

Work Matters Final Report

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Introduction

The Work Matters project is delivered by the Canadian Career Academy and funded by *Employment Ontario*. In the project's two-year existence, Work Matters brought together various key groups across multiple sectors to understand the successes and challenges affecting them in their respective industries. We then worked to build effective workforce solutions to address the challenges brought forth and transformed the successes we heard into best practices for other businesses and organizations to adopt.

This report captures the work we have accomplished over the past two years and our insights into the work that must still be carried out to encourage workforce development in Lanark and Renfrew Counties. This report will begin with a project overview that addresses the objectives of the project and how those objectives were met, followed by the project delivery detailing the structure of the project. Our project promotion, partnerships, successful outcomes, and recommendations will highlight the results of the project and provide insight into the lasting effects of the Work Matters project and where and how the work we have accomplished will carry forward into current partnerships and future projects.



Figure 1. Phase One Infographic

Project Overview

The primary objective of the Work Matters project was to improve recruitment and retention practices across five sectors within Lanark and Renfrew Counties. The five sectors of focus were: health care, manufacturing, transportation, early childhood education (ECE), and the skilled trades. We worked with employers in these sectors in various ways to understand the challenges they were facing with attracting and retaining staff and provided them with our recommendations on how to improve their recruitment practices to best reflect the future of work. The beginning of each of our two phases began with roundtable discussions focused on the sectors of choice. These roundtables provided a knowledge-exchange environment for employers to engage and share their sector-based challenges and share their previously established best practices that other employers were free to adopt where they see fit. From there, the Work Matters team produced an HR Toolkit with blog-style posts to help provide employers with resources related to the HR and recruitment-based challenges discussed during the roundtables. Similarly, we hosted Future of Work Summits that were designed with employer interests in mind and featured topics related to bettering recruitment prac-

tices and becoming employers of choice. Surveys were also designed in the project's second phase to engage incumbents, job seekers, and students in the early childhood education and skilled trades sectors. The results of these surveys highlighted several discrepancies between the values of these groups and employers. Employers were also provided a survey to compare these results. This information was shared with employers in our second Roundtable Report to help employers understand what their current and future employees look for in an employer and how best they can adapt to the needs of their staff and ultimately improve their recruitment practices. Finally, the first phase featured three virtual showcase events informing job seekers and students about career pathways in the health care, manufacturing, and transportation sectors.

Another way that the Work Matters project has helped improve recruitment and retention practices within Lanark and Renfrew Counties is by instigating various programs funded by *Employment Ontario* designed to train and place hundreds of people into sectors with extensive labour gaps. These programs include:

- **Pathway2PSW** : This program will train and place 180 personal support workers across Lanark and Renfrew Counties.
- **Pathway2DSW**: This program will train and place 15 developmental services workers across Lanark and Renfrew Counties.
- **Pathway2DZ** : This program will train and place 25 DZ licensed truck drivers across Lanark and Renfrew Counties.

These programs provide financial and job coaching support for each participant. Each program also includes a job readiness component that helps improve each participant's ability to be a great employee as well as a trained professional. This dynamic training model helps to ensure that each participant is an attractive candidate for employers and provides them with the training and confidence to remain in their respective sectors. The formation of these programs is a direct result of the research conducted by the Work Matters project and the partnerships established throughout.

The secondary objective of the Work Matters project was to create an advisory council to help support current and future labour market demands. This was achieved through the creation of the Work Matters Consortium. This consortium aims to bring together progressive, forward-thinking employers and partners to create and implement plans of action to help resolve rural workforce development challenges affecting our communities. With businesses and organizations in Eastern Ontario working together, the consortium will be sharing responsibilities and accountability toward a common goal of recognizing, researching, innovating, and implementing grassroots solutions that will lead to local workforce development. The consortium will be monitored by the Canadian Career Academy going forward.

Supplementary to these two objectives, the Work Matters project reproduced its process immediately after its first phase by applying it to other in-demand sectors in the area. The first phase focused on health care, manufacturing, and transportation followed by the second phase which focused on early childhood education and skilled trades. Both phases followed our model with adjustments made based on the lessons learned from the first phase. The second phase focused on our roundtables and Future of Work Summit, from which we saw tremendous results.

In addition to this, we were able to recommend our project model to other local organizations interested in adopting similar practices. One example of this is Valley Heartland – Community Futures Development Corporation, a non-profit organization that offers business development and finance programs for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lanark County and North Leeds, which adopted our roundtable format to host roundtable discussions focused on food, hospitality, and tourism sectors in October 2021.

The objectives of the Work Matters project remained consistent throughout its two-year span, however, the focus of efforts shifted slightly between phases, from health care, manufacturing, and transportation to early childhood education and skilled trades. We remained in constant communication with all sectors throughout the entire project, keeping the relationships alive and engaged. Many of the employers engaged in the project's first phase also attended the most recent summit in our final phase.



Figure 2. Phase Two Infographic

Project Delivery

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Work Matters project model consisted of roundtables, summits, and showcases. Our team also added an HR Toolkit, several reports, and various videos to this model to deliver a more fulsome approach to the needs of the project. Each piece of this model allowed us to engage with employers, learn about their sector-based challenges, and provide grassroots solutions to the challenges that were brought to our attention.

Roundtables

Each phase began with a set of sector-focused roundtable discussions that allowed local employers to engage with one another and discuss the greatest challenges affecting them in their specific sector. These discussions allowed employers to agree on common challenges, voice (from an employer standpoint) the changes that must be made, and share their current best practices for other employers to adopt. The roundtables also allowed employers to build connections with like-minded employers in their sector and encouraged employers to work together rather than competitively. In total, our virtual roundtables brought over 70 local employers together across five sectors. To add to the group discussions from

the roundtables, we were able to accommodate close to 60 individual interviews with employers who were eager to have their voices heard but could not attend the roundtable sessions.

Showcases

Originally, the showcases were to be in-person events but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to quickly move to a virtual platform that was designed, developed, and implemented by the Canadian Career Academy. We delivered three showcases using our virtual event platform during the project's first phase. The showcases were designed to promote the health care, manufacturing, and transportation sectors to students and job seekers. The showcases provided them with resources for how to enhance their career decision-making and job search skills and how to understand and interpret labour market information. On the live day event, we connected job seekers to employers. Our showcases featured 23 employers in the health care sector, 11 employers in manufacturing, and 12 employers in transportation. We learned lessons along the way to develop statistical tracking tools to understand our reach. Overall, our showcases captured over 2,000 site visits and over 3,400 page views.

Summits

The structure of our Future of Work Summits followed a virtual conference style. The summits were the first step in helping employers move towards improving their business practices to better reflect the future of work. The learning topics we chose to highlight often reflected the challenges discussed during the roundtables. Attending our summits was a great step in the right direction for most employers. We also discovered that continued programming focused on the areas of interest highlighted in the summits is paramount for employers to enable real action in tackling the challenges facing their businesses. This recommendation will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

In November 2020, we hosted our first Future of Work Summit virtually via Zoom. The featured speakers were David Coletto of Abacus Data, Chéla Breckon of With Chéla Inc., and Stephen Beamish of Launch Lab. The learning topics they presented were:

Managing Millennials and Bridging the Generational Gap: In this presentation, David highlighted ways that employers can create a millennial-friendly workplace and shared his best practices for embracing a younger generation of workers from an older generation of employer

standpoint. David also worked to challenge millennial and Gen Z stereotypes by highlighting the immense benefits of working with millennials and Gen Zs, such as being the most ethnically and culturally diverse, tech-savvy, entrepreneurial, and educated generations thus far, proving to be an asset to any company.

Diversity and Inclusion: In this talk, Chéla discussed how to practice unbiased hiring practices in the workplace. She began by identifying ways in which we engage in unconscious bias and explained the origins of these biases. She stressed that understanding areas where we hold bias is the ultimate way to practice unbiased practices in areas such as hiring.

Branding Strategies to Become an Employer of Choice: In this presentation, Stephen stressed the importance of developing a consistent brand culture to retain the staff you already have and attract the talent you are looking to gain from new hires. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong digital presence, online reputation, and employee vision statement to be considered an employer of choice, especially for millennials and Gen Zs.

In May 2021, we hosted our second Future of Work Summit again via Zoom. The featured speakers were Steve Holmgren of the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium, Michelle Chretien of Conestoga College, and Chéla Breckon of With Chéla Inc. The learning topics they presented were:

Integrating Technology into Your Organization: In these talks, Steve and Michelle discussed the importance of integrating technology into the workplace and the recent advances in AI technology, and how these advancements are changing the world of work. They also stressed that these advancements are something employers should work to embrace to enhance efficiency and remain current in today's labour market.

Welcoming Workplaces: In this presentation, Chéla expanded on her presentation about unbiased hiring practices from our first summit by discussing additional ways employers can work toward creating more welcoming workplaces. In this talk, Chéla focused primarily on the newcomer experience, what barriers they commonly face, and where those barriers appear in most workplaces. She also provided tips for overcoming these barriers, such as assessing your company's job postings, interview practices, and company policies and culture.

In March 2022, we hosted our final Future of Work Sum-

mit via the same virtual event platform we designed for our showcases in the first phase. The featured speakers were Emree Siaroff of Challenge Factory, Colin Harding of Jaeger Consulting Group, and Bailey Parnell of Skills-Camp. The learning topics they presented were:

Culture, Talent, and the Future of Work: In this talk, Emree discussed how and why we work and how best to adapt your organization to reflect the future of work based on his interpretation of labour market trends.

Decentralized Leadership: Overcoming the Small & Medium Enterprise Growth Challenge: In this presentation, Colin discussed the concept of decentralized leadership and how to implement this style of leadership in any organization. This leadership model focuses on accountability rather than the responsibility of members within an organization and spreads leadership roles throughout rather than having one central leader.

The Importance of Soft Skills & Building a Human-Centric Workplace: In this talk, Bailey highlighted the importance of developing soft skills, especially as we move toward a future centered around automation and AI. She also emphasized her Inviting M.O.R.E. model as the way toward building a more human-centric workplace. M.O.R.E. stands for a growth Mindset, Optimism, Resilience, and Each other/empathy.

In addition to the featured speakers, our final summit also included virtual trade booths showcasing 21 local employers and service providers and networking lounges to encourage employers to connect.

We had over 220 employers and community partners register for our three Future of Work Summits. As an example of activity, our final summit, which was broadcasted using our virtual event platform, had over 1,000 site visits leading up to the event, 4,000 page views on the day of the event, and almost 20,000 page views leading up to the event.

