



WORK FORCE AND LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT

AN OVERVIEW OF CONCEPTS AND
MODELS

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Introduction

Purpose of this Research

Rural communities and businesses across Ontario struggle to find workers. These difficulties compromise the potential of local and regional economies (Crawley, 2023; Stranges, 2023). The challenges of attracting and retaining workers is not unique to rural Ontario (Fletcher, 2020; Peters, 2022). There are opportunities to learn from the approaches of other jurisdictions to identify relevant approaches that could hold potential in rural Ontario.

Labour force development and workforce development involves a broad range of education, training, and professional development activities aimed at training individuals with the required skills to succeed in the workplace and help achieve the goals of the individual and the company. This report addresses three central questions:

1. What are the definitions of workforce development and labour force development?
2. What are the key models of workforce development?
3. How can rural communities leverage workforce development strategies for labour retention and attraction?

This research on workforce development is driven by the critical issue of labour shortages in rural communities. By examining successful workforce development models and strategies from other regions, this report aims to provide actionable insights that can be adapted to the unique context of the rural Ontario. Addressing labour shortages not only supports local economies but also enhances the overall quality of life for residents in these communities.

This research is part of a multi-year initiative called Addressing Labour Shortages through Newcomer Attraction. The research aims to assess and address labour supply issues specific to rural economies in Ontario. The initiative is funded by the [Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance](#), a collaboration between the Government of Ontario and the University of Guelph.

Overview of Report

This report is organized into several sections that will provide a thorough understanding of the research in workforce and labour force development. First section details the research methods to collect of data from various sources. It also outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting the sources and the data. The second section describes the history, evolution, timeline and different definitions of workforce development. It also contains a series of workforce development models. The third section contains the history, evolution, timeline and definitions of labour force

development. The final section discusses the similarities and differences between workforce development models, highlighting how these models intersect and diverge in practice. This section also identifies the potential impacts for rural communities in Ontario.

Methods

Research Approach and Data Collection

This research involved a comprehensive search to identify and evaluate various models of workforce and labour force development. The search was conducted using academic databases, governmental websites, and reputable industry sources to gather a wide range of perspectives and definitions. The primary keywords used in the searches included "workforce development," "labor force development," "labour force development", "workforce development models," "labour force development models" and "labor force development models." To ensure the inclusion of diverse and relevant sources, we applied three specific criteria for selecting the literature: The research strived to included resources from a wide variety of sources including peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and documents from recognized international organizations. A total of 30 documents were collected between February – July 2024.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the sources considered in this research were based on their relevance, credibility, and the breadth of information provided on workforce and labour force development. To be included, literature needed to be published in the past two decades (2004-2024), written in English, and hold relevance to rural communities and regions. Sources were included if they offered comprehensive definitions, historical context, and practical models that could be applied to rural communities. Exclusion criteria involved omitting sources that were outdated, lacked empirical evidence, or were overly specific to contexts dissimilar from rural Ontario. This rigorous selection process ensured that the information gathered was both relevant and applicable to the goals of this study.

Analysis and Synthesis

After collecting the relevant sources, a qualitative analysis was conducted to identify common themes and best practices in workforce and labour force development applicable to rural communities. This involved categorizing the information into distinct sections such as historical evolution, definitions, and practical models. Each model was

evaluated for its potential applicability to rural communities, particularly in the context of labour retention and attraction. The findings were then synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of workforce and labour force development, with specific recommendations for rural Ontario based on successful strategies from other regions.

Workforce Development

Overview of the Concept

Workforce development is a moderately modern concept, presently progressively being utilized by educationalists, approach creators and researchers. Hall and Lansbury (2006) stated the concept of workforce development first appeared in the mid-1990s. Harrison, Weiss, and Gant (1995) differentiated between 'employment training', which they claimed focuses on the skills supply side, and 'workforce development', which seeks to incorporate the nature of employer demand. The conception of workforce development extended the notion beyond training to include human resource management and development activities, including collaborations with other organisations, recruiting, job matching, mentoring and retention (Harrison & Weiss, 1998).

The definitions of workforce development vary based on the organizations or governments. Common definitions from the literature include:

- Workforce development is an overarching term used to describe a wide range of education, training and professional development activities carried out in the workplace (Short & Harris, 2014, p. 1).
- Workforce development as the education, employment, and job-training efforts designed to help employers to get a skilled workforce and individuals to succeed in the workplace (Jacobs, 2002).
- Workforce development is the coordination of school, company, and governmental policies and programs such that as a collective they enable individuals the opportunity to realize a sustainable livelihood and organizations to achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the history, culture, and goals of the societal context (Jacobs, 2002, p. 13).
- Those activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workforce throughout their whole working life and which increase the capacity of firms to adopt high performance work practices that support their employees to develop the full range and their potential skills and value (Hall & Lansbury, 2006, p. 576).

- Workforce development systems provide a broad range of employment and training services, as well as targeted assistance to employers (Pindus & Koralek, 2000).
- Workforce development consists of a constellation of activities from orientation to the work world, recruiting, placement, mentoring, to follow-up counseling and crisis intervention (Harrison & Weiss, 1998).
- Workforce development provides individuals with the occupational preparation necessary for employment, including technical, basic, and academic competencies (Grubb, 1999).
- Workforce: People who are employed (Crompton & Vickers, 2000, p. 3).

