LAWSON

Ottawa deserves better.

ALEX LAWSON FOR MAYOR

Jobs and growth for Ottawa.

The Lawson plan for work in Ottawa. Get people into work, and get more work into Ottawa.

POLICY PAPER

AUGUST 2026

01 / OVERVIEW

Ottawa is a one-industry town, and the industry is shrinking.

Between February 2025 and February 2026, Ottawa lost 30,500 jobs. That is the largest employment loss of any city in Ontario over that period.

Over roughly the same window, the federal workforce in the National Capital Region fell by about 8,000 people, from around 154,000 to about 146,000.

Read those two numbers together. The federal government cut roughly 8,000 positions here. The city lost 30,500 jobs. The rest were the dry cleaner, the lunch counter, the daycare provider, or the framing crew.

That is what happens to a city that has one big employer. When it exhales, everybody feels it.

And it is not over. The federal government has committed to being about 40,000 people smaller by 2029, with roughly 16,000 of those coming as direct position reductions and the rest through attrition and early retirement. More than 26,000 public servants have already received notice that their jobs are at risk.

This document does not blame the federal government for those decisions. Ottawa does not get a say in the federal budget and a mayor who pretends otherwise is wasting your time. The cuts are the weather. The question on the ballot is whether this city built a roof.

It did not. Nobody at City Hall is watching this.

Ottawa's workforce planning board, the Ottawa Employment Hub, was folded into an organization headquartered in Cornwall in 2023. Employment services for the Ottawa area are run under contract by a private firm that also holds Toronto, Peel and York. The City's own Economic Development branch is 13 people. There is no published Ottawa youth unemployment number. There has not been a current local labour market plan written in this city in years.

Meanwhile the bill is arriving. Ontario Works caseloads in Ottawa hit 20,170 households in 2025, the highest figure in the City's own published record. 711 families, made up of 2,574 people, were living in emergency accommodation in June 2026. Twelve years ago that number was 227 families.

JOBS LOST

30,500

Feb 2025 to Feb 2026, worst in Ontario

City of Ottawa staff report on economic conditions, 2026.

FEDERAL CONTRACTION

40,000

Positions gone from the public service by 2029

Budget 2025 commitment, Government of Canada.

ONTARIO WORKS

20,170

Ottawa households on assistance in 2025, a record

City of Ottawa open data, monthly average.

FAMILIES IN MOTELS

711

In emergency accommodation, June 2026. In 2014 it was 227.

City of Ottawa Housing Services HIFIS data.

This plan has two halves and they are in deliberate order.

First, get people into work. That means knowing where the jobs are, knowing what people can already do, and closing the distance between the two. It helps people who need help this year.

Second, get more work into Ottawa. That means competing hard for employers who want the workforce this city actually has, and having the serviced land ready when they call. That pays off over years.

Twenty-one commitments follow, across seven areas. Every one of them is something a City of Ottawa mayor and council can do on the City's own budget. Every figure is sourced in Section 11.

02 / THE MEASUREMENT PROBLEM

Nobody at City Hall owns this file.

The City of Ottawa employs 506 people in Employment and Social Services, administering assistance to residents who are out of work.

It only employs 13 people in Economic Development.

That is not an argument for spending less on social services. Those 506 people are doing necessary work and the caseload proves it. It is an argument about balance. **This city is far better staffed to manage the consequences of unemployment than to prevent it. We need to fix that.**

It gets thinner than it looks. Ottawa used to have its own workforce planning board, the Ottawa Employment Hub, which published a local labour market plan, quarterly employment reports, and spotlights on youth and other groups. Since April 2023 that work has been carried by the Eastern Ontario Training Board, an organization based in Cornwall, under a service agreement with the province.

More than one in five people who work in Ottawa work in public administration. The 2021 Census puts it at 21.1 percent of the employed labour force, against 6.2 percent nationally. No other industry here comes close, and no other big city carries anything like that concentration in a single employer. Yet Ottawa's labour market plan is now produced alongside those for Cornwall and Prescott Russell.

Ask a simple question: how many young people in Ottawa are out of work right now? There is no published answer. Ontario's youth unemployment rate was 15.7 percent in the first quarter of 2026, and 20.2 percent for teenagers. Ottawa does not publish its own.

