

Addressing the Labour Market Gap: Mainland/Southwest Region

In recent years, employers have found themselves grappling with the pressing need to adapt to the needs and expectations of job seekers to attract and retain skilled staff. Meanwhile, job seekers face the daunting task of securing employment despite the myriad opportunities available. The *Addressing the Labour Market Gap Report* is the culmination of an extensive research effort, drawing upon the valuable input of 1,225 job seekers and 812 employers across the province.

Within the Mainland/Southwest region, 246 job seekers and 239 employers participated in the provincial survey between February 7 and March 3, 2023.

The region had slightly more jobseeker respondents who indicated that they are employed either on a full time or part-time basis (70%), compared to the provincial average (65%). In the Mainland/Southwest region, job seekers seemed slightly less likely to participate in the gig economy compared to the BC average. 44% of participants indicated that they had never participated in the gig economy, compared to 36% provincially. The majority (53%) of respondents indicated that this was a supplemental way to earn income.

Key highlights of the findings from the Mainland/Southwest region are outlined below.

- **Top Challenge** | Employers in the Mainland/Southwest region reflected findings at the provincial level which identified finding qualified applicants that match the job description as the largest challenge they face. Job seekers in the Mainland/Southwest region most commonly cited finding jobs that they are interested in as their top challenge. This differs from the findings at the provincial level, where job seekers identified finding jobs that meet their salary expectations as the top challenge.
- **Recruitment Process** | Both at the provincial level and in the Mainland/Southwest region, employers found it most difficult to define salary ranges and offers as part of the recruitment process. Similarly, job seekers in this region felt that negotiating salaries and offers was the largest challenge, which is reflective of findings at the provincial level.
- **Job Postings** | Employers and job seekers had different ideas about what features are most important in job postings. Employers ranked access to additional benefits as the most important “selling feature” of a job posting. In contrast, salary was the most important feature of any job posting according to job seekers. Importantly, salary was seen as important among both groups, and was ranked with significantly higher importance than the BC average. This may be reflective of a shared understanding of the high cost of living among both employers and job seekers in the region.
- **Salaries** | 57% of employers described challenges finding qualified candidates within the salary range they offered while 55% of job seekers found it challenging to find jobs that meet their salary expectations. 68% of job seekers indicated that they found it difficult to negotiate salary offers, compared to the provincial average of 59%. Both employers and job seekers in this region found it slightly more challenging to connect on salary expectations compared to other regions surveyed.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** | Both job seekers and employers identified “creating a workplace that is safe and fair for workers of different backgrounds to feel welcome” as one of the most important factors influencing worker retention. However, the *Report* illustrates gaps in policies to support this: while



84% of employers in the region reported having policies in place to support a diverse workforce, only 67% of job seekers reported experiencing such policies at their previous workplace. This gap between employer policies and jobseeker experience is similar to findings from across BC.

To access the full "Addressing the Labour Market Gap Insights Report," please visit <https://bcchamber.org/addressing-the-labour-market-gap/>