Despite variations, two key common elements are present across workforce development definitions. First, most definitions emphasize education, training, and professional development aimed at preparing individuals for the workforce. Second, there is a consistent focus on collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and government bodies, and the integration of human resource management practices such as recruiting, job matching, and retention.

The most common definition in the literature describes workforce development as a broad range of education and training activities designed to create a skilled workforce and enable individuals to succeed professionally (Short & Harris, 2014; Jacobs, 2002). This definition is widely accepted because it addresses both the supply and demand sides of the workforce equation.

In Ontario, workforce development includes efforts by educational institutions, industry, nonprofit organizations, and government to develop a skilled labor force that meets the evolving needs of the economy. Initiatives focus on providing targeted training and support to both job seekers and employers, reflecting the collaborative nature of workforce development.

Some definitions are particularly relevant to rural communities, emphasizing unique challenges such as geographic isolation and limited access to training resources. Programs in rural Ontario aim to enhance local capacities and provide sustainable livelihoods, aligning with Jacobs' (2002) comprehensive approach but tailored to rural-specific needs.

Labour Force Development

Overview of the Concept

The concept of labor force development has evolved significantly over time, adapting to changing economic, social, and technological landscapes. Initially, the focus was primarily on quantifying the labor force, which included people who were employed or actively seeking employment (Crompton & Vickers, 2000). This understanding, rooted in early 20th-century labor economics, provided a foundation for tracking economic activity and informing policy decisions (OECD, 2017).

As economies became more complex, the notion of labor force development expanded beyond mere participation to include considerations of skill development, demographic shifts, and the impact of globalization. In the latter half of the 20th century, advancements in technology and changes in industry demands prompted a greater emphasis on aligning workforce skills with labor market needs (ILO Department of Statistics, n.d.). This shift led to a more integrated approach, recognizing the importance of education, training, and ongoing professional development in maintaining a competitive labor force.

In recent decades, labor force development has increasingly focused on inclusivity and adaptability. Governments and organizations have recognized the need to address barriers faced by underrepresented groups and to equip workers with skills for rapidly changing industries. The evolution of labor force development reflects a broader understanding of economic participation, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between the labor market and societal well-being.

Definitions

The definitions of labour force development also vary based on the organizations or government. Common definitions from the literature include:

- People who are employed and those who are unemployed but looking for work (Crompton & Vickers, 2000, p. 3).
- The labour force, or currently active population, comprises all persons who fulfil the requirements for inclusion among the employed or the unemployed during a specified brief reference period (Labour Force, n.d.).
- The labour force as those persons of working age who are actively engaged in the labour market. It is the sum of persons employed and the unemployed (ILO Department of Statistics, n.d.).
- The civilian noninstitutional population 15 years of age and over who, during the survey reference week [when labour force statistics are collected], were employed or unemployed (Labour Force in Canada, n.d.).

- All the people in a particular country who are of the right age to work, or all the people who work for a particular company (Labour Force, 2024).

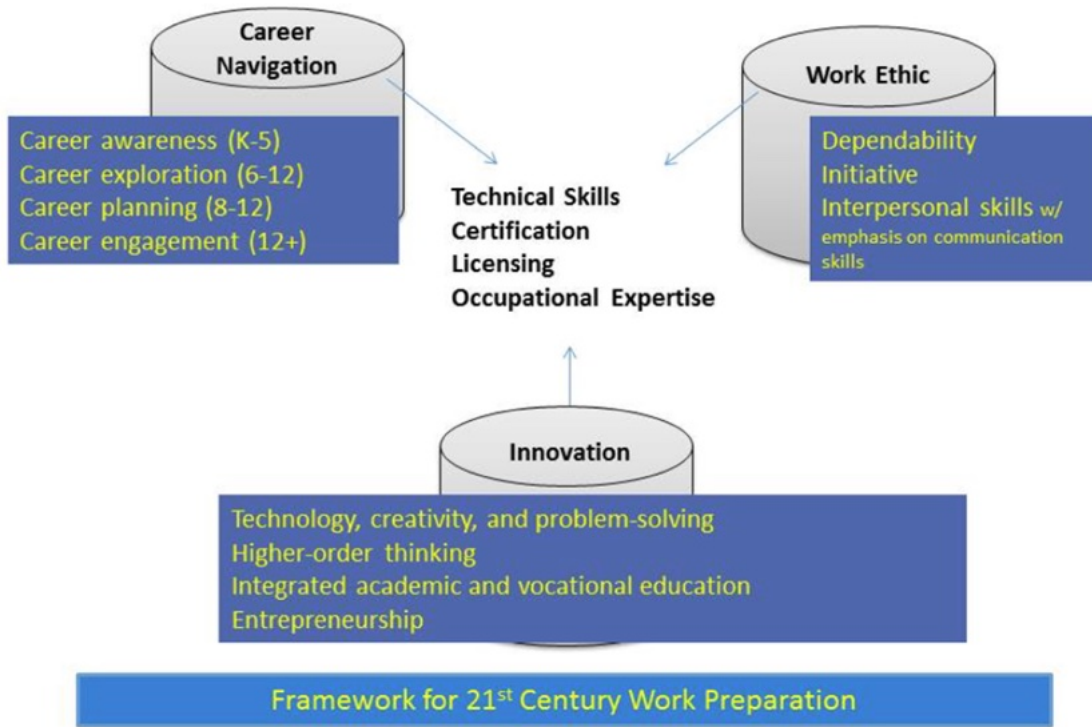
Across the various definitions of labor force development, two common elements appear. First, the definitions include the inclusion of both employed individuals and those actively seeking employment. Second, many definitions emphasize the dynamic nature of the labor force, reflecting economic activity and policy considerations. The most prevalent definition in the literature views the labor force as the sum of employed and unemployed individuals actively engaged in the labor market (ILO, 2024, n.d.). In Ontario, the definition aligns with this understanding, focusing on individuals of working age who are either employed or seeking employment, as highlighted in government labor force statistics. While most definitions apply broadly, rural communities may emphasize factors such as geographic isolation and limited access to training resources. These communities often tailor labor force development strategies to address specific local challenges, reflecting a need for customized approaches that are not always highlighted in general definitions.

