



Workforce Development Strategy - Early Years and Child- Care Sector

Proposal of Services for the
District Municipality of Muskoka
RFP 22-638300-01
March 18, 2022 - 12 PM ET

MDB Insight Inc.

Heather Elliott, Manager, Children and Seniors Programs
District Municipality of Muskoka
70 Pine Street
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1N3

March 18, 2022

Dear Ms. Elliott and Members of the Evaluation Committee,
Re: RFP 22-638300-01 – Workforce Development Strategy – Early Years and Child Care Sector

The ability for the labour force to work is foundational to our economic sustainability. Beyond labour force readiness and skills and knowledge building, there is a requirement for many to have reliable, competent, and affordable childcare services. This was significantly reiterated in the past couple of years as we saw school closures impact the ability of parents and guardians to work and be care givers.

In addition to the increased demand for a highly skilled, knowledgeable workforce for the early childhood system, is the increasing demand for workers in this sector. Both influence quality programs and outcomes for children and families. With the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care describing “a workforce at breaking point” (Forgotten on the frontline. A survey report on Ontario’s early years and childcare workforce) and the recent release of the new *2022 Ontario Child Care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres Service Management and Funding Guideline for Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards*, this District of Muskoka initiative is timely and essential. MDB Insight is keenly interested in supporting your efforts at workforce development in the Early Years and Child Care sector and well-positioned to bring innovative thought leadership and extensive expertise to the project.

Our careful review of your RFP made clear that successfully completing this project will require a range of talent and expertise. Our team brings that talent and expertise. We have extensive experience crafting innovative strategies that align specifically with the goals outlined for this project. This includes specific ECE and Child Care Sector experience, the development of Workforce and Talent Supply strategies and Action Plans, regional workforce initiatives, and Labour Market Information studies further described in our proposal. We have the internal expertise to answer the questions that will arise during this project. At the same time, we guarantee you that our senior team members will be active with you throughout the project.

As you consider our proposal, we ask that you keep this in mind: **we conduct our work to make a genuine difference**, not simply to provide a plan or strategy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trudy Parsons", written in a cursive style.

Trudy Parsons, Executive Vice-President
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Contents

BID SUBMISSION FORM.....	1
1. Company Background, Relevant Experience	3
1.1 About MDB Insight	3
1.2 Experience and Qualifications	5
1.3 Our Expert Project Team	12
REFERENCE FORM	19
2. Understanding of Deliverables, Work Plan	20
2.1 Our Understanding of the Project.....	20
2.2 Innovative and Value-Added Approaches.....	21
2.3 Methodology	26
3. Proposed Fee and Timetable.....	35
Appendix A – Team Résumés	36
Appendix B – Reference Projects	43

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BID SUBMISSION FORM

1. Proponent Information

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2. Addendum

This will acknowledge receipt of the following addenda and, that the pricing quoted includes the provision set out in such addendum(s)

<u>ADDENDUM #</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>
# _____	_____
# _____	_____
# _____	_____


3. Acceptance of Terms

In responding to this RFP, the Proponent acknowledges that they have read and completely understand and accepts all terms of the RFP.

By submitting a proposal, the Proponent agrees and consents to the terms, conditions and provisions of the RFP and offers to provide the services in accordance therewith at the rates set out in their proposal.



SUBMISSION FORM – AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES



Authorized Signature of Proponent

Trudy Parsons

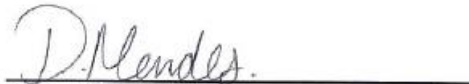
Name of Proponent Representative

Executive Vice-President


Title of Proponent

March 16, 2022

Date



Signature of Witness



Name of Witness



1. Company Background, Relevant Experience

1.1 About MDB Insight

Founded in 2007, MDB Insight is a leading Canadian consultancy with uniquely integrated specialties in workforce development, economic development, municipal strategic planning, and market research.



Our team works at the forefront of workforce development thought and practice. From strategic planning and talent recruitment and retention initiatives, to targeted attraction strategies and integrated economic development public policy analysis, our projects position communities and community stakeholders to succeed in the 21st century's rapidly changing economy.

The firm's founding principals and senior staff are widely recognized as some of the industry's most effective strategic planning, economic and workforce development professionals.



Global Knowledge and Local Expertise

One of the greatest strengths MDB Insight brings to our clients is the diversity and breadth of our expertise across labour markets, economic, cultural, international, and community-based planning. Our team has completed dozens of Sector and Workforce Strategies and Validation reports for communities spanning rural and urban boundaries and ranging in size from 100 to 4 million+.

Our Mission:

MDB Insight acts as a creative force to connect communities with opportunity in a rapidly changing economy.

Our Vision:

- We are innovators who collaborate with our clients to design unique and progressive tools, systems, and strategies.
- Our solutions foster a participatory environment that enables responsible economic growth, social innovation, and environmental sustainability.
- We are trusted advisors whose integrity, expertise, and thought leadership contribute to the success of our clients and the long-term growth of the firm.

MDB Insight's workforce development clientele includes some of the most progressive communities and regions in North America, as reflected in the sample following.



A core philosophy that informs and influences our work, is that economic and workforce development are two sides of the same coin. Tackling economic development challenges at the local level necessitates an understanding and consideration of labour supply and labour demand.

Workforce Development Thought Leaders

MDB Insight has worked extensively with communities and regions of all sizes as they struggle with the challenges of workforce development, talent alignment, attraction and retention, and human capital development. We have helped them to successfully build their local economies by creating strategies that align talent to growth sectors and growth occupations, increase the labour pool for jobs across all skill levels, and support businesses and organizations of all sizes, particularly SME's who generally face tougher challenges with attraction and retention and general hiring practices.

Our Workforce Development Division is headed by Trudy Parsons, a sought-after speaker and trainer and respected expert in the workforce development arena. Trudy is often invited to speak to students in economic development courses about the intersection of workforce development and economic development and is a regular conference speaker across the country.



Our team members are among Canada’s leading thinkers and strategists in the workforce development arena, actively supporting practitioners’ efforts and contributing advancements in the field. We are innovators invested in the outcomes of this work and champions of the communities and organizations with whom we collaborate.

1.2 Experience and Qualifications

Our extensive portfolio of past work includes a diverse range of projects relevant to this District initiative. MDB Insight has completed innovative strategies, recruitment and retention plans, labour market analyses, sector analyses, and strategic planning projects focused on workforce development for clients across Canada and parts of the U.S. as highlighted in this section. Many of our clients have turned to us for repeat engagements and multiple projects.

Our Past Work in the Muskoka Area

MDB Insight recently joined The Planning Partnership to complete a Community Improvement Plan for the Communities of Bala and Port Carling for the **Township of Muskoka Lakes**. Previously, we have worked with the **City of Bracebridge** (Community Based Strategic Plan; Review of Development Approvals, Incentive Programs, and Economic Development Organizational Structures), the **Town of Gravenhurst** (Cultural Mapping Project; Municipal Cultural Plan), the **Township of Georgian Bay** (Corporate Strategic Plan; 2020 Commercial Gap Assessment), and **RTO 12** (Destination Development Plan, with TCI Management Consultants).

Highlighted ECE and Child Care Sector Experience

- The **City of London and Middlesex County**, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), retained the services of MDB Insight to conduct a detailed analysis of the current and future Early Childhood Education (ECE) labour market within their geographic area. This analysis focused on understanding the supply/demand issues and training requirements for ECEs in the London-Middlesex area and involved a series of primary and secondary research activities. These activities included online surveys (in both French and English), stakeholder interviews, and two ECE community summits, collectively involving over 500 individuals. Together these activities validated the project’s ECE labour force projections and informed the development of 36 action items to strengthen the local ECE sector.
- **St. Thomas – Elgin Ontario Works** retained MDB Insight for a similar project - Labour Market Research and Analysis into Current and Future Early Childhood Education - following provincial policy changes and the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten.
- **Understanding and Addressing Workforce Shortages in Early Childhood Education and Care** – working with the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, between 2008 and 2009, our partnering firm **metro economics** (then Strategic Projections Inc.) worked to define current shortages of ECEC workers, assess their impact, and explore the feasibility of predicting future shortages.



Extensive Workforce Development Expertise

The depth and range of our workforce development projects is demonstrated in these examples of our past work of specific relevance to this District initiative. Several are also included in Appendix B – Reference Projects. Trudy Parsons was the project lead for all cited projects in the following list.

▪ Recent Workforce Development Strategies

- **Prescott and Russell** Economic Development and Tourism Office (ON) - engaged MDB Insight to specifically identify the shortages in workforce and employability in the Prescott-Russell region and recommend solutions for implementation. The Prescott Russell Labour Shortage Strategy is helping the PREDT in its efforts to improve the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region while balancing strong economic growth and addressing business needs.
- **Snohomish County** (WA) – Snohomish County’s Future Workforce Alliance (FWA) initiated this project to support the County’s economic recovery. As the County’s Local Workforce Development Board, the FWA is charged with supporting a resilient and proactive approach to the local workforce development ecosystem. Diversity, inclusion, and belonging principles were key to MDB Insight’s creation of a comprehensive project plan that culminated in a 5-year Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan.
- **Valley Regional Enterprise Network** (NS) – *Towards Workforce Prosperity* is the Valley Regional Enterprise Network 2021 – 2025 Regional Workforce Development Strategy, focused on building and sustaining a strong alignment between the development, attraction, and retention of talent to meet the needs of businesses across the Annapolis Valley. It was developed through a collaborative approach and establishes the foundation, objectives, and targeted actions to achieve workforce alignment for the Annapolis Valley Region.
- **Tioga County** (NY) Economic Development and Planning sought a comprehensive data analysis of Tioga’s workforce and talent pipeline. The first of a two-phase project, the Workforce Development Strategy supports a better understanding of the characteristics of the current labour force, the talent needs of local stakeholders, and it examines the link between businesses, education institutions and other stakeholders to strengthen the creation of highly skilled labour talent pool capable of meeting current and future labour demand.
- **Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Partnership** – The Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Study Partnership is a stakeholder collaboration formed to help identify regional skills and competency gaps and explore ways to address them. The Regional Skills Gap Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy was designed to support greater alignment between job vacancies of local employers with those looking for work.
- **Cariboo Chilcotin Region** (BC) – The *Local Action, Collective Impact: 2020-2025 Labour Market Strategy* emerged following a comprehensive assessment of current and forecasted labour market trends, opportunities, and talent demand needs. A year-long study, it included a rigorous and comprehensive review of the local labour market situation across the expansive geography of the Cariboo Chilcotin Region in the Central Interior of British Columbia.
- 3+ Economic Development Corporation (NB) and its partners (the municipalities of Dieppe, Moncton, and Riverview) commissioned the development of a Regional Workforce Development Strategy by MDB Insight that positions the **Greater Moncton** region with a



sustainable, strong talent pipeline aligning its local labour force and available employment opportunities.

