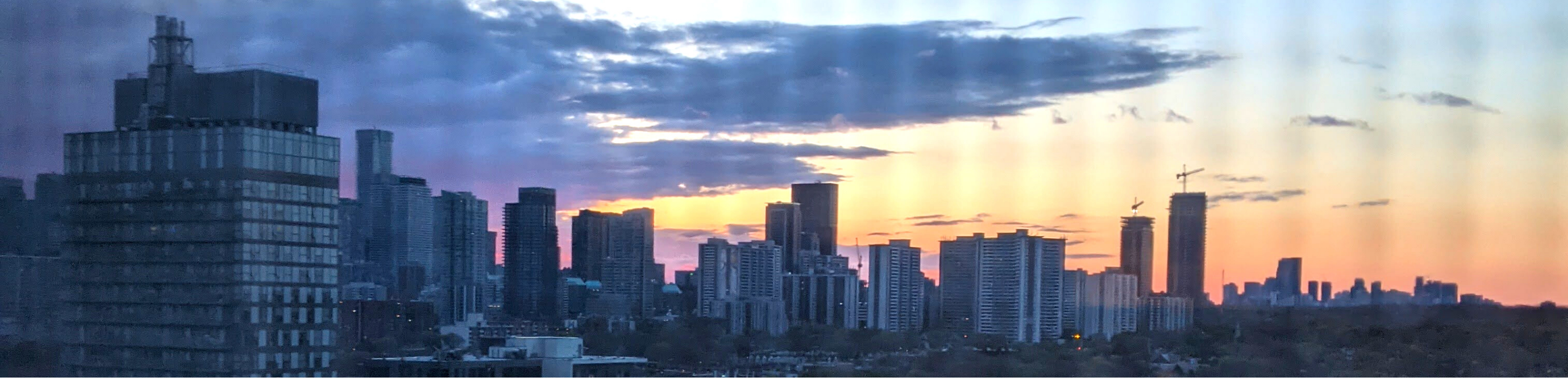
REGENT PARK
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
PLAN

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

COMMUNITY REPORT

2020
2021



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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals, agencies and grassroots initiatives.

Special thanks to SiiF for providing the funding to conduct this research. Financial support from Social Planning Toronto also helped to ensure the needs assessment was widely accessible and engage residents across the neighbourhood, in multiple languages. Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) supported in engaging residents for the research, as well. Other agencies and individuals that helped to promote the survey to ensure it got extensive responses were also vital to the success of this research. We also acknowledge the support of SEAS who offered free translation services for some of the surveys.

Thanks as well to the members of the Social Development Plan members (SDP), and the member of it's Employment and Economic Development Working Group (EED), other agencies and companies consulted (Centre for Community Learning and Development, Centre for Social Innovation, City of Toronto Employment and Social Services, Fred Victor at 40 Oak, Daniel's Corporation, Dixon Hall Employment Services, Regent Park Community Health Centre, Toronto Community Housing, Yonge Street Mission Employment Services), and finally, to all the community members who participated in the survey, focus groups and interviews, and shared their experiences and hopes for the future of employment and entrepreneurship in the neighbourhood.

About the Employment & Economic Development Working Group

The Social Development Plan (SDP) is a framework to manage change and promote community development in Regent Park. The Employment and Economic Development Working Group (EED) is a working group that sits under the SDP.

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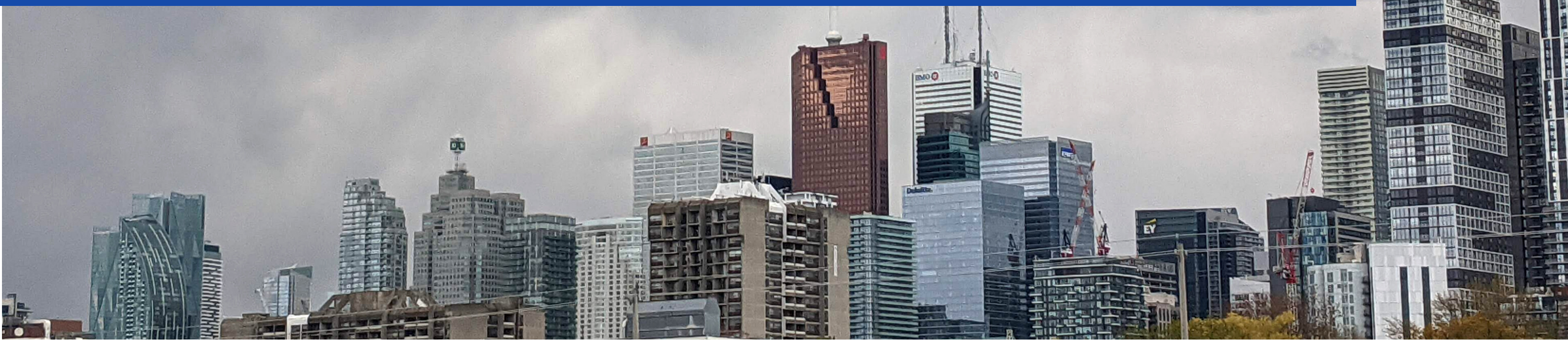
All photos in this report were taken by Ayesha Amin, except where otherwise indicated.

Executive Summary



This report aims to get a clearer understanding of the employment and entrepreneurial resources that are available to community members in Regent Park, as well as the needs that have been identified by the community.

The report is made up of three parts - a summary of labour market trends, an asset map and a needs assessment.

Labour Market Trends

The overall labour market trends in the years leading up to 2020 were strong across Toronto, Ontario and Canada. Across Canada, the rate of unemployment kept falling from 2016 to 2019, standing at 5.67% the year before the pandemic.

Across Ontario the rate of unemployment was similarly low, at 5.6% in both 2018 and 2019.

At the municipal level, across Toronto, the rate of unemployment also consistently lowered from 2015 up until the start of the pandemic, sitting at 5.4% in February 2020.

From March 2020 until the time of writing of this report (July 2021), the rate of unemployment across Canada, Ontario and Toronto have all grown, in response to pandemic-related restrictions, and resulting job losses.

Across Canada, unemployment reached historical records in May 2020, at 13.7%. Nearly 1 in 3 unemployed Canadians reported COVID-19 being the primary reason for their unemployment.

The 402,800 jobs that were lost in Ontario in the month of March 2020 due to pandemic-related restrictions, represented 40% of overall job losses across Canada. By the end of 2020, unemployment was at 9.5% in Ontario, and by April 2021, it was 11.3%.

In Toronto, the unemployment rate by the end of 2020 was 10.7% and 2021 started with high rates of unemployment as well, with 11.8% unemployment across the city in January.

It is believed that as pandemic-related restrictions ease, the rates of unemployment will reduce to near pre-pandemic rates, though it remains to be seen how quickly.

Asset Map

The asset map is made up of a repository and corresponding map that can be used by the community to keep track of the employment and entrepreneurial resources available.

The resources are categorized into four categories: employability, work experience, community employers, and entrepreneurship, which are also colour-coded in the map. The repository and map are virtual, so that they can be easily accessed as well as updated by the EED as information changes, to ensure it is up-to-date.

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment compiled responses from community members around their employment and entrepreneurial needs. It found that many residents continue to face barriers around finding employment, as well as in accessing the supports that are available to them.

62.1% of respondents have never worked in the area

79.3% of respondents want to or might want to work in the area

51.6% of respondents would like to work part-time and 38.4% would like to work full-time

The Needs Assessment compiled responses from community members around their employment and entrepreneurial needs. It found that many residents continue to face barriers around finding employment, as well as in accessing the supports that are available to them.

Suggestions were made on what residents believe would help them and others with regards to overcoming barriers and increasing employment and economic development within the neighbourhood. Some of these include more jobs, especially at management levels, a mandate to prioritize residents for jobs, a job search support group, a monument or peace garden, opportunities for larger demographics to access supports available through Employment Agencies, an audit of existing businesses and agency staff to determine how many of them employ local residents.

Entrepreneurship related suggestions include a local business hub where entrepreneurs can operate, affordable retail space, and a mentorship program.

Introduction

This report seeks to provide a current employment and entrepreneurship overview of Regent Park, to form a better understanding of what the current resources available to residents are, as well as the ongoing employment and entrepreneurial needs that remain to be addressed. The data from this report will inform the strategy of the EED moving forward with its objective to increase sustainable employment rates and entrepreneurial opportunities for residents of Regent Park.

With the view of providing a current employment and entrepreneurship overview of Regent Park, this report includes a scope of current Labour Market trends across the country, province and city, which helps to better understand how Regent Park fits into wider employment related trends.

This report also includes an Asset Map, which includes a repository of organizations and agencies, programs and services related to employment and entrepreneurship that exist in the community, which are available to residents.

The final element of this report is a Needs Assessment, which was conducted amongst residents, to better understand what gaps continue to remain for residents, seeking sustainable employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Limitations

While all efforts were made in gathering data for this report to ensure up-to-date, reputable data that was accurate and representative was used, there are some limitations that must be acknowledged.

Regent Park Demographics

Regent Park demographic data was based on the most recent Census from 2016 as there is no official data that has been reported since, as 2021 is the next year for Census data collection, so some of the statistics may not capture all the up-to-date 2021 demographic data fully.

Needs Assessment

Various methods were used to make the needs assessment as accessible and representative of the community as possible, though it is impossible to get a 100% accurate picture of the needs of every single resident. While collecting this data, ensuring it was accessible to diverse groups was a priority, and the researcher used common market research methods to calculate sample size and a variety of communications channels to distribute the needs assessment to people across the neighbourhood.

Regent Park

Regent Park was built in the late 1940s, as Canada's first and largest public housing area. Designed originally as a place that was tranquil and separate from the *hustle-bustle* of the rest of the city, it was originally developed to be totally residential, with lots of green space, mostly closed off to traffic, and no commercial or retail space or facilities. In practice, the combination of poverty, lack of amenities and therefore little reason for visitors from outside the area to come in, along with poorly/cheaply constructed buildings, led to the isolation of residents, and an increase in crime and violence, giving the neighbourhood a bad reputation, leading to stereotyping of residents from the area, throughout the rest of the city.

Photo by: Kevin Van Paassen/TheGlobeandMail, March 22, 2005

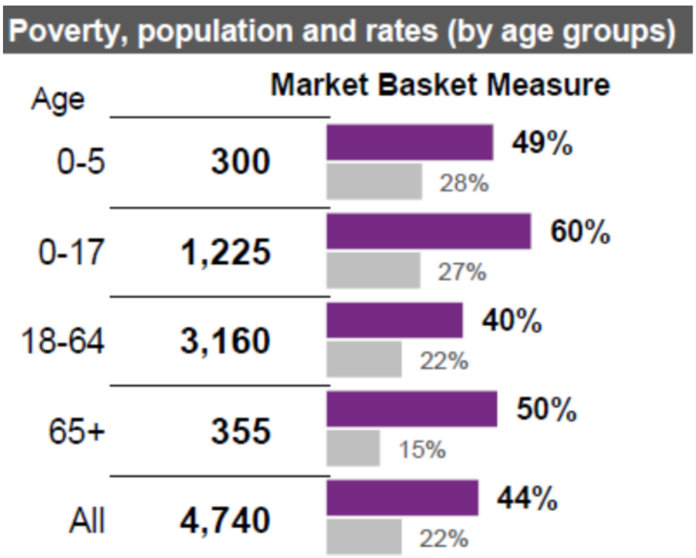
In 2005, the Revitalization project began in partnership with the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing (TCHC), residents, community organizations, and private developers (Daniel's, and now Tridel). The Revitalization aimed to redevelop the area to make it a mixed-income neighbourhood, with new, state of the art residential units, a mix of buildings, condos and townhouses, as well as a wide variety of amenities, including retail space, community centres, and community agencies.