Toolkit

In addition to our specified delivery model, we also created an HR Toolkit with blog-style posts to help provide employers with resources for bettering their HR and recruitment practices. The topics covered in our HR Toolkit are:

- Hiring Newcomers to Canada
- Managing Millennials
- Employer Branding
- Understanding Turnover
- The Importance of Tracking HR Metrics
- Search Engine Optimization

These resources are available on the Work Matters website for employers to reference at any time. We have also advertised these resources at our roundtables, summits, and showcases. View the Work Matters HR Toolkit [here](#).

Reports

In addition to this current report, the Work Matters team produced two Roundtable Reports and a Year in Review report detailing the project's first phase. These reports were not specified deliverables for the project, but we thought they were necessary to expand on our findings and recommendations throughout the project. We used these reports to share our findings with employers, ministries, EO providers, MPs and MPPs, community partners, and our economic development contacts. The reports were also shared on our social media and website to ensure that our findings were available to the public.

View the Roundtable Report from our first phase [here](#).

View the Year in Review from our first phase [here](#).

View the Roundtable Report from our second phase [here](#).

Videos

A major focus of the Work Matters project was to continue to make rural areas, like Lanark and Renfrew Counties, attractive to newcomers and people moving from urban areas. We wanted to showcase the wealth of opportunities our area has to offer and promote the benefits of rural living. We accomplished this through several video projects with Kaily Kay Strategy and Creatives, Flywheel Media, and LeMay Media & Consulting. We used these videos to showcase the various economic opportunities in our area specific to our five sectors of focus, day in the life perspectives from professionals in these fields, and employer spotlights that highlighted employers that we considered to be employers of choice. These videos were also designed to attract people to consider a career path they may have never considered. Aside from highlighting the benefits of living in rural communities and pursuing careers in health care, manufacturing, transportation, early childhood education, and the skilled trades, these videos also provided employers with marketing materials that could be used in their businesses. Each employer featured in our videos was given a free video of their own to use in their marketing, another way in which Work Matters helped improve recruitment practices for local employers.

We also worked with Matt LeMay of LeMay Media &

Consulting to produce our *Road to Recovery* short film that highlights COVID-19 impacts and how our business communities need to break down silos and build bridges to work collaboratively toward the future of work. View the Work Matters videos and *Road to Recovery* short film [here](#).

Technological Innovations










The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the vastness of Lanark and Renfrew Counties pushed us to use virtual platforms as much as possible to successfully deliver our project. In addition to boosting our digital presence on social media and our website, we also utilized a virtual event platform designed by the Canadian Career Academy. We used this virtual event platform to deliver the showcases from the project's first phase and our most recent summit. Below is a list of the technical capabilities the platform offers and how we used some of these capabilities in our events:

- **WCAG compliant with Accessibility tools** available to all users (screen reader, change contrast, enlarge fonts, etc.)
- **Multi-platform compatibility** allows the site to be accessed on a phone, tablet, and desktop computer.

- **Cross-platform browser compatibility** allows the site to display well on various browsers such as Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, and Safari.
- **Built-in registration** and password reset capability.
- **Easy to navigate** allowing users to reach any destination in three clicks or less.
- **Multi-lingual** with 104 languages supported and instant translation available.
- **Hosted in Canada**, developed in Ontario, to ensure security and privacy standards are met.
- **Extremely customizable** allows the platform to be adjusted for any event. For instance, our showcases and most recent summit featured virtual “trade booths” for employers and service providers to showcase their businesses. These booths featured downloadable content, company videos, job postings, and company profiles with predetermined fields. Each business could use these features to customize the content featured on their booth. The design of the booth itself was also easily customizable upon the employer’s request. To get a sense of the site’s versatility, view the virtual trade booths from our most recent summit [here](#).
- **Live chat** options to connect with attendees in real-time or ‘leave message’ option for follow-up after the event. The live chat feature was used at our showcases and most recent summit to allow attendees to connect with employers and trade booth participants or to request technical support during the event. Post-event we were able to provide employers and trade booth participants with transcripts and reporting related to the live chat feature.
- **Video conferencing** enabled for employer-initiated meetings upon candidate/attendee request during the showcases and summit.
- **Virtual conferencing services**, such as Zoom, are accessed directly through the event platform, so users remain on the platform for the duration of the event.
- **Reporting** available on event statistics such as page and site views, live chat engagement, number of content downloads, etc.

Project Promotion

A variety of methods were used to promote the Work Matters project to employers, community partners, and other parties in Lanark and Renfrew Counties.

- Designed the Work Matters [website](#) to promote roundtables, showcases, surveys, and summits while also providing additional information about the project. Our website also houses our reports, HR Toolkit, registration portals, and various media materials pertaining to the project.
- Used social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter to help promote our roundtables, surveys, showcases, and summits to employers and the public.    
- Shared various videos to our YouTube channel including employer Wish Lists compiled from clips from our roundtables, Employer Spotlights, and Day in the Life videos of incumbents in the specific sectors of focus. 
- Developed partnerships with various video production companies that helped create and deliver our Employer Spotlights and Day in the Life videos and our *Road to Recovery* short film.   
- Enlisted Swoop Media graphic recording artist to capture the main themes from each roundtable. The graphic recordings ([Appendices A.1. to A.15.](#)) were included on our website, in reports, and on social media to inform and promote the project. 
- Used various print and online publications/media outlets to promote the project, roundtables, and surveys, such as [Ottawa Valley Business](#), the Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark's quarterly newsletter, Hometown News, Inside Ottawa Valley, Pembroke Observer & News, and Cogeco TV.

- Created an extensive flyer and postcard mailout campaign ([Appendices B.1. to B.3.](#)) intended to engage employers and increase roundtable registrations and survey responses.
- Curated a separate flyer campaign ([Appendix B.4.](#)) targeting local high school and college students interested in careers in the skilled trades and/or early childhood education for the purpose of increasing student survey responses.
- Conducted radio interviews with Lake 88.1 and Valley Heritage Radio to promote the Pathway2PSW project, but Work Matters was mentioned as a key part in allowing the Pathway2PSW project to come to fruition. Held interviews and promoted 30-second commercials with myFM and JACK 92.3 in the project's first phase.



- Created various promotional items such as branded tote bags, pens, keychains, and water bottles to be distributed at events.
- Participated in various local job fairs, service provider-hosted community events, virtual 'tables', and individual meetings with employers and community partners to help promote the project, roundtables, showcases, and summit.

- Produced various 'commercials' in-house for use on social media to promote surveys and roundtables.
- Reached out to newcomer services in Toronto and Ottawa, in the project's first phase, to inform them about the showcases and encourage secondary migration to the area.
- Expanded our employer database and connected with employers using techniques such as cold-calling, in-person visits to businesses, and mass emailing campaigns to promote roundtables, showcases, summits, and surveys.
- Sent our Roundtable Reports and Year in Review to our area MPs, MPPs, mayors, economic development contacts, EO providers, local employers, and community partners to share our findings and increase the exposure of our project.
- Attended regular Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Tables and met with Tiffany Dedo, the Employment Development Officer of Pikwakanagan First Nations to help strengthen our connection with local Indigenous communities to hopefully encourage future collaboration.



Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
First Nation

Partnerships

Several partnerships involving varying levels of interaction and relevance were established throughout the Work Matters project. From consistently sharing our social media posts to arranging introductions with specific individuals to consulting on the possible directions of the project, various key players contributed to the impact and success of the project.

The key partnerships we have maintained and fostered throughout the entire project are as follows:

Valley Heartland: Valley Heartland worked very closely with us throughout the entire project. They advised and provided feedback on the project's implementation, reports, summits, and marketing strategy. Furthermore, Valley Heartland made important introductions to people, businesses, and organizations that had a great influence on Work Matter's success throughout Lanark County. Valley Heartland promoted and attended our summits and roundtables, managed a trade booth at our most recent summit, and provided us with office space at a reduced cost as we were co-located with them. They are Work Matters' biggest supporters as their innovative concepts align perfectly with the goals of the project.

Chéla Breckon (With Chéla Inc.): Chéla provided input throughout the project and not only presented at our first two summits but also moderated our most recent summit. Chéla and her staff managed two booths at our most recent summit, With Chéla Inc. and Best Boss. Best Boss is a leadership program that was developed by With Chéla Inc. as a direct result of the Work Matters project. It helps employers in rural communities improve their recruitment and retention practices, a service that aligns with the needs of our rural communities and improves businesses. Our alignment of values and strategy is what allowed this partnership to be so strong.

LeMay Media & Consulting: Matt LeMay of LeMay Media & Consulting was an integral partner to the Work Matters project. Matt moderated our roundtable discussions and produced our *Road to Recovery* short film, which highlights the importance of companies and organizations working together toward a common goal across multiple streams. He also advised on the project and its direction as per his previous experience working with the Labour Market Group of Lanark and Renfrew, which, as an organization, has been helpful in advancing the efforts of the Work Matters project. Matt LeMay has also initiated the start of a dialogue with Indigenous communities that would benefit from our work.

Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew (LIP): Jodi Bucholtz of LIP recently invited Work Matters and Canadian Career Academy staff to participate in the LIP Advisory Council and requested our feedback on their new website portal that offers integration and settlement resources to newcomers to our communities. LIP also supported the Work Matters project by promoting and participating in our roundtable discussions and our Future of Work Summits. LIP and the Canadian Career Academy are in discussion about their current partnership and how to continue collaboration moving forward.

In addition to our foundational partnerships, new partnerships were also formed during the second phase of the Work Matters project. These connections present opportunities for collaboration on future projects focused on economic and workforce growth within our communities. A few budding partnerships are as follows:

United Way East Ontario: Through Kelly Mertl, of United Way East Ontario, Work Matters was invited to attend several Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Tables, working to address community and workforce challenges experienced by Indigenous communities in Eastern Ontario. Attending these tables offered us the opportunity to connect and begin building bridges with these important communities. In addition to the invitation to their tables, United Way East Ontario supported the Work Matters project through promotion and participa-

tion at our most recent Future of Work Summit.

Colin Harding (Jaeger Consulting Group): Valley Heartland connected us to Colin Harding, Founder and President of Jaeger Consulting Group. Jaeger Consulting Group created the SAVE Leadership System to help train and support business leaders in planning and articulating a decentralized leadership model in their businesses, which works to hold team members accountable for achieving the overall goals of the business so business leaders can focus on the growth of their company. Human-first leadership training is the foundational building block to drive the change necessary for strong SME business growth, pandemic recovery, and meeting future work demands. Colin's work in leadership development aligns with the employer feedback from the Work Matters project, which has made Jaeger Consulting Group an ideal partner for pursuing a leadership program of this nature.

World Skills Employment Centre: Ottawa-based World Skills Employment Centre and Work Matters are potential partners in employing and attracting newcomers to rural areas such as Lanark and Renfrew Counties. This partnership would assist in bridging the workforce gaps our rural communities are currently experiencing. World Skills took an active part in our final summit and are interested in exploring other options to entice newcomers into rural areas.