- **Workforce Attraction, Recruitment and Retention Initiatives**

- **The Newfoundland & Labrador Environmental Industry Association** looked to MDB Insight for a comprehensive examination of its technology sector workforce, resulting in the detailed report *Defining Newfoundland and Labrador's Technology Workforce and Attraction & Retention Jurisdictional Scan*.
- The **City of Abbotsford** contracted MDB Insight to facilitate and support talent development, attraction, and retention, to ensure that Abbotsford has a talent pipeline that meets the current and future needs of its key economic sectors. The approach used to develop the Abbotsford Labour Force Analysis and Strategy combined research and analysis of the current economic and workforce context in Abbotsford with a comprehensive consultation and engagement process.
- The **Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation** contracted MDB Insight to prepare the Lehigh Valley Talent Supply and Industry Sector Analysis & Strategic Action Plan Strategy. This work combined research and analysis of the current economic and workforce context in the Lehigh Valley with a comprehensive consultation and engagement process. This consultation and engagement involved a range of stakeholders from throughout the Lehigh Valley across five priority sectors, and included employers, education and training institutions, job-seekers, community organizations, municipal and State leaders, and sector associations. The insights, perspectives, and knowledge shared created a strong foundation that resulted in informed strategic directions, and actions to implement those directions.
- The **Town of Cochrane** tasked MDB Insight with the development of a Talent Attraction and Retention Strategy. The essence of this initiative is to create an attraction and retention strategy that strengthens the Town's ability to attract new talent to the area and retain those that have already chosen Cochrane as their place of residence. Consequently, an actionable strategy with clear strategic objectives, timelines and performance measures was needed to serve as a road-map to labour force sustainability in Cochrane.
- **Government of Alberta** – we created a Recruitment Calculator Index to support Alberta employer's ability to attract talent from outside of the province to meet demand for high growth occupations.
- MDB Insight has worked with multiple municipalities to inform and enhance efforts to attract and retain internationally trained and immigrant workers to local areas. For example, the Brockville Immigrant Portal engaged us to update their existing **Leeds & Grenville Immigration Portal**, <http://www.leedsgrenvilleimmigration.ca/>.
- Trudy Parsons, prior to joining MDB Insight was responsible for securing funding to launch the **Niagara Immigrant Employment Council (NIEC)** and initiating and managing the Immigrant Mentorship Program and the **Niagara Immigrant Connections Initiative** – bringing together employers, community members, and immigrants choosing to call Niagara “home”. <https://www.niagaraworkforce.ca/site/niagara-immigrant-employment-council>
- Nova Scotia Office of Immigration awarded MDB Insight the contract to carry out an In-Demand Occupation Analysis. The project involved a review of the in-demand occupations in the



province to ensure it is current in its understanding of labour needs. This information supported the existing nominee programs as well as the launch of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot.

- Trudy Parsons brings direct experience and knowledge of the Local Immigrant Partnership, having worked closely with the Region of Niagara to design and launch the Inaugural Niagara Immigration Portal. <https://welcomeniagaracanada.com/moving-to-niagara/immigration/>
- **Labour Market Intelligence (LMI)**
 - **Tourism HR Canada** recently entrusted two significant projects to MDB Insight – a pan-Canadian Post-COVID Future of Tourism Study, and engagement in support of a Future Skills Framework. Extensive stakeholder consultations and bespoke research and analysis informed both projects.
 - **Workforce Planning Board (Peterborough)** - developed an interactive resource accessible to employers and job seekers to inform on local occupation demand in near-time.
 - **City of Calgary** - we validated sectors and occupations for which Calgary has an available talent pool, and then created a validated list of target companies that are seeking talent in these or comparable occupations.
 - **Government of Yukon** - informed and validated the top 100 occupations and the territory compensation offerings.
 - Since 2013 MDB Insight has been a strategic partner with **Vicinity Jobs**, a leader in the collection and delivery of reliable, scalable, Canadian real-time hiring demand and labour supply tracking and analytics solutions. Our hiring demand and labour supply analytics services are a trusted source of regional Labour Market Information, used by government organizations, Canadian universities, colleges, industry associations, economic development organizations, municipalities, and employment support agencies. The **Job Demand Reporting System** offers access to aggregated, validated, local data that will identify the types of occupations in demand by employers through their hiring efforts, the industries in which these jobs are being sought, along with a series of education and skills reports that inform on employer requirements and potential post-secondary and training trends. The geographic area can be defined and tailored to meet your needs. We are experts in the collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information.
 - MDB Insight partners with *metro economics* to offer detailed long-term projections to 2071 of output, employment, households, and personal income for both the United States and Canada, at the national, state/provincial and sub state/provincial level. *metro economics* specializes in developing assessments of the economic and demographic potential of metropolitan areas and individual communities, producing **labour projections by NOC and NAICS**, on an annual or wide periodic view (5 years, 10 years, etc.).
- **Strengthening Talent Pipelines**
 - MDB Insight was contracted by the **Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako** (a repeat client since 2013), to carry out an Administrative Services Contract. The core purpose of this work was to equip the region with the knowledge and resources necessary to increase awareness of regional assets that support workforce attraction, retention and development; inform decisions; bring relevant information into a single space (inventory, database, report) and making it available (website, marketing), and drive actions forward. S series of inventories, databases, strategies,



marketing campaigns, and presentations were developed and delivered. Significant emphasis was placed on creating a database of programs/supports/relevant organizations that support practicum/work experience for youth, an inventory of programs and laddering opportunities of relevance to the four priority sectors, a database of training institutions, and a listing of training events taking place in the region.

- **Hospitality Workers Training Centre Career Lattice** – we created an interactive career lattice for the Pearson Airport Employment Zone in Toronto including a dataset of skills, certifications, and connections demonstrating the web of possibilities available to workers at various career stages within the hospitalities sector of the Pearson Employment Zone.
- The **Lehigh Valley Economic Development** project (identified above) is another example of a project where our team worked with the school districts and post-secondary providers across the valley to identify relevant programming that aligned with the skills development most relevant to the economic sectors/employer needs for talent. This informed on over and under supply of graduates as well it informed the education sector on gaps in the system.
- **Solidifying Collaborative Links Between Business and Education**
 - This is a common deliverable in most strategies developed by MDB Insight as we recognize the necessary link between education and business. Strategies developed for such clients as **Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Kenora, Cochrane, Simcoe County**, to name a few, include specific recommendations and tactical actions that bring together education and business for knowledge exchange related to needs, opportunities, and collaborative efforts. For example, the Lehigh Valley strategy identified: *Encourage local business owners to seek experiential work term opportunities (internships, co-ops, apprenticeships) for local secondary and postsecondary students / Engage with educational institutions (leadership, teachers, and students) to develop a greater understanding of current work opportunities in the Lehigh Valley and the skills, education levels, and knowledge needed to succeed.*
 - MDB Insight was contracted by **Olds College, Alberta** to examine Smart Agriculture in a broader context and research the skills and competencies sought by employers of graduates from relevant programs. As part of this work, our team carried out a series of employer interviews with leaders in the agriculture sector and hosted a one day facilitated workshop with industry influencers to create an employer directed profile for graduates emerging from the new program to be launched. The project resulted in a comprehensive examination of emerging occupations, as defined by industry leaders and influencers, and graduate skills and competencies necessary for successful transition between college and work.
 - i) This work was further supplemented with an additional engagement to support a funding opportunity for a new apprenticeable-type diploma granting program. MDB Insight is currently supporting Olds College to further advance this initiative.
- **Employer Readiness Initiatives**
 - **Venture Kamloops** engaged MDB Insight to undertaken research to help inform employers in the region on strategies and tactical actions that can enhance their efforts to recruit and retain employees. The emphasis of the research was on supporting employers in Kamloops to access the right talent with the required skill levels and help employers utilize creative strategies to promote the benefits of life and work in Kamloops.



▪ Partnership Table Formation, Engagement, and Business Planning

MDB Insight has worked with numerous communities to establish a table of key stakeholders to facilitate discussion and advance planning initiatives that are directed at building and strengthening the talent pipeline and align supply and demand. Examples include formation and implementation of:

- Government of Yukon – Yukon Skills Table
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako – Strategic Workforce Opportunities Team
- Niagara Workforce Planning Board – Labour Market Planning Leadership Table
- Tioga County – Tioga Regional Talent Supply Table
- Lehigh Valley – Talent Supply Table
- Greater Moncton Leadership Council

Our Unique Differentiation

Building on our practice that promotes and draws on the intersection of economic and workforce development, MDB Insight has married our methodologies, blended our knowledge, and utilized our extensive research to foster a firm that is recognized as a thought leader and pioneer. In addition to our specific expertise in economic and workforce development, we are known for our innovative community strategic planning, having led strategy development for large and smaller geographies, from Abbotsford, Edmonton and Calgary to Waterloo, (ON), Peterborough, Moncton, and many others. We understand communities, municipal operations, and the connection points between economic, workforce, culture, corporate and community strategy development – and where they intersect, and how they inform and influence the planning process.

Our clients' vision – the intended future that sparks a new project – is the starting point for every consultation we undertake. Stepping back from the pages of an RFP, we look at the motivation and intent behind a project. What does it make possible? What does the future look like once the project is completed? With the "why" identified, we apply our best thinking to the project while looking for the opportunities, connections, and value-added offerings we might bring - those unique to MDB Insight and to our accomplished team. This helps us to respond not only to the goals and objectives identified by a prospective client, but also to identify possibilities that might otherwise be missed.

This passion makes our people our greatest strength. Our team's breadth of expertise allows us to push the boundaries of our practice areas. We continually explore new overlaps between our core practice areas – economic development, cultural development, and workforce development – because we believe sustainable growth won't happen in silos.

MDB Insight has built a reputation for connecting clients with opportunities.

We peer around corners and ask questions differently, all with the aim of making sure each project receives the very best of what we can offer. That's not only thought leadership, it's a core piece of our culture as a firm. We're a curious bunch. For us, this work isn't about churning out strategies. It's a commitment to creating change to foster the success of people, communities, and economies.



We're not just experts in these fields. We're experienced practitioners. Our team members have worked on the ground in diverse communities and contexts. We understand the challenges faced by our clients. We customize our approach to each project to meet clients' needs using sound research, proven methodologies, and a collaborative attitude. That means our clients achieve tangible results and vision-driven successes.

Uniquely Integrated Expertise

One of the greatest strengths MDB Insight brings to our clients is the **diversity and breadth of expertise across labor market, economic, sector and community-based planning**. Our team has completed dozens of Sector and Workforce Strategies and Validation reports for sectors and communities challenged by access to the skilled labor force required to drive competitiveness. Strategies must be grounded in evidence, validated through engagement, and aligned with priorities and policies of local, region wide, state, and federal government. This alignment further supports access to funding streams through these channels. Our work in workforce development and labour market strategic plans is hands-on and informed through market research that depicts a standard of excellence, stakeholder engagement that captures the lived experiences, perspectives, and insights of business owners, employees, those displaced in the workforce, those looking to enter the workforce, and those that serve to connect job seekers to job opportunities. We know economic development. We know workforce development and are experts in labour market information, data collection and analysis.



Unique among market research firms, MDB Insight's investment in an expert team and **in-house market research capabilities** (including our state-of-the-art Operations Centre) reflects our commitment to providing innovative market intelligence solutions integrated with our core practice areas of economic and workforce development.

Our firm is large enough to handle any issue that arises during a project yet small enough to guarantee the **hands-on attention of senior team members throughout all project phases**. Our team has worked on the ground with Workforce Planning Boards, local and regional workforce development eco-systems, post-secondaries, K-12 education streams, businesses, job seekers and dislocated workers. **This experience positions us strongly to write strategies and action plans that are relevant, that answer not just the "what" to do to address priorities, rather include the "how" do to it, "who" needs to be involved from both a funding and an implementation perspective.** We recognize the importance of measuring what we do – what are those key performance metrics that will demonstrate the outcomes and impact of work delivered. This is where real value and progress can be measured. We want our clients to succeed, and our approach to client relationships and project management reflects this well beyond project completion.

We bring a fresh and attentive approach to each individual initiative. Of particular interest, we've been working with clients across the country over the past 20+ months to understand the impact of COVID-19 on community and workforce wellness including comprehensive surveys and robust analysis to inform planning and decision-making.



1.3 Our Expert Project Team

Great projects are built on trust, expertise, and innovation. MDB Insight is proud to have been part of many great project successes that have helped define communities across Canada, including many past projects in Ontario. We have gained our reputation based on collaborative approaches, visionary plans that are practical and achievable, and solutions that are actionable and measurable. Our team offers the District an agile combination of expertise, experience, inspiration, and demonstrated results.

Our team is introduced here, with résumés of team members provided in Appendix A.

Trudy Parsons, MBA, C.I.M., P.Mgr., Executive Vice-President | Project Lead



***Project Role:** Trudy will serve as Project Lead, responsible for ensuring that the District Municipality of Muskoka receives a final product that is comprehensive, actionable, and informed by evidence-driven research and analysis. She will oversee all elements of project delivery and will author the final report for content clarity, relevancy, and layout and design. Trudy will be the key point of contact for the District throughout the project.*

Trudy is the first non-founding partner with MDB Insight, known for her contributions to the workforce development field and 25+ years of direct experience working with communities, organizations, and individuals to find viable solutions to identified challenges. Trudy is regularly recognized for her innovative thinking and creative approaches.