> **A city cannot fix a problem it has decided not to measure.**

COMMITMENT 01

Re-establish a municipal labour market function.

Within the first year, stand up a small team inside the City with one job: know Ottawa's labour market.

COMMITMENT 02

Publish an Ottawa youth unemployment number every quarter.

Beginning in year one. If it is bad, we publish it anyway. A number that only gets published when it flatters the mayor is not a number, it is an advertisement.

COMMITMENT 03

Run the EmployerOne survey in Ottawa and publish the results.

EmployerOne is a standardized employer survey already used by workforce planning boards across Ontario. Hamilton built its entire municipal workforce strategy on a round that reached more than 650 businesses. It is an existing instrument with a known method and a known cost. Ottawa has not run one at city scale.

COMMITMENT 04

Publish an annual Ottawa Jobs and Skills Report.

Vacancies by occupation. Training seats by occupation. The gap between them. Which sectors are most exposed to federal contraction. One document, once a year, in plain language, so that a school board, a college, an employer, and a person looking for work are all reading the same page.

03 / THE PATHWAY PROBLEM

The retraining money already exists. Almost nobody is using it.

If you were laid off in Ontario, the province will cover up to $35,000 to retrain you for a different career under Better Jobs Ontario. That ceiling went up from $28,000 in August 2025, the training window doubled to two years, and the eligibility test loosened from six months out of work to twelve weeks.

Just over 4,000 Ontarians started training under that program in 2024-25. That is the entire province, in a year when Ottawa alone lost 30,500 jobs.

There is a second program on the employer side. Under the Ontario Job Grant, an employer can access up to $10,000 per employee for training, and up to $15,000 per trainee where they are training and hiring someone who is unemployed.

So the money is not the problem. **The problem is that someone who just lost their job has no idea any of this exists**, and no way to find out which of the hundreds of eligible courses leads to a job that actually exists in this city.

That is a navigation problem. Navigation is something a city can do, and it costs almost nothing.

Windsor-Essex did exactly this when its auto sector started changing shape. Workforce WindsorEssex published 76 career profiles of in-demand local jobs and built a tool mapping existing automotive and manufacturing skills onto occupations that are hiring. They did it for auto workers. Ottawa should do it for anyone who needs it.

To be precise about who did that. Workforce WindsorEssex is that region's workforce planning board, an independent non-profit with the City of Windsor as a partner rather than its operator. Ottawa had a body exactly like it. Ours is now run from Cornwall.

That is the whole reason this lands on the City's desk. Where a local board still operates, it can hold the pen. Where one does not, the work either gets done by the municipality or it does not get done. Hamilton shows the municipal version is possible: its Workforce Strategy was built by Hamilton Economic Development, a City department, working with the local board.

COMMITMENT 01

Build and publish Career Pathways Ottawa.

The City will use labour market data to aggregate information for the public, so people will know how many jobs out there are available based on the skills they already have. We will show the occupations in Ottawa that need those skills right now, and the average rate of pay. We'll show the industries hiring, the skills they want to hire for, the courses needed to train for it, where the training is offered, and which programs (federal, provincial, or otherwise) can help cover the cost. This will be built to help anyone, from a laid-off analyst, to a retail manager, or a 23-year-old who has never had a full-time job.

COMMITMENT 02

Open a single front door for displaced workers.

More than 26,000 people have been told their federal jobs are at risk. What they have is a phone number. There is no place in this city to walk into. The City convenes one, with the colleges, the Board of Trade, and employers, and publishes the results: how many people came through, how many landed work, and in what.

COMMITMENT 03

Connect the caseworkers to the jobs.

The City already employs 506 people who speak with residents who are out of work every single day. That is an existing relationship with thousands of people, and today it is not wired to anything on the employer side.

COMMITMENT 04

Take the skills gap to the institutions, in public.

The annual Jobs and Skills Report becomes the agenda for a standing table with the school boards, Algonquin, La Cité, Carleton, and uOttawa. The City chairs it and publishes what comes out of it. We do not control what any of them teach. We can make sure everybody is looking at the same evidence, and that the public can see it too.

04 / THE TRADES PROBLEM

You cannot build houses without the people who build houses.

Ottawa has housing targets. It has a $400 million agreement with Build Canada Homes for 3,000 affordable homes. It has a Housing Action Plan with 53 measures to cut red tape.