Work Matters would like to acknowledge all our community partners for their support throughout the Work Matters project. We have been fortunate to work alongside the following community partners for the duration of the project:



Successful Outcomes

The Work Matters project has successfully delivered in its two-year existence – 14 roundtable discussions with employers, 3 showcases connecting job seekers to employers, 25 videos and 1 short film promoting economic opportunities and workforce development, and 3 Future of Work Summits providing employers with knowledge and resources to begin tackling the recruitment and retainment challenges they face.

The accomplishments of the Work Matters project have led to the creation of several programs, partnerships, and success stories from the employers we connected with. Some of the successful outcomes of the Work Matters project include:

Pathway2PSW: In partnership with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) and the Native Education & Training College (NETC), we established the Pathway2PSW program. This program will train and place 180 personal support workers (PSWs) across Lanark and Renfrew Counties. Currently, 45 participants have completed the program and are employed as PSWs, and 90 participants are anticipated to graduate from the program in June 2022. There is an ongoing demand for PSWs in our region, as expressed by local

health care employers, and we are committed to meeting this demand.

Pathway2DSW: In partnership with the Native Education & Training College (NETC) we established a pilot project, the Pathway2DSW program. This program will train and place 15 developmental services workers (DSWs) across Lanark and Renfrew Counties. We currently have all 15 participants enrolled in this 52-week online program who will enter the sector as DSWs upon completion. Polling from only six of our employer partners has revealed a dire need to fill over 100 DSW vacancies just within their organizations. The broader district requires more. Based on the success of our pilot project and this evolving information, we clearly see a need for local training opportunities to support this industry.

Pathway2DZ: In partnership with the Eastern Ontario Training Board (EOTB) and Crossroads Truck & Career Academy we established the Pathway2DZ program. This program will train and place 25 DZ licensed truck drivers across Lanark and Renfrew Counties. We have agreed to continue this partnership to meet the demand for truck drivers in Eastern Ontario.

Local Immigration Partnership Advisory Board: The partnership formed with the Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew (LIP) through the Work Matters project led Robert Probert and Shelley More of the Canadian Career Academy to join LIP’s advisory board. This board will work to create actionable solutions to issues concerning local immigration initiatives.

The Work Matters Consortium: The creation of our employer-led consortium will be instrumental in carrying forward the work accomplished by the Work Matters project to continue to create actionable solutions to future workforce development challenges.

In addition to these concrete examples of success relating to programs and partnerships established because of the Work Matters project, we have also experienced success in assisting local employers as they work to make improvements in the culture and recruitment practices of their companies. Here are some examples of these successes:

Wills Transfer Ltd.: After participating in the roundtables held during the project’s first phase, Wills Transfer Ltd. in Smiths Falls learned about the importance of developing a strong employer brand by upgrading its digital presence and online reputation. Taking advice from the Work Matters project, Wills Transfer Ltd. completely revamped

its company website to attract a younger generation of workers and in so doing, has established a human resources department to navigate attraction, retention, and leadership challenges. This is a growing company with five locations throughout Eastern Ontario.

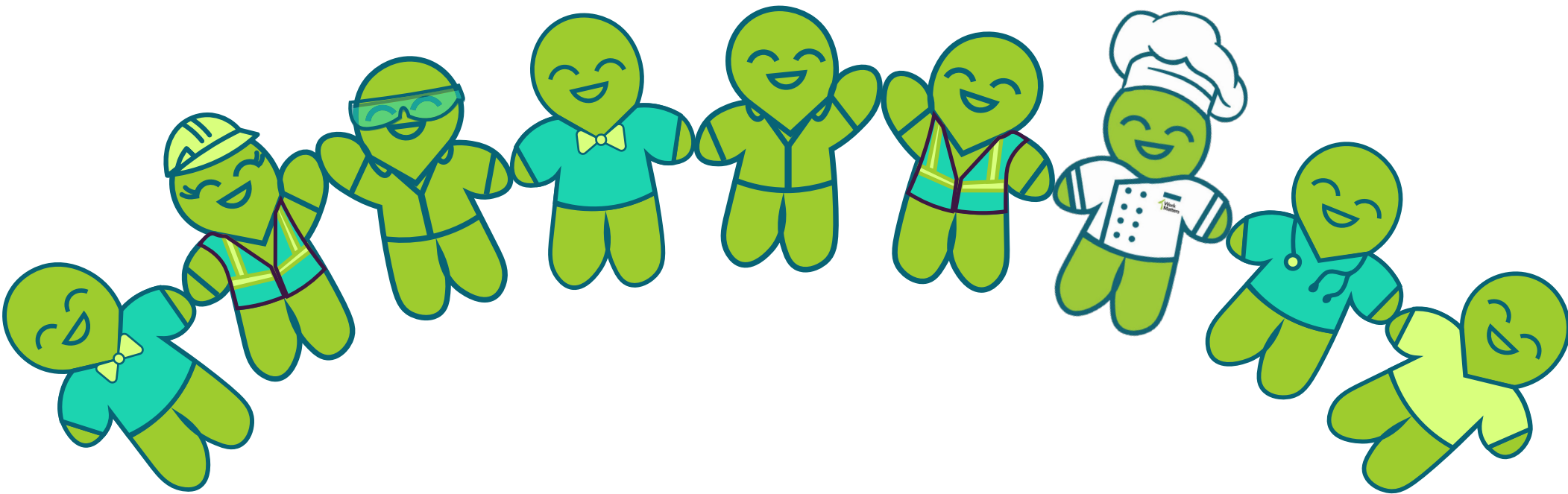
KI: After attending the roundtables and summits from the project’s first phase, the General Manager of KI in Pembroke began investing in progressive strategies to begin diversifying his company. Upon our recommendations put forth in the first phase, KI was one of the first companies to invest in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) created by the Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew (LIP). This training helps employers understand how they can improve and integrate diversity and inclusion practices within their organization. The IDI training helped KI improve its company culture, policies, and practices and KI is now offering sponsorships to encourage newcomers to join their organization.



Additionally, we have had success with connecting like-minded organizations to help strengthen the work that they are already doing. For example, we facilitated the connection between Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew and United Way East Ontario to leverage the work that they do toward their common goals.

Further, through engaging with ECE employers during our roundtable period, we found that current ECE programs need restructuring, management-specific training,

and must offer paid placements. These ECE employer discussions have revealed a desire for better communication and course development with the College of Early Childhood Educators who control the formal curriculum used in Ontario. Our findings and our connections made throughout this project have allowed us to connect local ECE employers with each other to help facilitate this change and begin the necessary steps to improve ECE program curriculum to better suit the needs of employers.



Testimonials

We collected numerous testimonials throughout the Work Matters project. Below are a few of the statements we received from employers and community partners who have participated in the project.

“ I had a fantastic time at the Future of Work Summit by Work Matters. These kinds of conversations about skills that will be required in the future of our businesses and how to build them are critical. I’m glad to have been a part of it. ”

Bailey Parnell, Founder & CEO
SkillsCamp

“ Thanks again for coordinating everything! The virtual booth setup was a unique way of doing things, and your presenters were great. Thanks again for letting us participate. ”

Garrett Elliot, General Manager
Launch Lab

“ Congratulations on a very organized and insightful event! The speakers you got were amazing and timely. The only feedback I would give for future events is to have longer networking sessions in between speaking sessions, other than that it was a great success overall, looking forward to future events! ”

Marco Ritondo, Manager, Employer Engagement
World Skills Employment Centre

“ It was an honour to facilitate a session at the Work Matters Future of Work Summit 2022. Work Matters’ objective to bring both sides of the talent pool – supply and demand – together with community partners for the improvement of Human Resources practices in Lanark and Renfrew Counties is a truly valuable approach. Their professionalism, knowledge, and efforts will add great short- and long-term value to the community. ”

Emree Siaroff, Vice President, Leadership & Consulting
Challenge Factory

“ People are at the heart of what drives us at Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew, what moves our culture, what makes our work possible. And yet we often only pay the most superficial attention to what powers the people we work with. The Future of Work Summit spoke to the very heart of this. At the summit, I heard presenters speak to their own processes in ways I could identify with, and in ways, I’ve never thought of. Work Matters created a space where people were at the core – an inspired and helpful space that gave me additional tools to support my leadership approach within my team and community. ”

Jodi Bucholtz, Manager
Local Immigration Partnership – Lanark & Renfrew

“ The Work Matters Project is one-of-a-kind for all the right reasons. In my career in smaller community workforce, economic, and community development projects, I have seen many publicly funded initiatives focus on discussion and consultation, leaving action and responsiveness on the table. This project is different because of the mobilization of findings into action. Employers need and deserve public projects that can respond at the pace of business. Under the courageous leadership of the Canadian Career Academy and their incredibly talented team of professionals, so many concrete outcomes emerged for employers. Real listening. Real action. Real results. I strongly feel that this approach is a best practice for rural areas, for small-town employers, to carry out relevant, resourceful responses that honour the rural context and encourage lasting change and progress. I know we will see the ripple effect of this project for years to come. ”

Chéla Breckon, Founder & Freestyle Strategist
With Chéla Inc.

“ We identified the need for workforce development roundtables through our year-long Business Retention and Expansion Project in 2019. As hoped, the roundtables have been a useful sounding board and provided valuable insight into industry-specific challenges. By supporting the Work Matters project, we have benefited from collaboration with other economic stakeholders.

For Valley Heartland, the opportunity to connect directly with business owners and human resource staff has been invaluable. For Lanark County Economic Development, the information gathered will be crucial to our ongoing workforce development efforts. ”

Amber Coville, Business Development + Program Officer
Valley Heartland

Head Office:
Box 340, 146 Hwy # 15
Smiths Falls, ON K7A 4T2



June 4, 2021

Good afternoon Jayne and Shelley

I wanted to thank you for your work this past year on the Work Matters project. As discussed, in our rural community we do struggle to properly staff some positions in our company, and these types of initiatives help deal with some of the HR challenges of recruiting and retention.

The Transportation Roundtable in September of last year was a good forum to share our struggles, and best practices with our industry peers, as well as a great opportunity to pick up best practices from our industry colleagues. The participants represented a very good cross section of our regional transportation industry.

The "Future of Work Summit" in November of 2020 was a very informative, and worthwhile event.

Each of the speakers, David Coletto, Chela Breckon and Stephen Beamish brought a unique perspective on understanding the current work force and building a culture to both attract talent and increase retention. I benefited from being on the employer panel at the lunch hour breakout session. Again, I had the opportunity to share about the culture at our company and learn best practices from the colleagues at the table.