Labour Force Development Models

Based on the literature reviewed, seven labour force development models were identified as holding potential relevance for rural businesses and communities. Each of the seven models is briefly described in terms of the key elements of the models, when the models were developed, who developed the model, and its potential applications to rural communities and businesses.

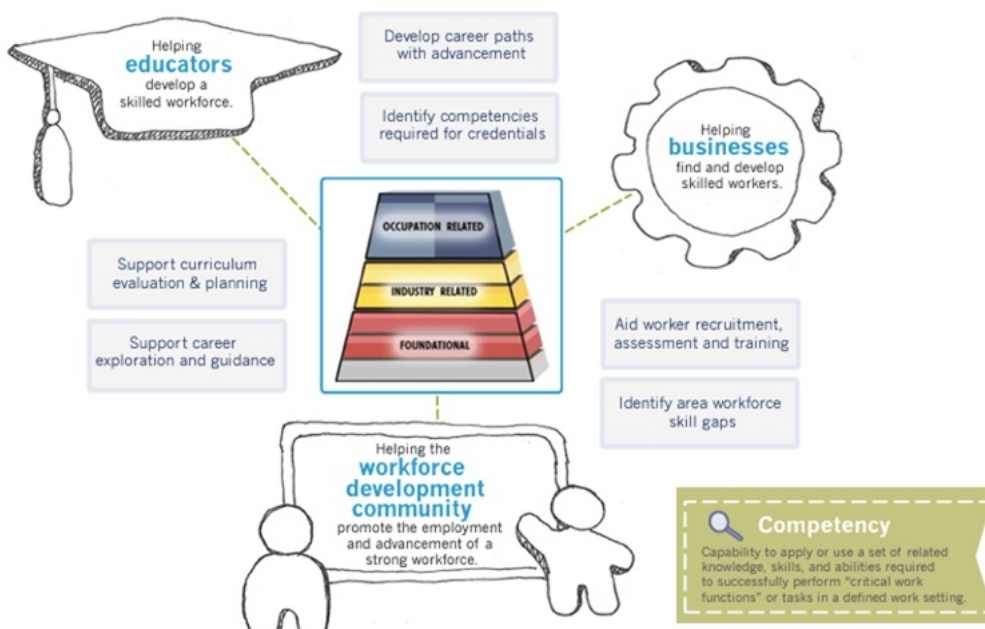
Rojewski & Hill (2012)

The Workforce Development Model, developed by Rojewski and Hill (2012) at the University of Georgia, is a comprehensive framework designed to enhance career preparation and workforce readiness. The model emphasizes three main components: career navigation, work ethic, and innovation. Career navigation involves guiding individuals through the complexities of career planning and development, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions. Work ethic focuses on instilling values such as responsibility, diligence, and professionalism, which are crucial for success in any career. Innovation encourages creative thinking and problem-solving, essential for adapting to the ever-changing job market. This model is widely used by educators and human resource professionals to prepare individuals for the workforce, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the demands of their chosen careers (Rojewski & Hill, 2012).



Source: Rojewski & Hill (2012)

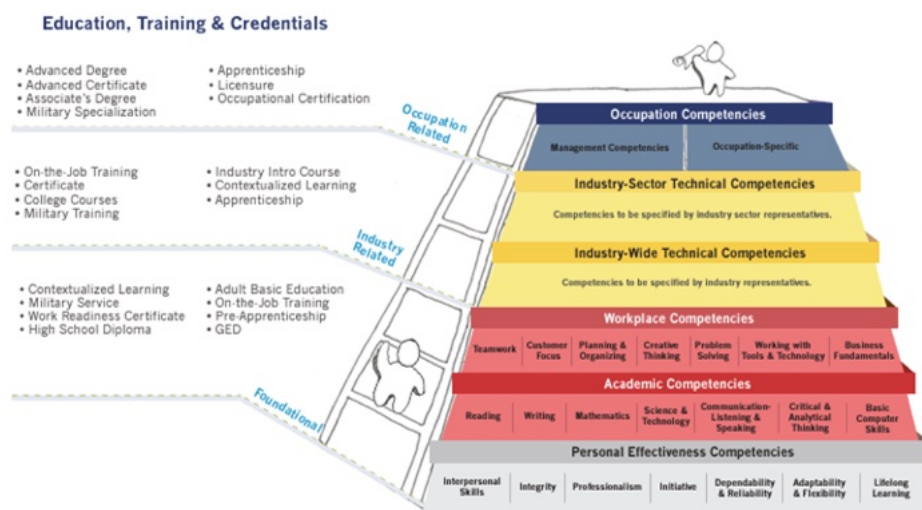
Model-2 Industry Competency Model



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (2024)

The Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), provides a comprehensive framework for defining the skills, knowledge, and abilities required for successful performance in various industries and occupations. Developed to support workforce development, the CMC emphasizes the importance of foundational and technical competencies. The model is structured in a tiered pyramid format, with foundational competencies at the base, including personal effectiveness, academic competencies, and workplace competencies. As you move up the pyramid, the model includes industry-wide technical competencies and occupation-specific requirements. This structured approach ensures that individuals are well-prepared to meet the demands of their chosen careers. The CMC is widely used by educators, workforce development professionals, and employers to guide curriculum development, career exploration, and human resource activities (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2024).

Industry Competency Model Building Blocks



Tools of the Competency Model Clearinghouse



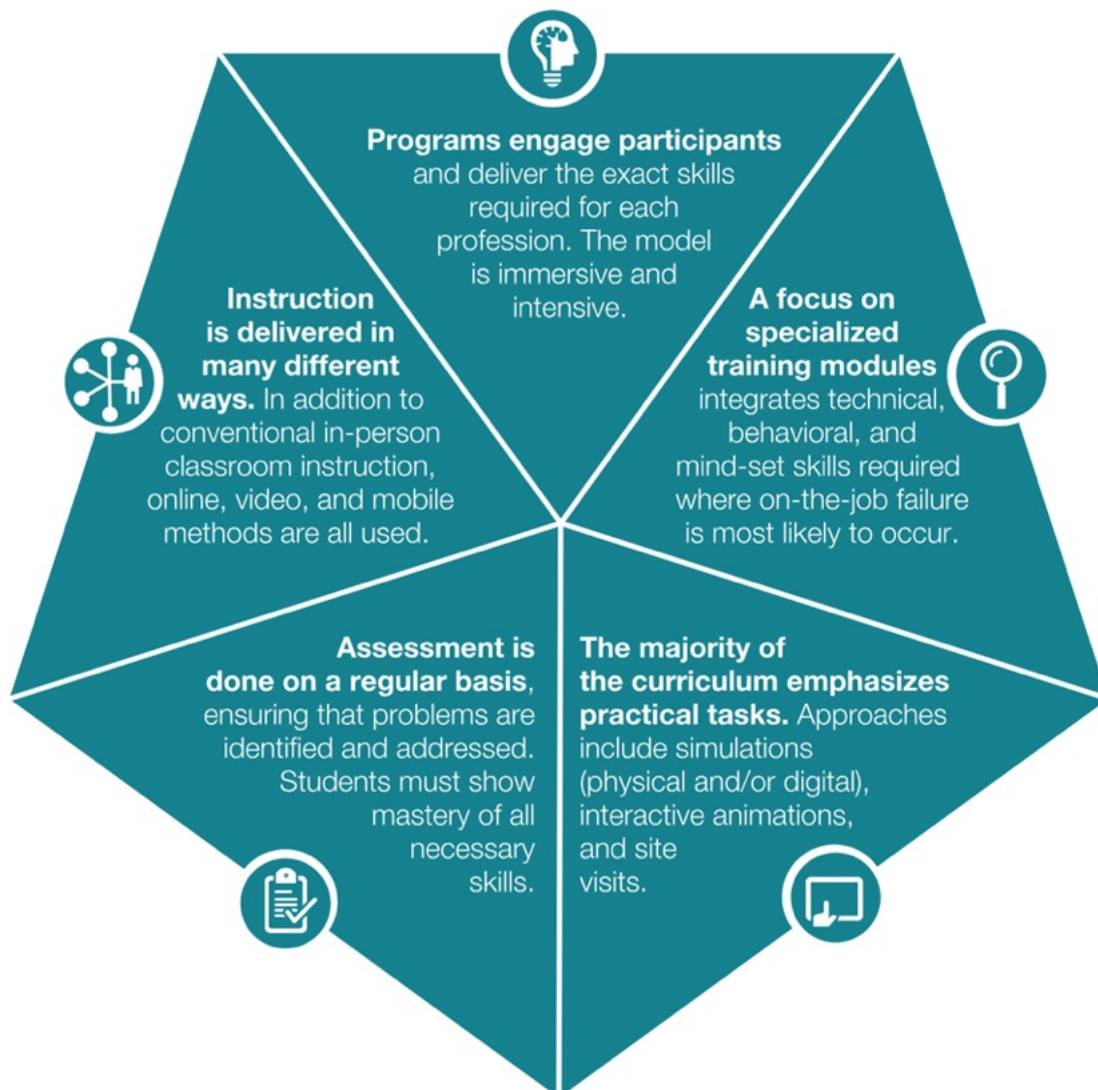
- Collection of Industry-Validated Competency Models
- Tool to Build and Customize a Competency Model
- Tool to Build a Career Ladder/Lattice
- User Guides with Background Info & Instructions
- Examples of Models in Action
- Database of Competency-Based Resources

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (2024)