None of that produces a single house if there is nobody to swing the hammer.

BuildForce Canada projects that Ontario's construction industry faces as many as 92,000 retirements by 2035, and needs roughly 126,100 new workers over that period once demand growth is counted. Expected recruitment of new entrants under 30 comes to about 98,800. That leaves a projected shortfall of around 27,300 workers.

I run framing crews. I have spent years trying to hire people who can do this work, and it has been getting harder every year for a decade. This is not a forecast to me. It is Monday morning.

Here is the part nobody says out loud. A licensed journeyperson in the trades in the Ottawa region earns in the range of $35 to $50 an hour. That is a career you can raise a family on, buy a house on, and retire from. We have spent thirty years telling teenagers it is the fallback option.

COMMITMENT 01

Weight workforce development in contract award.

Lowest price is not the only metric that matters, and it never has been on a job site. A contractor training the next generation of tradespeople is delivering something to this city beyond the work itself, and the scoring should say so.

COMMITMENT 02

Adopt a fair wage policy for City construction contracts.

Toronto has had one since the nineteenth century, administered by a Fair Wage Office that sets schedules and investigates complaints. Hamilton has one. Oshawa and Thunder Bay have one. Ottawa does not. This is not about picking a side in a labour dispute. It is about a level playing field. A contractor who pays his people properly should not lose City work to one who does not, and this city should not be using your tax dollars to fund a race to the bottom on wages. Toronto's schedules are built partly on collective agreement rates and partly on market surveys of prevailing non-union wages, so the mechanism works for union and non-union shops alike. Ours should be designed the same way. I have bid against people who were undercutting me because of how they were paying their crews. Everybody in this industry has. The City is a big enough client to stop rewarding it.

COMMITMENT 03

Back trades training with what the City has, and keep every option open on what more it could do.

Start with the assets already on the books. Buildings, yards, land, and shop space that could host pre-apprenticeship and training programs run in partnership with the high schools, the colleges, the unions, and employers. That is available immediately and costs nothing new. The high schools matter most here and they are the ones most often left out. A kid who has never held a tool is not going to pick this work at twenty-two. The shop class is where this starts, and where it has been quietly disappearing for thirty years. Beyond that, nothing is ruled out. If the evidence from Section 02 shows Ottawa is short of a trade and no existing provider is filling the gap, this city should be willing to look at whatever fills it, including a municipal role in delivering training directly. That is not the usual thing for a municipality to do. It is also not prohibited, and "we have never done it that way" is not a reason. We will not commit today to a specific model we have not yet costed. We are committing to the outcome and to being honest about what it takes.

05 / THE YOUTH PROBLEM

A 22-year-old is now competing against a 45-year-old with security clearance.

Youth unemployment in Ontario is 15.7 percent. For teenagers it is 20.2 percent. Those are the provincial numbers because, as Section 02 notes, Ottawa does not publish its own.

The federal contraction has made this sharply worse in a way that is specific to this city. A young person looking for a first job in Ottawa in 2026 is applying against experienced administrators with fifteen years of service and a security clearance who have just been let go. Those are not fair fights, and the young person loses most of them.

Let me be plain about something. Somebody stocks the shelves, cleans the building, drives the bus and answers the phone, and this city does not run for one day without them. A job at roughly $21 an hour is about 20 percent above Ontario's minimum wage. It is honest work, plenty of people do it for a career and do well by it, and there is nothing in it to apologize for.

The problem is choice. Somebody who wants to stay in that job should be able to stay. Somebody who wants to change should be able to find out how, and today they cannot. Which certification to get. Which employers actually train people and promote from within. What the next job up pays and who is hiring for it. Those are answerable questions, and nobody in this city is answering them.

One thing this plan will not do is pretend City Hall is the answer. The City is a significant employer, but it is a small fraction of the jobs in this city, and no municipal payroll is big enough to hire its way out of youth unemployment. Nor should it try. **The City's job here is to be the conduit, not the destination.** Model what we ask of others, then spend our effort getting young people in front of the employers who actually have the openings.

COMMITMENT 01

Broker youth hiring commitments from real employers, and publish who delivered.

The City convenes employers and asks for specific numbers. Summer positions, co-op placements, apprenticeships, first jobs. Then it publishes the list. Who committed, how many, and how many they actually hired. The City does not employ these young people. It gets them in front of the people who will, and it puts the results where everyone can see them. An employer who signs up and delivers should get the credit publicly.