Trudy brings direct experience leading a Workforce Planning Board (in Niagara) where her insight, passion, and progressive approaches supported regional and local labour market talent alignment. During her work as Executive Director, Trudy crafted over 100 workforce related strategies that served to bring together local partners, educators, government leaders, industry, labour, and workers – all working towards the common goal of developing a skilled, resilient, and talented labour force to support local economic competitiveness. Since joining MDB Insight in 2011, Trudy has been the project lead for the development of numerous workforce strategies and labour market initiatives in communities and regions, large and small, across Canada and the US. She is known for her aptitude in engaging participants, eliciting robust feedback, and synthesizing input for clarity and context.

Trudy brings expertise in community development, stakeholder engagement and evidence-based, results-driven project delivery. She is a Professional Manager (P.Mgr.) and a seasoned Project Manager, having managed up to 17 projects simultaneously.

Your depth and expertise in workforce development and talent attraction and retention was extremely helpful. MDB Insight has equipped us with a solid strategy to support the Lehigh Valley in its quest for a strong and aligned talent pipeline to meet workforce and talent demands in the region. Our efforts to be proactive in addressing talent supply and demand issues are now grounded in data and supported by a strategic action plan that will guide communications and implementation strategies.

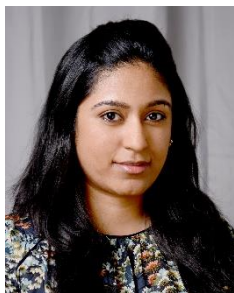
Don Cunningham, President & CEO
Lehigh Valley Economic Development
Corporation



Highlighted Relevant Experience

- Career Lattice Project – Hospitality Workers Training Centre (2020)
- TIAPEI – Tourism Sector Action Plan (in progress)
- Tioga County (NY) Economic Development – Identifying Labour Supply and Key Findings (2019); Workforce Development Strategy (2020); Strategy Implementation Support (2021)
- Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Gap Study for the SouthGrow Regional Initiative (2020)
- Local Action, Collective Impact: 2020-2025 Labour Market Analysis and Strategy for the Cariboo Chilcoltlin Region (BC)
- Labour Supply Study (2020) for Calgary Economic Development (AB)
- Defining Technology Sector Workforce & Defining Future Needs Study (2019) followed by Attraction and Retention Strategies - Jurisdictional Scan (2020) for the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association
- Use of Labour Market Information by Students and Job-Seekers – Research Study for the Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (2020)
- A comprehensive Workforce Analysis for the City of Prince George (BC) (2019)
- City of Abbotsford (BC) – Labour Market Strategy (2018)
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Partnership (PA) - Talent Supply and Industry Sector Analysis & Strategic Action Plan (2018)

Evelyn Paul, MEDI, Senior Consultant | Project Manager



Project Role: Evelyn will serve as the dedicated Project Manager and will be responsible for day-to-day project management. She will work closely with Trudy to ensure that all project tasks are completed on time and within budget.

Evelyn is a Senior Consultant at MDB Insight and a graduate of the distinguished Economic Development and Innovation Program at the University of Waterloo. In her role as Consultant, she supports economic development strategies, creative economy strategies, cultural plans, industry sector profiles, and innovative workforce development projects. Her well-honed research skills and knowledge of development fundamentals are assets to development strategies requiring attention to detail and careful analysis.

Evelyn has an undergraduate degree in Biotechnology and a background that includes working as a research assistant for over 4 years. As a former researcher in the National University of Singapore (NUS) and has specialized knowledge in environmental chemistry and cancer research. As such, she understands the research and development environment and processes including acquiring funding, grants, and intellectual property protection. Evelyn has lived and worked in various countries around the globe, has experienced different cultures, and has gained valuable knowledge by performing tasks in a multicultural work environment.



Evelyn has a strong background in qualitative and quantitative research, economic base analysis, conducting interviews, and synthesizing surveys. She excels at thoroughly researching ideas and capitalizing on existing tools to reach stipulated targets and project objectives.

Highlighted Recent Experience

- Town of Milton Market Research Project (2022)
- Snohomish County (WA) Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (2021)
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network (NS) Regional Workforce Development Strategy (2021)
- Tioga County (NY) Economic Development – Identifying Labour Supply and Key Findings (2019); Workforce Development Strategy (2020); Strategy Implementation Support (2021)
- City of Ottawa (ON) Rural Economic Development Strategy (2020)
- Town of Caledon (ON) 2020-2030 - Economic Development Strategy (2020)
- City of Hamilton ICT/Digital Media Sector and FDI Strategy (2020)
- City of Penticton Long Term Residential Rental Study (2020)
- City of Burlington Post-Secondary Attraction Study (2019)
- City of Vaughan (ON) Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study (2019)

Chris Bandak, B.Sc., CMRP, Executive Vice-President Research & Analytics



Chris heads MDB Insight's Market Research & Analytics Division and specializes in conducting market research for the private and public sectors. His expertise includes the design of custom survey work for all levels of government. He has worked closely with Trudy Parsons on numerous labour studies and workforce strategies to inform projects with custom data and

analysis.

Over the past twenty-plus years, Chris has conducted more than 500 research studies and is considered a thought-leader in design and analysis. Chris holds a North American Patent for a methodology he designed to produce a scientific online panel. In addition, Chris has designed and consulted on large market research pricing, branding, advertising and media projects across North America, including large-scale research programs for organizations such as Verizon, Coke, Honeywell, Duraflame, Esselte, Air Miles, Canada Post, CBC, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and Microsoft.

Chris has helped many communities across Canada and the U.S. to pinpoint citizen priorities and collect targeted data using innovative market research methodologies. From Tacoma, Washington to Paradise, Newfoundland, Chris' projects equip clients with scientific data and comprehensive analysis to inform decision-making with information that instills confidence.

MDB Insight were a great partner in carrying out a challenging research project for our Committee. They went above and beyond the call of duty to troubleshoot unexpected roadblocks during the execution of the project and were fully committed to delivering the results we needed. Their professional and experienced staff were a pleasure to work with and we greatly appreciated their flexible and innovative approach to deliver on our requirements.

Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (ICE),
April 2020



Recent Relevant Experience:

- Tioga County (NY) Economic Development – Identifying Labour Supply and Key Findings
- Local Action, Collective Impact: 2020-2025 Labour Market Strategy for the Cariboo Chilcoltin Region
- Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development - Use of Labour Market Information by Students and Job-Seekers – Research Study
- Indigenous Tourism Ontario – Covid-19 Impact Assessment
- Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) Canada - Manufacturing Essentials Certification Research Project
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (PA) Talent Supply and Industry Sector Analysis & Strategic Action Plan
- Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Gap Study for the SouthGrow Regional Initiative
- Tourism HR Canada – Post-Covid Future of Tourism Study

Project Role: *Chris will lend his expertise to questionnaire design and will oversee survey field work and contribute to the analysis of data and to the preparation of the final report.*

Alanna Davidson, BA(Honours), Consultant



Project Role: *A creative analytical thinker, Alanna will support data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement, and contribute to the development of project deliverables. She will work closely with Chris Bandak to support the survey component of the project.*

Alanna joined MDB Insight in 2022 with a background in community economic development across the public, private and non-profit sectors. Alanna's creative abilities to engage and facilitate stakeholder groups while building community capacity has been critical her successful support of business operators and municipalities.

Her recent economic development experience has focused on creative workforce attraction campaigns, pan-regional tourism development and downtown strategic planning. Within the last 5 years, Alanna has supported and consulted on projects for Destination Ontario, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, City of Owen Sound, Parks Canada, Algoma Country, City of Kawartha Lakes, Superior Country, Ontario Regional Tourism Organizations 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, Grey County Economic Development, Madawaska Maliseet First Nation in New Brunswick, and Tourism Saskatchewan.

As a creative strategist, Alanna combines her unique analytic research analysis and creativity into innovative solutions to business challenges, while ensuring that execution details are never missed during implementation. Her knack for engaging stakeholders effectively, combined with her business analysis education have helped communities successfully leverage their true economic potential.

Highlighted Experience:

- Workforce Attraction Strategic Plan & Campaign Implementation- Town of Hanover (ON)
- Workforce Attraction Campaign & Implementation- City of Owen Sound (ON)



- 3 Year Strategic Action Plan for the 'River District' – City of Owen Sound (ON)
- Knapsack Signature Experience Program – City of Kawartha Lakes (ON)

Jose Rodriguez, MAES, Consultant



Jose joined MDB Insight as a Research Analyst in 2018 with an expertise in data, collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. Jose has supported dozens of economic and workforce development projects across Canada and the USA. His professional interests also include innovation and entrepreneurship. Jose is very familiar with the challenges facing communities as they seek to grow, attract, and retain their business stakeholders and talent pipeline. After completing the highly praised Master's in Local Economic Development from the University of Waterloo, Jose worked in labour force analysis for rural communities in Southwest Ontario,

including Haldimand County, Norfolk County, Brant County, the City of Brantford and the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve. Jose has been involved in a variety of economic development projects, which include labour market studies, industry sector analysis, innovation feasibility studies, business retention and expansion programming, and place branding.

Recent Relevant Experience:

- ECO Canada Clean Teach Labour Market Research Project
- City of Prince George (BC) Workforce Development Strategy
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network (NS) Workforce Development Strategy
- Tioga County (NY) Economic Development – Identifying Labour Supply and Key Findings (2019); Workforce Development Strategy (2020); Strategy Implementation Support (2022)
- Long-Term Economic Development Strategy for Grande Prairie Region (AB)
- City of Ottawa Rural Economic Development Strategy

Project Role: An excellent researcher, writer and communicator, Jose will support data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement, and contribute to the development of project deliverables.

Tom McCormack, MA, metroeconomics (Sub-Consultant)



Tom McCormack is a recognized authority on Canada's economic and demographic prospects. He has provided economic and demographic advice to clients in all sectors of the economy for three decades through his economic consultancy **metroeconomics**.

metroeconomics regularly produces and updates detailed long-term projections to 2071 of output, employment, households, and personal income for both the United States and Canada, at the national, state/provincial and sub state/provincial level.



metroeconomics' clients include municipalities, provincial government departments, retailers, property developers, utilities, transportation service providers and planning consultants.

metroeconomics specializes in developing assessments of the economic and demographic potential of metropolitan areas and individual communities. **metroeconomics'** work in this area in recent years has included: Stettler (2021), Flin Flon (2021), Halton Region (2021), York Region (2021), the Winnipeg metropolitan area (2020), Rocky View (2020), Durham Region (2020), the Calgary metropolitan area (2020), the Atlantic Provinces by metropolitan and rural areas (2020), the Lethbridge area (2020), the City of Thunder Bay (2019), the Prince George area (2019), the City of St. Albert (2018), the City of Brantford (2018), the Victoria West Shore Community (2018), the Elfrida Growth Area of the City of Hamilton (2018), and the Montreal metropolitan area (2018).

Tom's recent consulting assignments include:

- assessing the economic importance of AECL's Chalk River Laboratories on the economies of Renfrew County and eastern Ontario;
- assessing the impacts of slated mine closures on the economy of Flin Flon;
- assessing recent labour market trends and future labour market needs for the Calgary metropolitan area, particularly on those occupations employed by the financial sector;
- assessing the labour market needs for the Southern Alberta area and sub-regions within by detailed industry and all 500 occupations;
- assessing for each of Estevan and Coronach in Saskatchewan the economic impacts of the expected closure of mining and electric power generation facilities on their economic activities in general and on their population potential;
- assessing the prospects for population and employment growth in the Calgary suburban community of Chestermere given expectations for Alberta's energy sector;
- serving as an economic advisor to a team of consultants led by CDM Smith assessing the need for increased bridge capacity in the Detroit-Windsor corridor.

Project Role: Tom will provide projections to inform on current and project labour demand within relevant occupations and industry (NOC and NAICS).