Laboissiere and Mourshed (2017) Model

This model “Closing the Skills Gap: Creating Workforce-Development Programs That Work for Everyone,” published by McKinsey & Company in February 2017, addresses the critical issue of the skills gap in the United States. Developed by Martha Laboissiere

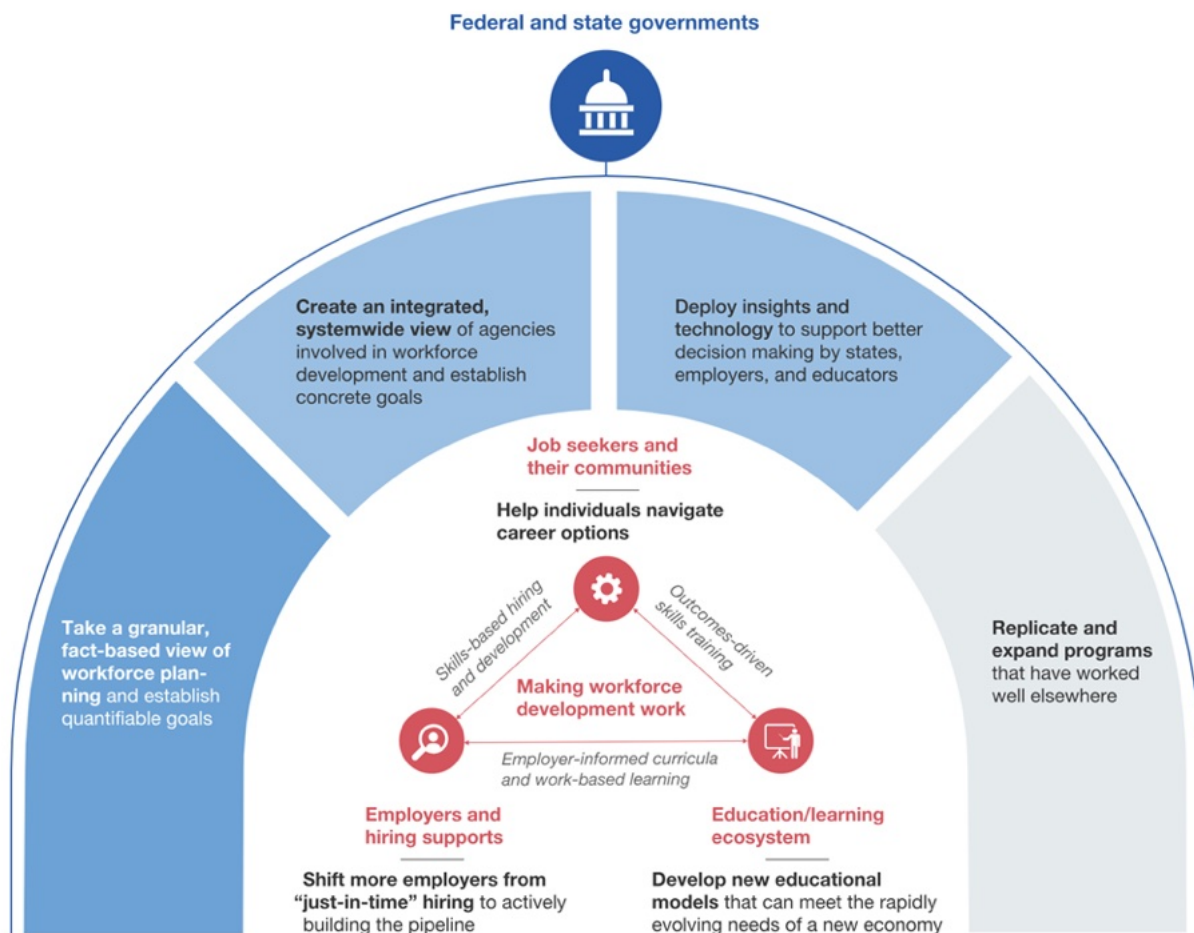
and Mona Mourshed, this comprehensive framework aims to prepare individuals without college degrees for jobs with promising career paths. The model emphasizes five key principles: defining geographic assets and identifying target professions, conducting job-market analyses, engaging participants in immersive and instruction-intensive training, fostering collaborations among leading employers, and ensuring the training delivers the exact skills required for each profession. This approach is designed to support workforce development by equipping individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities to succeed in the job market. The model is widely used by state, local, and national governments, as well as employers and workforce development professionals, to address the talent problem and create effective workforce-development programs (Laboissiere & Mourshed, 2017).



Source: Laboissiere and Mourshed (2017)

Cheng et al. (2018) Model

This model was developed in 2018 and was published by McKinsey & Company, addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization and technology-induced changes such as automation and digitization. Developed by McKinsey & Company, this comprehensive framework aims to enhance workforce development by identifying seven key initiatives that hold significant promise. These initiatives include aligning goals and incentives, scaling promising efforts through strategic distribution of funds, and fostering cross-sector collaboration. The model emphasizes the importance of foundational and technical competencies, structured in a tiered pyramid format, with foundational competencies at the base and occupation-specific requirements at the top. This approach ensures that individuals are well-prepared to meet the demands of their chosen careers. The model is widely used by federal and state governments, educators, workforce development professionals, and employers to guide curriculum development, career exploration, and human resource activities (Cheng et al., 2018).