COMMITMENT 02

Put sector information in every high school.

This region has more than 1,800 technology firms and over 330 defence, aerospace and security companies. It also runs on diesel mechanics, millwrights, heavy equipment technicians, industrial electricians, welders, HVAC techs and crane operators. Somebody keeps the trucks moving, the plants running and the buildings heated, and those people are paid accordingly. Most seventeen-year-olds in Ottawa could not name three employers from either list. A teenager cannot choose a path they have never heard of, and the trades are the ones they hear about least. This costs almost nothing and we do not do it.

COMMITMENT 03

Lead by example, and be honest about the scale.

The City should be able to look an employer in the eye when it asks them to hire young people, which means going first. Three things, all cheap, all inside our own control. Set a target for students, co-op placements and apprentices and report against it annually. Ottawa runs a student program today and publishes no target and no outcome. Strip degree requirements from City postings where the work does not require a degree, which is a barrier this city built itself. And give every applicant to a student or apprentice posting a real answer rather than silence. None of that is the bulk of the solution and this document will not claim otherwise. It is the City earning the standing to ask everyone else.

06 / THE EMPLOYER PROBLEM

We have a workforce that other industries would pay for.

The people this city is currently losing have a rare combination on their resumes. They are experienced administrators. A high share of them are bilingual. Many hold or qualify for security clearance. They have spent careers running complicated programs inside heavy regulation.

Insurance companies pay for exactly that. So do banks, asset managers, compliance and regulatory operations, and corporate head office functions. Median pay for an insurance underwriter in the Ottawa region is about $70,000 a year. For a claims adjuster it is about $74,000, and experienced people in both clear $100,000. **Those are jobs you can raise a family on.**

Quebec City proved this works. It is a government town with the same structural exposure Ottawa has, and it deliberately built a financial services and insurance cluster on a specific local talent advantage. They did it with actuaries. We would do it with bilingual, security-cleared administrators.

The pitch is that the people are already here, and that this city will work with you to get your doors open.

Several thousand people in this region are bilingual, hold or qualify for security clearance, and have spent fifteen years administering complex programs inside heavy regulation. You will not find that concentration anywhere else in Canada. And you will get a named contact at City Hall, decision timelines you can build a schedule against, serviced land with a price already on it, and a public scoreboard on whether we did what we said we would do.

Talent, and a city that answers the phone. That is the offer, and the commitments below are what make it real.

A word on defence. Ottawa's defence and technology sectors are a genuine strength, this council has been working that file, and the province released a defence industrial strategy framework in May. Good. That work should continue and this campaign will say so plainly. But a strategy document does not employ anybody. Sections 06 and 07 are about what has to be true underneath any sector strategy before a single person gets hired.

COMMITMENT 01

Publish a quarterly employer attraction scoreboard.

Every sector, including defence. Investment landed, jobs committed, acres taken up, against target. Ottawa currently announces strategies and reports on activity. Residents are entitled to the results.

COMMITMENT 02

Give a company moving here one person to call, and publish the timelines that person is held to.

Today a business looking at Ottawa gets a general line and a brochure. It should get a named officer whose job is opening employers in this city, published decision timelines for site plan approval and permits, and a public scorecard on whether we hit them. A company choosing between Ottawa and three other cities is not asking whether we are friendly. They are asking how long it takes and who is accountable if it slips. Right now we cannot answer either question.

COMMITMENT 03

Rebuild the Economic Development Strategy around the workforce we have.

The current strategy expires this year. The next mayor writes the next one. It should be built around the talent this city actually holds, and it should be written with the labour market evidence from Section 02 in hand rather than without it.

07 / THE LAND PROBLEM

The City counts land. Employers count serviced lots.

Ottawa's industrial market is not empty. It is tight. Availability was 4.4 percent in early 2026, with a record 3.6 million square feet under construction. The market read is that Ottawa is underbuilt, in part because of limited land zoned for industrial use.

The City reports it holds more than fifteen years of employment land supply.

Both of those can be true, and the gap between them is the entire problem. Between mid-2022 and mid-2024, 23.9 net hectares were actually developed for industrial and employment uses. Designated hectares on a planning map are not the same thing as a serviced, zoned, priced parcel that a business can build on next year.