Other Talent Available for the Project

As narrow as it may appear to an outsider, those close to the industry appreciate that workforce development is a broad discipline and includes vital elements like economic development. With this in mind, MDB Insight has created an industry-leading, comprehensive and integrated consulting practice. Beyond the team identified here, MDB Insight has nationally recognized thought leaders in Economic Development (led by Paul Blais and Lauren Millier). Beyond these most senior team members, our Senior Consultants and Consultants all come with their own specialist backgrounds. You can view their bios on our web site. **All of this additional expertise comes without extra cost to the project.**

A word about our staffing model...

We want the District Municipality of Muskoka to understand how MDB Insight selects its team members and what factors have gone into building the staff team we offer to our clients. We aren't typical in this



regard, having no entry level staff. All MDB Insight team members have strong backgrounds and are seasoned professionals. Each has academic credentials as well as industry qualifications. This guarantees efficiencies to our clients and represents a significant value-added element in our assignments.

Executive team members each bring more than 20 years of direct experience and are recognized industry leaders in their fields. Their extensive project repertoires and well-honed expertise set them apart, and their personal attention to each project ensures actionable, realistic, and tailored outcomes.

Senior Consultants are seasoned professionals, each with 6 or more years of direct experience in their specialized fields (often considerably more). They have completed a diverse range of projects and are skilled practitioners with exemplary track records. Each has demonstrated fine-tuned project management expertise and well-developed analytical and writing skills.

Consultants bring exceptional analytical skills and attention to detail to each project. Each is adept at utilizing the latest qualitative and quantitative tools and methods to support project methodologies that produce reliable, accurate, and evidence-based outcomes.



REFERENCE FORM

The Proponent shall provide below three (3) separate Clients having purchased a similar service as specified herein for a previous five (5) year period from the issuance of this document. **Current or past suppliers of the District must list the District as a reference.**

REFERENCE # 1	
Client	Cariboo Regional District
Contact Name & Phone Number	Darron Campbell, Manager of Community Services, (250) 392-3351
Contact Email Address	dcampbell@cariboord.ca
Date of Contract	2020
Description of Services Provided	Local Action, Collective Impact: 2020-2025 Labour Market Strategy for the Cariboo Chilcotin Region (please see Appendix B)
REFERENCE # 2	
Client	Snohomish County
Contact Name & Phone Number	James Henderson, Chief of Economic and Workforce Development Initiative, 425-262-2212
Contact Email Address	james.henderson@co.snohomish.wa.us
Date of Contract	2020/21
Description of Services Provided	Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (please see Appendix B)
REFERENCE # 3	
Client	Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Study Partnership
Contact Name & Phone Number	Peter Casurella, Executive Director, SouthGrow Regional Economic Development, (403) 394-0615
Contact Email Address	peter.casurella@southgrow.com
Date of Contract	2020
Description of Services Provided	Skills Gap Analysis & Workforce Development Strategy (please see Appendix B)

REFERENCE RELEASE

I **Trudy Parsons** (authorized signatory for the submitting Firm) authorize the District to contact the person and/or organization listed on the REFERENCE FORM, for the purpose of obtaining information relating to the Proponent. The District reserves the right to call references if in its sole discretion finds a need to do so. The District reserves the right to check other references other than listed herein.



2. Understanding of Deliverables, Work Plan

2.1 Our Understanding of the Project

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, early childhood education (ECE) is viewed as a human right. In Ontario the responsibility for this lies with the Ministry of Education who oversees funding, licensing, and policy development to support the provision of licensed childcare. As the local service system manager, the District of Muskoka has a pivotal role in the planning and development of additional capacity, maximizing affordability, and quality assurance within this provincial early years and child care system. This role affords the District a unique understanding of the issues (social, economic, demographic) that impact, influence and shape the community.

The vital importance of ECE professionals within the local economic and workforce landscape is central to the District's investment in this workforce development initiative. While acknowledging that the profession has been undervalued and underpaid, the District has also recognized the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the early years and child care workforce. This presents a timely opportunity for crafting an innovative and collaborative workforce development strategy that will support local recruitment and retention efforts in order to ensure a high-quality childcare and early years workforce for the District moving forward.

We understand that the key objectives for the strategy are:

- To sustain the existing childcare and early years workforce to ensure a more stable and high-quality early years and child care system
- To enhance access to opportunities for the workforce that promote retention and recruitment, including professional development, training, and qualification upgrade programs
- To grow the number of qualified staff in the early years and childcare workforce to increase access to high quality licensed child care for families
- To attract and support the development of an increasingly diverse workforce to more effectively reflect the children and families accessing early and childcare programs.

Muskoka's vision is for childcare and early years to be a career of choice for existing and potential professionals by informing them about the range of opportunities available to them within the sector. Muskoka needs to retain and attract professionals with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to provide high-quality care, education, and play-based learning opportunities for children.

District Municipality of Muskoka, Request for Proposals - Workforce Development Strategy Early Years and Child Care





Within the context of these key objectives, the strategy will be developed as a two-part initiative, worked on synchronously. The first will be the development of a **professional learning strategy** for the sector, combining a focused examination of the current landscape within Muskoka with a review of best practices from other jurisdictions. The second will involve the creation of a **Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy** in collaboration with the Partnership Table made up of community stakeholders, education partners, service providers

and District staff. A key focus for this second initiative is to facilitate an action plan that will support recruitment and retention of local early years and childcare workforce. It is recognized that the majority of the work will fall within this second initiative phase.

We understand the **ultimate deliverable for this RFP is the development of an evidence-based, actionable workforce development strategy for Muskoka’s Early Years and Child Care sector**. This strategy will be crafted to inform, influence, and inspire the supports needed for the sector to be positively positioned and to move forward confidently in collaborative efforts aimed at workforce sustainability. As noted in the RFP, “Early Childhood Education Professionals are the workforce that support the workforce”.¹ The District will find our team to be fully invested in the outcomes of this initiative and enthusiastic champions for the long term success of your efforts to support workforce development across your local early years and child care sector. Our approach to this work will be mindful and will draw upon our substantial experience and expertise in workforce development across multiple jurisdictions. We will apply our thought leadership to the development of an innovative and collaborative strategy that will reflect the District’s unique characteristics, the project’s intended outcomes, and Muskoka’s vision for child care and early years programming and support.

2.2 Innovative and Value-Added Approaches

MDB Insight integrates several innovative and value-added approaches into our work, and we would like to highlight some of these for the District’s consideration. We appreciate that your combined strategies must reflect not only local priorities and relevant best practices but also the commitment to innovation that Muskoka brings to this vital initiative.

Always on the Leading Edge and Doing More for Our Clients

Our expertise is integrated across our key practice areas – we work in the dynamic space where these overlap, and where communities and organizations thrive. For instance, our deliberate foray into Workforce Development in 2011 made us the first firm in Canada to have a division dedicated to incorporating the economic impact of the labour market. Our curious and passionate team members have

Unique among market research firms, we combine expert survey design and interviewing capabilities with industry-leading analytics and the full depth of knowledge that is represented by MDB Insight’s national workforce development division.

¹ RFP 22-638300-01 The District Municipality of Muskoka, pg. 13 of 23; 3-16-2022



continued to stay in front of these changes and we have always been able to offer compelling ways in which our clients can capitalize on the opportunities they present.

Dedicated Market Research & Analytics Division

Recognizing a gap between market intelligence that is available for provincial and national decision making and that which is available for local and regional decision making has led into another progressive and exciting aspect of economic development. In 2017, we started a Market Research and Analytics Division. The division is focused on gathering local market intelligence. The statistically reliable data from local businesses, consumers, and citizens is gathered and analyzed with methods that ensure applicability to strategy and action planning. Bringing these capabilities in-house has positioned us to better integrate the latest market research innovations into our work, and to provide the most diverse array of market intelligence supports for our clients.

Our operations centre specializes in quantitative fieldwork services across North America and offers a full range of field services including telephone, online and mixed-mode consultation as well as a comprehensive range of data collection services including sampling, coding, data processing and tabulations to meet our client's specific marketing research needs. We are equipped with powerful statistical software packages to ensure quick turnaround of accurate tabulations according to our client's requirements. In addition, we can conduct telephone services for online surveys, online discussion groups, online panels and focus groups.

Our operations centre team consists of highly trained interviewers, multi-lingual field supervisors, proficient data processing staff, seasoned project managers and research associates. Our survey system is capable of hosting a multitude of languages within a single project.

Our fully integrated CATI/Web system provides for exceptional control, flexibility and monitoring capabilities to produce the high quality of work our clients expect on each and every project. A great example of this is our work with Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium where our team connected with 2500 manufacturing firms across Canada, and 100 educational institutions to complete a custom survey to inform on sector needs, strategies, and future planning. We are also known for our professionalism, cost efficiency, quality data collection, and data security and are proud to support a diverse list of satisfied and repeat customers.

SOARR Assessment – Going Beyond a Typical SWOT

The SOARR model of "appreciative inquiry" (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks, results) represents an emerging best practice in strategic planning. MDB Insight has been a pioneer in the SOARR assessment space in workforce and economic development, and the approach is now being used by other firms. We have provided these assessments in many urban and rural communities from coast to coast to coast, including West Vancouver, Port Moody, Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Petawawa, Alnwick/Haldimand, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Cape Breton, among many others.

We have adapted our original SOAR by adding Risk. Bringing Risk as well as Results into the conversation from the very beginning ensures contingency planning receives due attention and that outcomes are reflected in an action-oriented, measurable manner. By the end of the project, the goals, objectives, and performance metrics have all been tested several times, and that ensures recommendations are realistically grounded for the District Municipality of Muskoka.



Key Attributes of a SOARR™ Assessment



Unparalleled Local Labour Market Intelligence

MDB Insight's National Workforce Development Division offers the expertise and innovative approaches necessary to support workforce development initiatives like this one for the District of Muskoka and ensure its success. Here are some of the key qualifications and assets that set our firm apart in providing unparalleled workforce development expertise and insights:

- Direct experience in the analysis of local labour markets at the macro and micro level.
- MDB Insight and Vicinity Jobs' Regional Labour Demand Report™ offers unequalled access to timely and accurate Labour Market Information (LMI) data by analyzing online job vacancy postings along with an array of insights related to skills and education requirements, employment type, etc. This platform is used by Governments, Intermediaries, and local municipalities as part of the LMI analysis tools.



- We have the experts that can provide insights that will allow you to make informed projections and to adjust your planning based on reliable data that is specific to the District. Extensive quality assurance goes into the analysis and compilation of these data sources, ensuring the labour market information is relevant and up to date.
- The importance of attracting and retaining a skilled, resilient workforce has perhaps never been of greater priority. With increased competition for talent among private, public, and voluntary sectors, the battle for talent has shifted. Successful strategies must address the value proposition for the job candidate, reflect a positive brand supporting employment within the local area, and establish strong and relevant practices to support and promote retention of talent.

Online and Alternative Engagement Experts

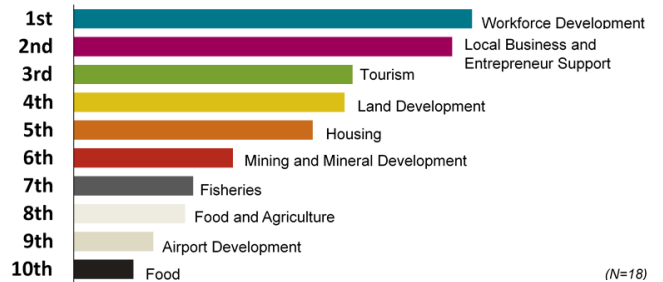
Pandemic protocols have necessitated alternative approaches to community and stakeholder engagement that would otherwise involve in-person or group contact. We have used a range of online, digital, and alternative engagement tools and approaches in our community engagements over the years and added to our repertoire as the need for these alternatives intensified. We are well positioned to elicit meaningful input from stakeholders in several ways if required.