With an anticipated duration of 20 to 25 years, by the end of the Revitalization project, the previous infrastructure of Regent Park will have been replaced, with 2,083 replacement rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, 399 new affordable rental units and 5,400 new market condominium units[1]. Aside from new infrastructure, the Social elements of the Revitalization include four priorities that overlap and interlink: Safety, Employment, Spaces to Interact, and Access to Information.[2]

Demographics[3]

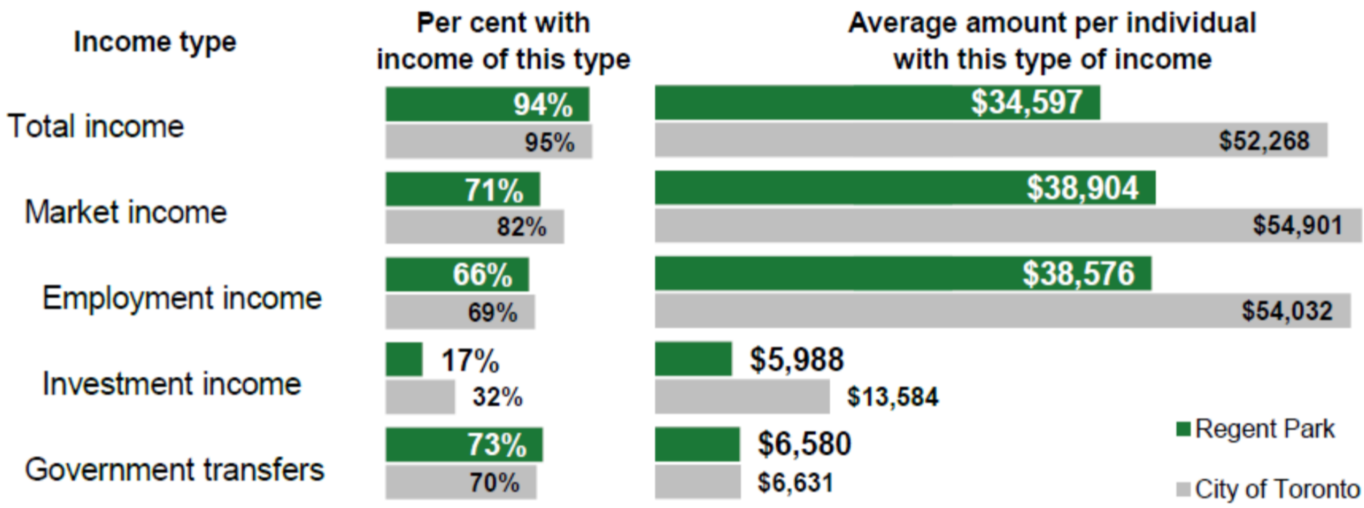
Regent Park is one of Canada's most diverse neighbourhoods, with over 50 languages being spoken in the community of 10,803 residents, 70 percent of whom identify as visible minorities, compared with 51.5 percent across Toronto.

The most recent data available shows that poverty and unemployment remain major issues in Regent Park, with the median family income at only $52,506 compared with $82,859 across the city. The percentage of people that are considered low-income according to Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy's Market Basket Measure (MBM) poverty line, is 44.4% in Regent Park, compared with 21.9% in the entire city.



In every age group, the percentage of residents in Regent Park living in poverty, is significantly higher than across the city. The age group with the highest poverty level is 0-17 year olds, of which 60% of residents in that category are considered to be living in poverty, compared with 27% across Toronto.

The higher levels of poverty in Regent Park is also consistent across income streams - the average amount of income earned by residents under every income type (eg. from employment, from investments, from government), is lower than the average across the city.



This data paints a clear picture of the income inequality that residents face. Since 2005, at the start of the Revitalization, at least 582 jobs have been created for residents,[4] but data shows that the need for an increase not just in employment and economic opportunities for residents, but more sustainable income streams, is a necessary priority if the social priorities of the Revitalization are to be successful.

Labour Market Report

Purpose

Understanding the current labour market can be useful for individuals, agencies, employers, investors and other stakeholders, to better understand the economic reality of their neighbourhood within the broader context of the city, province, and country.

This report includes data on employment rates across Canada, Ontario and Toronto, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what sectors have been most impacted by pandemic related restrictions.

It also includes information on trends in the labour market and projections on what industries and skills will be in demand, which can help inform decision making on hiring, skills development and training opportunities for the future.

Terminology

Some of the terms used in this report are the official terms used in the data provided by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments. Definitions of these terms can be found here.

Employment Rate
Percentage of people aged 15 and older who are employed

Unemployment Rate
Percentage of people aged 15 and older who would like to be working but are not

Participation Rate
Percentage of people aged 15 and older who are working

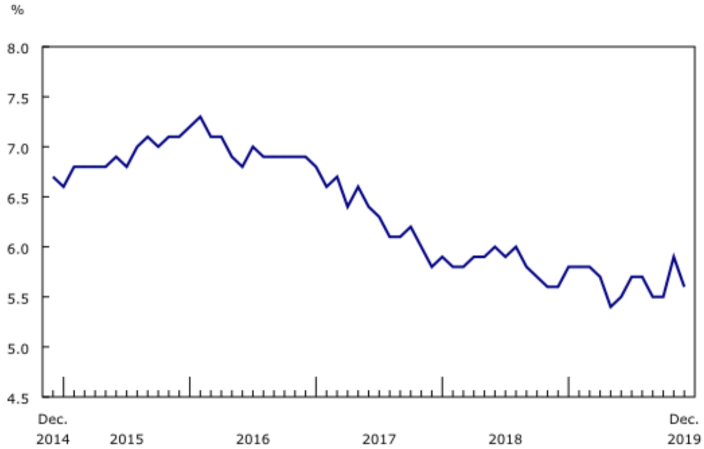
Canada Employment Rates

Pre-Pandemic

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada was experiencing a strong labour market, with record low unemployment rates through 2016-2019.

In 2017, the unemployment rate in Canada fell to 6.3% from 7.0% in 2016, and fell even further to 5.8% in 2018, and lower still to 5.67% in 2019. Regionally, some provinces fared better than others with employment rates, but overall the Canadian employment rate had been steadily growing.[5]

Rate of Unemployment in Canada to December 2019 [6]

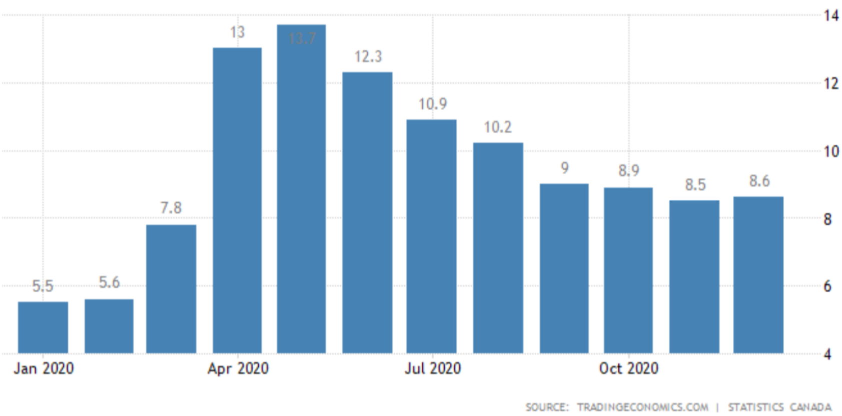


Employment Rates Across Canada in 2019 for Youth (ages 15-24) [7]

Pandemic Employment Rates[8]

On March 11, 2020 the COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, leading to government-imposed restrictions across Canada, including the closure of non-essential businesses, travel restrictions and the limit of social gatherings, which had an immediate impact on the economy and labour market. The unemployment rate throughout the year fluctuated in response to these ongoing and changing restrictions.

Unemployment Rate in Canada, 2020



The week immediately after (March 15 - 21, 2020), the unemployment rate increased to 7.8%, with 1.3 million Canadians losing their jobs or being temporarily laid off. The increase of unemployment from February (5.6%) to March was the highest ever recorded jump in unemployment over a one month period.[9] By April 2020, the unemployment rate had grown to 13.1%[10] and rose even further to record levels at 13.7% in May.[11]

By June, with pandemic related restrictions being reduced, the unemployment rate began to drop and continued to drop every month to November, when it was 8.5%.[12] Restrictions being reimposed in December led to a minor increase in the unemployment rate, at 8.6%.[13]

By the end of 2020, nearly 1 in 3 unemployed Canadians reported COVID-19 being the primary reason for their unemployment.[14]

Sectors Most Impacted Across Canada

The impact of the pandemic has been felt across different levels of the economy, but certain sectors have been hit hardest due to restrictions set in place to slow the spread of the virus. Since the start of the pandemic, industries across Canada that have continued to suffer the most in employment rates include, in order of highest impact (defined as decrease in employment in the sector, since February 2020[15]:

Accommodation and Food Services (31.4%)
Hotels and other travel accommodation, restaurants, cafeterias, mobile food services

Information, Culture and Recreation (14.7%)
Publishing industries, recording production, broadcasting, sightseeing and tourism, entertainment establishments, including casinos, nightclubs, concert and sport venues

Retail (10.8%)
Stores, Dealers, Markets

Other Services (9.5%)
Automotive services, electronic and appliance repair and maintenance, beauty and other personal care establishments, veterinary services, political organizations, parking lots and garages

Agriculture (9.5%)
Forestry, fishing, hunting, farming

Business, Building and other Support Services (8.3%)
Administrative services, travel agencies, collection agencies, call centres, waste management, document preparation, head offices and holding companies.[16]

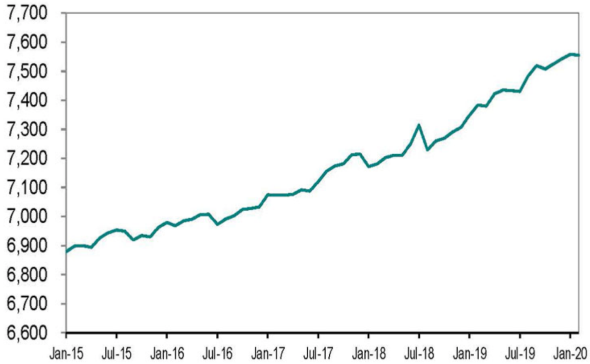
Despite the overall negative impact that the pandemic has had on the wider economy and many industries, there have been some job roles that have seen an increase in demand during this time. Web and Software Developers, IT consultants and Tech Support, Sales Representatives and Account Managers, call centre representatives, Retail Supervisors, Inventory Managers and Salespeople, Administrative Assistants and Receptionists, Warehouse Workers, Janitors and Cleaners, Transportation and Food Delivery Drivers, and Registered Nurses, have all been roles that have been seeing an increase in demand across Canada.[17, 18, 19]

Ontario Employment Rates

Pre-Pandemic

The overall employment rate in Ontario has been steadily growing since 2015. Up until the beginning of 2020, the overall labour market in Ontario was strong with the annual rate of unemployment at 5.6%, the same as in 2018, and the lowest it's been since 1989.[20]

Rate of Employment in Ontario January 2015 - January 2020 (by the Millions) [21]



Sectors that saw the greatest increase in employment rates during that time include:
Natural resources (19.5%), Public administration (9.1%), Professional, Scientific and Technical services (8.7%), Finance, Insurance, Real estate, Rental and leasing (7.1%), and Agriculture (6.7%). Sectors that saw the largest percent decrease in employment in Ontario by the end of 2019 were Utilities (-10.6%) and Manufacturing (-3.5%).[22]

