT INTO THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES: HEALTH CARE, TRANSPORTATION AND MANUFACTURING



Coming Soon

**An Exceptional Local
Professional Development
Opportunity**



Monday, October 26, 2020 | Register today

In response to Renfrew County's growing need for local, affordable, and quality professional development opportunities, Algonquin College, Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation, and RBC Royal Bank are partnering to present this conference opportunity again this year Monday, October 26, 2020. Our conference will be 100% virtual and feature an all-female facilitator line-up. The Conference includes:

- 3 keynote addresses
- Your choice of 3 workshops from 4 topics
- \$25 gift card to purchase a special lunch for the day of the virtual conference
- Networking opportunities

Early bird registration rate is on until October 9th. Learn more and register at <https://www.algonquincollege.com/pembroke/business-conference/>.

[Click Here for More Information](#)



**Training on Digital Skills for Entrepreneurs, Small Business and
Career-Minded Individuals**

In partnership with the Canada Learning Code, Algonquin College - Perth Campus and the local Community Employment Services team will be hosting a series of webinar training sessions on enhancing digital business literacy skills over the month of October 2020. These free webinars are available to Lanark County residents and range from using Google tools, branding and social media.

Join **Week A** topics (October 19 to 22):

- October 19th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Getting Started with your Google Account
- October 20th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Using Google Applications to Connect and Collaborate
- October 21st, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Using Google Sheets to Manage a Budget
- October 22nd, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Digital Tools for Branding

Join **Week B** topics (October 26 to 30):

- October 26th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Introduction to Social Media
- October 26th, 2020 between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM - Social Media Best Practices
- October 27th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Promoting Your Business
- October 28th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - WordPress Basics
- October 28th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Build and Customize your WordPress Site
- October 29th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - What is E-Commerce?
- October 30th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM - Using Google Slides to Pitch your Idea

[Click Here for More Information](#)

Employer One Survey Launches in Early 2021

The Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark is engaging with local employers through the **Employer One Survey** initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. The survey provides an important opportunity to gather comprehensive and detailed workforce data from every range of industry within Renfrew and Lanark Counties. The survey serves as a vehicle for the employer community to express their needs on a range of HR issues, such as labour turnover, hard to fill positions, recruitment difficulties, current and future skills shortages, as well as issues in training and education practices.

The 2020-2021 Employer One survey will look a little different than previous years. We have joined a collaborative effort with the other Workforce Development Boards in Eastern Ontario to launch a common survey. As a result, there will be a question at the beginning of the survey to identify which community you reside in. There are also a few new questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the local workforce.

The survey itself will launch on January 2nd, 2021 and close on February 26th, 2021. More information on how to access the survey will be made available shortly.



Save The Date: Labour Market Summit (October-November 2020)

Each year, the Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark hosts a Service Coordination Day(s) that bring our service providers and stakeholders together to learn about their common challenges and realities. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to operate our programming through virtual delivery. Additionally, our 2020 focus will be on how we can better support inclusivity in our labour market and workforce. The webinar series will be comprised of three (2) two-hour virtual events spread over a few weeks to delve into diversity in our communities. The first webinar will focus on developing a baseline of cultural competency. The second webinar will be a panel discussion with stakeholders and persons with lived experience, followed by a Q&A period and individual discussion groups. The third and final webinar will take the learnings from the first two webinars to start on action planning with regard to our own organizations and workforces.

1. **Webinar No. One: Primer on Building Cultural Competency** (Tuesday, October 27th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM)
2. **Webinar No. Two: Panel Discussion on Inclusivity and Attracting Newcomers** (Wednesday, November 4th, 2020 between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM)

3. **Webinar No. Three: Action Planning for a More Inclusive Workforce** (Thursday, November 12th, 2020 - time 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM)

Keep an eye out for more information in the near future regarding this service coordination event.