A big thank you for allowing us to be the Lanark County -Transportation employer Ambassador for the video series.

The video showcasing our company and culture and opportunities within our company was very professionally prepared. We are using this in our recruiting efforts.

The "Day in the life of" video, showcasing one of our transport drivers helps to show the benefits of living and working in our rural community. We know it is the best place to live and work, and these videos help us tell that story

Again, thanks for all you did to promote our community and company

Best regards

Terry Wills

President wills Transfer Limited

"Logistics Experience That Works"
www.willstransfer.com

March 31, 2022

To whom it may concern,

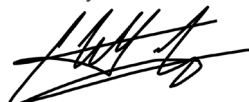
I am writing to share my experiences with, and sincere appreciation for, the 'Work Matters' project executed over the 2021-2022 period.

As a business consultant working in the local community, I am aware of the challenges not just of this community, but rural areas in general, in ensuring preparedness for the realities of the modern workforce. One of, if not *the* most important challenge facing many small businesses in the rural regions right now is hiring and retention. This is a challenge that is heavily related to ensuring readiness for the new workforce; meeting the expectations of the modern workforce, while simultaneously getting the most out of them – ensuring happy employees, creating successful, growing organizations, and supporting strong families, communities and regional economic prosperity.

The Work Matters project and its excellent staff, through both Roundtable discussions and the Future of Work Summit, have been important in providing critical knowledge to local organizations, as well as helping to connect them with one another and to other important support organizations in the region. This is particularly important for rural businesses, which, in my experience, are often underrepresented and underserved and risk being 'left behind', despite being absolutely critical to the economic outcomes of their regions.

By offering effective and timely support to these rural organizations in this key area of modernization, I have no doubt that Work Matters has helped to create positive economic outcomes for the service region. It is my sincere hope that this type of support continues into the future.

Sincerely,



Colin Harding
President & Founder
Jaeger Consulting Group
Cell: 613-884-6998
Email: colin@jaegercg.com

Workforce Development Recommendations

from the Work Matters Team

The Work Matters project has made several accomplishments in its short two-year existence, but we recognize that there is still a lot more work to be done to tackle the workforce development challenges affecting our area. Based on some of our findings from the project, we would like to offer the following recommendations:



There is a skilled labour shortage that will continue to be amplified as the population ages and skilled workers enter retirement.

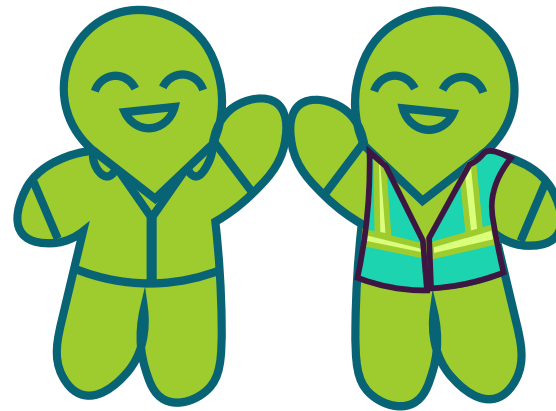
More programming and improved work structures are needed to fill the gaps in our labour force. Programs such as the Pathway2PSW, Pathway2DSW, and Pathway2DZ must be renewed to continue producing skilled workers to fill the demand for workers in the health care and transportation sectors. Additional programs are needed to attract and train ECEs to meet this labour demand as well. A similar ECE program using this format would be useful and much in demand.

To mitigate the effects of the labour shortage, adopting an Employee Work Sharing Model can also help fill the gaps and provide workers with full-time hours across multiple positions in one sector. This model is particularly helpful in the early childhood education and health care sectors where positions are often part-time or casual.

2

Employers working with apprentices need more assistance. We have learned that a lack of resources and the administratively heavy apprenticeship process deters local employers from hiring apprentices. Employers that do hire apprentices agree that these are pitfalls to the program and would benefit from assistance in helping to guide their apprentices through the program and manage the administration process. Apprentices can also benefit from this assistance.

Apprenticeship-Mentor programs are key to assisting employers and apprentices with the apprenticeship process. Employers welcome the idea of an apprenticeship-mentor program that would A) pair each apprentice with an Apprenticeship Mentor who has specific experience in the selected trade and will help navigate the apprentice on their pathway to qualification B) assign each apprentice to an Apprenticeship Support Specialist who would be responsible for completing all paperwork related to the program, removing this burden from the employer and apprentice. The Apprenticeship Mentor would also work closely with the employer to assist with their needs. Employers agree that this type of one-on-one continuous support would allow them to open many apprenticeship opportunities and entice more people into the trades.



3

Certain careers are not highlighted as rewarding careers, which has contributed to the labour gaps in some sectors. Elementary and high schools must work to promote career paths that are not often highlighted, especially those that are in high demand such as careers in the skilled trades, health care, and early childhood education.

Creative and engaging initiatives are needed to attract young people into sectors with a high demand for workers. Mobile career tours are a unique way to showcase different careers to young people by offering innovative, hands-on demonstrations from individuals in the field and providing students with a day-in-the-life experience of the showcased career.

Additionally, improved training for guidance counselors and the reintroduction of curricula related to the skilled trades and other in-demand sectors may help attract young people to careers with significant labour gaps. As the population ages and more women continue to join the workforce, it is integral that careers in the skilled trades, health care, and early childhood education are promoted and made more attractive to young people to help support these labour market trends.



4

Leadership and soft (human) skills training programs are necessary for employers and their staff. The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased labour shortages have forced many employers to cover staff shortages and the day-to-day responsibilities of their businesses, taking their focus away from the growth of their business. Business growth is linked to labour market growth making effective leadership critical.

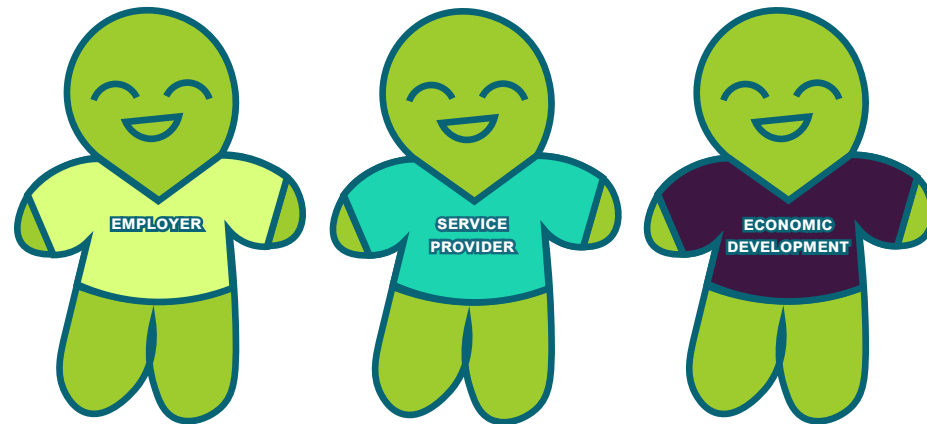
Leadership and soft (human) skills training programs for both employers and their employees are necessary to build strong, productive, diverse, and inclusive workplaces. At our most recent summit, Colin Harding, of Jaeger Consulting Group, spoke about the concept of decentralized leadership, a model employers would work toward in this proposed training. Though his presentation was incredibly informative and engaging, we and Colin agree that programs are needed to facilitate this change in organizational structure rather than just attending a presentation on the strategy. Employers have also expressed the need for hands-on leadership training to assist in this transition.

We believe that **human-first leadership** is the foundation for solving staffing shortages and reinventing our communities for the future of work. We need to develop the workers, job seekers, and those not yet in the labour market with human and technical skills. The essential human skills needed to drive us forward are building a **growth mindset** and developing **optimism** and **resilience** to adapt to the changing world of work. Finally, we need **each other**. We need to continue to develop skills to work together to empathize with our colleagues and coworkers and embrace change. Therefore, a program focused on building human-first workplaces with decentralized leadership structures is necessary to assist employers which is why we will continue to pursue it.

5

There is a need for continued collaboration between employment services, economic development, employers, service providers, etc. Often, these groups are linear-focused and do not operate far beyond their traditional streams. To avoid duplication of efforts and harness the power of collaboration, these groups need to work together toward their common goals.

More initiative needs to be taken that allows employment services, economic development, employers, service providers, etc. to connect and collaborate on common goals. The Work Matters project strived to achieve just that by gaining insight from various groups and connecting organizations that were simultaneously working toward the same goals. The Work Matters Consortium will work to continue this effort outside of the project, continuing to build bridges and promote workforce development in a collaborative way. More initiatives such as this consortium group need to be established to optimize our collective ability to make change happen.



Final Thoughts

In its two-year existence, the Work Matters project has made great strides in the way of workforce development and has built a strong foundation to address workforce development challenges moving forward. This report has detailed the methods and successes of the Work Matters project and has outlined the essential work that still needs to be done based on our findings. Throughout the project, we have been approached by employers and business leaders who read our reports, contributed feedback and ideas, and participated throughout the various phases of the project. These people want change. They recognize the unique needs of rural communities and understand that now is the time for strategic action. We must continue to support initiatives and projects that support rural communities and the needs of employers.

Some of the greatest accomplishments of the Work Matters project are the partnerships we have formed and the tangible successes that have come from collaborating with other businesses and organizations. These successes include the programs that have come out of the Work Matters project that will continue past the project's completion. We feel that the work of the Work Matters project is not done, and we will work to continue our

efforts through the partnerships we have made and the consortium we have created under the Canadian Career Academy.

Critical Labour Shortages:

It is clear from the Work Matters activities that there is a labour shortage in virtually all employment sectors, both pre-and post-pandemic eras. Following are some observations and feedback conveyed through the Work Matters project:

The five most dominant fields with specific skill set needs and large numbers of vacancies are:

- Personal Support Workers (PSWs)
- Developmental Services Workers (DSWs)
- Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) and Managers
- Transportation – AZ and DZ drivers
- Skilled Trades (we identified 11 critical shortages in the skilled trades - *Welder, Refrigeration and AC Mechanic, Construction Electrician, Plumber, Landscape Horticulturist, Carpenter, Bricklayer, Machinist, Industrial Electrician, Baker, Heavy Equipment Technician*)

These specific sectors each have urgent societal demands. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exasperated the situation. It has increased awareness of the vital role these sectors play in the broader workforce and economy while presenting opportunities to mitigate these challenges. Some of the foreboding challenges are as follows:

- An explosion in demand for ECEs is imminent. The adoption of the \$10 per day child care program will only bring additional pressure on this sector and impact the number of families wanting to enter the labour force.
- The huge demand for both PSWs and DSWs is not easing. Burnout has become a factor with existing workers as has been the ability to make these career choices favourable ones. Within Lanark and Renfrew Counties, the rapid expansion of new beds and services needs to be met.
- The broader need for skilled trades workers is a systemic challenge everywhere. Revamping the skilled trades administration, curriculum, registration, branding, and promotion are critical to replenishing the labour market pool. Skilled trades are a key economic engine of Ontario.
- Our retail, service, and hospitality industries have been decimated by the pandemic. There needs to be a significant realignment, innovation, and upskilling to bring these industries back.