I have spent my career on the difference between a drawing and a site. If a company calls this city and asks what is available, and the honest answer takes three weeks to assemble, we have already lost to somewhere that answered in an afternoon.

COMMITMENT 01

Publish a live serviced employment land inventory.

Parcel size, servicing status, zoning, and price. Updated quarterly. Public. A business should be able to answer its own question in ten minutes without calling anyone.

COMMITMENT 02

Commit to a servicing schedule and publish it.

Name the employment parcels that get water and sewer, and the year they get it. That commitment is what turns land on a map into land you can build on, and it is entirely within the City's control.

COMMITMENT 03

Treat approval timelines as an economic development measure, not just a housing one.

The City tracks how long its approvals take. It does not report them to you. That is not my characterization. Ottawa's Auditor General audited the development application review process in September 2025 and found that key performance indicators for that process are not being reported to Council or to the public. The same audit found post-approval delays climbing, particularly on subdivision and site plan files while legal agreements are being finalized. Publish them. Site plan, permits, servicing agreements. Housing and employment land, measured the same way, reported quarterly, with the misses shown beside the hits. A number only the department can see is not accountability. It is a filing cabinet.

08 / WHAT THIS COSTS, AND WHAT IT SAVES

Grow the city, or grow the bill.

There are only two ways for a city to bring in more money. Build more things to tax, or charge the people already here more.

This year's budget did a little of the first and a lot of the second. New buildings and new businesses were forecast to add about 1.6 percent to what the city collects, without anybody's rate going up. Then your property tax bill went up 3.75 percent anyway.

Every dollar that comes from a new building or a new employer is a dollar that does not have to come off somebody's kitchen table. That is the whole argument for going after employers, and it is not a soft one. It is the difference between those two numbers.

A city that stops attracting employers has one lever left. You are holding it.

The other side of the ledger is what happens when work does not come back.

Ontario Works caseloads in Ottawa reached 20,170 households in 2025, the highest in the City's published record and up 51 percent from 2021. Applications have nearly doubled over the same period.

711 families, made up of 2,574 people, were in emergency accommodation in June 2026. In 2023 it was 406 families. In 2014 it was 227. The City provided 757,457 nights of emergency accommodation to families in 2025, up 51 percent in two years, and spent $29.3 million on hotel and motel placements for homeless families in 2025, by its own published figure.

That motel bill is more than double the City's entire Economic Development budget.

A person who loses a job and is back at work in three months costs this city almost nothing. A person who loses a job, then loses their housing, and ends up in a motel costs us thousands of dollars a month for as long as it takes.

I would rather spend a fraction of that making sure people find the next job.

To be straight about the numbers: Ontario Works benefits are paid by the province, not by the City. This is not an argument that unemployed people are a drain on your taxes. It is an argument that **prevention is cheaper than the alternative, and right now this city is buying the alternative.**

COMMITMENT 01

Report the cost of the pathway, annually and in public.

Caseloads, families in emergency accommodation, nights provided, and cost. Beside the employment numbers. In one document. So that the connection between whether people are working and what this city spends is visible to everyone, every year, whoever is mayor.

09 / WHAT WE WON'T DO

Three things off the table.

We will not promise you money that belongs to another government. Better Jobs Ontario and the Ontario Job Grant are provincial programs. They exist today, they have changed twice in the last two years, and they may change again. This campaign is not going to stand here and promise you provincial funding it does not control. Every commitment in this document is something the City of Ottawa does on the City of Ottawa's budget. If the province expands those programs, good. If it cuts them, the work in Section 03 still matters and the map just points somewhere else.

We will not claim a mayor creates jobs. No mayor hires anyone into a private business. What a mayor can do is make sure this city is not the reason an employer chose somewhere else, and make sure somebody is finally watching our exposure. That is preparation and competence. It is not a jobs guarantee and anybody offering you one is not being honest.

We will not announce a strategy and call it a result. A framework is not a factory. A task force is not a job. This city has had no shortage of launches, and what residents are owed is a number they can check. That is why Section 06 commits to a quarterly scoreboard covering every sector, and why Section 08 commits to reporting the cost of failure alongside it. Judge this plan on the scoreboard, not on the announcement.

ALEX
LAWSON

10 / WHY ALEX

I hire people for a living.