Source: Cheng et al. (2018)

Global Social Development Indicators (GSDI) Model

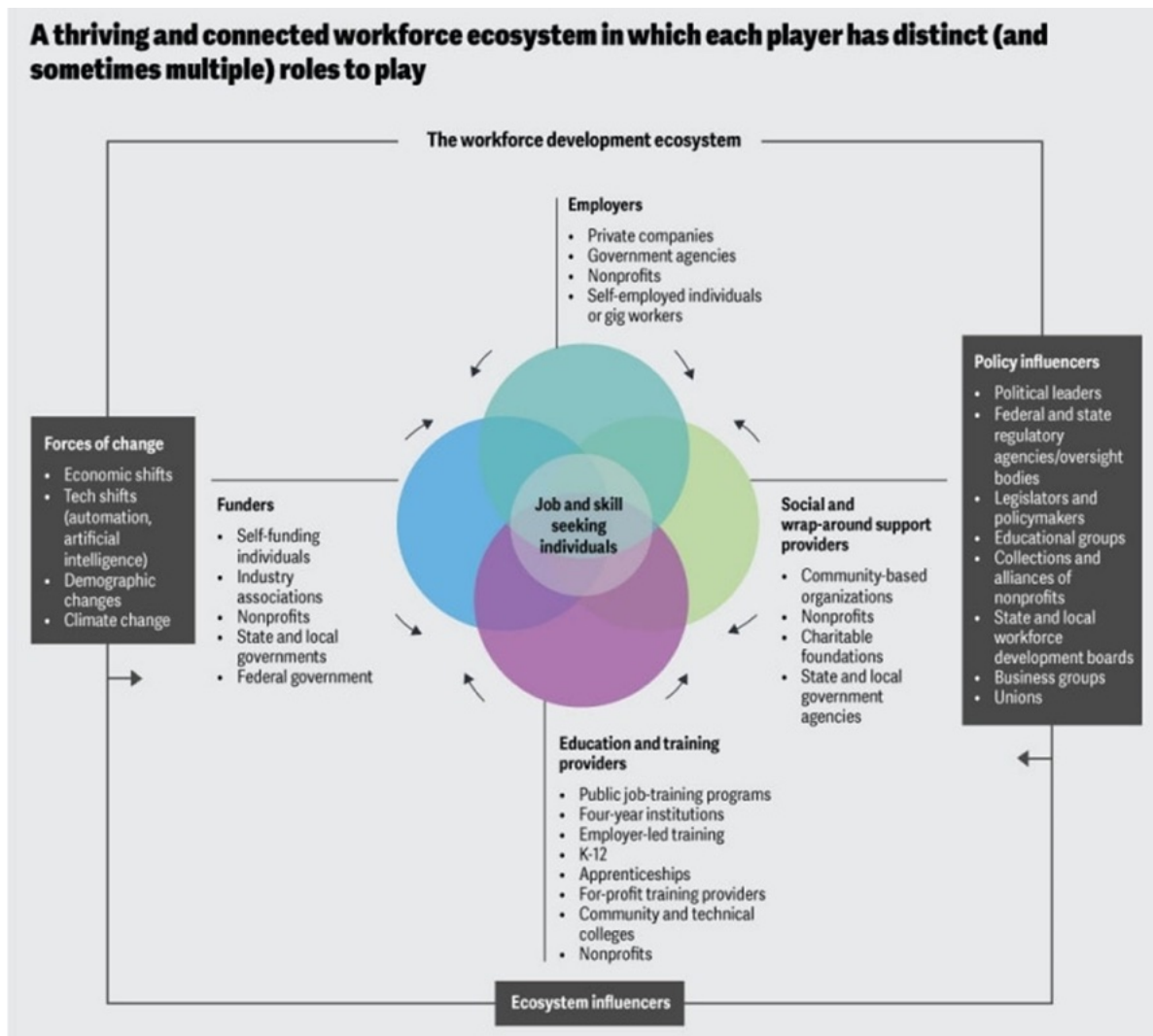
The Workforce Development model by Global Social Development Innovations in 2021 at the University of North Carolina is a comprehensive framework designed to address employment needs through a dual approach. This model promotes employment by addressing the needs of both job seekers and employers. From the job seeker's perspective, it prepares potential employees with the necessary skills and provides support services to optimize their employment opportunities. From the employer's perspective, it serves as a practical channel to communicate and meet their demands for skills. The model emphasizes helping individuals obtain jobs and thrive in the workplace while meeting the hiring demands of employers. This two-pronged approach sets workforce development apart from existing programs, such as basic education and technical and vocational skills training. The model is widely used by youth development organizations that prepare and train young people on life, work readiness, entrepreneurial, and technical skills, provide support services like job counseling and workplace experience, and build mechanisms to connect job seekers and employers (GSDI, 2021).