Mentimeter is one example of a web-based platform that is effective and simple. It is easily used by audience members who use their smartphones to provide responses to questions that we pose. It does not require the downloading of an app or complex login – just type in menti.com and key in the 5-6 number passcode. Results from this method of "virtual response" are immediate (examples at right). We can frame questions to move us towards electronic ranking and voting on priorities, entering text bubbles that lead to dynamic word clouds. It is an excellent way to engage everyone and, importantly, it allows us to use the audience's priorities to motivate spontaneous (and virtual) group discussions and, where beneficial, collaborations in small virtual groups.

We are also using Zoom as an online meeting platform and have successfully gleaned meaningful input despite pandemic protocols for many projects over the past two years.

Management Capabilities/Project Management

MDB Insight has well-developed management protocols crafted over 15 years and hundreds of projects. Beginning with the Project Launch Meeting, and reflected in our Project Charter, our project management approach is focused on clarity, open and regular communication, and attention to detail. This is reinforced throughout the project, with ongoing updates designed to ensure the District will have clear and current information at all times. Project milestones are identified and carefully tracked by our experienced Project Manager, supported by the entire team, and backed by contingency planning and





risk mitigation strategies informed by our extensive and diverse experience. Our subsequent Work Plan, Consultation, and Report Outline are each designed to furnish additional clarity and to ensure expectations are fully addressed from the beginning. Throughout the project, Trudy Parsons (Project Lead) will hold overall accountability.

We want to assure the District that MDB Insight has the capacity and resources to successfully complete this project on time and within budget. We maintain a generous buffer in our workload management practices in order to ensure team members have more than enough time to attend to project details. Our project managers stay abreast of team workloads and monitor project assignments carefully.

MDB Insight places quality over quantity. We commit to new projects with a critical consideration of our existing workload and capacity to deliver as promised to our clients. We make this commitment to the District to deliver on the requirements of this RFP as detailed in our proposal.

Thought Leaders, Community Champions

MDB Insight's executive team includes some of Canada's most respected and accomplished experts and practitioners in economic development, workforce development, and market research. These are passionate community builders, invested in the success of community projects both professionally and personally. Beyond our portfolio of professional accomplishments, our clients know us as enthusiastic cheerleaders for the success of their efforts in cities and towns across the country. Closer to home, we are volunteers and community boosters with a vested interest in the vitality of the places where we live and work.

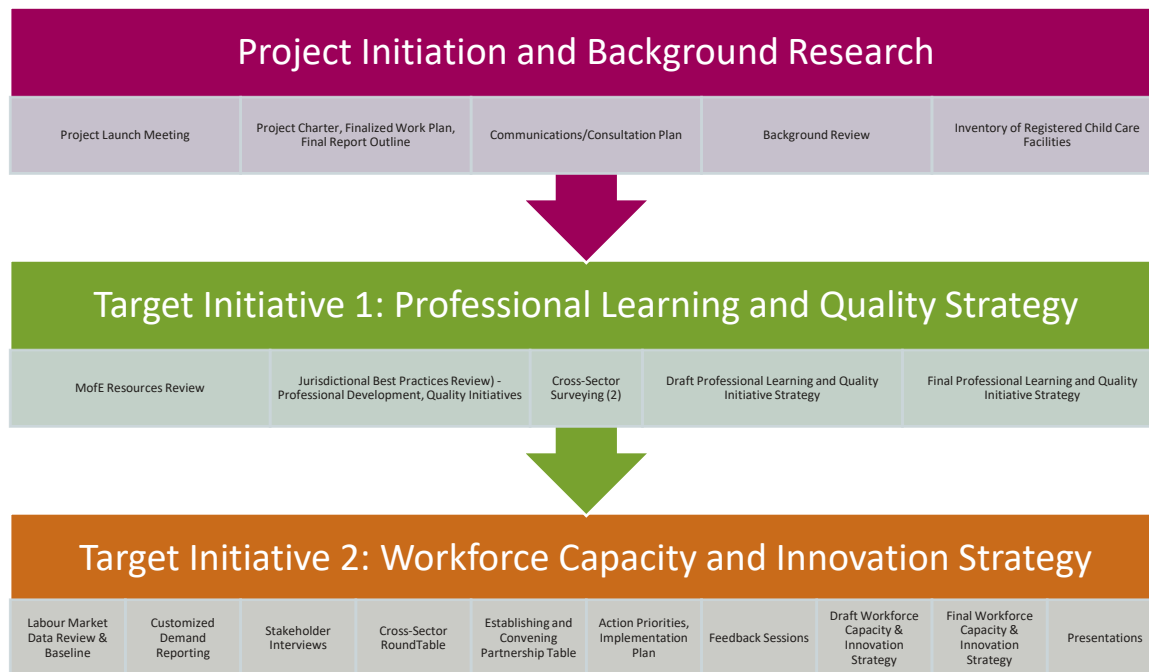


MDB Insight's Executive Vice-Presidents (L to R) Trudy Parsons, Paul Blais, Chris Bandak and Lauren Millier.



2.3 Methodology

The following methodology takes into consideration the required project management and resources to deliver the project on time and on budget. We have developed the workplan and the associated time allocations to reflect this. Our project management is grounded in the continuous review and update of the workplan (at least weekly). We will share the updated workplan with the District bi-weekly, or as desired by the District team. This will ensure that the District stays current on project status and milestone deliverables.



Project Initiation and Background Research

Our consulting team will meet with the District to discuss all aspects of each target initiative for the project, the proposed work plan and timelines for key activities. Trudy Parsons (the consulting team lead) will attend (in-person, or via video, pending public health guidelines) with other team members participating in-person or via teleconference. The anticipated outcomes of the meeting include:

- Confirmation of project objectives, timing and milestones
- Clarification for Monthly Status reports regarding work status and financial reporting; issues and/or concerns will include a mitigation strategy that will resolve and monitor such issues
- Confirmation of working relationships, roles and responsibilities of consulting team and the District of Muskoka, Capacity Building Committee, Partnership Table, and stakeholders as identified
- Confirmation of stakeholders for engagement and best approaches to reaching those individuals
- Selection of dates for deliverables, presentations, and meetings, and identification of in-community visits (preliminary identification of specific dates); we will also explore options related to in-



community activities vs virtual outreach in response to potential future in-person interaction restrictions.

Following this meeting (within 1 week) our team will present a detailed Project Charter, a Communications/Consultation Plan, and a comprehensive project workplan.

Project Charter

A Project Charter will confirm project scope, the timing of project updates at key milestones, as well as the roles and responsibilities of all members of the project team.



Communications/Consultation Plan

The Communications/Consultation Plan addresses the necessary communications process and maps the consultation schedule, identifying the target groups, key messaging, distribution channels, and the roles of District representatives and our consulting team in the outreach.

A key discussion in the launch meeting will be related to the chain of distribution for invitations to participate. It is our experience that invitations receive a greater positive response when received directly through the client organization. However, a brief introduction to the consulting team can also help achieve that positive response.

Work Plan

A revised work plan will include all timelines and milestones for the project; the work plan will further serve as the project status update for the life of the project, issued to the project team bi-weekly or on a schedule to be determined. This is in addition to the monthly status report update as required by the RFP. This will include a detailed schedule or GANTT chart of project tasks and deliverables.

Detailed Report Table of Contents

A Detailed Outline of each final report (Professional Learning and Quality Strategy, Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy) identifying content areas and clearly articulating the process to be followed. Completing these outlines early will give the District confidence that all pertinent information/data will be included in the resulting work. It is important to note that these outlines can still be modified (and almost certainly will be) as the project moves forward and new information is collected and/or priorities of content change.

Background Review to Inform All Aspects of this Initiative

The Project Team will provide a brief overview of the sector, paying particular attention to any relevant documents published by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO), Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Childcare Resource and Research Unit of the University of Toronto and local research. Where available, we will also include relevant updates on the Canada-Ontario Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (currently not enacted in Ontario) and relevant conference and event proceedings (e.g. 'What Matters in Early Childhood Studies Now' Jan/Feb 2022). There is a significant focus on child care services and access and our team will incorporate information that is current and applicable to ensure a deep dive in the research.



Inventory of Registered Child Care Facilities

While not identified as a deliverable in the RFP, our team proposes the development of an Inventory of Registered Child Care Facilities for Muskoka. This will serve to inform the composition of childcare sector capacity and makeup (centre-based and home-based).

The baseline information for this database will be collected from Ontario's licensed childcare system and the Canadian Childcare Directory. The database will later serve as the basis for a sampling frame of area childcare providers.



Initiative 1: Professional Learning and Quality Initiative Strategy

Resource Review

We will review the Ministry of Education resources referenced by the District (RFP Appendix A) through a professional learning and quality lens. These resources include, but may not be limited to:

- *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*
- Introductory Guides
- *Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from Research about Young Children*
- *Building on How Does Learning Happen? Pedagogical Approaches to Re-opening Early Years and Child Care Programs in Ontario*

Results of this review will be integrated with the information obtained from the remaining tasks in this section to inform the Professional Learning and Quality Strategy. Exploration of the level of awareness of these resources, utilization, and identified gaps will be carried out as part of the stakeholder engagement activities. This will be insightful to the development of potential strategic priorities and initiatives that will further strengthen the sector's ability to attract, retain, and recruit talent.

Best Practices Review – Professional Development and Quality Initiatives

Our team will conduct two specific reviews of best practices to inform the Professional Learning and Quality Strategy.

Though planning for labour force development and early childcare growth can be challenging due to political and macroeconomic factors, there are a number of case studies from Canada and Europe that illustrate best practice approaches to professional development, and continuous improvement for quality service delivery that can support early childcare longevity and quality initiatives. Our Project Team will undertake a review of existing best practices from communities, organizations, or businesses across Canada and selected European Countries focused on supporting the growth and sustainability of early childcare talent development and quality delivery models. The Project Team will identify case studies and best practices as they relate to:

- Human resources, including employee retention and recruitment strategies;



- Education and training, including innovative approaches and models for delivery (e.g. online, private sector, workplace-based);
- Immigrant engagement, including labour force integration and international recruitment;
- Career pathways.

The resulting best practices will inform the development of recommendations and strategies that will improve and enhance professional development, skills development, service quality, and the talent pipeline. These practices will be viewed through the lens of key learnings emerging through the research specific for Muskoka.

Cross-Sector Surveying



We will undertake two cross-sector surveys. The first will target employers, workers, and educators in the Early Childhood and childcare sector. The second will target employers specifically. Chris Bandak, Executive Vice-President Market Research & Analytics, will recommend a questionnaire design for each survey that addresses specific objectives. Chris has conducted large and small research undertakings for a broad breadth of clients across North America.

Survey One – Professional Learning

Working with the Capacity Building Committee, Mr. Bandak will design an online survey aimed at informing collaborative curriculum for professional learning that aligns with current capacity building activities in Muskoka.

The following methodology outlines our approach to conducting this survey. Our implementation, rigorous quality control standards and expertise position us to deliver a final product that can be used to make informed decisions based on accurate data and clear insights from the perspective of those in the ECE and childcare sector.

Questionnaire Design: Mr. Bandak will oversee the design of the questionnaire in consultation with the Capacity Building Committee. The survey is anticipated to have a target length of 8-10 minutes. The survey will be programmed into our CAWI (Computer Aided Web Interview) system and will be available for testing prior to going live. It will be promoted to a cross-sector audience of potential respondents that includes facility-based and home-based childcare providers and staff, as well as post-secondary education professionals with early childhood and/or child care programming.

Outreach: Mr. Bandak will provide feedback on the outreach and design of the communication that is sent to potential respondents. In addition, Mr. Bandak will also provide feedback on the design of the reminder emails which will be critical in the process of increasing response rates.

Sampling: MDB Insight recommends a target of 150 completes.

Data Collection: Respondents will complete the online questionnaire, including self-identification of sampling categories (i.e. employer, worker, educator). Once all data collection is completed, data will be coded and cleaned.



Analysis: MDB Insight will provide a summary of all questions asked in the survey. Utilizing our in-house statistical analysis, MDB Insight will extract views, priorities, and preferences that will most impact and inform the Professional Learning and Quality Strategy for Muskoka. These findings will be incorporated into the other research and engagement activity findings that inform the final strategy.