Pandemic Employment Rates

In Ontario, like across the country, the rates of employment fluctuated throughout the year 2020, in response to COVID-19 government-imposed restrictions. In January and February 2020, 62% of people living in Ontario aged 15 and up, were employed.[23] By March, the employment rate in Ontario dropped to 58% - a 4% drop in a matter of weeks. The 402,800 (248,500 full-time and 154,300 part-time) jobs that were lost in Ontario in the month of March 2020, represented 40% of overall job losses across Canada.[24]

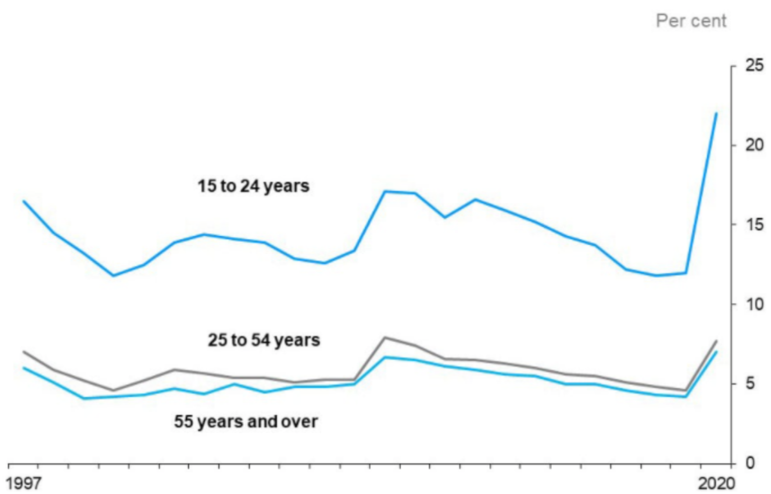
In December 2020,[25] unemployment was at 9.5% in Ontario, and by May 2021, it was 9.3%.[26] Comparing this with February 2020, before the pandemic hit, when the unemployment rate in Ontario was only 5.5%[27] or December 2019, when it was only 5.3%,[28] shows how serious an impact the pandemic has had on employment rates in the province.

Groups Most Impacted by the Pandemic

Youth

Youth (ages 15-24) have represented the highest rate of unemployment across age categories in Ontario consistently for decades. But in 2020, they were disproportionately impacted by job losses in 2020, at an average annual unemployment rate of 22% (compared with 7.7% of 25-54 year olds), up 10% from 2019.[29]

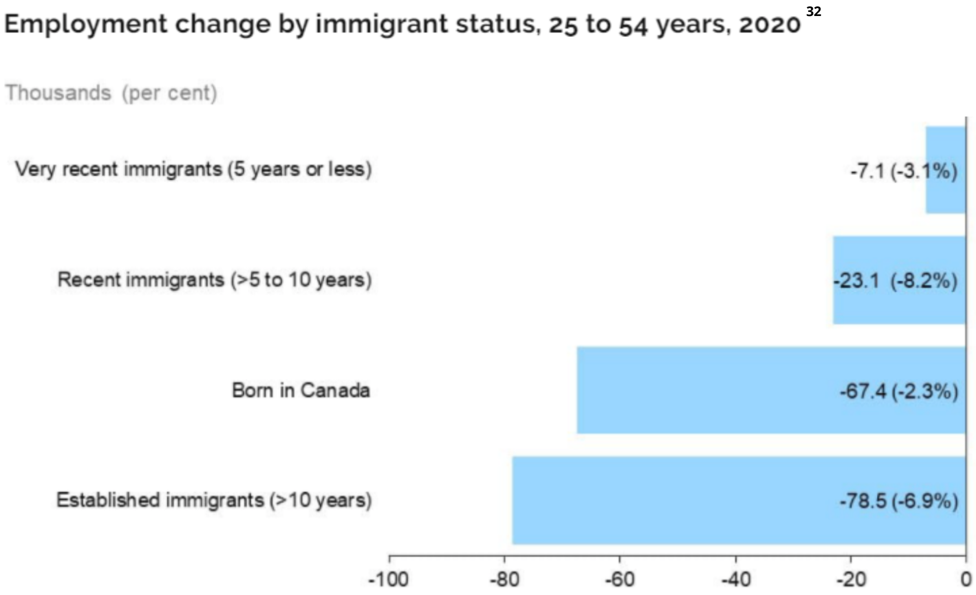
Unemployment rate by age group, 1997-2020 [30]



Education Level

Ontario residents (ages 25 to 54) that were most impacted by job losses in Ontario in 2020 were those with a postsecondary diploma or certificate, at a 9.4% increase in unemployment throughout the year. Ontarians with a High School diploma reported the second highest increase in unemployment across the province, at 5.1% increase of job loss in 2020. Despite the overall economic disruption due to the pandemic, Ontarians that had a University degree, still reported an overall increase of 2.5% in employment rates throughout the year.[31]

Immigration Status



Immigrants in Ontario experienced an overall decrease in employment throughout 2020, regardless of the duration of their time in Canada. Immigrants that have been in Canada between 5 and 10 years experienced on average, the greatest job losses across Ontario at 8.2% increase in unemployment through the year, followed by immigrants that have been living in Canada for a decade or longer, at 6.8% increase in unemployment.

Low Waged Workers

The average hourly wage across Ontario in 2020 had increased by 6.3% from 2019, to $30.24 per hour for full-time workers.[33]

However, wages across industries varies significantly, and the employment decreases in 2020 that were heavily concentrated in relatively lower-paying industries, impacted the average wage for the year, as those making under $20 per hour, experienced on average 19.8% increase in unemployment through the year, versus Ontarians making $40 or more per hour, who experienced an average 15.5% increase in employment during the year.

Toronto Employment Rates

Pre-Pandemic

Toronto is the fourth largest city in North America, and the fastest growing. It is also one of the most multicultural and multiracial cities, with 51.5% of Torontonians identifying as a visible minority.[34] But the rate of poverty, as defined by the Canadian government,[35] in 2018, the latest year for which this data exists, was 11.3%, 1.7 times higher than the rate across Ontario, and 1.8 times higher than the rate across Canada, which was 8.7%.[36] The rate of employment in Toronto in December 2019 was 4.5% higher than it was the same month in 2018. Equity seeking groups, such as Indigenous and Black Canadians, racialized youth, people with disabilities and vulnerable seniors, experienced poverty within the city at a disproportionate rate.[37]

Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 5 Torontonians were already living in poverty - this number was disproportionately represented by Indigenous and Black Torontonians, racialized youth, new immigrants, people with disabilities and vulnerable seniors.[38]

The overall rate of unemployment across the city though, was steadily reducing over the five years before the pandemic. Comparing February 2015 and February 2020, the rate of unemployment in Toronto reduced from 7.4% to 5.4%.[39]

Pandemic Employment Rates

As Canada's largest city, Toronto has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on jobs and the economy. The unemployment rate in Toronto in December 2020 was 10.7% [40] and in January 2021, went up again to 11.8%.[41]

Trends in Employment - Industries and Sectors

This section looks at general labour market trends, and considers which industries and sectors will be in demand in the short and long term.

Gig Economy

Employment and labour are increasingly shifting towards temporary, insecure jobs with no benefits and often low pay, based around a single task, what is often referred to as the 'gig economy'. This can include different types of jobs from freelancing to contract work, to pay-per-item jobs with no set hours such as driving or food delivery through apps including Uber, Uber Eats and Skip the Dishes. More of the labour force is in precarious employment, due to a combination of factors, including employees wanting more freedom leading to an increase in freelance workers, as well as economic factors leading businesses to drive down their spending by hiring contractors to increase their own economic flexibility in the event of economic downturn, or low profitability.[42]

Forecast on Employment Skills and Sectors

Short Term

Experts predict that the economy and employment rates will recover in late 2021 as the pandemic becomes more controlled and vaccinations being rolled out. Forecasts for job roles that are projected to be hiring widely in 2021 include contract administrators, project managers, HR generalists, software developers, data analysts, corporate law clerks, legal assistants, accountants, executive assistants, office managers, buyers, purchasing coordinators, digital marketing specialists, supply chain managers, construction superintendents, construction estimators, logistics and transportation managers, drivers, skilled trades, and facilities managers.[43, 44, 45]

Long Term (looking at 2030)

Understanding what industries are forecasted by experts to grow over the next decade is useful in making decisions around what skills to focus on developing to keep up with changing needs of the labour force.

Technology

With the rapid advancements, and society's increasing dependence on technology, which has become exacerbated by the pandemic, experts project that the technology sector will continue to grow long term. In 2015, the tech industry in Canada employed 86,000 people - 5.6% of Canada's overall total workforce,[46] and the number of tech companies and reliance on technology has since increased.

The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2030, 50% of current jobs will be automated - replacing people with computers or robots, and 9 out of 10 job will require digital skills.[47]

Different areas within technology are projected to grow in the medium and long term, and skills in these sectors will be sought after:[48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59]

- Creative - Graphic Designers, Illustrators
- Website, App and Software Development and Engineers
- Artificial Intelligence
- Virtual Reality
- E-Commerce
- Online entertainment (casinos, video-gaming)
- 3D printing
- Cybersecurity

Health Care[60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66]

There are many roles and skills within health care that are currently in demand, and this sector is projected to continue to grow, expand, and evolve. With the Baby Boomer generation (born in the 50s, 60s, 70s) entering into older age by 2030, and longer life expectancies,[67] paired with increased need for mental health supports, a range of health care related skills are already, and are projected to continue to be, in demand.

Roles include:

- Home Healthcare
- Specialist Physicians
- Registered Nurses
- Nursing Assistants
- Psychiatric Nurses and other Mental Health Practitioners
- Health Care Managers

Business and Finance[68, 69, 70]

- Investing
- Cryptocurrency

Renewable Energy[71, 72, 73, 74]

- Hazardous Materials Removers
- Environmental Scientists
- Climate Controller
- Technician
- Solar Panel Installer

Trades[75, 76, 77]

- Wholesale traders
- Truck/Transportation Drivers
- Heavy Duty Equipment Technicians

Soft Skills

Many employers believe that employees will need to re-skill or upskill themselves, with many skills identified as important across roles and sectors, being soft skills, meaning skills that are not specific to any particular job but are personal characteristics or attributes that are good for long term success. The most important soft skills for employees across sectors to have, that have been identified by experts, include critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving, ability to work independently with limited overseeing, collaboration, communication, creativity, time management, resilience, stress tolerance, flexibility, instruction, persuasion, customer service, brainstorming and memorization.[78, 79, 80, 81, 82]

Asset Map

Purpose

A repository of the employment and entrepreneurship resources that exist within the community, will help residents to find out what is available to them.
The resources, also referred to as assets, are compiled in an excel sheet that can be updated as the information changes.

There is also a corresponding map, that shows the different assets within the community, so that residents can see where to access them, once services are operating in person once again.