COVID-19 Tips and Tricks

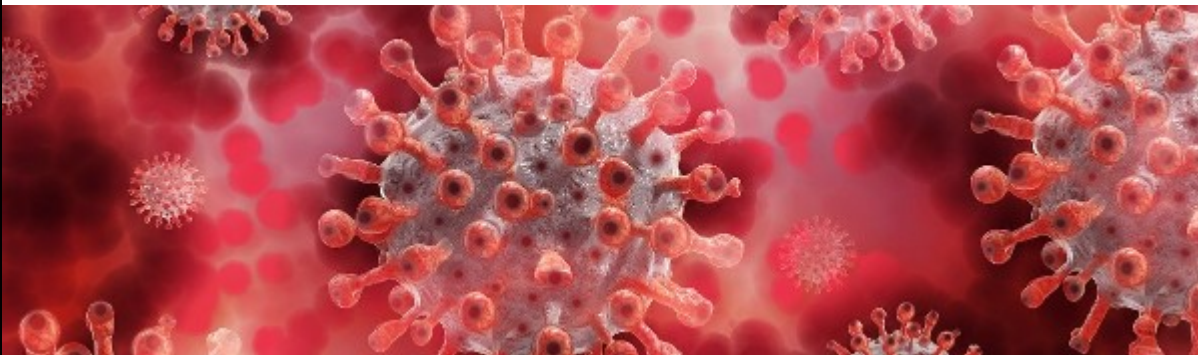
The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted Ontario's economy, employers and workers since the State of Emergency was first proclaimed on March 13th, 2020 by Premier Doug Ford under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9* as amended. However, Canadians have adapted to changing economic and social environments, as necessary, across the nation.

As we know, communities across Ontario have declared the arrival of the Second Wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we brace for the impacts of the second wave, it is important that we continue to follow the public health advice of health care professionals, including our local Medical Officers of Health Dr. Robert Cushman (RCDHU) and Dr. Paula Stewart (LGLDHU).

1. **Stay home** – save lives and don't put others at risk.
2. **Practise physical distancing** – stay at least two metres (six feet) away from others outside of your household.
3. **Wash your hands** with soap and water thoroughly and often. Use hand sanitizer when handwashing is not possible.
4. **Learn about face coverings** – how to use, clean and dispose.
5. **Get the facts about COVID-19** – basics, symptoms and treatment.

To learn more about COVID-19 in your local communities, please visit the website of your respective Public Health Unit.

- [Renfrew County and District Health Unit \(RCDHU\)](#)
- [Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit \(LGLDHU\)](#)



Working From Home

As the Canadian economy ground to a halt in mid-March, many businesses were forced to adapt to new ways of transacting business with their clients. One primary change that occurred was that employees began to work from home in large numbers. For the employee, working from home can be a welcome

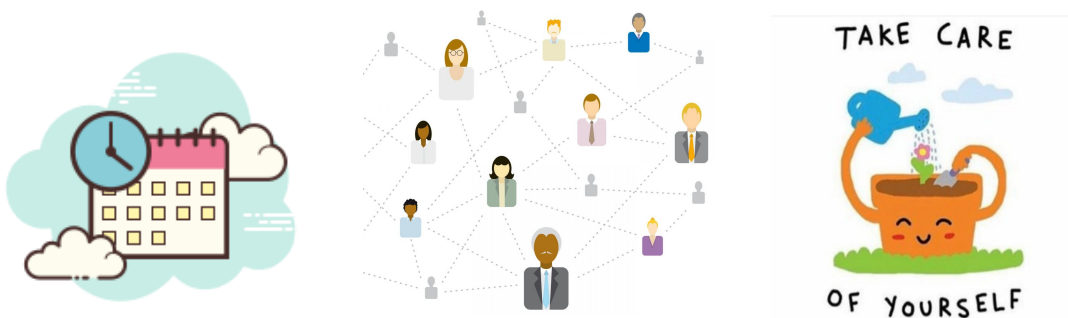
break from commuting time and an opportunity to spend more time with family, rather than in their car. However, it is also important to consider that their home has now become their workplace. From an Employment Standards perspective, the existing requirements to ensure the health and safety of the workplace and to support accommodations for employees continue to apply.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has produced a helpful fact sheet on tele-working or working from home that is accessible on their website [here](#). They explain that employers should consider what agreements exist with their remote employees. Answering the following questions about these arrangements may be helpful to determine health and safety implications for the employer.

1. Will the employer or the health and safety committee have access to the house for safety inspections? Or, will alternative arrangements be made such as the worker using checklists or submitting photos of the work area?
2. What parts of the house will be considered the 'workplace'? Is the bathroom and/or kitchen included?
3. That teleworkers must immediately report any incident or injury to their supervisor (just as they would at the office).
4. How will incidents be investigated?