Survey Two – Quality Initiatives

The District has also indicated a desire to conduct a cross-sector survey based on the results of the best practices review related to quality initiatives in other jurisdictions. We propose a questionnaire designed to specifically target employers in the sector who indicated an interest in participating during the first survey. Chris Bandak will develop this questionnaire and, as with the first survey, will oversee outreach and data collection activities. The methodology for this survey will be the same as the first survey, with an online questionnaire hosted on MDB Insight’s CAWI system.

Using our derived importance analytics, we will rank respondent priorities to provide the District with a clear picture of the best practices deemed to be of greatest importance. This will be a valuable asset in developing the strategy, recommendations, and action plan.

Draft Professional Learning and Quality Initiative Strategy

As part of the draft strategy development, Our Team will carry out a SOARR analysis, utilizing the methodology presented earlier in this submission. Doing so will further inform the identification of key strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks and results emerging through the research and engagement processes carried out to date. The draft strategy will capture all research and analysis gathered as they relate to the Professional Learning and Quality Initiatives based on existing approaches being utilized in the District, as well as those emerging through the secondary best practices review. The applicability of the best practices to the District will be informed by the research as part of Initiative 1 and those relevant findings emerging from the simultaneous task findings relevant to Initiative 2. Findings from the research and review activities and the survey will be summarized and emerging recommendations will be articulated and considered as part of Initiative 2, where relevant.

The report for Initiative 1 will be provided to the District not later than May 30th for review, and sufficient time will be allocated for feedback and any required revisions.

Final Professional Learning and Quality Initiative Strategy

We will make any necessary revisions based on feedback received from the District following the review. The final report for Initiative 1 will be delivered in MS Word and PDF format to the District not later than June 10th. The final report will be accompanied by all aggregated data files, inventory, and presentations developed over the lifecycle of the project.



Initiative 2: Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy

Labour Market Data Review and Baseline (across relevant NOC occupation codes)

In support of the research required here, metroeconomics will draw on its projection system and its constituent Regions and Counties to carry out the following steps:

- develop a brief historical profile of economic and demographic trends of the area
- develop a Base Case projection over the next five years of employment by industry for each of the 4-digit level by the North American Industry Classification System for the Child Services Sector
- transform the detailed industry projections into a Base Case projection for each of the related occupations identified in the National Occupations Classification System
- based on data for 2016 regarding the number of people by age employed in the area in each occupation project the number of people likely to retire each year over the next decade from each occupation
- the projections, therefore, will reflect the recruitment pressures on the area by detailed occupation stemming both from expected economic changes and from expected retirements
- specific tables will be created to showcase labour supply needs for 2022 to 2027.

The projections will be summarized in a table indicating the number of people that will need to be recruited to the district into each occupation due to (a) the expected changes to the area's economy over that span; (b) the expected number of retirees from each occupation who will need to be replaced over that span; and (c) the expected total recruitment needs (due to economic expansion plus retiree replacement).

Projections will be developed for each year for all variables over the next five years (this may be expanded to ten years, if preferred). Thus, it will be possible to identify the expected occupational requirements for any sub-period within that timeframe.

Labour Demand – LMI Reporting: Customized Demand Reporting System

Through the use of a technology tool – the Vicinity Jobs Labour Demand Reporting System - our project team will produce customized real-time data reports that reflect actual labour demand (as captured through on-line job postings by local employers). This informs on the types of occupations, by sector, being posted by local employers, skill levels, wage levels, certifications being requested, and the methods employers are using to advertise job vacancies. A sector review of occupational postings will help inform on sector specific activity. This platform is available beyond the scope of this project through an annual subscription option. It is currently being used in municipalities across Canada, and by the Labour Market Information Council, Conference Board of Canada, Future Skills Canada/Magnet, and other groups to inform on labour market activity, skills in demand by local employers, wages, and sector activity.

Further, we will examine current vacancy rate for RECE positions in Muskoka, and offer analysis of what future demand and supply alignment will require.



Stakeholder Interviews

We will conduct 10-15 interviews with key stakeholders, including child care sector experts, in order to clarify existing recruitment and retention barriers and challenges accessing RECE designation and continuing education. Interviewees will be identified in consultation with the District during project initiation discussions but are anticipated to include a cross-section of:

- Sector Employers/Operators
- Child Care Advisory Group members
- Best Start representatives
- Employment/Training partners
- Others, as identified in the Project Launch meeting

Cross-Sector Roundtable

Our Project Team proposes a facilitated stakeholder roundtable for the purpose of:



- Sharing a summary of findings from the labour market data review and baseline
- Validating data findings and analysis through dialogue with those in the sector
- Engaging participants in a dialogue around key priority areas to support the sector within Muskoka – priority topics will include capacity, recruitment and retention, innovations

We envision a 3 hour working session that would begin with an overview of our findings to date and would then move to a series of facilitated round table discussions focused on the priority topics.

In addition to serving as a validation exercise for the project to-date, this Summit will also provide an opportunity to recruit participants interested in membership at the Partnership Table to be established.

Venue costs, include any rental fee and refreshments, are outside the project budget. The District has indicated it will facilitate and support the project in this way.

Establishing the Partnership Table

The District's desire to establish a Partnership Table reflects a willingness to make a valuable investment in the long term vision for the sector and its ongoing success. Establishing this Partnership Table will be a process, and we believe meaningful input will only be realized if this process unfolds in deliberate and timely stages.

To recruit Partnership Table members we have proposed an invitation to participants at the Cross-Sector Summit. Those with an expressed interest and willingness will bring welcome enthusiasm and commitment to the Partnership Table, enhancing both its effectiveness and potential impact.



Convening the Partnership Table

With membership established, we will convene an inaugural meeting of the Partnership Table, working collaboratively with the District. This meeting will have specific objectives aimed at ensuring the Partnership Table's ongoing effectiveness, including:

- Introduction of members and review of Muskoka's vision for early childhood and child care
- Development of Terms of Reference
- Creation of a 1-2 year Business Plan grounded in the development of a recruitment strategy, marketing campaign, career pathways map, and retention strategy

Our consulting team will facilitate this inaugural meeting and provide advance materials to support members' onboarding in the context of vision, parameters for Terms of Reference, and a Business Plan outline for consideration.

Action priorities for the Partnership Table, with a detailed implementation plan for how these are to be achieved over a 1-2 year timeframe, will be included in the Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy.

Feedback Sessions

Our team will facilitate two feedback sessions with front line child care professionals in order to gain further clarity about existing recruitment and retention barriers and challenges accessing RECE designation and continuing education. We propose two 2-hour sessions offered at differing times to accommodate participant work schedules. These sessions may be in-person and/or virtual, depending on the District's preference and current pandemic protocols.

Draft Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy

Our consulting team will develop the draft strategy, informed by the labour market data review and baseline, Cross-Sector Roundtable, and preliminary input from the Partnership Table's inaugural meeting. We will integrate these into a draft strategy that focuses on capacity and innovation and sets out a clear plan for Muskoka moving forward. For each recommendation, a series of actions will support implementation efforts beyond the research, an important element to moving from research and planning to implementation and impact. This will include the development both short- and longer-term strategies/ solutions available to stakeholders and the broader systems improvement. The narrative structure will describe:

- the proposed recommendation and rationale
- the key community partners who have a role to play
- the timing (over the Strategy's timeframe)
- the required operational structure to support implementation, including staffing and organizational considerations.

The draft strategy will be provided to the District not later than October 28th for review, and sufficient time will be allocated for feedback and any required revisions.



Final Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy

We will make any necessary revisions based on feedback received from the District following the review of the draft strategy and prepare the final strategy. This will be delivered to the District not later than November 10th.

Presentations

The District's RFP indicates that two public presentations are required. Trudy Parsons, Project Lead, will make these presentations with dates and specifics of approach and content to be determined in consultation with the District. For purposes of establishing a project budget, we have anticipated two 1-hour presentations summarizing each of the two final strategies.



3. Proposed Fee and Timetable

MDB Insight prides itself on the provision of industry-leading quality services for a competitive price. Our proposed fee for the completion of this District of Muskoka project, as detailed in our proposal, is \$43,660 excluding tax.

		MDB Insight					Tom McCormack metroeconomics	Section Subtotal
Hourly Rate		Trudy Parsons	Chris Bandak	Evelyn Paul	Alanna Davidson	Jose Rodriguez	\$ 240	
Phase & Tasks	Week of							
Project Initiation & Background Research								
Project Launch Meeting	April 4 2022	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0		7.0
Project Charter, Workplan, Report Outline	April 11 2022	2.0		3.0				5.0
Bi-Weekly Progress Updates/Monthly Reporting	Ongoing	6.0		6.0				12.0
Communications/ Consultation Plan	April 11 2022	2.0		2.0				4.0
Background Review	April 18 2022	1.0			7.0			8.0
Inventory of Registered Facilities	April 18 2022	1.0			7.0			8.0
Total Hours		14.0	1.0	13.0	8.0	1.0	0.0	37.0
Total Professional Fees		\$ 3,010			\$ 1,160	\$ 145	\$ -	\$ 4,315
Target Initiative 1: Professional Learning and Quality Strategy								
MofE Resource Review	May 2 2022	2.0				7.0		9.0
Jurisdictional Best Practices and Quality Initiatives Review	May 9 2022	4.0		4.0	10.0	10.0		28.0
Cross-Sector Surveys (2)	May 16 2022	3.0	5.0	3.0		5.0		16.0
Draft Professional Learning and Quality Initiative Strategy	May 30 2022	7.0		7.0				14.0
Final Professional Learning and Quality Initiative Strategy	June 6 2022	3.0		4.0				7.0
Total Hours		19.0	5.0	18.0	10.0	22.0	0.0	74.0
Total Professional Fees		\$ 4,085	\$ 1,075	\$ 3,150	\$ 1,450	\$ 3,190	\$ -	\$ 12,950
Target Initiative 2: Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy								
Labour Market Data Review and Baseline	April 25 2022	2.0		4.0			21.0	27.0
Customized Demand Reporting	May 2 2022					4.0		4.0
Stakeholder Interviews (10-15)	May 16 2022	2.0		5.0	5.0			
Cross-Sector Round Table	June 20 2022	6.0		6.0				
Establishing and Convening Partnership Table	August 15 2022	6.0		6.0				
Action Priorities & Implementation Plan	Sept 5 2022	6.0		6.0				
Feedback Sessions (2)	Sept 26 2022	6.0		6.0				
Draft Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy	Oct 17 2022	7.0		5.0				
Final Workforce Capacity and Innovation Strategy	Nov 7 2022	5.0		4.0				
Public Presentations (2)	To be scheduled	5.0		3.0				8.0
Total Hours		45.0	0.0	45.0	5.0	4.0	21.0	120.0
Total Professional Fees		\$ 9,675	\$ -	\$ 7,875	\$ 725	\$ 580	\$ 5,040	\$ 23,895
Total Project Hours		78.0	6.0	76.0	23.0	27.0	21.0	231.0
Total Professional Fees		\$ 16,770	\$ 1,075	\$ 11,025	\$ 3,335	\$ 3,915	\$ 5,040	\$ 41,160
TOTAL PROFESSIONAL FEES + DISBURSEMENTS								
Travel Estimate								\$ 1,000
Data Costs								\$ 1,500
TOTAL PROJECT FEES (excluding taxes)								\$ 43,660



Appendix A – Team Résumés

Trudy Parsons

M.B.A., C.I.M., P.Mgr.

Trudy joined MDB Insight in 2011 to lead the establishment of a National Workforce Development Division, expanding her practice in strategic planning with local municipalities across Canada. She is the firm's first non-founding partner and holds the position of Executive Vice-President.