The assets are categorized into four types:

Employability - defined as an agency or organization that offers Employability Support or Training related to employment

Work Experience - defined as an opportunity that offers Volunteer, Apprenticeship or Work Study Experience

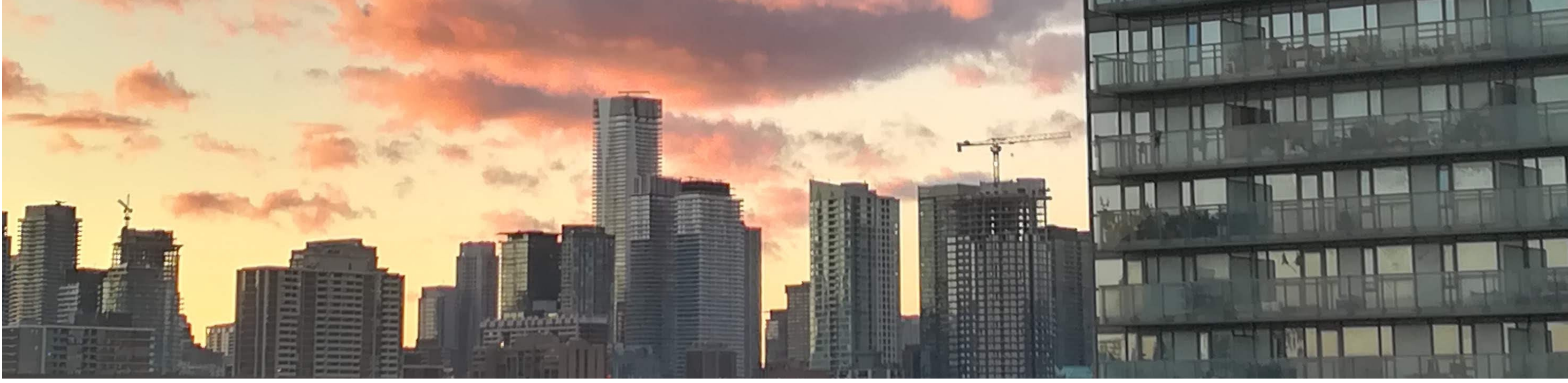
Community Employer - defined as a place that employs or prioritizes community members for jobs

Entrepreneurship - defined as supports or services specifically targeting entrepreneurs

There are two additional categories that are listed on the repository that are not on the map: In the Works, and List of Businesses. The assets under the In the Works category, don't have a physical address yet, and will be updated as they do. The assets under List of Businesses include all businesses, agencies and organizations in the neighbourhood, including ones that are not necessarily under the other categories.

Agencies or businesses that have resources that overlap categories, are listed within each of the relevant categories.

To access the repository, visit this link for the comprehensive list. To see the assets in a map, visit this link.



Needs Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this Needs Assessment was to understand how residents are benefitting from the resources available to them, and what gaps remain to be addressed, with regards to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities and access. In order for the EED to develop a strategy for how to address the ongoing needs of residents, the needs assessment set out to give residents an open platform to express their voices and be heard.

Working in collaboration with the asset mapping portion of the research, which seeks to understand what resources are currently available, known and being accessed by residents, this Needs Assessment seeks to form a clearer picture of the needs of residents, and form a descriptive picture of resident experiences and desires for the future of the neighbourhood.

Methodology

Data Collection

The Needs Assessment was conducted through an online survey, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with community members.

The online survey was the primary source of data collection as it was widely accessible, could be easily made available in multiple languages, would be confidential and anonymous, and easily shared through different channels in the community.

To incentivize participation, a prize draw was developed that residents filling in the online survey could enter into, through a separate link available at the end of the survey, to ensure confidentiality. Prizes included two Samsung Galaxy Tablets, and twenty $5 gift cards to Tim Horton's.

In order to get deeper qualitative responses, focus groups and one-on-one interviews were also held, where participants could share their experiences, thoughts and needs on the topic in more detail. Participants were selected based on their demographics, to ensure a wide range of diverse experiences and responses. Interpreters were also made available if required. Further prizes were offered to Focus Group and Interview participants - $20 gift cards to a local business for focus group participants, and $35 gift cards for one-on-one interviews.

Sample Sizing

As Regent Park is a diverse neighbourhood, the research aimed to get responses from a diverse range of residents, to build a clearer picture of the experiences and needs of all residents.

As the research was conducted in late 2020 and early 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, social restrictions were in place limiting engagement opportunities with community members. For this reason, most of the research had to be conducted online.

Efforts were made to ensure folks who are harder to reach were still able to be involved in the research, and have their voices heard. To prevent technological barriers to participation, residents could also request to participate in the survey over the phone with the Lead Researcher.

To reduce barriers to participation, the online survey was available in 9 community languages (Tamil, Bengali, Urdu, Arabic, Somali, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Spanish), and a note was included that if any residents wished to access the survey in another language, that a translator would be made available by request.

Survey and interview participation was promoted amongst residents using various channels to get wide participation amongst diverse groups. This included communication and promotion of the needs assessment through agencies, direct mail to TCHC residents' mailboxes, through email to TCHC residents, through property managers at the condos for market residents, through social media channels, posting flyers around high-traffic areas in the neighbourhood, community groups, and word of mouth.

While these efforts ensured that diverse voices were included, there are still limitations as no qualitative research can ever be entirely accurate or representative of every single resident. Using survey sampling methodologies, the research did take every effort to ensure that a good representation of the numbers and diversity of the community formed the results to ensure as accurate a representation as possible.

In determining the number of responses that were needed for the research, called the sample size, a common market research method was used. (84)

Population size: Approximately 10,000 residents (2016 Census)

Confidence Level: 95%
(how accurate of a representation responses should be)

Margin of Error: 5%
if the survey were conducted 100 times, the data collected each time would be 95% similar *(100-5% = 95%)*

Ideal Sample Size = 370

The online needs assessment survey was live from December 6 until January 20, 2021. In total, 396 people responded to the online needs assessment survey, and 29 residents with diverse experiences (employed, students, entrepreneurs, unemployed and actively looking, unemployed and unable to work), as well as 13 agency staff from various organizations across Regent Park, were interviewed through one-on-one and focus group interviews, to collect more in depth responses.

Questions

The questions for the needs assessment were co-created by the Community Engagement and Research Lead, members of the EED, agencies and residents, with input from over 40 individuals. This was to ensure that the questions were written in an accessible way, were not too long, and included a range of relevant topics to build a clear picture of employment and entrepreneurial needs and experiences of residents.

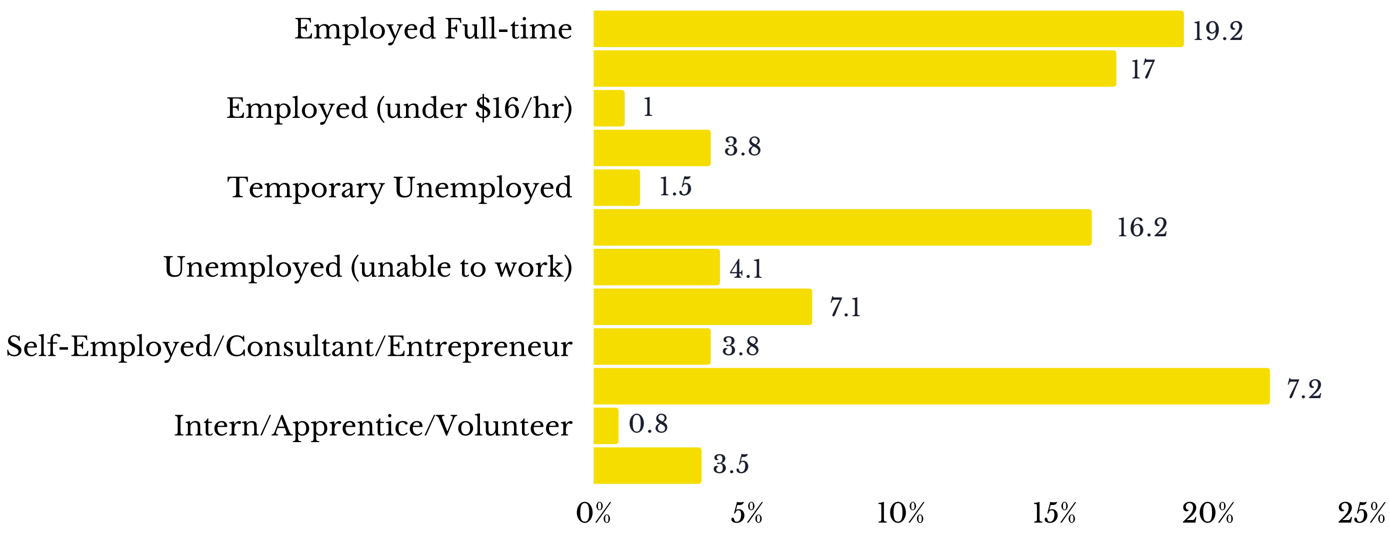
The questions asked in the online survey and one-on-one and focus group interviews, can be found in the Appendix.

Findings

Demographics

Respondents of the online survey were asked to share their demographic information.

Employment Status



Age

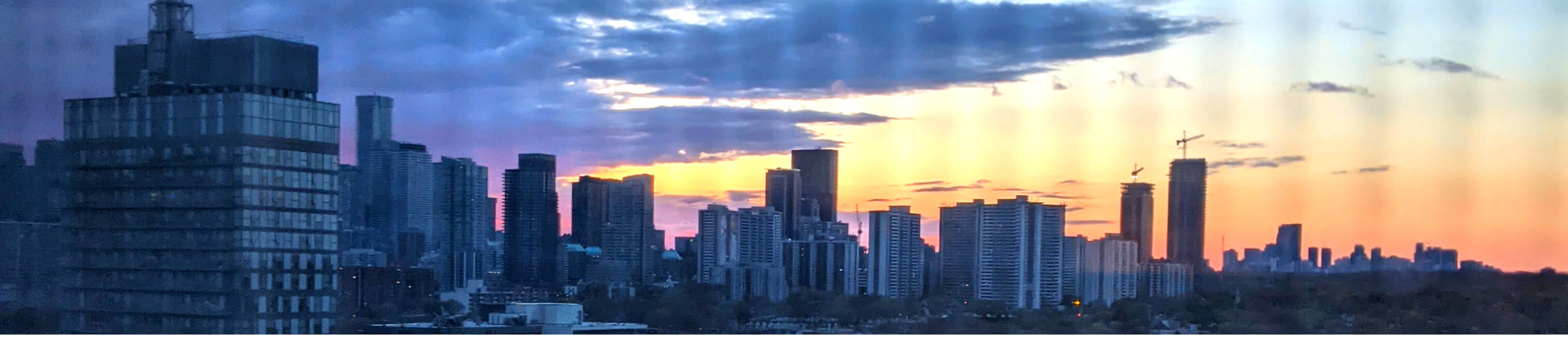
7.1%	*Under 16*
33.1%	*17-23*
11.9%	*24-29*
17.4%	*30-39*
16.9%	*40-54*
11.9%	*55-64*
1.8%	*65+*

Highest Level of Education

8.1%	*Didn't Complete High School*
38.7%	*High School (or equivalent)*
16.8%	*College/Apprenticeship*
27.8%	*University (undergraduate)*
8.6%	*Post-graduate*

Gender

59.3%	*Female*
59.3%	*Male*
59.3%	*Transgender/Non-binary*
59.3%	*Prefer not to say*

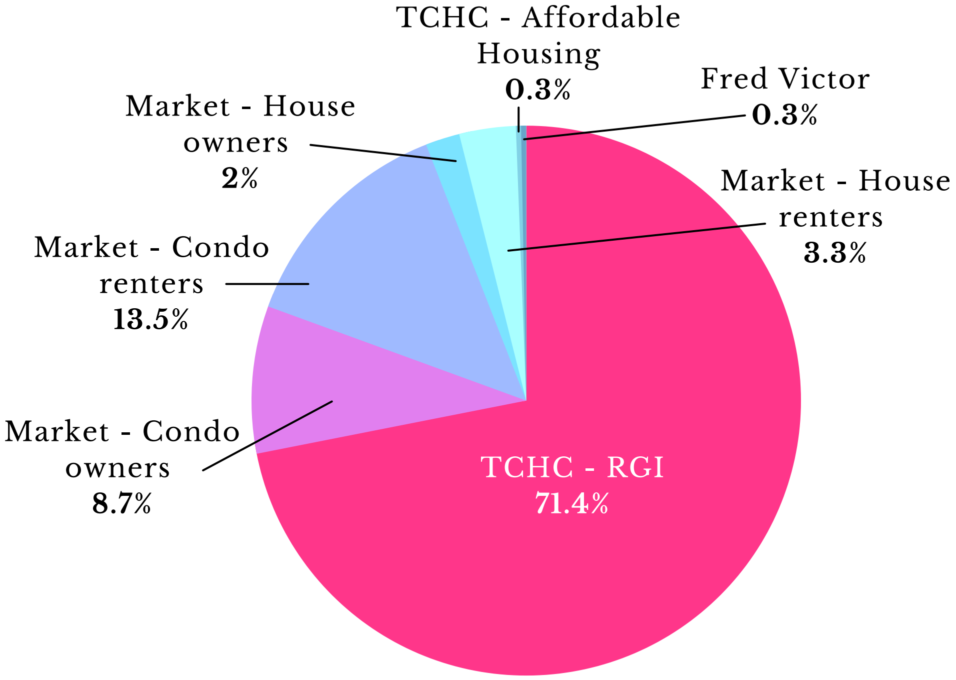


Residence Type

71.4% of respondents were TCHC residents in Rent-Geared to Income (RGI) units, and 0.3% were TCHC residents in Affordable Housing units.