One important aspect of the working from home environment is that there needs to be adequate policies and procedures in place to provide guidance to employees. These policies may speak to hours of operation, technology requirements, office supplies, etc. These policies could also outline:

1. Who buys and maintains the equipment such as the desk, chair, computer (including software and updates), fax, general office supplies, etc.
2. If remote access to company's main computer systems are available outside of the office or not. If possible, how and what type of software or equipment is necessary.
3. What expenses will be reimbursed (dedicated telephone lines, Internet access, business telephone calls, office supplies)?
4. What hours the employee will be available?
5. How will overtime be approved?
6. When and how often the employee will check for messages?
7. Will the primary contact method be by telephone or e-mail?
8. What number to call to reach employee at home. Is there an alternative number?
9. Who will have access to home-office phone number?
10. Listing of work assignments, due dates, work expectations, etc.



On the employee side, you should consider your needs to ensure that you are maintaining positive physical mental and mental health in your professional and personal lives. The following tips from the [Government of Canada](#) can help you to do so. Also check out [this helpful checklist](#) from the Workplace Safety and Prevention Services on setting up your home office.

1. Set a schedule: We are creatures of habit. Routine helps us physically and mentally prepare for our day. When working from home:
 - **Get ready for work.** Shower. Get dressed. Eat breakfast. Keep the same routine as when heading into the office. However, without commute time, there may be an opportunity to sleep longer.
 - **“Commute” to work.** If possible, have a dedicated workspace that minimizes distractions and helps reduce the blurring of lines between your work and home life.
 - **Schedule your time.** Set regular working hours, including breaks and self-care practices between different tasks. Check-in regularly with your manager and colleagues.
 - **Respect your limits.** Resist the temptation to keep working beyond your established work hours. Know, respect and share your limits with those around you to avoid burnout
2. Stay connected: Physically distancing ourselves can make us feel disconnected. To help maintain social connection:

- **Call / text a “work buddy.”** Pair up with a peer to whom you can relate, sharing successes and challenges.
- **Take a virtual coffee break.** Skype, FaceTime, etc., hearing friendly voices and maintaining social connection.
- **“Meet” by the water cooler.** Set up a channel on a social networks for impromptu, informal workplace conversations.
- **Help colleagues with disabilities.** Offer assistance such as taking notes during virtual meetings or writing a descriptive text to relay information on images.

3. Make time for self-care: Practicing self-care isn’t selfish. It is essential to maintaining positive mental health. Back to basics works best:

- **Get sufficient sleep.** Aim for 7.5 to 9 hours of sleep. Maintain proper sleep hygiene for the rest you need.
- **Eat healthily.** Ensure proper, balanced nutrition throughout your work day. Stay hydrated.
- **Exercise regularly.** Your gym may be closed, but the outdoors are not. Get outside for a daily 20-30 minute walk.

Handling Electronic Meetings

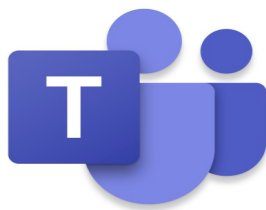
With working from home, employees and their employers have also been thrown into the electronic age of video conferencing to conduct much of their internal communications. What was accomplished by an in-person staff meeting or an individual meeting with an employee must now be completed virtually as much as possible. As a result, we have become familiar with various video conferencing platforms which offer their services to Canadians.

These tips and tricks have been adapted from the MW Shares: Municipal Pandemic Response podcast episode with communications consultant Jan Enns ([Part One](#) | [Part Two](#)) which was released in early September 2020. To view her tip sheet, visit the Municipal World website [here](#).

1. Set up your "studio" where you can have some privacy and consider placing a note on the door to alert other people that you are in a video conference call.
2. Ensure that your background is appropriate for the conference call. For instance, remove family photos and add books, art, plants, etc. to improve the background. Be careful with virtual backgrounds as they are not always successful if you are moving around during the meeting.
3. Place your camera lens at eye level so that you can maintain virtual eye contact with other participants.
4. Check the lighting in your "studio" space. Orient yourself so that light is facing you, not behind you (to prevent shadows).
5. Check the video, sound and microphone capabilities of your device before the meeting. Launch a test meeting with co-workers or family members to test the connection. Alternatively, you can use your device's camera feature to record yourself and play back the recording to evaluate the quality of the audio-visuals.
6. Know your "vidiquette":
 1. Arrive early and test your technology.
 2. Simple movements can be very distracting on a video call. For instance, know where your camera is and where the mute button is. Ensure that your hand doesn't block the video while you are muting/unmuting yourself.
 3. Be attentive to what you are doing while in the meeting (eating, flossing, multi-tasking). Be cognizant of your actions as they are visible to other attendees as well. Generally, follow the same etiquette practices that you would as if the meeting were in-person.
 4. It's okay to step away. Let the meeting host/chair know and simply mute your audio and turn off your video (if necessary).
7. Remember to stay hydrated during your meeting. Drinking coffee, water, and/or juice is appropriate but be cognizant of the glass/mug that you choose (i.e. appropriate text).
8. Turn off the ringer on your phones and your computer/device notifications.
9. Be a calm and confident communicator. Sit tall and box breathe (breathe in for a count of three, hold for three, breathe out for three, hold for three and repeat three to five times).
10. Start with a smile - its contagious.