- The lack of transportation drivers (AZ and DZ) is negatively impacting our supply chain.
- Business leaders expressed a skills gap in understanding how to lead a modern workforce in a post-pandemic world. SMEs make up 99% of Lanark and Renfrew Counties' business demographics. They drive our economy. Business leadership development will open many pathways to business innovation and labour force growth.

In all cases, strategic training programs can produce excellent results and have been somewhat lacking in availability within rural regions.

Collaboration, and building bridges, have been the key to our success. We recognize that by keeping the connections we have formed alive, the collaborative network will expand, more ideas are contributed and more businesses, organizations, community partners, and individual people will work together to develop a more prosperous community through economic and workforce development. For us, this report captures the beginning of our efforts, and we know that partnerships and the employer takeaways from this project will continue to grow exponentially as we continue to create actionable solutions to workforce development challenges in our area through our programs, consortium, and future project ideas.

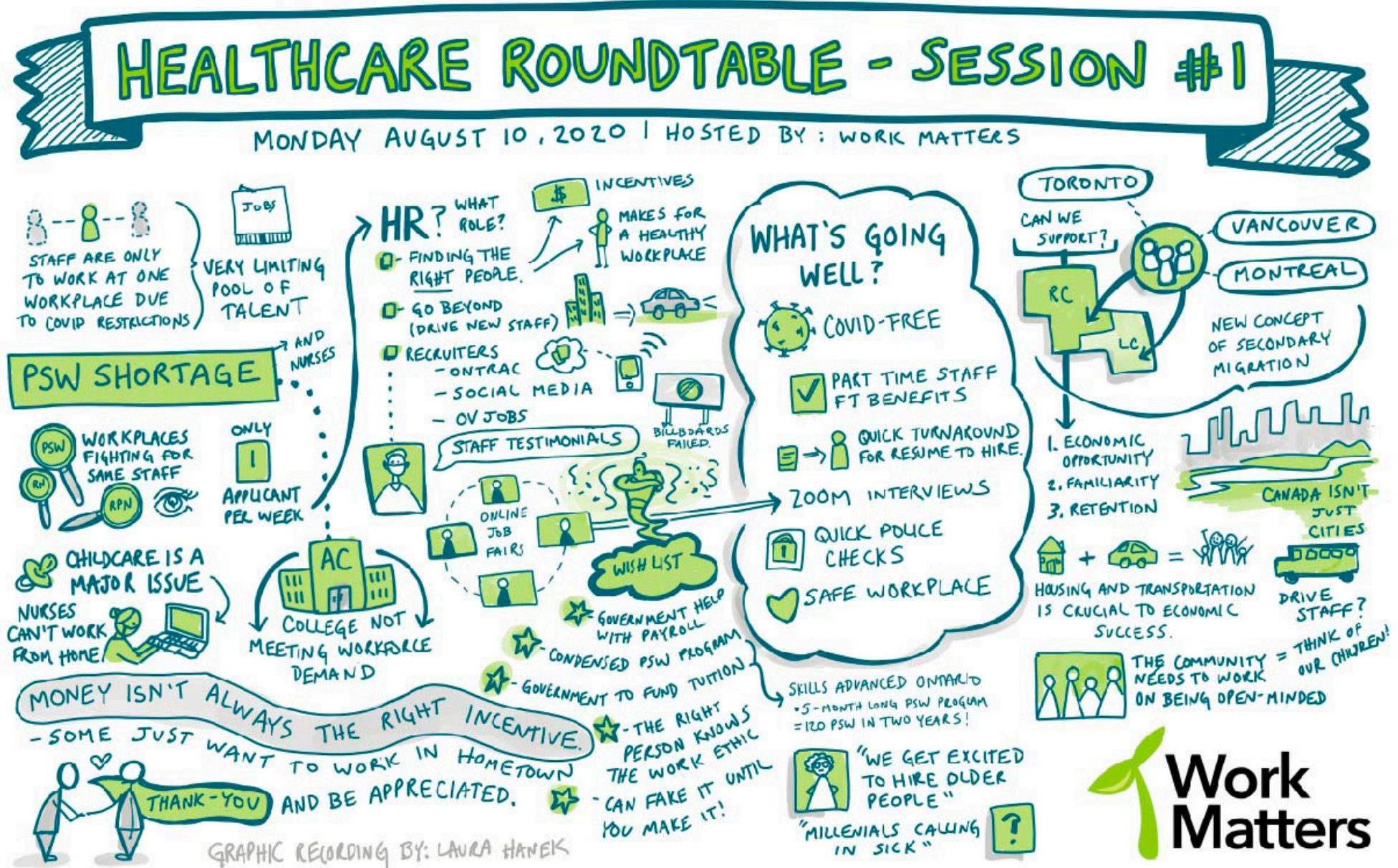
Appendices

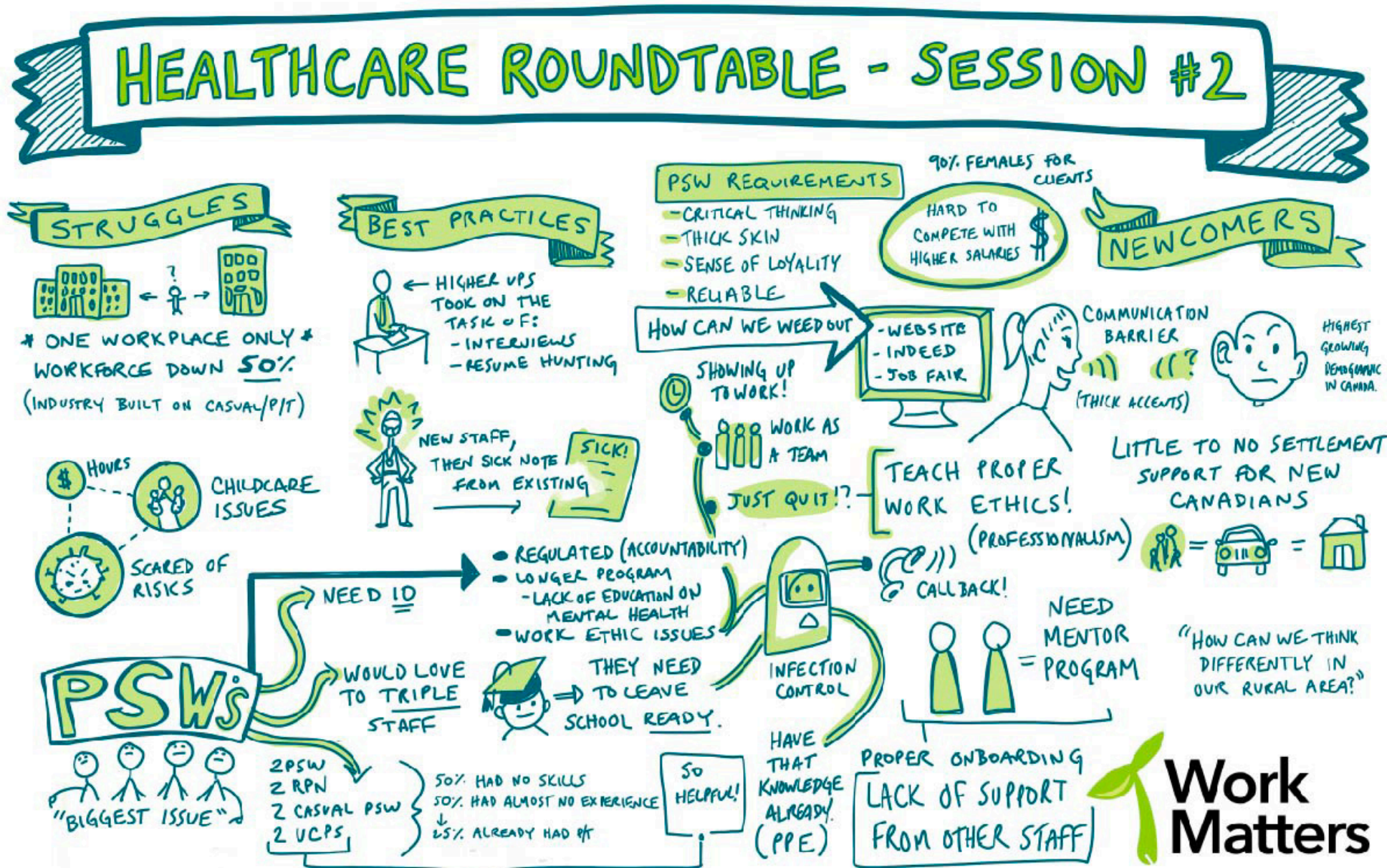
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B. Marketing Materials