27.3 % as Market residents, made up of 13.4 % that rent their condo/apartment, 8.6% that own their condo, 3.3% that rent a house, 2% that own their house.

0.3% of respondents as residents of Fred Victor, with the remaining 0.6% preferring not to disclose.



'Mother Tongue' or First Language

23.2%	*Bengali*	2.3%	*Cantonese*
7.8%	*Tamil*	3.5%	*Somali*
6.6%	*Vietnamese*	2.6%	*Spanish*
5.6%	*Mandarin*	4%	*French*
3.8%	*Urdu*		

Survey Respondents' mother tongues included 30 different languages, which is a fair representation of Regent Park's diverse demographics. The majority (61.6%) spoke English as their first language, with 53% (130 of 244) of them indicating at least one other language along with English as their mother tongue.

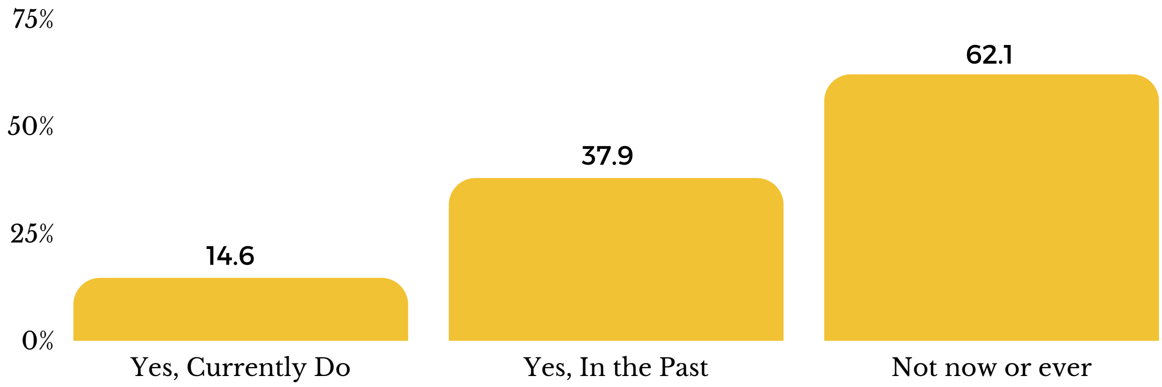
The next most spoken language of respondents, were Bengali (23.2%), Tamil (7.8%), Vietnamese (6.6%), Mandarin (5.6%), French (4%), Urdu (3.8%), Somali (3.5%), Spanish (2.6%), Cantonese (2.3%), followed by 20 other languages (13.3%), with 2.3% of respondents wishing not to disclose.

Ethnicity

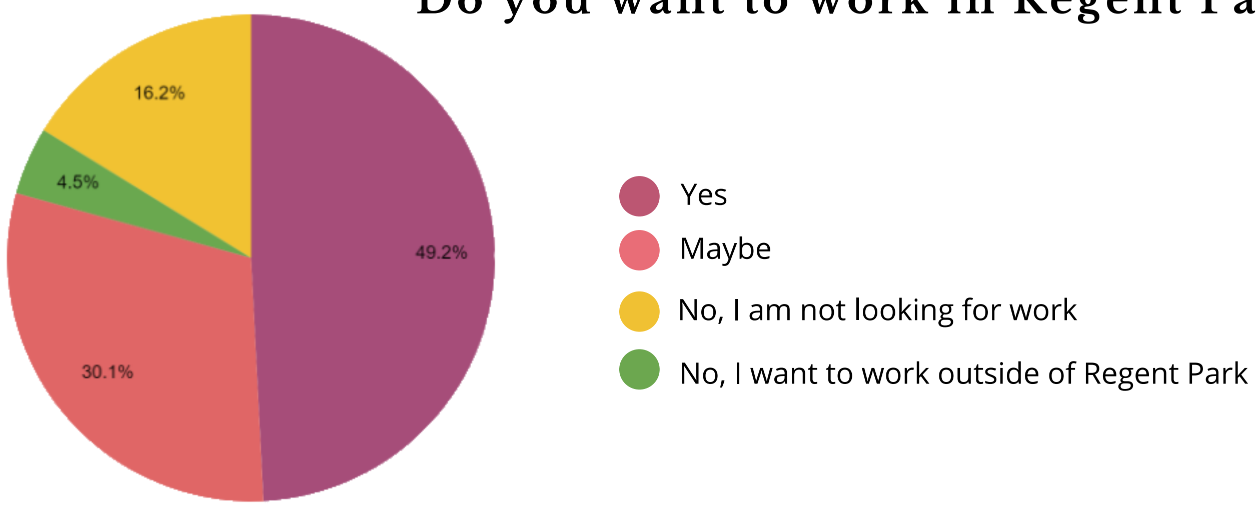
46.8%	*South/South-East Asian*
13.9%	*East Asian*
15.2%	*Caucasian/White*
16.4%	*Black/African/Caribbean*
2.8%	*Latinx/South American*
0.8%	*Arab/Middle Eastern*
0.6%	*Indigenous*
8.8%	*Mutli-Ethnic/Racial*

Also representative of Regent Park, respondents identified as a wide range of races, with South and South East Asian as the highest (46.8%), followed by Black/African/Caribbean (16.4%), Caucasian/White (15.2%), East Asian (13.9%), Latin/South American (2.8%), Arab/Middle Eastern (0.8%), Indigenous (0.6%), with 5% identifying as multi-ethnic/racial, and 8.8% preferring not to disclose.

Do you work in Regent Park?

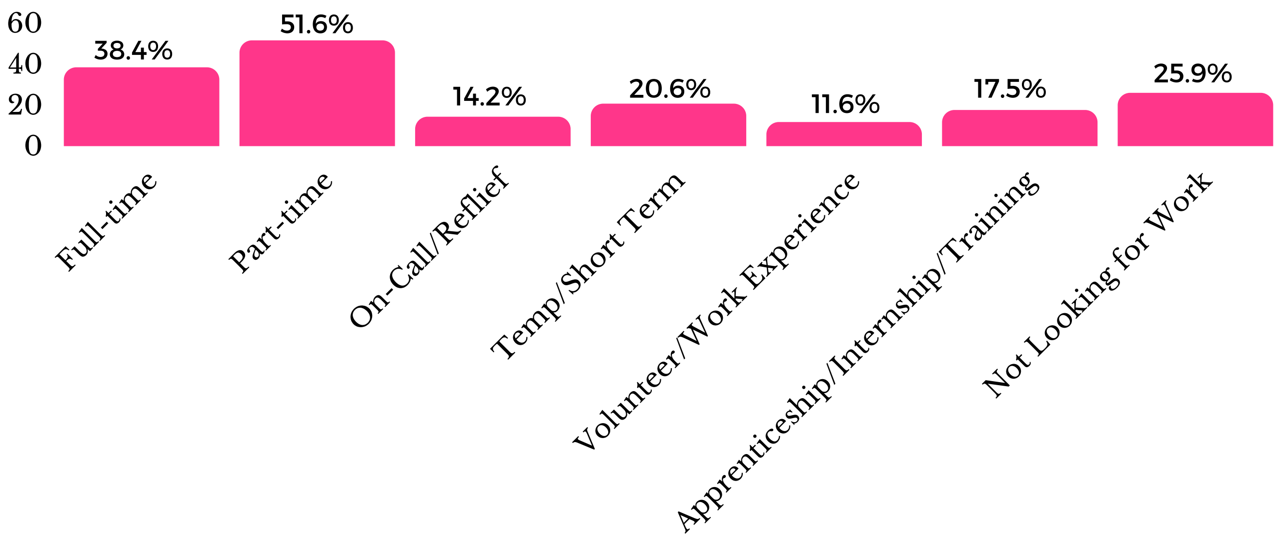


Do you want to work in Regent Park?

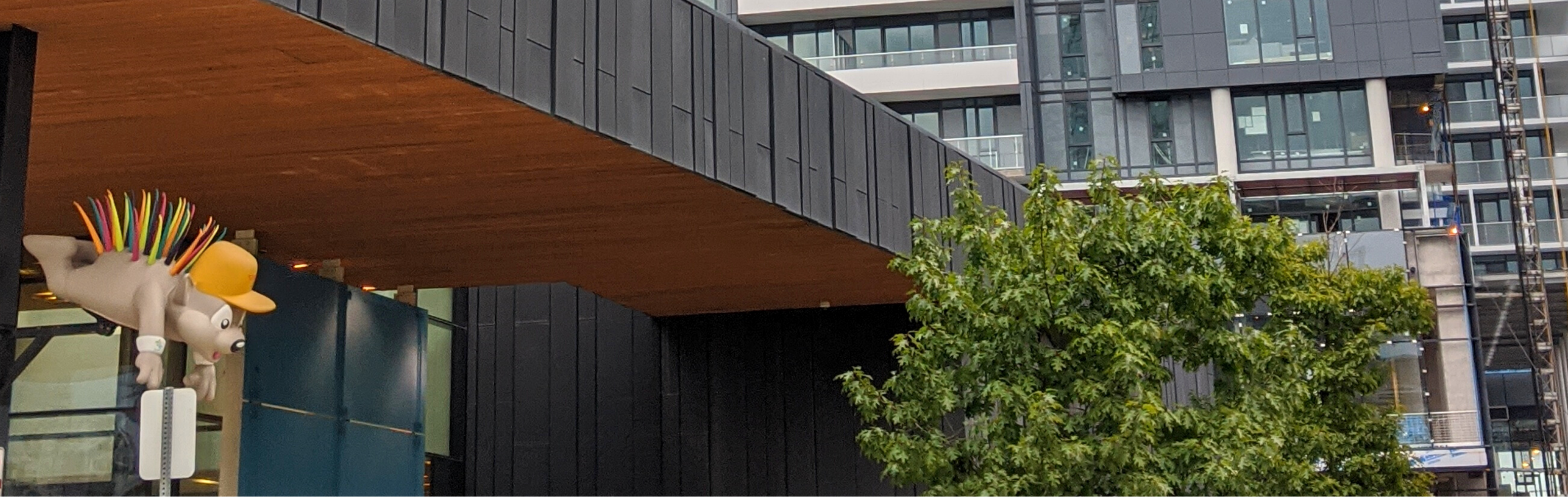


What kinds of job schedule are you looking for?