Please also remember that the video conferencing environment is new for most of your colleagues. Be kind and patient as they explore the new technology. The occasional barking dog or screaming baby should not derail an entire meeting. Chalk it up to the trials and tribulations of working from home!

Popular Video Conferencing Platforms



Google Hangouts

Coping with Stress and Anxiety

In the wake of COVID-19, Canadians are facing a new reality of physical distancing, self-quarantining and isolation in order to protect public health and safety. These new circumstances may lead individuals with mental health concerns into heightened symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Here are some tips to maintain your physical and mental health:

1. **Stay connected** – maintain your social networks with family and friends on-line and by telephone.
2. **Create a family schedule** – follow your usual routine as much as possible. If you are working from home with the kids also at home, prepare a schedule together that is similar to the structure of school and work. While you are working, children could be doing on-line learning or other quiet activities. Children can suggest things to do together for breaks. Make sure to build in outdoor play, hikes and walks during the day.
3. **Stay Active** – it's important to keep your body moving. It may be tempting to pass the day by binging on the latest Netflix release or scrolling through Facebook for hours. Try going for a walk or try out an at-home exercise workout. Many local gyms and yoga studios are moving on-line. YouTube has lots of great videos for all fitness levels. For more ideas, check out <http://www.participaction.com/> and <https://activeforlife.com/>
4. **Get outside** – get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can to boost your mood, even if it is limited to your backyard. Finish up some fall yard work or have an outdoor scavenger hunt. <http://www.mykidsadventures.com/scavenger-hunt-ideas/>
5. **Keep busy** – now is a great time to tackle those jobs around the house that you've been putting off. Declutter closets and drawers or organize family photos.
6. **Cook more** – find a new healthy recipe to try at nutritionmonth2020.ca and unlockfood.ca
7. **Keep your mind active** – catch up on podcasts, read a new book, dust off a puzzle or board game.
8. **Be creative** – start a new do-it-yourself project, paint a picture, do a craft, write a journal, listen to music, play a musical instrument, start an online course through your local library or post secondary institution.
9. **Set limits on the news** – stay informed with facts from reputable sources, but don't overdo it. If it is causing you too much anxiety or worry, take a break.
10. **Seek out help when you need to** – it's OK, to not be OK.

For local support materials, visit <https://www.rcdhu.com/healthy-living/mental-health/> and for general information on mental health, visit <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19>.

Have a routine



Structure your day and keep good habits

Take deep breaths



Breathing exercises can ease stress

Call a loved one



Lean on each other for support

Have fun



Play online with friends or start a hobby

Open windows



Sunlight can improve your mood

Help others



Get essential supplies for a neighbour

If you are in a crisis, please call 911 and emergency services personnel will assist you, in conjunction with the local hospital. Outside of a mental health crisis, your family doctor may be able to assist you to access further counselling services and/or explore medication options tailored to you. If you do not have a family doctor and your concern is not urgent, Renfrew County residents may contact the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre (RCVTAC) at 1-844-727-6404 or <https://rcvtac.ca/>. Please note that they are currently experiencing higher than normal wait times due to COVID-19 test bookings.

Update Contact Information

Over the course of the last quarter, we understand that you may have new members of your team who would benefit from receiving the quarterly bulletin directly. Please let us know by email if your organization's contact information has changed so that we can keep our mailing list up-to-date.

Email List Subscription Link



Questions

We are here to help you! Please always feel free to contact us anytime with your questions, comments, concerns and needs. You can either reach us using the contact information listed above or by emailing our general email inbox at renfrewlanark@gmail.com. Following us on social media will also be helpful in staying up-to-date on local labour market trends and developments in the field.



SEND TO A FRIEND



WEBSITE



How Did You Enjoy our Fall 2020 Newsletter?

Please click on the smiley face photo below to access the short one-question survey. It'll take less than one minute to complete and help us to develop more helpful and informative bulletins in the future.



Very Unsatisfied



Unsatisfied



Neutral



Satisfied



Very Satisfied