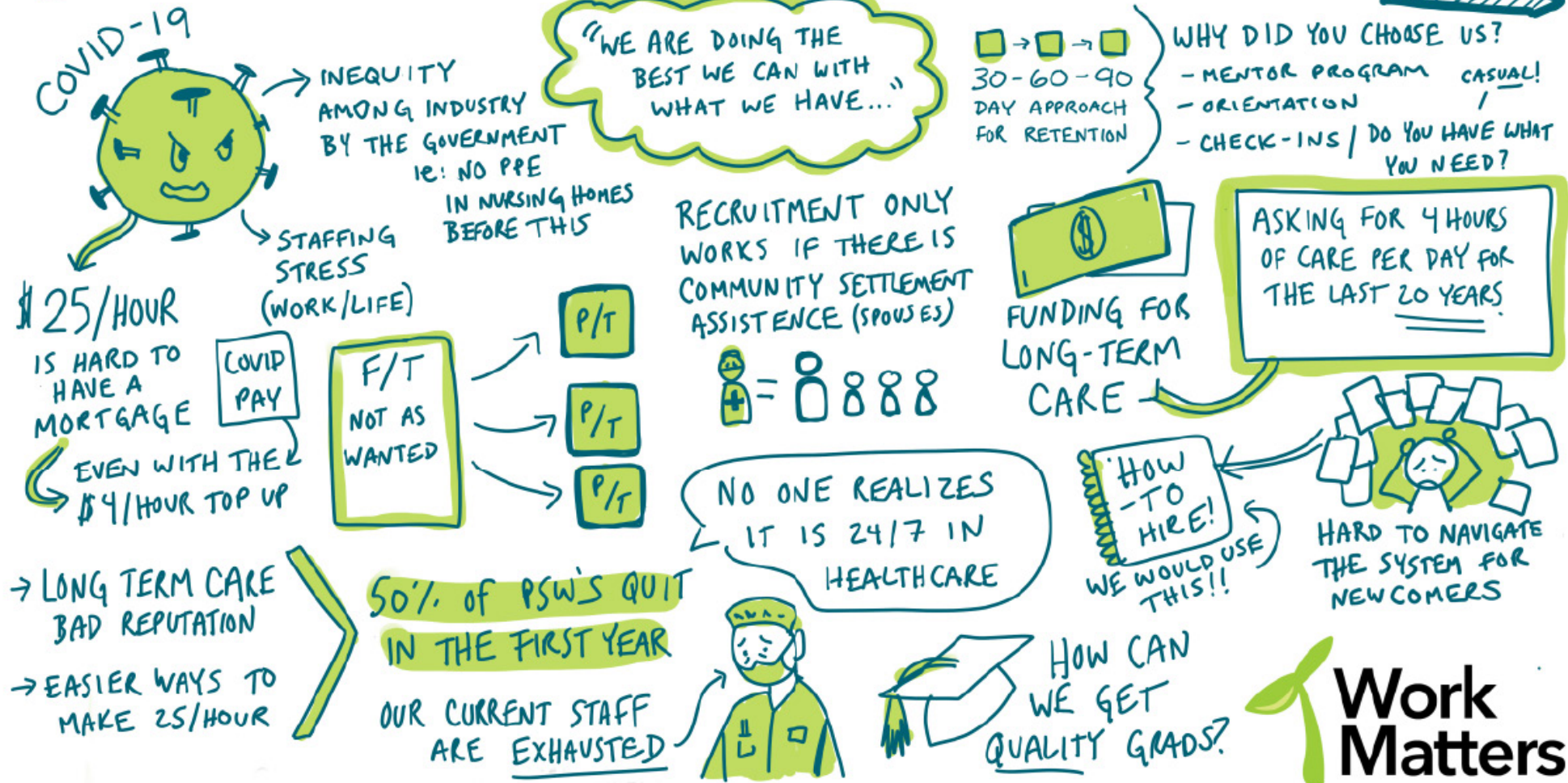
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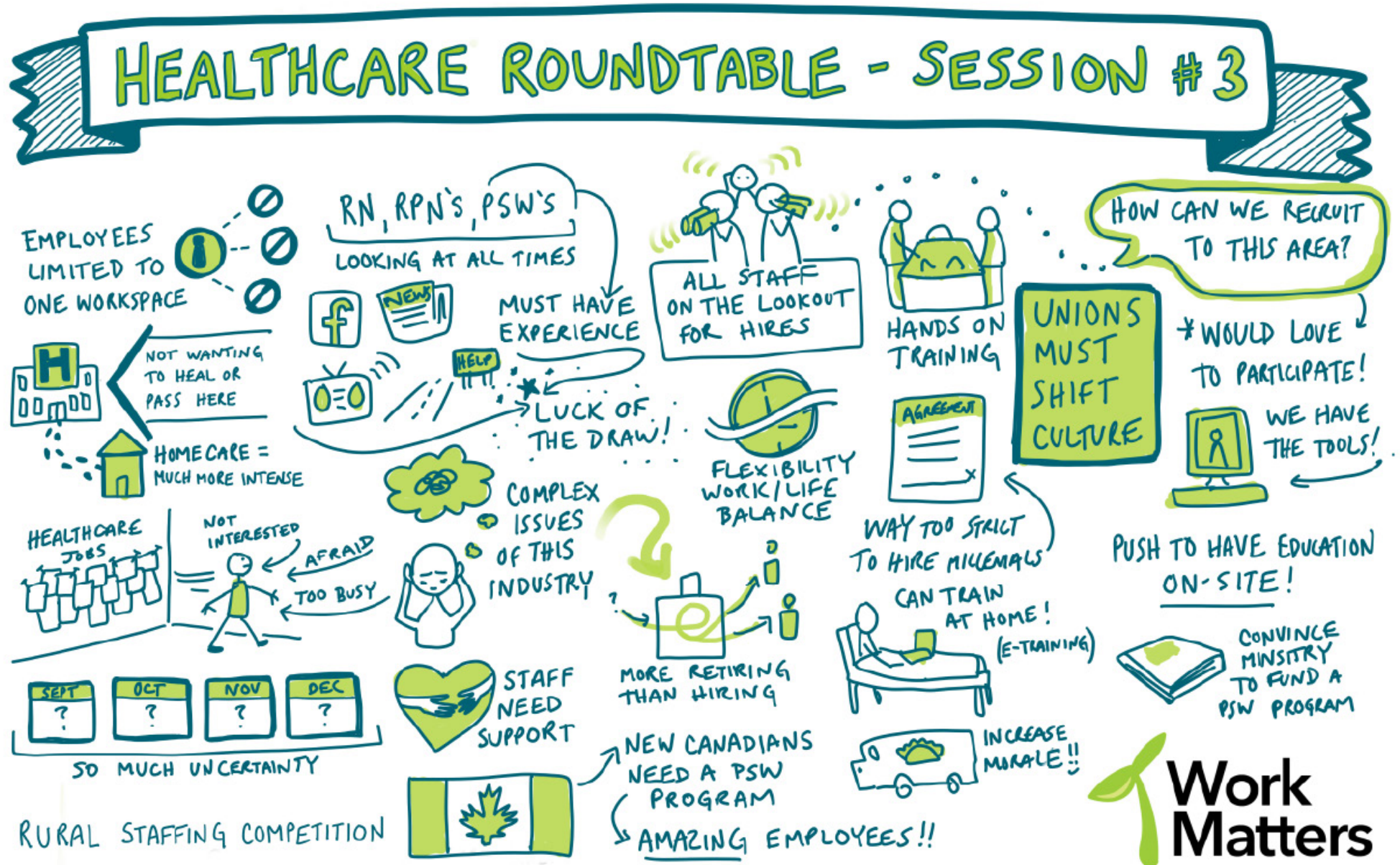