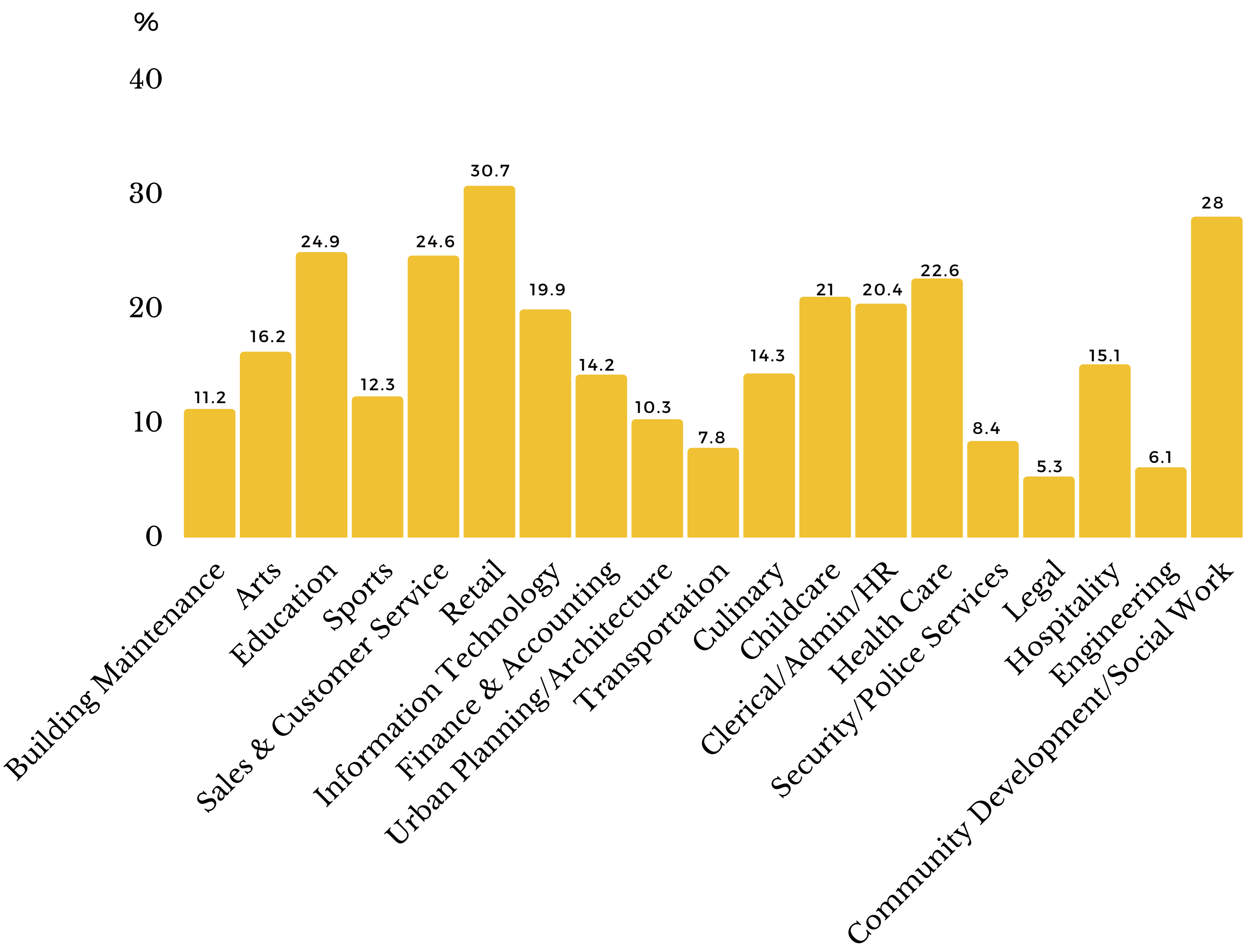
38.4% of respondents are looking for a full-time job, 51.6% a part-time job, 14.2% were interested in an on-call or relief job, 20.6% were looking for temporary or short term roles, 11.6% were looking for volunteer work experience, 17.5% are looking to do an apprenticeship, internship or some sort of training, and 25.9% were not looking for a job. Respondents could select multiple types of employment, with many flexible with the kinds of schedules they were willing to take.



This question allowed participants to select multiple responses. Respondents could select multiple types of employment, with many flexible with the kinds of schedules they were willing to take. The percentages of each option refers to the percentage of respondents that selected that particular option. The total for all questions therefore adds up to over 100%.



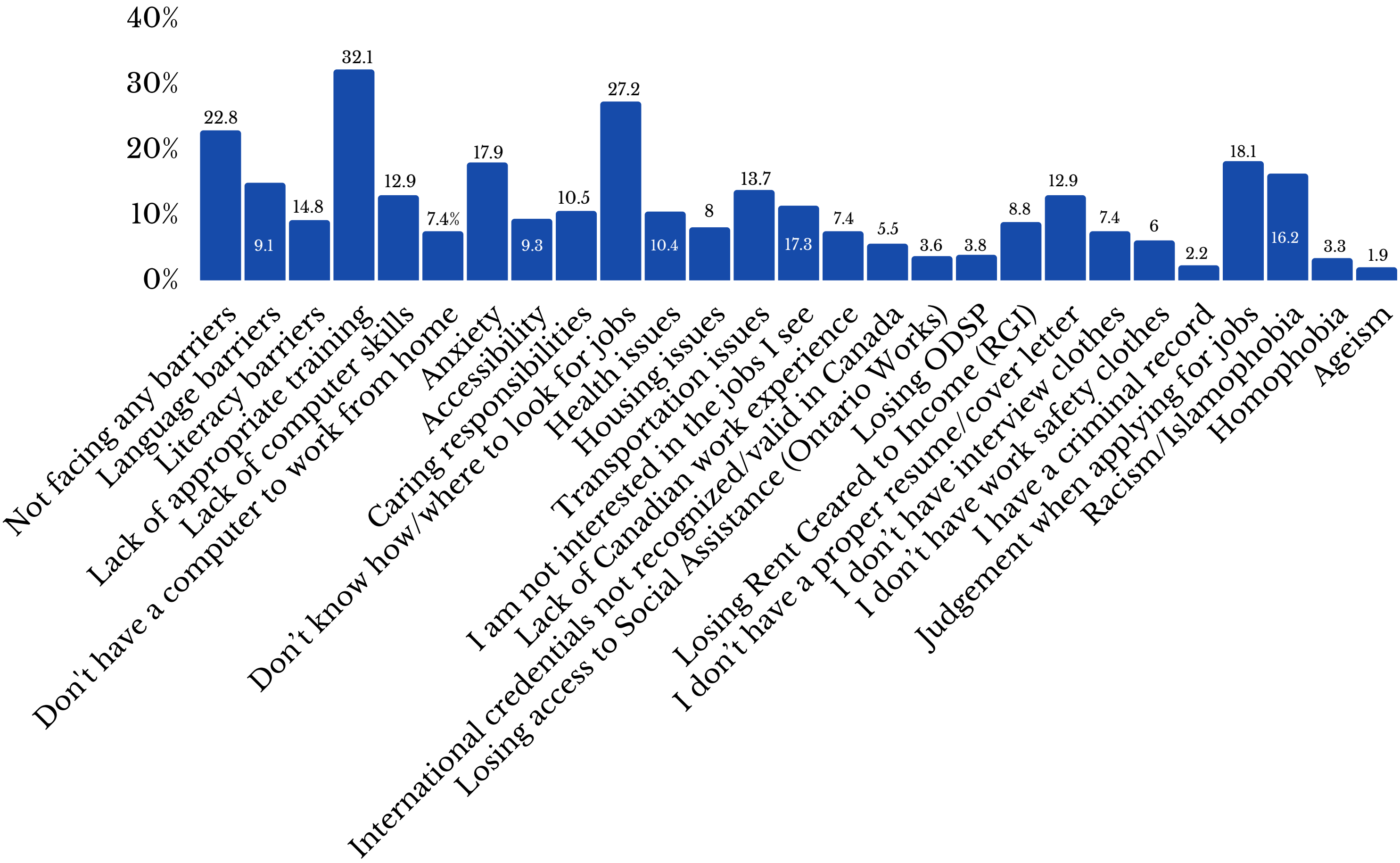
What areas of employment are you interested in?



Aside from these areas, some respondents also mentioned other areas such as business, service provision (sewing, translation), general labourer and trades.

> **If these companies are profiting off of us, they should give us an opportunity to also learn from them and a chance to work there.**
>
> Student, focus group

What kinds of barriers do you face in finding or keeping employment?



Lack of appropriate training and not knowing where or how to look for jobs were the two top barriers mentioned by survey Respondents. Discrimination, stigma and judgement were highly ranked barriers that survey respondents mentioned, as well, followed by transportation issues, inability to work due to health or caring responsibilities, anxiety when applying for jobs, not being interested in jobs that they see, and lack of Canadian work experience or Canadian credentials.

One common barrier to employment that was mentioned by many interview and focus group respondents, was losing Social Assistance (Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program) and Rent Geared to Income (RGI). In many instances, especially for families on Social Assistance, working a low waged job, even if full-time, may mean losing RGI, subsidized child care, subsidized or free medication, and other welfare benefits that would be difficult if not impossible to afford on a low waged job, keeping many individuals and families who wish to work, in a position where they are unable to work as it is unaffordable to do so, leading to an ongoing cycle of poverty.

Other barriers that respondents added, included a general lack of work experience (not just Canadian experience, but any relevant experience at all), and COVID-19.

This question allowed participants to select multiple responses. Respondents could select multiple barriers.The percentages of each option refers to the percentage of respondents that selected that particular option. The total for all questions therefore adds up to over 100%.

Youth-Specific Barriers

Youth Respondents also expressed particular barriers that they faced as young people, in finding employment opportunities, including stigma and discrimination by employers outside of Regent Park towards them, not feeling that they could compete with youth from other parts of the city, lack of job opportunities in the neighbourhood, lack of experience, lack of confidence, lack of networks, family who don't know the Canadian employment market, and for some, dealing with domestic issues at home (mental health, substance abuse) or criminal records. Knowing what kinds of long-term employment they wished to get into, and how to get career-specific experience, was a major barrier especially for youth that were in, or applying to, postsecondary education.

Youth Respondents expressed that summer opportunities through agencies in the neighbourhood were the primary ways they got jobs and experience. Accessing employment outside of the area, or throughout the year (jobs other than summer time employment through youth specific programming), or after being a student, were the bigger obstacles.

Barriers to Accessing Agencies

Respondents shared their experiences and views on accessing supports that are available to them.

- Residents and agency staff acknowledged that most of the staff at the agencies come from outside of the neighbourhood and don't look like the majority of the residents they are trying to engage with, which creates a barrier to trust building
- Agencies reported struggling with ensuring that residents that might benefit from activities and programs actually access them
- Many residents perceive the Employment Agencies to be focused on people facing multiple barriers, specifically homelessness, language and literacy barriers, so they don't feel their needs would be served by accessing them
- There is a widespread perception that jobs available through Employment Agencies are very limited to low salary jobs that are mostly manual labour
- Employment Agencies reported that funding restrictions and targets set by Employment Ontario, limit their services and programs to only individuals who meet strict criteria, mostly whom are experiencing multiple barriers or issues with finding or keeping, employment

> **"The targets set for us by the Ministry prevent us from taking an individual approach to supporting job seekers."**
>
> Employment Agency Staff, Interview

Overcoming Barriers

Respondents were asked if and how they have tried to overcome the barriers they face in accessing employment, to get a better sense of what supports they are aware of, their experience with them, and if they face any barriers in not only gaining employment, but in finding available support to help with getting employment. This is important to ensure that any employment and economic development strategy developed to address barriers to employment does not replicate existing supports that do not work.