I run framing crews. I have spent my career trying to find people who can do the work, train the ones who are willing to learn, and keep them long enough to be worth it.

So when a report says Ontario construction is short 27,300 workers by 2035, I do not read that as a forecast. I read it as a description of the next ten years.

Here is the part worth hearing. **I have not had that problem, and it is not luck. I hire out of high school co-op programs.** I have taken on kids who had never picked up a tool and watched them turn into tradespeople.

It works. It is not expensive. And most employers never do it, because nobody ever showed them how and nobody ever made the introduction.

This is what I want the City to do.

I also know what a serviced lot is worth, and what an unserviced one is worth, and that the difference is not a rounding error. I know that when somebody asks how long an approval takes and you cannot tell them, they go somewhere that can. That is not a theory I read. It is how I have lost work and won it.

Here is the thing about this city that I cannot get past. We are short of tradespeople and we have thousands of people out of work. We have money sitting on the table to retrain them and almost nobody using it. We have 711 families in motel rooms and an Ontario Works caseload at a ten year high. And we have thirteen people at City Hall whose job is to do anything about any of it.

That is not a funding crisis. That is nobody being in charge of it.

We've got a lot of work to do.

Ottawa deserves better.

11 / SOURCES & VERIFICATION

Every figure here is sourced.

OTTAWA JOB LOSSES, FEBRUARY 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026

30,500 jobs lost, the largest employment loss of any city in Ontario over the period. Unemployment rate 6.3 percent. Reported from a City of Ottawa staff report on economic conditions.

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-gatineau-economy-jobs-cuts-government-2026-9.7145006

FEDERAL WORKFORCE REDUCTION

Budget 2025 commits to reducing the federal public service to approximately 330,000 by March 2029, about 40,000 fewer than the March 2024 peak, with 16,000 full-time equivalent positions identified as direct reductions over three years and the balance through attrition and early retirement.

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/carney-budget-to-slash-public-service-by-16-000-over-3-years-9.6965108

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION FEDERAL WORKFORCE DECLINE

The region's federal workforce fell from approximately 154,000 in 2025 to about 146,000 in 2026.

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/public-service-sector-shrinks-by-over-12-000-workers-in-2026-9.7247908

PUBLIC SERVANTS ISSUED AT-RISK NOTICES

More than 26,000 public servants have received notices that their positions could be affected.

https://www.ctvnews.ca/ottawa/article/26000-public-servants-warned-their-jobs-could-be-at-risk-here-is-a-breakdown-by-department/

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SHARE OF OTTAWA EMPLOYMENT

21.1 percent of Ottawa's employed labour force worked in public administration at the 2021 Census, against 6.2 percent for Canada as a whole. Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, as published in the agency's Ottawa-Gatineau profile.

https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/7803-tale-two-cities-one-national-capital-region-ottawa-gatineau-glance

CITY OF OTTAWA STAFFING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

2026 Adopted Budget. Economic Development, 13.00 full-time equivalents, gross $12.39 million, net $11.66 million. Employment and Social Services, 506.17 full-time equivalents, gross $260.71 million, net $38.97 million. The "more than double" comparison in Section 08 sets the $29.3 million motel figure against the $12.39 million gross Economic Development budget.

https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/2026%20Adopted%20Budget%20Book%20English%20Condensed.pdf

OTTAWA EMPLOYMENT HUB TRANSFER TO EASTERN ONTARIO TRAINING BOARD

As of April 2023, the Eastern Ontario Training Board manages the Ottawa Employment Hub under a service agreement with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. EOTB is headquartered at 16 Second Street West, Cornwall.

https://eotb-cfeo.on.ca/ottawa/

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DELIVERY FOR THE OTTAWA CATCHMENT

WCG Services is the Employment Ontario Service System Manager for the Ottawa and Eastern Collaborative region, and also holds the Toronto, Peel and York catchments.

https://wcgservices.com/our-programs/employment-ontario

ONTARIO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth aged 15 to 24 in Ontario had an unemployment rate of 15.7 percent in the first quarter of 2026. Teenagers aged 15 to 19 were at 20.2 percent.

https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-employment-reports/january-march-2026

ONTARIO WORKS CASELOAD, OTTAWA

Monthly average of 20,170 households receiving Ontario Works in 2025 year to date through June, the highest figure in the City's published series, against 13,323 in 2021, an increase of 51 percent. Applications rose from a monthly average of 892 in 2021 to 1,712 in 2025. City of Ottawa open data.