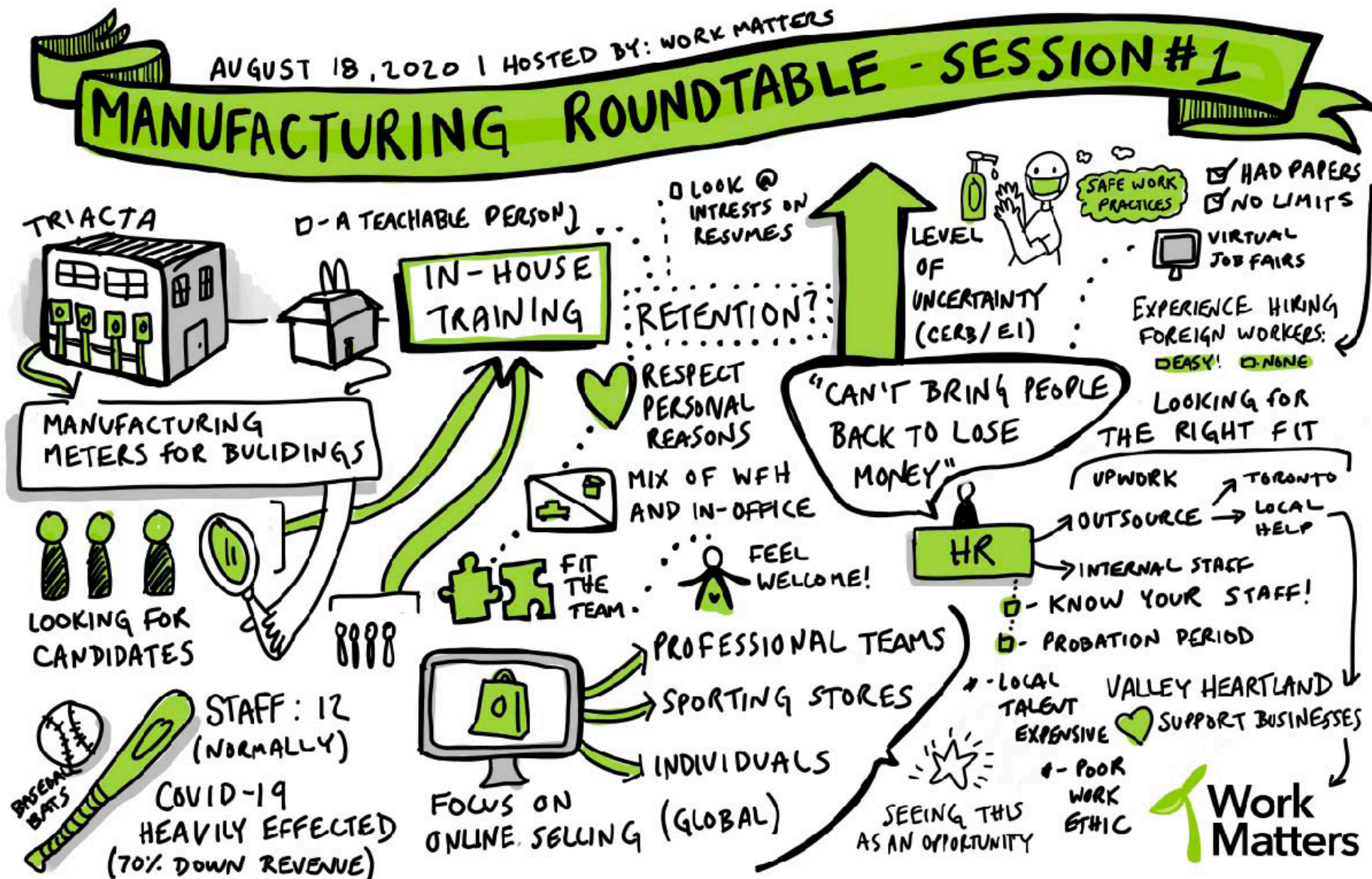


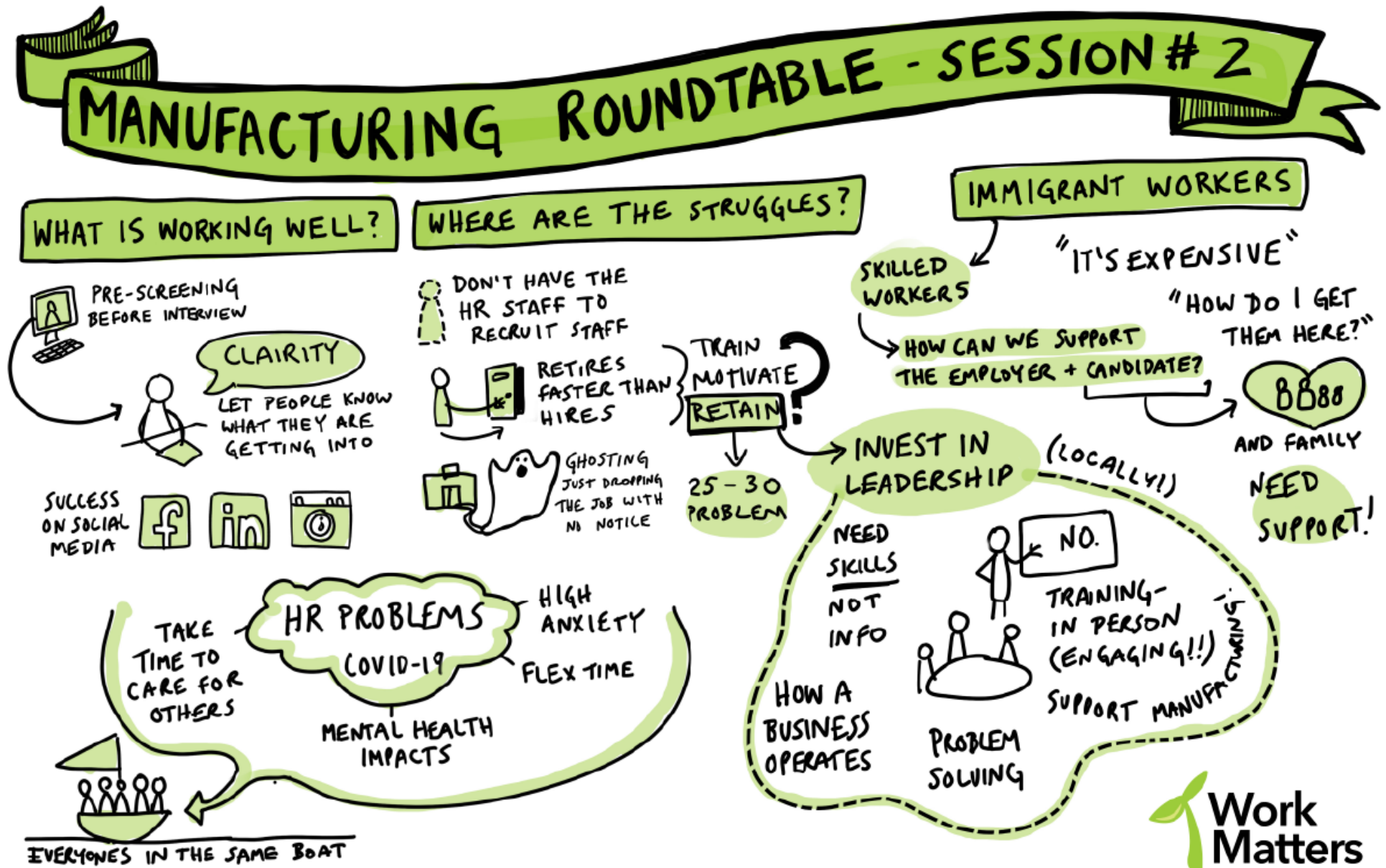
HEALTHCARE ROUNDTABLE - SESSION 2.5

SEPTEMBER 3 2020







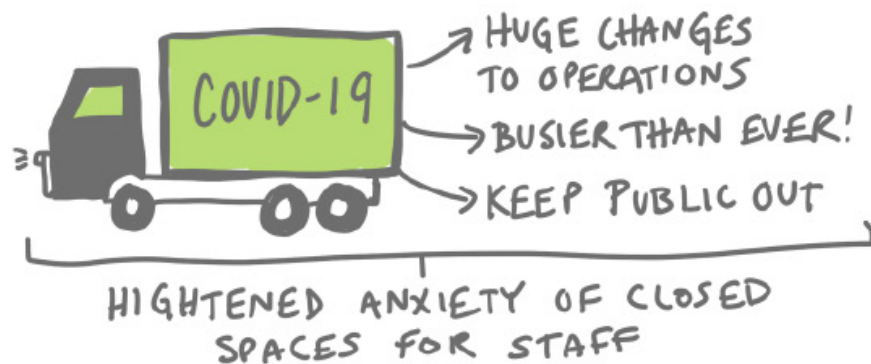


TRANSPORTATION ROUNDTABLE SESSION #1

AUGUST 18, 2020 | HOSTED BY: WORK MATTERS



TRANSPORTATION ROUNDTABLE SESSION #2



WHAT'S GOING WELL?

- * FOREVER CHANGING
- * ENGAGE THE STAFF
- * PRE-SCREEN FOR THE RIGHT FIT
- * CONNECTIONS / WORD OF MOUTH

HIRING NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

40% SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT
60% NO EXPERIENCE

HUMAN RESOURCES



PRIORITIES SHIFT
1. FAMILY
2. QUALITY TIME
= LEADS TO QUIT

- INSURANCE BARRIERS
- LACK OF APPLICANTS
- HARD TO ATTRACT TALENT TO THE INDUSTRY
- MULTI-GENERATIONAL
- NO WORK ETHIC
- NO EXPERIENCE

FAIR HONEST AND UPFRONT

OPEN WORK PERMITS CAN'T CROSS BORDER QUICKLY

USA
CAN

ONTARIOWORKS SYSTEM WORKING AGAINST THEM



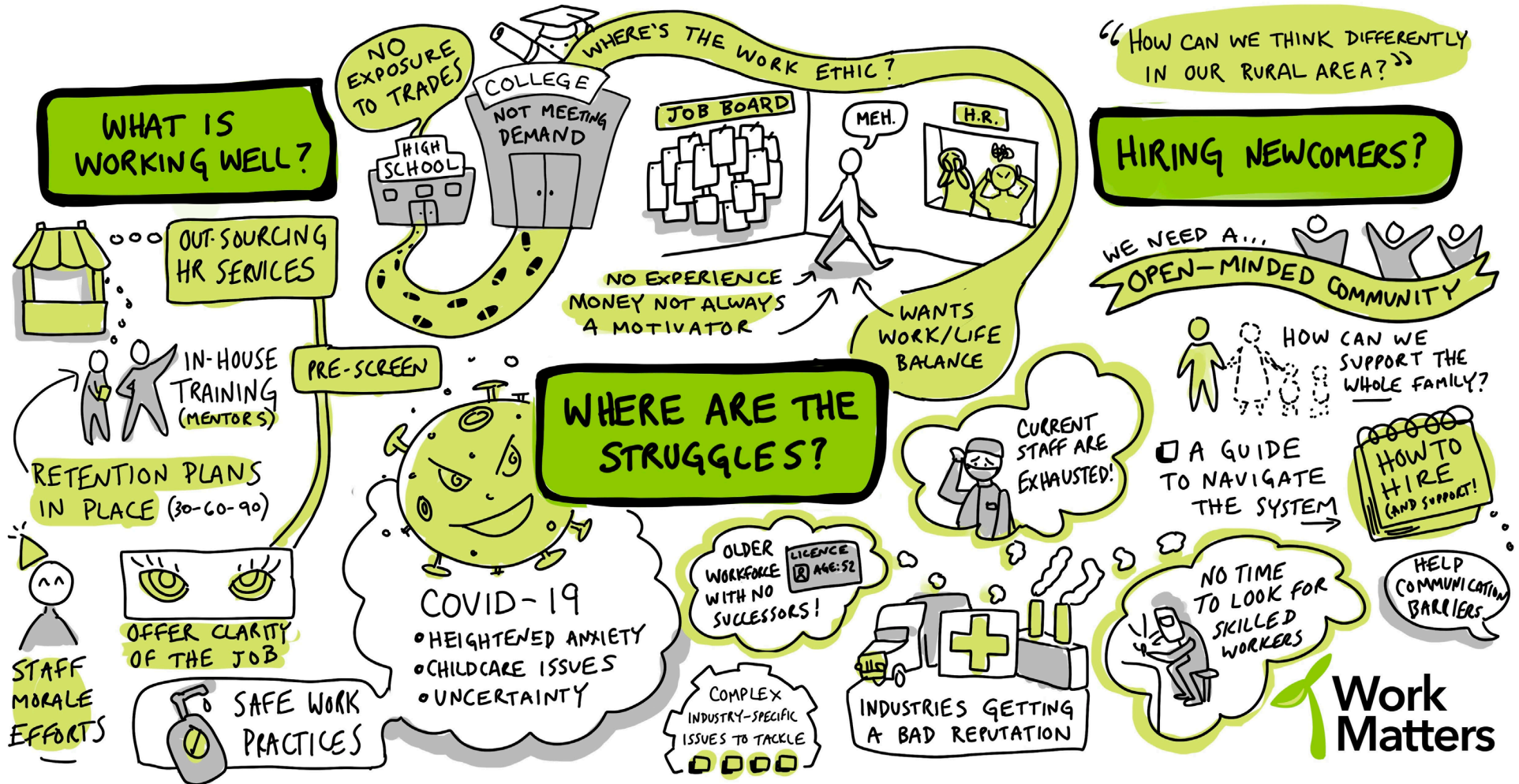
WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS THAT CAN HIRE NEW

GIVING STUDENTS THE BEST CHANCE POSSIBLE (SO THEY CAN BE RETAINED)



ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

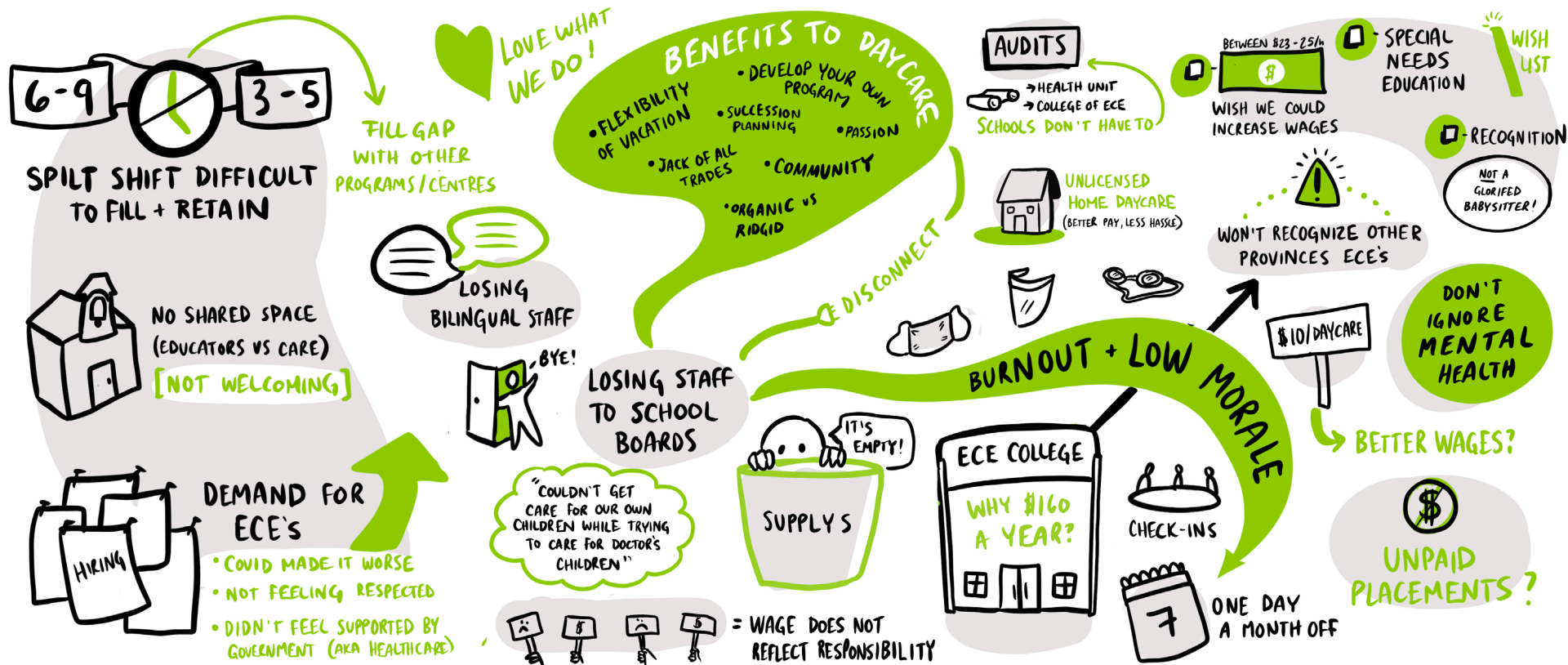
AN INSIGHT INTO THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES: HEALTHCARE, TRANSPORTATION AND MANUFACTURING



Early Childhood Education



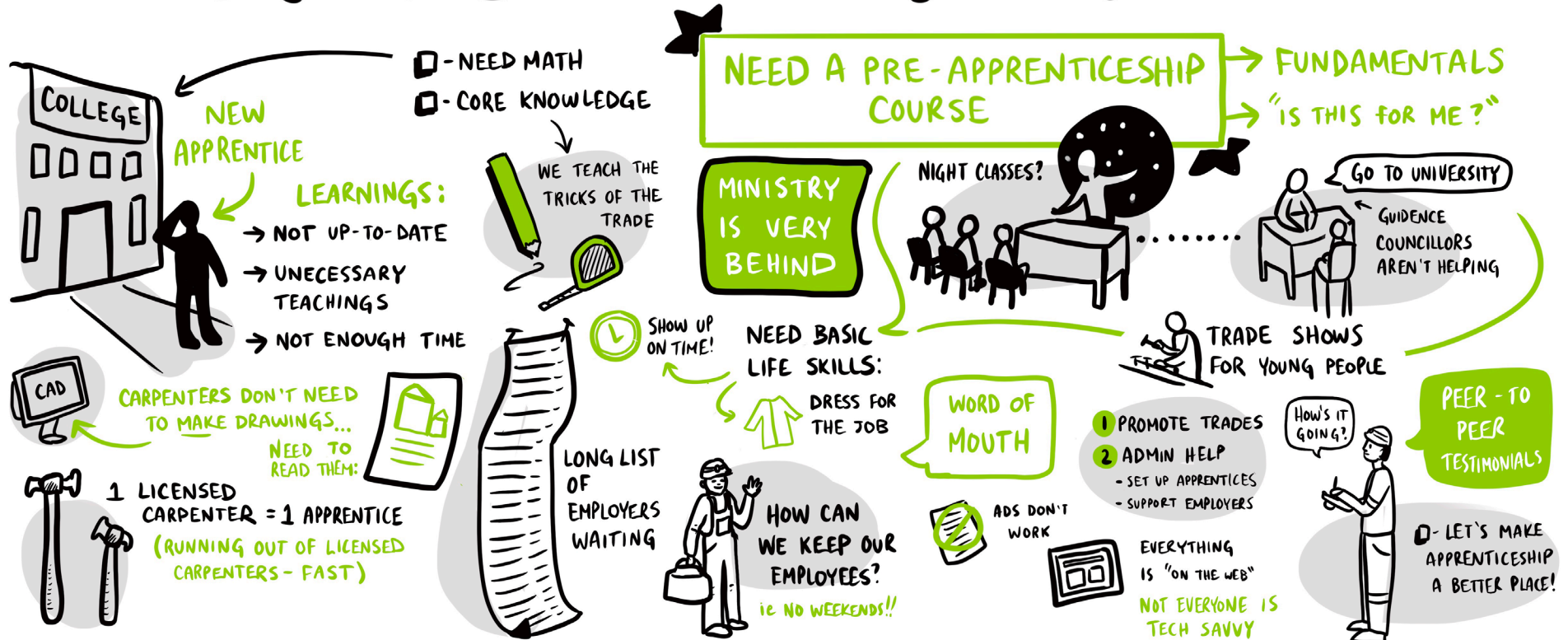
Early Childhood Education



Early Childhood Education



SKILLED TRADES



SKILLED TRADES

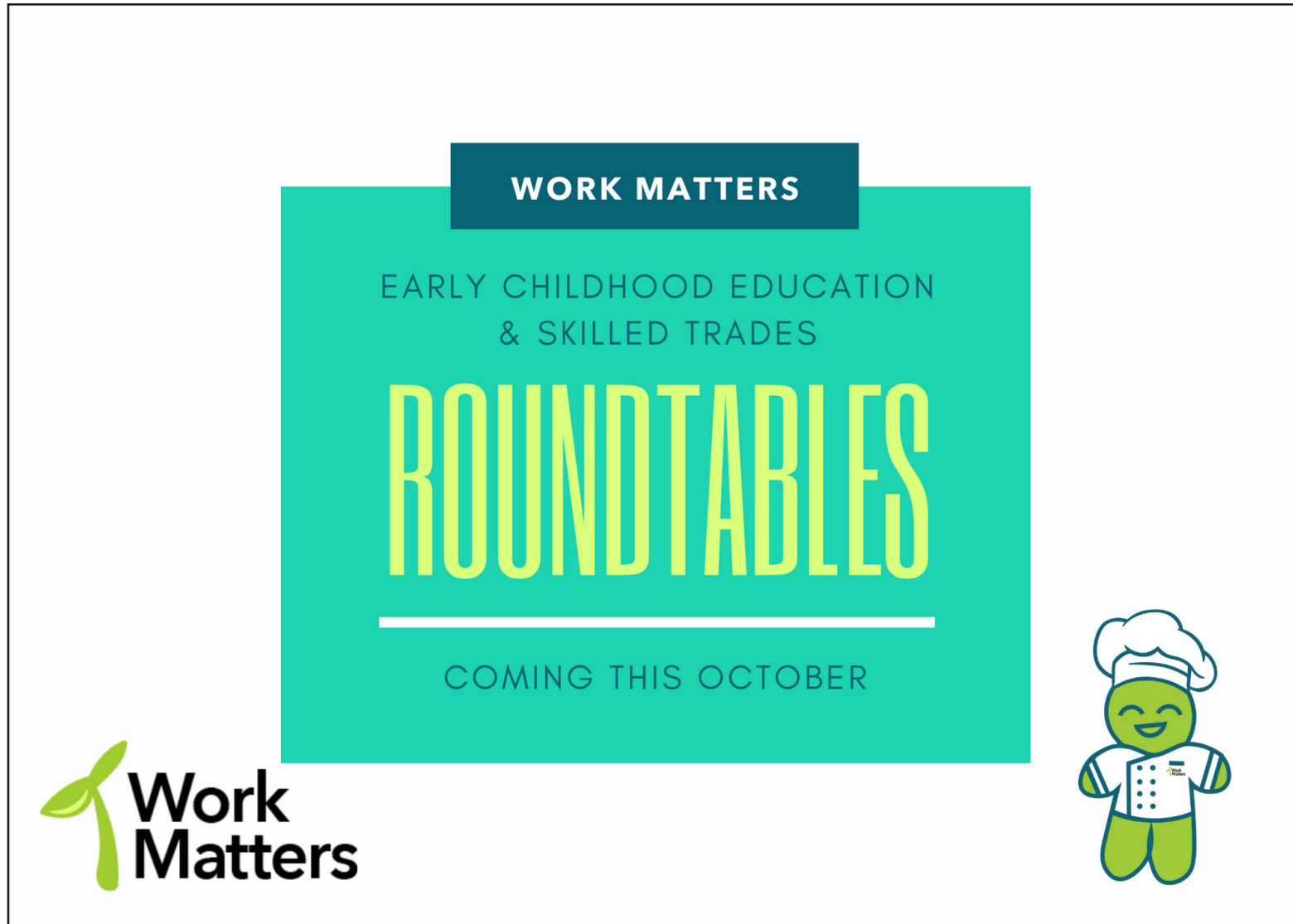




**Live Graphic
Recording by:**

48

B.1. Roundtables Postcard – Front



B.2. Roundtables Postcard – Back



We are looking for employers in the Early Childhood Education and Skilled Trades sectors to participate in our virtual roundtable discussions focused on worker attraction and retention challenges specific to these industries.



REGISTER NOW!

For more information on our roundtables and where to register, please scan this code or visit

www.work-matters.ca/roundtables/



B.3. Roundtables Employer Poster

Have You Heard?

Work Matters is hosting various **roundtable discussions** focused on worker attraction and retention practices in **early childhood education** and the **skilled trades**.

Join us this October in discussing the successes and challenges you have experienced with your business.

Have your voice heard, help drive solutions, and improve your communities!

Scan the code below or visit <https://work-matters.ca/roundtables/> to register.





B.4. Student Survey Poster



The poster features a purple circle at the top left containing the 'Work Matters' logo, which consists of a green leaf icon and the text 'Work Matters'. Below this, there are five circular images: a woman and child with colorful beads, a woman in a red shirt and safety glasses working with wood, a woman in a black apron styling a man's hair, a man and child at a table with a blue mat, and a man in a white hard hat and safety gear using a chainsaw on a tree. The background is white with several overlapping green and purple circles.

Work Matters

Are you interested in pursuing a career in **early childhood education** or the **skilled trades**?

We want to hear what's important to you when choosing your future career!

Scan this code to complete our survey



or visit <https://work-matters.ca/surveys/>

CCA CANADIAN CAREER ACADEMY

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Ontario 

Canada 