Accessing Supports

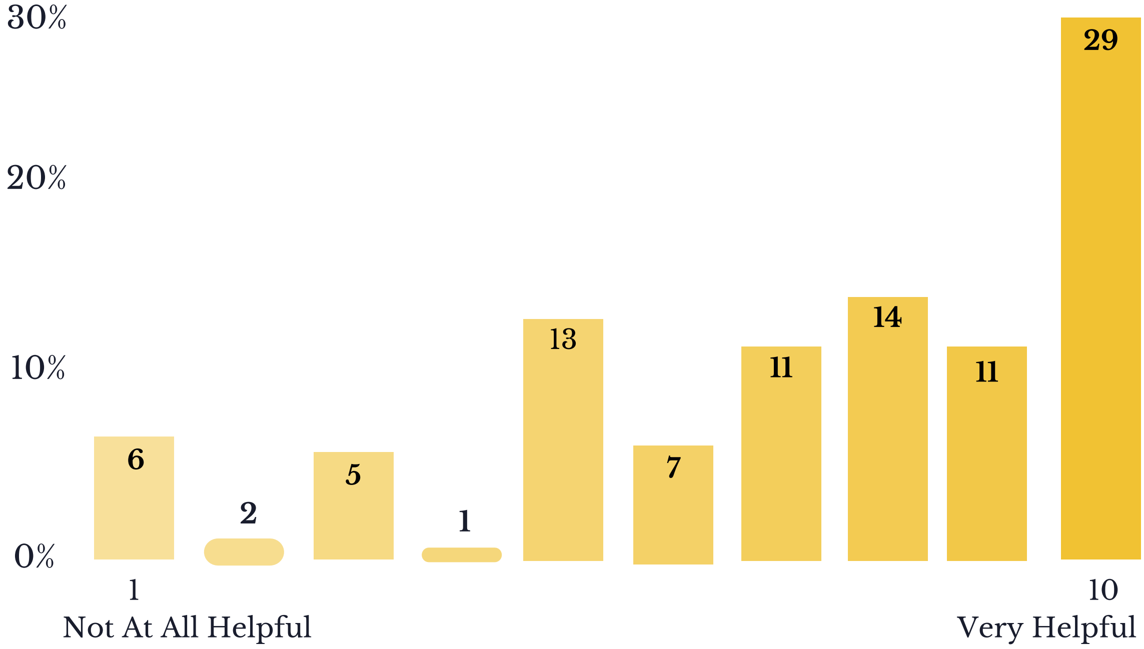
40.9% of respondents indicated that they have not looked for support to overcome the barriers they face in looking for, finding, and getting the kind of employment they want.

For respondents that have accessed supports, the types of services they have accessed included attending ESL classes, attending job fairs, taking college classes or returning to school to upgrade, volunteering for experience, joining mentorship programs, getting job-search specific help such as resume and cover letter writing, job search skills and interview skills, some of which were accessed through employment agencies.

Employment Agencies

71.9% (282) of respondents have not accessed any of the employment agencies in Regent Park.

Of respondents who have, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not helpful at all, and 10 being very helpful, 29.1% found their experiences with the agencies very helpful, and 6% found them not at all helpful.

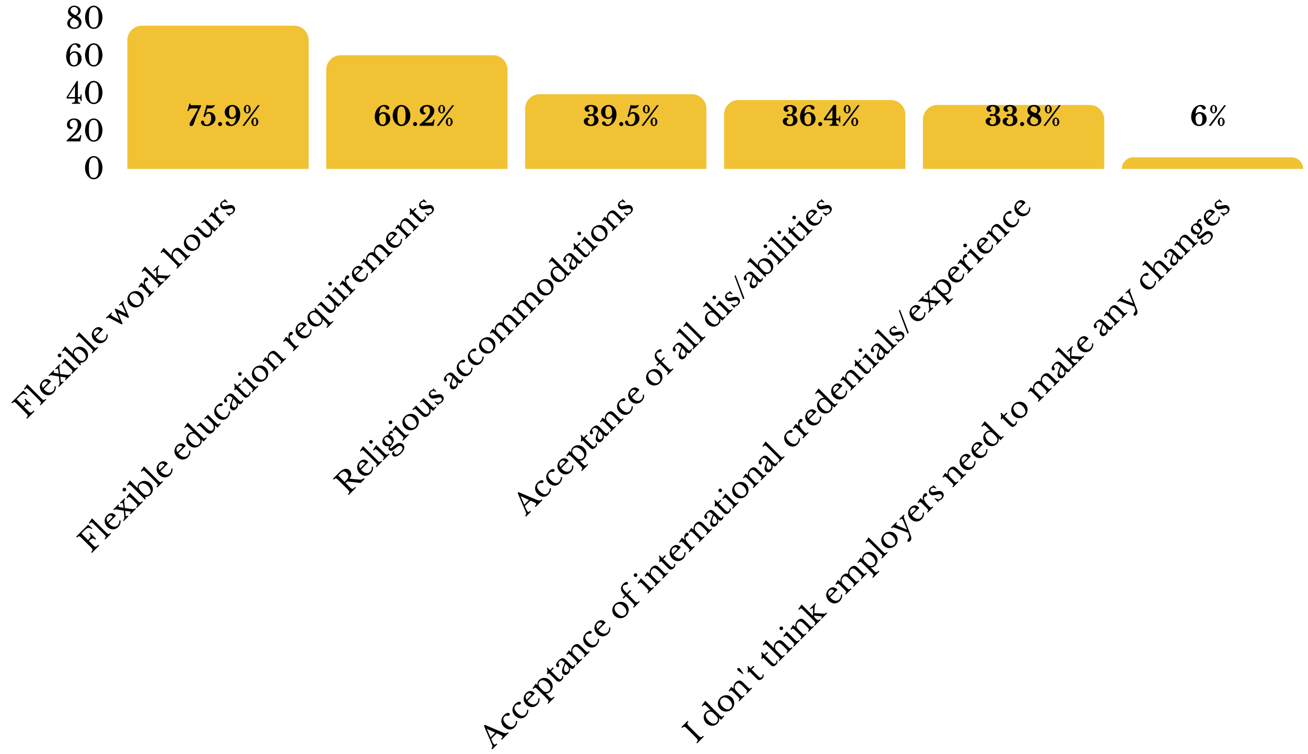


> **If these companies are profiting off of us, they should give us an opportunity to also learn from them and a chance to work there.**
>
> Community Member, Interview

Suggestions

Respondents shared ideas and hopes for what would help them individually, as well as the community as a whole, with regards to overcoming barriers to sustainable employment.

How would you like employers to make jobs and job descriptions more flexible?



1

A group for job searchers in the area who could support one another, share experiences and suggestions, hear from employers, get tips and advice, share opportunities

- This can be in the form of a Facebook/online moderated group, or a group that meets regularly over Zoom
- Should be separated by demographic (eg. a group for high school students or youth not in school, a group for postsecondary students, a group for unemployed or underemployed adults) and be targeted to that demographic, rather than grouping everyone together

2

Financial Literacy workshops to help residents with different aspects of financial literacy (eg. filing taxes, investments, working and reporting income)

- Specific workshops geared towards different demographics (eg. youth, adults)

3

There should be more businesses that open up in the area, from industries that would simultaneously encourage non-residents to visit, while also employing residents (eg. Restaurants and entertainment)

4

Systemic changes around Social Assistance and financial supports, so that individuals and families who receive Social Assistance but wish to work, can work without losing all financial supports available to them

- Education programs to help individuals receiving Social Assistance understand the potential for receiving a higher income at the end of each month from working full-time , than form Social Assistance, for cases where this is true

5

All jobs, at all levels, of businesses and agencies within Regent Park, should be mandated to prioritize residents of Regent Park while hiring, before opening up the vacancies to others (non-residents).

- Residents know the area and culture of the neighbourhood better than non-residents. Prioritizing them for employment opportunities would benefit employees, businesses and shoppers

6

Regular audits of businesses in the area to determine what percentage of staff, and at which levels, are residents

- Recognition that it is not realistic for all jobs in the area to be filled by residents, especially certain roles in social or health care, that may create further barriers to community members accessing them, out of a fear that the employee they may know from the community, has access to their sensitive information

7

Relationships should be built between the EED and businesses and agency managers

- Learn about those who are applying for jobs (their demographics, experience), versus who is getting hired, and the reasons for rejection shared anonymously for better transparency, data collection, and evaluation of where the focus on community employment, needs to be (eg. If the focus should be on businesses making changes to their hiring, or if the focus needs to be on up-skilling residents who apply for these jobs, or on the promotion and marketing of job opportunities to get higher application numbers from residents)

8

Employment streams should be developed with the larger agencies and businesses that service the area

- 51 Division Police Station is one service that should especially create employment streams for residents, which would not only help build trust between the community and Police, but also help with policing, if officers came from and knew the community better, which would not only create meaningful employment opportunities for youth, but would also help to tackle the ongoing issue of violence, and potentially reduce harmful racial and age prejudices from police towards residents

9

The new developer in Phases 4 and 5 of the Revitalization (Tridel) should especially prioritize hiring residents for all jobs associated with the development (eg. construction, design, landscaping, events, catering, security)

- This should be part of the ongoing negotiations with the developer

10

More jobs generally, and especially ones that are full-time and permanent

11

Youth Specific

- Mentorship opportunities for youth in high school
- Opportunities for youth to 'try out' different jobs
  - 2 to 4 week try-outs to help them figure out what they are good at, and what kinds of jobs they want to pursue
- Conference
  - Bringing together community members or former residents who have been successful in their careers to speak about their stories, to provide hope, inspiration and suggestions on how youth from the area can achieve their goals

12

Community Building and Engagement

- Bridging the disconnect between Regent Park 'newcomers' (new, market residents), with residents who have lived in the neighbourhood before the Revitalization (TCHC residents)
  - Mandatory education packages for new buyers and market renters in the area, about the history of Regent Park so they understand the rich history of the area they are moving into
  - Events or activities that bring out market residents and TCHC residents to engage, build trust, and get to know one another, which may be a starting point for building future events, mentorship opportunities or employment related opportunities once that trust is built
- A monument or Peace Garden
  - Memorializing residents who have lost their lives to violence and simultaneously be a sign of respect to the youth who have lost their lives as well show their families and community that they have not been forgotten, and act as a symbol of past and ongoing violence that stems from intersectional oppressions many residents to face
  - Would also create part-time employment for youth who can care for the memorial (cleaning, upkeep of a garden)
  - This would give visitors and new residents a place to also learn about the history of the area
- Centralized place for residents to learn about opportunities available
  - This could include workshops, events, programming, job vacancies, and for agencies and business to post opportunities
  - The preferred method of this centralized communication space varied amongst different demographics; youth preferred a social media page or website; middle aged and older demographics preferred direct mail in their mailboxes, or emails from TCHC/building managers or Whatsapp messages from community members

13

Employment Agencies

- Mental health wrap around supports for residents that get placed in employment through Employment Agencies
- Programs offered to help guide people who may not need multiple levels of support or meet the strict eligibility criteria at Employment Agencies.
  - Support for folks who may be able to find employment on their own, but wish to access support with career transition, or career progression

> **"It's up to us as a community, to define what the developers have to do in the context of 'redeveloping' our community."**
>
> Community Member, Interview