Highlighted Consulting Experience

- Valley Regional Enterprise Network (NS) Regional Workforce Development Strategy (2021)
- Snohomish County (WA) Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (2021)
- Tioga County NY Economic Development – Identifying Labour Supply and Key Findings (2019); Workforce Development Strategy (2020); Strategy Implementation Support (2021)
- Cariboo-Chilcotin Region Labour Market Strategy (2020)
- Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Gap Study for the SouthGrow Regional Initiative (2020)
- Municipality of Kincardine Strategic Plan (2020)
- Town of South Bruce Peninsula Corporate Strategic Plan (2020)
- Municipality of Waterloo Strategic Plan 2015-2019; 2019-2022 (2019)
- Municipality of Abbotsford (BC) Labour Market Study (2018)
- Municipality of Summerside – Labour Supply and Demand (2016-ongoing)
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Commission – Sector Labour Supply and Attraction Strategy (2017-18)
- Regional District of Bulkley Nechako – Talent Strategy Implementation (2017-18)
- Venture Kamloops – Sector Strategy Talent Alignment and Attraction (2017)
- Mohawk College – Smart Growth Strategy (2016)
- Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay – Strategic Plan (2016)
- Town of Sylvan Lake – Strategic Plan (2015-2018)
- Town of Saugeen Shores – Strategic Plan (2016)
- Calgary Economic Development – Labour Strategy (2016)
- Government of Alberta – Labour Study (2013-14; 2015; 2016)
- Government of Yukon – Labour Study (2013; 2014; 2016)
- Cape Breton NextGen Leadership Society – Young Talent Attraction (2014)

Professional Experience

Niagara Workforce Planning Board

Executive Director 2001-2011

T. Parsons Education Service

President 2000-2006

Keyin College

Director, Campus Operation 1996-2000

Director, Continuing Education and Corporate Training 1992-1996

Education

PuMP® Blueprint Workshop –

Performance Measurement (2020)

University of Waterloo: Economic Development Certificate (2010)

Canadian School of Management:

Executive Fellow in Business

Administration. MBA. Awarded with Credit (2002-2006)

Canadian Institute of Management:

Management and Administration (C.I.M.) and Designation of Professional Manager (P.Mgr.) (1992-1995 and 1995)

College of the North Atlantic: Business Administration Certificate (1977-1978)

Professional Involvement

International Economic Development Council – Member

Economic Developers Association of Canada – Member

Economic Developers Council Ontario – Past Board Member; Member

British Columbia Economic Developers Association – Member

Canadian Institute of Management – Member

Evelyn Paul

MEDI

Evelyn is a Senior Consultant at MDB Insight and has contributed to economic development strategies, creative economy strategies, cultural plans, industry sector profiles, and workforce development projects. She has a strong background in qualitative and quantitative research, economic base analysis, conducting interviews, and synthesizing surveys. She excels at thoroughly researching ideas and capitalizing on existing tools to reach stipulated targets and project objectives.

Highlighted Project Experience

- Snohomish County Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (2021)
- Valley REN Regional Workforce Development Strategy (2021)
- The 2020-2025 Tioga County Workforce Development Strategy (2020)
- City of Ottawa Rural Economic Development Strategy (2020)
- Fraser Valley Alliance Technology-Based Industries Analysis and FDI Strategy (2020)
- Burlington Economic Development Corporation Organizational Review (2020)
- Town of Caledon 2020-2030 - Economic Development Strategy (2020)
- City of Vaughan Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study (2019)
- Regional District of Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission Strategy to 2025 (2019)
- Town of Tillsonburg High-Tech Manufacturing Sub-Cluster Action Plan (2019)
- City of Hamilton Creative Industries Sector Strategy (2018)
- Lehigh Valley Talent Supply and Industry Sector Analysis (including Healthcare) & Strategic Action Plan (2018)

Professional Experience

MDB Insight

Senior Consultant	2021-Present
Consultant	2019 - 2021
Research Analyst	2017-2019

University of Waterloo

Teaching Assistant	2016-2017
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Anna University

Environmental Auditor	2015-2016
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National University of

Singapore

Research Assistant	2012-2014
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Education

University of Waterloo
 Master of Economic Development
 and Innovation
 (2016-2017)

University of Hertfordshire
 Master of Environmental
 Management
 (2010-2011)

Anna University
 Bachelor of Biotechnology
 (2005-2009)

Chris Bandak

Hon BSc (Major: Marketing, Minor: Micro-Economics), CMRP

Chris Bandak joined MDB Insight as Executive Vice-President Research & Analytics in 2017. Chris has over 20 years of experience in the Market Research industry. He has managed, designed, and consulted on market research projects for a range of industries and using a variety of methodologies. With diverse experience and strong analytical and managerial abilities, Chris is capable of designing and implementing complex research methodologies that are customized for each client's needs. His experience has given him a solid background in the technical aspects of research and the ability to present relevant and actionable results to clients in a clear and understandable way.

Highlighted Consulting Experience

Public Sector Surveys

Chris has directed citizen satisfaction / public opinion research studies to provide an in-depth understanding of the experience of residents including use of municipal services, resident satisfaction, and the perceived importance of various publicly delivered services. He has also directed many business satisfaction and B2B surveys for municipal and private sector clients. Past work includes projects for: City of Brampton, City of Burlington, City of Port Colborne, City of Barrie, City of Vaughan, City of Tacoma, District of Saanich, Regional Municipality of York, Resort Municipality of Whistler, Northumberland County, Town of Newmarket, Town of Richmond Hill, Town of Sylvan Lake, Township of Oro-Medonte, Township of Black River-Matheson and many others.

Other High-Profile Research Assignments

Chris' market research experience spans several fields. He has directed projects for clients in the public and private sectors such as: Canada Post, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA), Canadian Out-Of-Home Measurement Bureau (COMB), Microsoft, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Radio Marketing Bureau, Rouge Media Group, Transport Canada, TV Ontario, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium Canada (EMC), Tourism HR Canada, and ECO Canada among others.

Professional Experience

Forum Research Inc.

President, Marketing Research 2005-2017

Foundation Research Group, Inc.

President & Partner 2003-2005

ComQUEST Research

Director of Consumer Research 2000-2003

Siemens Canada Limited

Strategic Marketing Manager 1998-2000)

Harrison Associates

Management Consultant 1996-1998

Education

Ferris State University, Michigan:

Bachelor of Science (Hon.) in Business (1996)

Marketing Research and Intelligence

Association (MRIA) – Certified

Marketing Research Professional

Professional Involvement

Marketing Research and Intelligence

Association (MRIA) – Member

Alanna Davidson

Honours Bachelor of Arts

For almost a decade, Alanna has been working in destination development, cultural tourism, and community economic development across the public, private and non-profit sectors. Alanna specializes in cultural tourism development and strategic community economic development.

Highlighted Project Experience

- Workforce Attraction Strategic Plan & Campaign Implementation- Town of Hanover (ON)
- Workforce Attraction Campaign & Implementation- City of Owen Sound (ON)
- 3 Year Strategic Action Plan for the ‘River District’ – City of Owen Sound (ON)
- Destination Ontario- Group of Seven Discovery Routes (ON)
- Knapsack Signature Experience Program – City of Kawartha Lakes (ON)
- Winter Product Development Strategy- Madawaska Maliseet First Nation (NB)
- Visitor Experience Development Strategy - Parks Canada Sault Ste. Marie (ON)
- Downtown Visitor Assessment- Town of Collingwood (ON)
- Business Trainer- Tourism Excellence North (ON)
- Downtown Revitalization Program Coordinator- Spruce the Bruce (ON)
- Market Assessment & Visitor Experience Concept Development- Parks Canada Rouge National Urban Park (ON)
- Best Practices Mission Trip Planning & Development- RTO Destination Northern Ontario (ON)
- Group of Seven Experience Product Development Strategy & Implementation Plan- Algoma Country (ON)

Professional Experience

MDB Insight	
Consultant	2022-Present
Black & MacDonald Ltd.	
Project Analyst	2021
BC Hughes Tourism, Marketing & Management Inc.	
Destination Developer & Strategist	2015-2021
County of Bruce	
Economic Development Project Coordinator	2013-2015
Southampton Art Center	
Executive Director	2010-2013
McMaster University	
Project Coordinator	2006-2010
Education	
University of Toronto	
Certificate- Business Analysis	(In Progress)
University of Waterloo	
Certificate- Introduction to Project Management	2019
McMaster University	
Honours Bachelor of Arts- Humanities	2009

Jose Rodriguez

MAES, Local Economic Development

Jose is a Consultant at MDB Insight. Jose has experience in data analysis and workforce development projects including projects around labour and skills shortages in rural communities in Southern Ontario including Brantford, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk and the Six Nations of the Grand River. He has a strong background in labour market analysis. Originally from Colombia, Jose has a globalized mindset cultivated by many professional experiences in South America, the United States, and Canada. These experiences made him open to innovative ideas and also makes him comfortable connecting with people in a variety of roles.

Highlighted Project Experience

- Snohomish County, WA. Workforce Development Strategy
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network (Valley REN) – Workforce Development Strategy
- Hospitality Workers Training Centre – Skill Transferability Study
- Town of East Gwillimbury Economic Development Strategy
- Southwest Alberta Regional Skill Gap Study
- Prince George Workforce Development Strategy
- Greater Moncton - Regional Workforce Development Strategy
- County of Tioga, New York; Workforce Development Strategy
- ECO Canada Clean Teach Labour Market Research
- Municipality of Clarington Economic Development Strategy
- Bruce County Research and Engagement Study
- Middlesex County Economic Development Strategy Update
- Burlington Economic Development and Municipal Development Corporation Review
- Town of Caledon – Economic Development Strategy
- Town of Ajax – Innovation Village Business Plan
- Town of Ajax – Economic Development Strategy
- Ottawa Rural Economic Development Strategy
- City Port Colborne – Creativity, Culinary and Innovation Co-Working Hub Feasibility Study

Professional Experience

MDB Insight	
Consultant	2020-Current
MDB Insight	
Research Analyst	2018-2020
Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie	
Labour Market Analyst	2017-2018
YFactor Inc.	
Intern	2016

Education

University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Canada
Master of Applied Environmental Studies, Local Economic Development (2015-2017)
Universidad del Norte
Barranquilla, Colombia
Bachelor of International Relations, Major in International Economy (2008-2012)



Tom McCormack



Tom McCormack is a recognized authority on Canada's economic and demographic prospects. He has provided economic and demographic advice to clients in all sectors of the economy for more than a third of century through his economic consultancy **metro economics** (formerly *Strategic Projections*):

- **metro economics** regularly produces, and updates detailed long term projections to 2071 of output, employment, households, and personal income for both the United States and Canada, at the national, state/provincial, and sub-state/sub-provincial level.
- **metro economics'** clients include municipalities, provincial government departments, retailers, property developers, utilities, transportation service providers and planning consultants.

Professional Experience

Tom was a member of:

- The Premier's *Task Force on the Future of the Greater Toronto Area* (the Golden Task Force).
- The Province of Ontario's *Panel on Smart Growth Strategy*.
- The *Ontario Jobs and Investment Board*.
- The Province of Ontario's *Who Does What Panel*.

In addition:

- He is a past-president and member of the Canadian Association for Business Economics and a past-president of the Ottawa Economics Association and the Toronto Association for Business and Economics.
- He is a current member and past Chairman of Pragma Council, a multi-disciplinary group of planning and legal professionals that meets at the University of Waterloo School of Planning to discuss related issues.
- He is a member of the Simcoe Chapter of Lambda Alpha International, an honorary society for the advancement of land economics.
- He is a former member of the board of directors of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority.

Education and Career

- Tom has an MA (Economics) from Western University (1970) and four decades of experience as an economic forecaster and advisor in both the private and the public sectors.
- Prior to establishing **metro economics** he served as VP of Research with *Compusearch* (now *MapInfo*), Director of Canadian Economic Services and Chief Canadian Economist with *Data Resources Inc.* (now *IHS Global Insight*) and in various capacities as a senior economic advisor to the federal government in Ottawa at the *Ministry of Finance*, the *Anti-Inflation Board* and the *Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce*.



Appendix B – Reference Projects

The reference projects listed in the Reference Form are further described here, together with other highlighted relevant past work, to give the District Municipality of Muskoka a fuller picture of our capabilities. These are but examples from our extensive portfolio, selected to demonstrate the range and depth of our workforce development expertise.

