

## Addressing the Labour Market Gap: Northeast 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 Northeast region, 61 job seekers and 44 employers participated in the provincial survey between February 7 and March 3, 2023.

Compared to other regions surveyed, the Northeast region had one of the lowest proportions of job seeker respondents who are actively looking for work (28%), and one of the highest proportions of respondents who are currently employed on a full or part time basis (72%). Despite relatively similar education profiles, the survey illustrated significant income disparity between employers and job seekers. For instance, 22% job seekers indicated that their income was below \$50K per year compared to 7% of employers. There was also a large proportion of employers in this region who earned over 200K per year (20%) compared to the BC average (11%). In line with provincial-level findings, 66% of job seekers in the Northeast region indicated that they had participated in the gig economy either before or after COVID-19 began. Among job seekers who participate in the gig economy, 78% indicated that this was to earn supplemental income, which is much higher than the provincial average of 54%.

Key highlights of the findings from the Northeast region are outlined below.

- **Top Challenge** | Employers in the Northeast identified finding applicants in the area where their business is located as the largest challenge they currently face. This differs from findings at the provincial level, where employers identified finding qualified applicants that match the job description as the largest challenge. Job seekers in the Northeast most commonly cited finding jobs that meet their salary expectations as the top challenge, which reflects provincial-level findings.
- **Recruitment Process** | Across BC, both employers and job seekers most commonly identified salary expectations – either defining salary ranges or finding jobs which meet their expectations – as the largest challenge in the recruitment process. While employers in the Northeast agreed with these provincial-level findings, job seekers in the Northeast felt that identifying positions for which they are qualified was the largest challenge.
- **Job Postings** | Employers and job seekers in the Northeast region agreed about the most important features in job postings. Both groups ranked work-life balance and additional benefits as the most important “selling features” of a job posting. In contrast, findings from across BC showed that salary and opportunities for advancement were the most important features of any job posting according to job seekers.
- **Salaries** | 55% of regional employers described challenges finding qualified candidates within the salary range they offered while 59% of job seekers found it challenging to find jobs that meet their salary expectations. Both employers and job seekers in this region found it slightly more challenging to connect on salary expectations compared to the provincial average.



- **Diversity and Inclusion** | Both job seekers and employers in the Northeast region identified the presence of “a safe, fair and welcoming environment for different backgrounds” as one of the most important factors influencing worker retention. However, the *Report* illustrates gaps in policies to support this: while 75% of employers in the region reported having policies in place to support a diverse workforce, only 64% of job seekers reported experiencing such policies at their previous workplace. This gap between employer policies and job seeker experience is reflective of 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/>