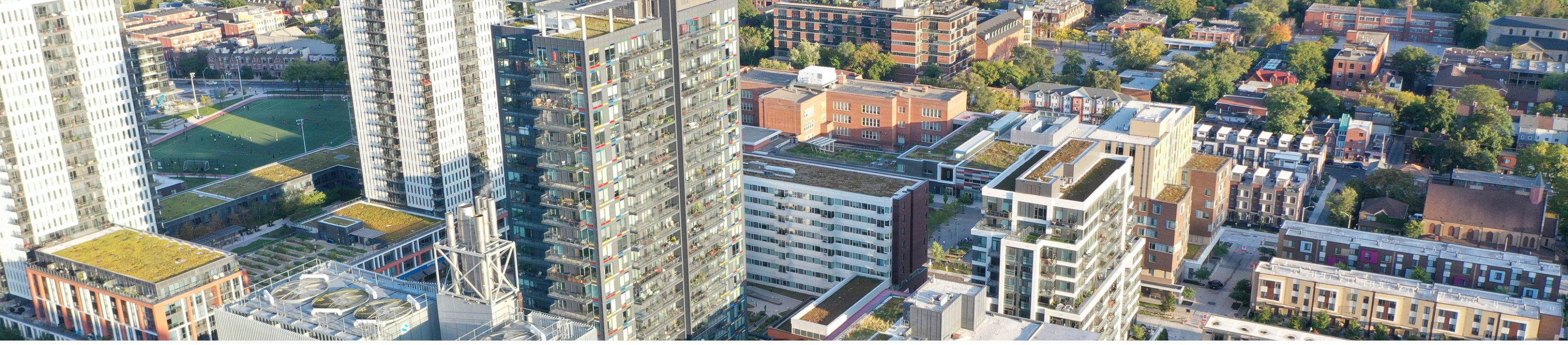


Photo by: Murwan Khogali

Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur respondents ran a range of small businesses, including social enterprises, charities/non-profits, retail shops, independent service providers and freelance consultants. Of the 242 survey respondents that do not currently operate their own business, but wish to, 36% are interested in providing food or catering services, 31% are interested in providing services (eg. beautician, barber, cleaner, etc.), 28.9% are interested in having a retail shop selling goods, 27.2% want to start their own non-profit or charity, 20.7% are interested in starting a social enterprise, 16.5% are interested in becoming freelance consultants.

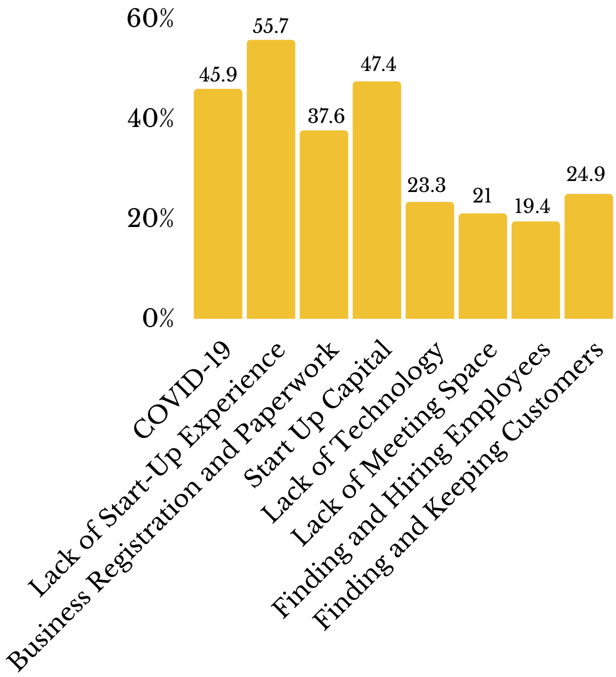
What kind(s) of Business/Enterprise do you want to start?

36%	**Food and Catering Services**
31%	**Providing Services** (eg. beauty, cleaner)
28.9%	**Retail shop - selling goods**
27.2%	**Non-Profit or Charity**
20.7%	**Social Enterprise**
16.5%	**Freelance Consulting**

What Barriers do you face starting a Business?

Respondents that want to start their own business, or have recently done so, shared the main barriers they are facing in doing so.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions were a concern that all entrepreneurial respondents mentioned in the focus groups and interviews, as well as 45.9% of survey respondents, from across sectors, regardless of the size and development phase of their enterprise. Specifically, the unpredictability of the ripple effects of the pandemic: Numbers of clients or customers and therefore income; Funding due to possible reallocation of funding priorities; How long the restrictions will last; Number of staff required in response, as well as other related concerns including less money being spent on services and products by customers, events being cancelled, safety of staff and customers.

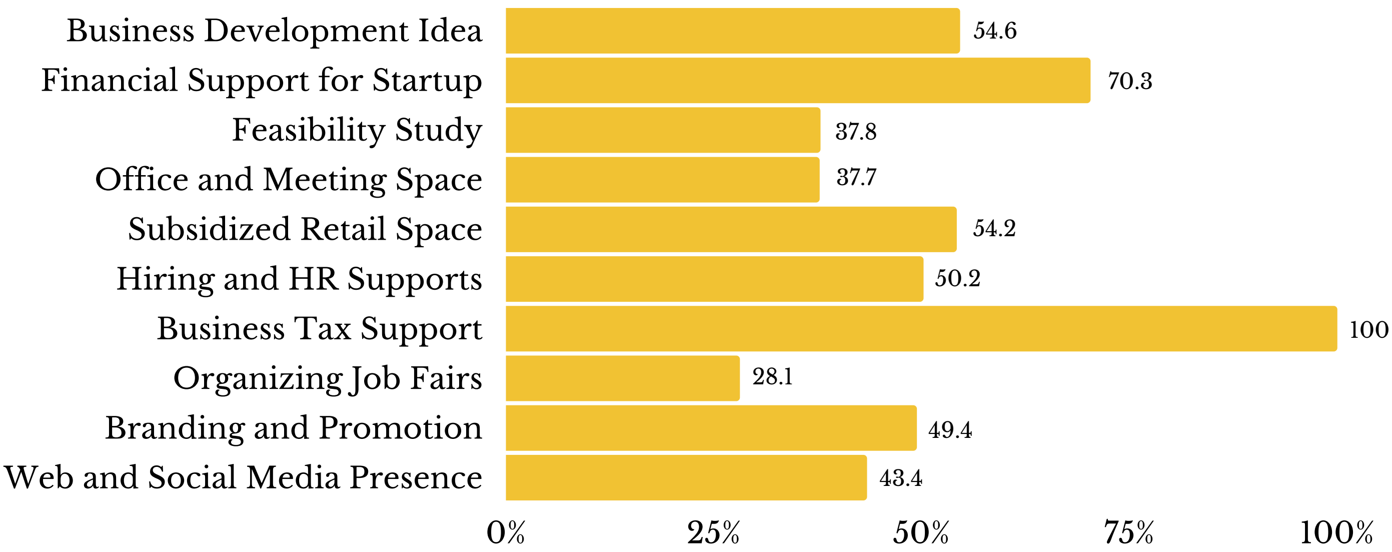


Aside from pandemic-related concerns, other barriers that entrepreneurs at all levels of business development mentioned were affordable space for selling their products or services, or to have meetings, having an address for their business that is not their personal address, knowledge around business paperwork, finding and keeping customers and clients.

Suggestions

What Supports would you need to help create or expand your business?

To tackle the barriers they are facing in starting a business, respondents shared what support they would need to help them get their businesses off the ground.



This question allowed participants to select multiple responses. Respondents could select multiple types of support that they required. The percentages of each option refers to the percentage of respondents that selected that particular option. The total for all questions therefore adds up to over 100%.

1

Part of the Community Benefits Agreement should be dedicated specifically towards entrepreneurs and startups

- Training, Grants, Affordable space

2

A Mentorship program

- Experts from specific sectors supporting entrepreneurs with learning specific skills they require, based on individual needs, rather than just one mentor paired with a mentee
- It should be skill and industry specific, and when that person (eg. the Finance expert, or the HR expert) has finished mentoring the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur can then get another mentor for another specific need (eg. Legal, Marketing)
- Including an honorarium for participation in the program so that it is accessible for people who really need the support

3

Affordable retail space for entrepreneurs

4

Business Hub

- A space where mixed types of entrepreneurs could operate their services
- This would not only provide residents an opportunity to sell their services and products, but it would also be a draw for non-residents to visit the area and bring more money into the neighbourhood
- Regent Park resident entrepreneurs should be prioritized as members and cost should be affordable or free

Appendix

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Appendix
Communications Materials Used

The Communications Materials used to promote the needs assessment survey through social media and flyers posted around high traffic areas in the community are below:

Appendix

Survey & Interview Questions

Questions for Job Seekers and Unemployed or Underemployed Groups/Individuals

1. Do you have previous work experience?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. What kinds of jobs are you looking for? (Industry, Hours)
4. What obstacles/barriers do you face when looking for a job?
5. What steps have you taken to overcome/tackle these barriers?
6. What services do you know of that help residents find employment?
   a. Have you accessed them?
7. Where they Helpful? OR What is stopping you from accessing them?
8. How can we better connect residents (YOU) with local employment agencies?
9. What kinds of services, supports or opportunities do you think would help you to find a job?
10. What opportunities that don't yet exist, would you like to see in the area?
11. Do you know of any employers in the area that prioritize community members?
12. Do you know of any training opportunities that prioritize community members?
13. Have you been directly impacted economically by COVID-19?
    a. How?
14. How would you like to see employers become more flexible with hiring?
15. If these kinds of changes were made, how would it impact your ability to apply for jobs and/or to work? Please be specific.
16. Is there anything you would like to add?

Youth Specific:

1. Do you know about services or opportunities available to you, as a young person?
   a. Have you accessed any of them?
2. What other kinds of opportunities (trainings, bursaries, spaces, supports) for youth would you like to see in the area that you would apply to?
3. How would you like them to be different than the existing opportunities?

Questions for Unemployed People Not in Post-Secondary

1. What kinds of jobs are you looking for? *(Industry, Hours)*
2. What obstacles/barriers do you face when looking for a job?
3. How would you like to see these addressed?
4. What services do you know of available to residents that help with finding employment?
5. What kinds of services, supports or opportunities would you like to see being offered in the community to support folks who are either unable to work or are limited with what kinds of work they can do?
6. How would you like to see employers become more flexible with hiring?

7. If these kinds of changes were made, how would it impact your ability to apply for jobs and/or to work?
8. Do you know of any employers or training opportunities in the area that prioritize community members?
   a. If yes, have you applied to any?
9. Have you been directly impacted economically by COVID-19? How?
10. Is there anything you would like to add?

Questions for Entrepreneurs

1. What kind of small business/organization/service do you operate?
2. Where do you operate?
3. Why did you want to start a company/organization with that service? What gap did you want to fill?
4. Do you feel your company has succeeded in filling that gap?
5. What were the primary obstacles you faced in starting? Did you get help to start up?
6. What kind of support did you receive?
7. Did you face any limitations in receiving support?
8. How did you find out about the help available?
9. What do you think we could do to make sure entrepreneurs can find out about
10. opportunities or supports available to them?
11. Currently, what obstacles or barriers are you facing with your business?
12. What would help you tackle these barriers now?
13. What kinds of supports or opportunities would you like to see available to new entrepreneurs in the area? What would have been helpful to you to have access to, if you were to start now?
14. What do you think would be the best way to make sure residents know about small businesses in the area?
15. Is there anything you would like to add?

Questions for People Who Wish to be Entrepreneurs

1. What kind of small business or organization would you like to start?
2. Tell me about what gap you see that filling? How?
3. Where would you operate?
4. What are the main obstacles preventing you from starting?
5. What kind of help would you need?
6. Do you know of anywhere currently available to you, where you can access this kind of support?
7. What would be the best way to let entrepreneurs like yourself in the area, know about opportunities or supports available?
8. How would you like to see the neighbourhood become a place where entrepreneurs can succeed?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share?