https://open.ottawa.ca/datasets/6bae78f1c5e447b2b5f2e57d12348a67

FAMILIES IN TEMPORARY EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION, OTTAWA

711 family units comprising 2,574 people in June 2026, the highest in a monthly series beginning January 2014. 406 family units in June 2023, 227 in June 2014. City of Ottawa Housing Services HIFIS data, families dashboard.

https://ottawa.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing-and-homelessness/plans-facts-and-data/shelter-system-use-and-trends-dashboard/families-dashboard

NIGHTS OF EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED TO FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

757,457 nights in 2025, against 501,516 in 2023. Same source and dataset as above.

https://ottawa.ca/en/family-and-social-services/housing-and-homelessness/plans-facts-and-data/shelter-system-use-and-trends-dashboard/families-dashboard

CITY SPENDING ON HOTEL AND MOTEL PLACEMENTS

The City spent $29.3 million in 2025 on hotel and motel placements for families experiencing homelessness, per the City of Ottawa's April 2026 announcement of the Pathways to Housing family homelessness strategy and the accompanying staff report to the Community and Protective Services Committee.

https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/city-news/newsroom/new-strategy-helps-families-experiencing-homelessness-move-more-quickly-stable-housing

ONTARIO WORKS COST SHARING

Ontario Works financial benefits have been 100 percent provincially funded since 2018. Municipalities cost-share 50 percent of program administration.

https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-works-policy-directives/113-cost-sharing

BETTER JOBS ONTARIO

Up to $35,000 for retraining, increased from $28,000 effective August 20, 2025, with the training window extended to two years and the eligibility threshold reduced from six months to twelve weeks of unemployment. Just over 4,000 Ontarians started training under the program in 2024-25.

https://eopg.labour.gov.on.ca/en/programs/better-jobs-ontario/

ONTARIO JOB GRANT

Formerly the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, relaunched effective May 1, 2026. Up to $10,000 per employee for employer-led training, and up to $15,000 per trainee where an employer trains and hires an unemployed person.

https://forms.mgcs.gov.on.ca/en/dataset/59083fb3-4b2e-45c0-8f14-ca183ee03779/resource/85c78c6d-f8f4-4ad5-b57c-bf2f166f6e86/download/ojg_application_guidelines_effective_may_1_2026_en.pdf

FAIR WAGE POLICIES IN ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES

The City of Toronto operates a Fair Wage Policy under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 67, administered by a Fair Wage Office that publishes wage schedules and investigates complaints against contractors and subcontractors on City work. Certain construction classifications are set at the lowest applicable rate established by collective bargaining; others are based on market and industrial surveys reflecting prevailing wages for non-union workers. Hamilton, Oshawa and Thunder Bay operate comparable policies.

https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/doing-business-with-the-city/understanding-the-procurement-process/fair-wage-office-policy/

OTTAWA HAS NO FAIR WAGE POLICY

The City of Ottawa's Procurement By-law contains no fair wage provision. Two candidates in the 2022 Ottawa mayoral race, Catherine McKenney and Bob Chiarelli, campaigned on enacting one, and no such policy has been adopted since. IBEW Local 586 maintains an active petition calling for a fair wage policy for the City of Ottawa.

https://www.ctvnews.ca/ottawa/article/mckenney-chiarelli-promising-fair-wage-policy-for-city-contracts-if-elected-mayor/

ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE OUTLOOK

BuildForce Canada projects up to 92,000 retirements in Ontario construction by 2035 and a total requirement of approximately 126,100 new workers, against expected recruitment of about 98,800 new entrants under 30, leaving a projected shortfall near 27,300 workers.

https://www.buildforce.ca/en/lmi-2026/

WAGE FIGURES

Job Bank wage data built on Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey and Small Area Estimation figures, 2023 to 2024 vintage. Insurance underwriters, Ottawa region, median $33.65 per hour, roughly $70,000 annualized, high $48.35. Insurance adjusters and claims examiners, Ottawa region, median $35.44 per hour, roughly $74,000 annualized, high $51.79, above $100,000 annualized. Electricians, Ottawa region, median $38.45 per hour, high $50.22, supporting the $35 to $50 range for licensed journeypersons.