Source: GSDI (2021)

O’Leary et al. (2023) Model

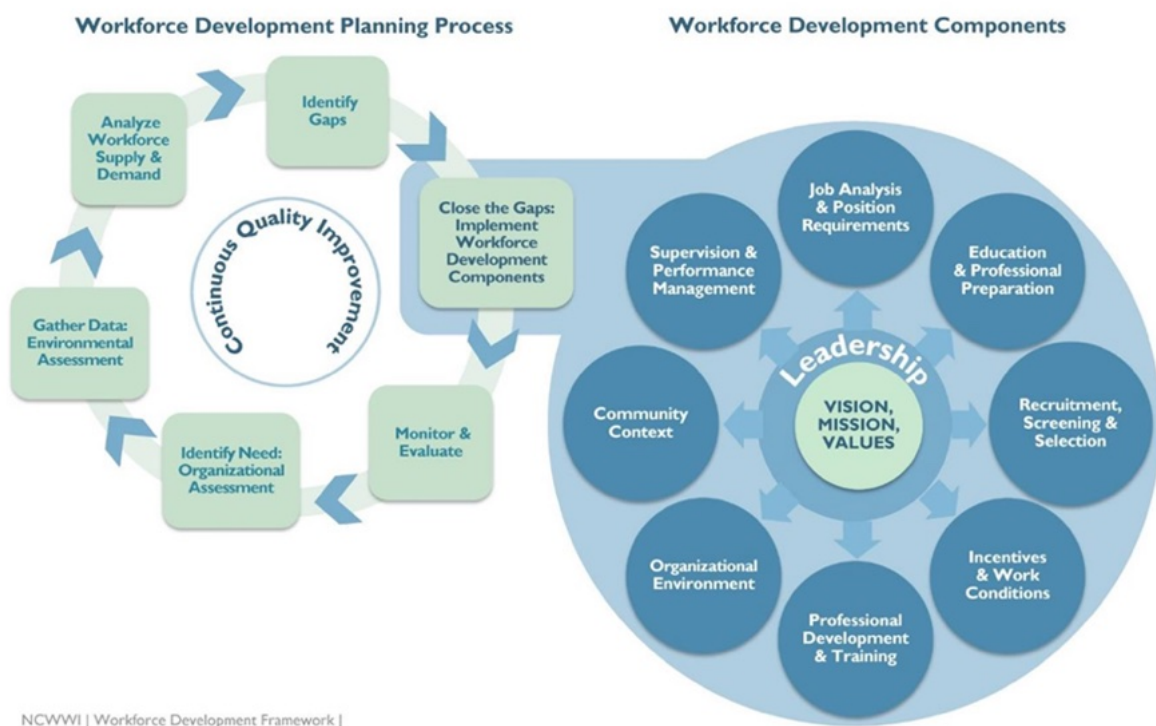
The Strategic Workforce Development Ecosystem model, developed by O’Leary, Overley and Datar for Deloitte Insights, was introduced on August 8, 2023. This model aims to bridge the skills gap by fostering a collaborative ecosystem where key players such as educators, employers, and workforce upskilling advocates work in tandem. The main components of the model include aligning goals and incentives, scaling promising efforts through strategic distribution of funds, and fostering cross-sector collaboration. This approach ensures that the workforce development ecosystem is not just a linear process but a dynamic, interconnected system. The model is widely used by state policymakers, educators, employers, and those committed to workforce upskilling to enhance economic opportunities and drive economic growth (O’Leary et al., 2023).



Source: O’Leary et al. (2023)

Competency Workforce Development Model

The Competency Workforce Development model, developed by the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing workforce competencies in child welfare. This model was developed to address the critical need for a well-prepared and competent workforce in the child welfare sector. The main components of the model include leadership, organizational environment, workforce development, and continuous quality improvement. These components work together to create a supportive and effective workforce system. The model is widely used by child welfare agencies, educators, and workforce development professionals to guide training, professional development, and organizational improvement efforts (NCWWI, 2015).



Source: NCWWI (2015)

Analysis of Labour Force Development Models

The table below outlines the key similarities and differences of the seven labour force development models.

Similarities	Rojewski & Hill (2012)	Industry Competency Model	Laboissiere and Mourshed (2017)	Cheng et al. (2018)	GSDI Model (2021)	O' Leary et al Model (2023)	Competency Workforce Development Model (2015)
Focus on Competency Development	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Public-Private Partnership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Targeted Sectors and Population	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Technology and Data Utilization		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Continuous Learning and Adaptability			✓	✓	✓		✓

Five key similarities were assessed in the labour force development models, each briefly described below.

- Focus on Competency Development:** Both the NCWWI Competency and the Industry Competency Model Clearinghouse emphasize on creating and using competency models to identify and develop necessary skills and behaviors for various roles within their specific sectors. Deloitte's Strategic Workforce Development Ecosystem and McKinsey's both models highlights the importance of aligning the skills with required industry needs and leveraging collected data to understand and develop competencies essential for the job (O'Leary et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2018; Laboissiere & Mourshed, 2017).

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Cheng et al. (2018) Model and O’Leary et al. (2023) Model emphasis on the importance of collaboration between public and private sectors to enhance workforce. GSDI and Industry Competency Model also involve multiple stakeholders including government agencies, educational institutions, and private companies.
- **Targeted Sectors and Populations:** Many models, including Competency Workforce Development Model, GSDI, and Industry Competency, focus on specific sectors or populations, such as child welfare, youth, and various industry sectors. Laboissiere and Mourshed (2017) model targets broad sectors with specific initiatives tailored to different industry needs .
- **Technology and Data Utilization:** Deloitte, Industry Competency Model, and McKinsey models emphasize the use of technology and data analytics to develop, track, and adapt workforce development programs.
- **Continuous Learning and Adaptability:** Models from NCWWI, GSDI, and McKinsey advocate for continuous learning and adaptability to keep pace with evolving industry requirements and economic conditions.

Five key differences were assessed in the labour force development models, each briefly described below.

- **Sector Focus:** NCWWI Competency Synthesis is specific to the child welfare sector. GSDI focuses on employment and economic security, particularly for youth in resource-limited countries (GSDI, 2021). Cheng et al. (2018) Model addresses broader economic and public sector needs.
- **Scale and Scope:** Industry competency model provides a comprehensive national-level competency model applicable to multiple sectors across the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2024). NCWWI and GSDI have more focused scales, targeting specific groups within particular sectors or regions (NCWWI, 2015.; GSDI, 2021). McKinsey and Deloitte models can be applied at regional, state, and national levels, with an emphasis on systemic changes and broader economic impacts (O’Leary et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2018).
- **Approach to Implementation:** O’Leary et al (2023) Model of Strategic Workforce Development Ecosystem focuses on building a sustainable ecosystem through continuous learning and public-private partnerships (O’Leary et al., 2023). NCWWI focuses on competency-based training and professional development within child welfare organizations (NCWWI, 2015). Industry competency model provides tools and resources for creating competency models, emphasizing self-directed and institutionalized development (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2024).
- **Geographic Focus:** GSDI and NCWWI models are designed with specific geographical contexts in mind, such as resource-limited countries or the U.S. child welfare sector (GSDI, 2021; NCWWI,2015). Industry Competency Model and O’Leary et al. (2023) models are primarily U.S.-focused but can have global

applicability with adaptations (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2024; O’Leary et al., 2023).

- **Evidence of Rural Application:** Models like NCWWI and GSDI mention applicability to rural communities due to their focus on accessible and resource-limited settings (GSDI, 2021; NCWWI, 2015). O’Leary et al. (2023) and both McKinsey models do not specifically target rural areas but emphasize adaptability, which could include rural applications with the right customizations (O’Leary et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2018; Laboissiere & Mourshed, 2017).

Programs to Support Labour Force and Work Force Development in Ontario

These are the programs that are currently available in Ontario that supports and provide funding for the workforce development and labour force development.

Program Name	Source of Funding	Eligible Applicants
Community Workforce Development Plan	Government of Canada	Local Government, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education, Indigenous organizations
Canada-Ontario Job Grant Program (COJC)	Government of Canada	Individuals, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education
Skills Development Fund	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Local Government, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education, Trade unions/ union-affiliated organizations, Hospitals
Municipal Workforce Development	Association of Municipalities of Ontario	Local Government
Workforce Development Stream	Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation	Local Government, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education

Program Name	Source of Funding	Eligible Applicants
<u>Ontario Labour Market Partnerships (OLMP)</u>	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Local Government, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education, Charitable Foundations, First Nations organizations, Métis organizations, Industry Associations/Employer Organizations
<u>Achievement Incentive Program</u>	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Businesses
<u>Apprenticeship Capital Grant</u>	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Training Delivery Agents
<u>Ontario Bridging Participant Assistance Program</u>	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Internationally trained professional immigrants
<u>Ontario Job Creation Partnerships (OJCP)</u>	Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development	Local Government, Businesses, Business Associations, Nonprofit, Education, Indigenous councils
<u>RED (Economic Diversification and Competitiveness Stream)</u>	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Local Government, Nonprofit
<u>RED (Strategic Economic Infrastructure Stream)</u>	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Local Government, Nonprofit

Summary

This research paper provides an in-depth examination of workforce and labour force development, highlighting their definitions, historical evolution, and key models that are relevant to rural Ontario communities. Workforce development encompasses a broad range of education, training, and professional development activities aimed at equipping individuals with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. It emphasizes collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and government bodies to

prepare a skilled workforce. Labour force development, on the other hand, includes both employed individuals and those actively seeking employment, focusing on skill development, demographic shifts, and inclusivity. Both concepts have evolved to address modern challenges, emphasizing adaptability and collaboration as critical elements.

The paper identifies seven key models of workforce and labour force development, each with unique features and applications. Common themes across these models include competency development, public-private partnerships, targeted sectors and populations, technology and data utilization, and continuous learning. Differences among the models highlight their varying sector focus, scale, approach to implementation, geographic focus, and evidence of rural application. These insights are crucial for understanding how to effectively implement workforce development strategies tailored to specific contexts, particularly in rural settings.

For rural Ontario communities, the findings underscore the importance of leveraging workforce development strategies to address labour shortages and enhance local capacities. The report suggests that rural areas can benefit from adopting models that focus on competency development and public-private partnerships. By fostering collaborations between local educational institutions, businesses, and government agencies, rural communities can develop tailored training programs that meet local labour market needs. Utilizing technology and data analytics can further enhance these efforts by identifying skill gaps and tracking progress.

The paper also highlights the various programs available in Ontario that support workforce and labour force development, such as the Canada-Ontario Workforce Development Agreement and the Skills Development Fund. These programs provide funding and resources that rural communities can utilize to implement effective workforce development initiatives. By applying the insights and strategies discussed in this report, rural Ontario communities can strengthen their local economies, improve employment opportunities, and enhance the overall quality of life for their residents.

Acknowledgements

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