https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/wagereport/occupation/12592

ONTARIO MINIMUM WAGE

$17.60 per hour, increasing to $17.95 effective October 1, 2026. A job at roughly $21 an hour sits about 20 percent above the current rate.

https://hicksmorley.com/2026/04/01/ontario-minimum-wage-to-increase-october-1-2026/

OTTAWA INDUSTRIAL MARKET

Availability rate 4.4 percent in Q1 2026, down from 4.9 percent. Record 3.6 million square feet under construction. Market assessed as underbuilt, in part because of limited land zoned for industrial use.

https://www.cbre.ca/insights/figures/ottawa-industrial-figures-q1-2026

AUDITOR GENERAL AUDIT OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REVIEW

Office of the Auditor General of Ottawa, Audit of Development Application Review, tabled September 2025. The audit found that specific key performance indicators relevant to the development application process are not currently reported to Council or the public, and that timelines lengthened for subdivision and site plan control applications at the post-approval stage during finalization of legal agreements.

https://www.oagottawa.ca/media/jyvfeycq/audit-of-development-application-review-final-report-1-final-ua.pdf

OTTAWA EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY AND TAKE-UP

The City reports more than fifteen years of employment land supply under the 2022 Official Plan. 23.9 net hectares were developed for industrial and other employment uses between mid-2022 and mid-2024, per the City's vacant industrial land survey report.

https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/vils_mid2022_mid2024%20report_en.pdf

OTTAWA ASSESSMENT GROWTH AND 2026 TAX INCREASE

The 2026 Budget Directions report forecast assessment growth of 1.6 percent for 2026, representing new revenue from growth in the tax base without a rate increase. Council adopted the 2026 budget with a 3.75 percent property tax increase in December 2025.

https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/city-news/newsroom/council-approves-ottawas-2026-budget

OTTAWA TECHNOLOGY AND DEFENCE SECTOR SCALE

More than 1,800 technology firms and close to 100,000 technology workers. More than 330 defence, aerospace and security companies employing over 10,000 people. Four NATO DIANA facilities and 65 federal laboratories.

https://www.ottawabot.ca/article/takeaways-from-ottawas-economic-outlook-2026/

ONTARIO DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Framework released May 2026, projecting 43,000 jobs and $6 billion in provincial GDP by 2035. Final strategy expected later in 2026.

https://www.torys.com/our-latest-thinking/publications/2026/06/ontario-releases-framework-for-its-first-of-its-kind-defence-industrial-strategy

QUEBEC CITY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Québec City diversified deliberately into insurance and financial services alongside information technology, optics, life sciences and agri-food, building on regional actuarial and financial talent. Delivered through Québec International, which has run a dedicated talent attraction and retention function since 2008.

https://www.quebecinternational.ca/en/about-us

HAMILTON WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND EMPLOYERONE

Hamilton's Workforce Strategy was built by Hamilton Economic Development, a City of Hamilton department, working with Workforce Planning Hamilton, the local workforce planning board. It was informed by over 270 stakeholder interactions and an EmployerOne survey reaching more than 650 Hamilton businesses. This is the municipal precedent for a City department holding the pen on a workforce strategy.

https://investinhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Hamilton-Workforce-Strategy-FINAL-9-9-23.pdf

WORKFORCE WINDSORESSEX CAREER PATHWAYS AND GOVERNANCE

Workforce WindsorEssex published 76 career profiles of the region's top in-demand jobs and built career pathway tools mapping automotive and manufacturing skills onto growing occupations. It is the region's local workforce planning board, incorporated as a non-profit in 2008 and sponsored by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. It is not a City of Windsor department; the City of Windsor is a partner in delivering employment programs and services.

https://www.workforcewindsoressex.com/local-workforce-planning-board/

TORONTO MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

City of Toronto Community Benefits Framework, adopted July 2019, includes apprenticeship and employment targets on City construction projects. Toronto has committed to 10,000 additional summer jobs for people aged 15 to 24. Toronto's Partnership to Advance Youth Employment provides guaranteed

interviews with participating private-sector employers, not with the City itself. Referenced for context only; this plan does not propose replicating the guaranteed-interview mechanism in City hiring.
https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/community-benefits-framework/

Authorized by the official agent of the Alex Lawson campaign.