Career Lattice Project – Hospitality Workers Training Centre (2020)

Traditionally, career paths were often visualized using a ‘career ladder’, where individuals would start at an entry-level position and work their way up the clearly laid out steps towards management. In the modern economy, career paths are much less linear. For this reason, the concept of the ‘career lattice’ was created, which lays out potential career paths as a web of vertical and horizontal moves possible, given a particular set of skills. Recognizing the importance of this new concept, the Hospitality Workers Training Centre (HWTC) aimed to create an interactive career lattice for the Pearson Airport Employment Zone in Toronto, Ontario. HWTC hired MDB Insight to produce the dataset of skills, certifications, and connections which was necessary to build the lattice. The end product would be an interactive visual tool demonstrating the web of possibilities available to workers at various career stages within the hospitalities sector of the Pearson Employment Zone.



MDB Insight developed a novel approach to create a unique career lattice dataset with connections drawn based on real-time demand in the economy. As the foundation, we leveraged our exclusive access to Vicinity Jobs’ access to real-time data about online job postings, to download up-to-date statistics about job and skills demand in the Pearson Employment Zone. Industry Canada NAICS codes were chosen in consultation with the HWTC team, and the job postings were filtered based on these codes. For each of the applicable occupations, the skills requirements were extracted from all online job postings in the area over the previous year. Using this skills demand data, MDB Insight designed an innovative algorithm to systematically compare in-demand skills across occupations and draw relevant connections between occupations. For each occupation, the final dataset included the occupation description, examples of jobs within the category, top 5 skills/certification requirements, and the most relevant occupations to which potential connections exist.

The Career Lattice produced by this innovative methodology has been a big success and was very well received by HWTC. The HWTC were enthusiastic about the approach taken by MDB Insight since the connections were drawn based on evidence rather than personal judgement. Due to this approach, there were many interesting and useful connections drawn based on similarities in skills requirements that might have been missed using researcher judgement to select the career connections. Further, HWTC noted that the lattice was able to demonstrate the complexity and non-linearity of modern career paths, with plenty of room to move between disciplines. The innovative approach to skills-matching developed in this project is a new technique that is highly applicable to a wide array of projects. MDB Insight is now able to apply this methodology to help clients define the possible career paths in their region or industry.

Contact: Mandie Abrams, Executive Director, (437) 779-9307, mandie@hospitalitytrainingcentre.com



Snohomish County (US) Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (2021)

The process for the Snohomish County Workforce Development Strategic Action Plan (WDSAP) was initiated in the fall of 2020 by Snohomish County (US) through a Request for Proposal. MDB Insight was selected to develop the WDSAP for Snohomish County's Future Workforce Alliance (FWA) to support the County's economic recovery.

As Snohomish County's Local Workforce Development Board, the FWA strives to achieve a resilient and proactive approach to establish a gold standard workforce development ecosystem grounded in diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI) for all.

In creating the 5-year action plan, MDB Insight designed a comprehensive project plan in three distinct phases:

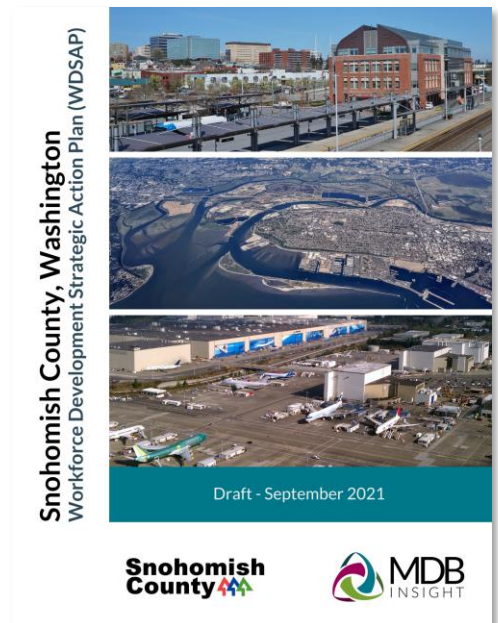
Research and Analysis – included a document review to understand coordination with other plans and workforce development efforts underway. The analysis also focused on evaluating current labour force trends, financial, health, and physical barriers to labour force opportunity and target industries that have the greatest potential for job growth.

Stakeholder Engagement – involved workforce partners across the County through a county-wide survey and a targeted workshop. The input was solicited on themes including barriers to opportunity, current capacity, workforce development collaboration, skills, talent supply, and industry trends, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) considerations, and workforce development vision.

Strategy Reporting – The final WDSAP identified 4 goals and over 40 action items targeted towards creating a more equal workforce ecosystem that supports all population groups, regardless of their race, colour or creed.

At its core, the strategy recognizes that the current workforce ecosystem is not serving all population groups and that reducing this gap requires increased focus on embracing DEI principals and philosophy.

Contact: James Henderson, Chief of Economic and Workforce Development Initiative, Snohomish County (US), 425-262-2212, james.henderson@co.snohomish.wa.us





Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Study – Skills Gap Analysis and Workforce Development Strategy (2020)

The Southwest Alberta Regional Skills Study Partnership is a stakeholder collaboration formed to help identify regional skills and competency gaps and explore ways to address them. The Regional Skills Study was designed to support greater alignment between job vacancies of local employers with those looking for work.

The strategy offers tangible solutions to local and regional challenges related to the labour market, ensuring that resources are being best allocated and that efforts are coordinated for maximum results informed through:

- An understanding the technical and core competencies skills gaps in the region, the causes of those gaps and the impact they are having on economic activity
- Identifying methods employers use to address these gaps
- Identifying opportunities for underrepresented groups to fill these gaps with specific training and
- How employers, regional development agencies, post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders cooperate to address the challenges.



Engagement spanned local municipalities, collecting input from over 750 individuals, businesses, job seekers, educators, and intermediaries. This strategy was created to support individual community and regional efforts that will ensure the Southwest Alberta Region has a productive and valued workforce to meet the needs of local employers and contribute to the local and regional economic competitiveness currently and into the future. The study and action plan outlined how the Southwest region will overcome challenges in meeting local talent demand and aligning its labour supply to local opportunities.

Contact: Peter Casurella, Executive Director, SouthGrow Regional Economic Development, (403) 394-0615, peter.casurella@southgrow.com



Defining Newfoundland and Labrador's Technology Workforce and Attraction & Retention Jurisdictional Scan (2020)

In early 2020, MDB Insight completed two foundational studies that contributed to Newfoundland's efforts to stem its technology worker labour shortage. The first study, *Defining Newfoundland and Labrador's Technology Workforce and Defining Future Needs* defined NL's technology workforce by identifying National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes that aligned with Newfoundland and Labrador's technology jobs. This study was initiated through the Co-Chairs of the Technology Sector Work Plan, led by the Newfoundland Environmental Industry Association (NEIA), as a means of positioning NL to be strongly positioned to respond to the growing need for talent with the skills, knowledge, and abilities to support local business needs.

This process acknowledged the evolving nature of the technology sector, and by extension its workers and the types of firms they work within. The result was a robust listing of NOCs that accounted for Newfoundland's diverse technology workers and its future needs – including those needed in manufacturing, Ocean Tech, transportation and warehousing, and the more traditional technology sector.

Following that project, MDB Insight was hired by NEIA again to conduct a jurisdictional scan of attraction and retention efforts across North America. This initiative examined select best and promising practices in attracting and retaining technology workers in comparable jurisdictions to Newfoundland, that further considered NL's strengths and challenges. This scan resulted in a series of recommendations that industry players in NL will use toward centralized technology worker attraction and retention efforts in its regional Attraction and Retention Strategy.

Contact: *Kieran Hanley, Executive Director, Newfoundland & Labrador Environmental Industry Association, (709) 700-1351, kieran@neia.org*



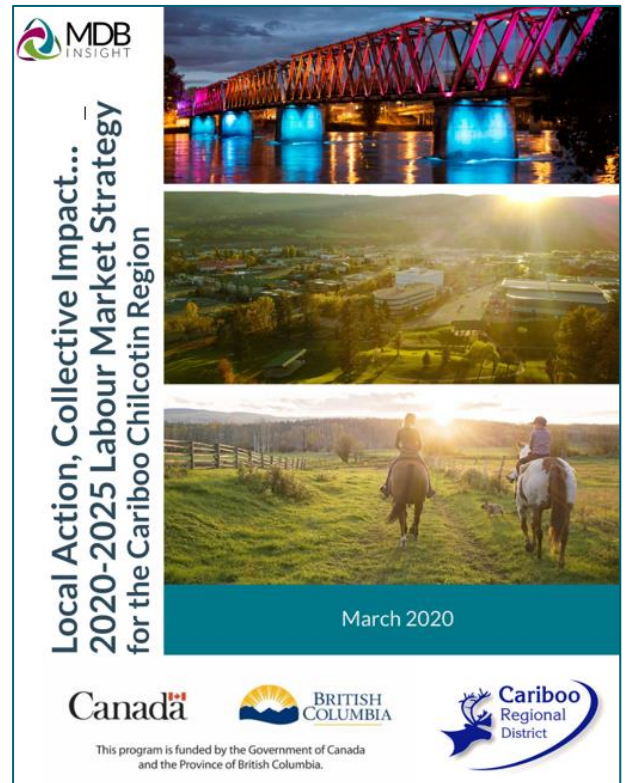


Local Action, Collective Impact: 2020-2025 Labour Market Strategy for the Cariboo Chilcotin Region (2020)

The Cariboo Chilcotin Regional Labour Market Study emerged following a comprehensive assessment of current and forecasted labour market trends, opportunities, and talent demand needs specific to the region. This evidence-based strategy positions the region and its communities to effectively build capacity within the labour force to meet business talent needs, while further strengthening the region's economy. The year-long study included a rigorous and comprehensive review of the local labour market situation across the expansive geography of the Cariboo Chilcotin Region in the Central Interior of British Columbia. Engagement spanned local municipalities and 15 First Nations communities, collecting input from over 1,250 individuals, businesses, job seekers, educators, and intermediaries. The year-long project began with a labour market needs assessment to inform the priority areas of focus to achieve labour market alignment between business talent needs and available labour supply. Challenges that were identified within the region included skills gaps and skills mismatches, sector downsizing, and semi-remote geography. In order to have a lasting positive impact, the study offers practical strategies to more effectively connect the existing labour force to employment, strengthen the local talent pipeline, and attract and retain new workforce participants. It also includes actions to promote and grow the region's economy.

As this project was regional in nature, there was a desire and an identified need within select communities to further inform a more local approach. The action plan identified actions suited for local implementation as well as regionally.

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3+ Economic Development Corporation - Greater Moncton Regional Workforce Strategy (2019)

The Greater Moncton region, like many regions across Canada, has recognized that its future competitiveness and sustainability lies in its ability to attract, retain, and sustain a talent pool that is poised to meet employer demand for labour.

3+ Economic Development Corporation and its partners (the municipalities of Dieppe, Moncton, and Riverview), has demonstrated a clear recognition of the inter-connection between workforce development and economic development. Collectively they commissioned the development of a Regional Workforce Development Strategy by MDB Insight that will position the Greater Moncton region to utilize its quality of place and quality of talent to strengthen its economic competitiveness.

The strategy positions Greater Moncton with a sustainable, strong talent pipeline that results in alignment between its local labour force and available employment opportunities. To achieve this, MDB Insight undertook a comprehensive background review and completed a Labour Market Profile and Supply and Demand Analysis followed by a robust stakeholder engagement process that included job seekers, employers and educators.

The Workforce Strategy includes four pillars with ten clear objectives. These are supported by 16 strategic priorities and 39 specific actions targeting concrete outcomes involving the entire regional workforce ecosystem.

The Greater Moncton Regional Workforce Strategy is a call to action for all stakeholders including business, government, local intermediaries, and educators to advance the strategy's priorities towards the common goal of aligning labour supply and demand for a sustainable economy.



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Tioga County Economic Development and Planning – Workforce Development Strategy (2019)

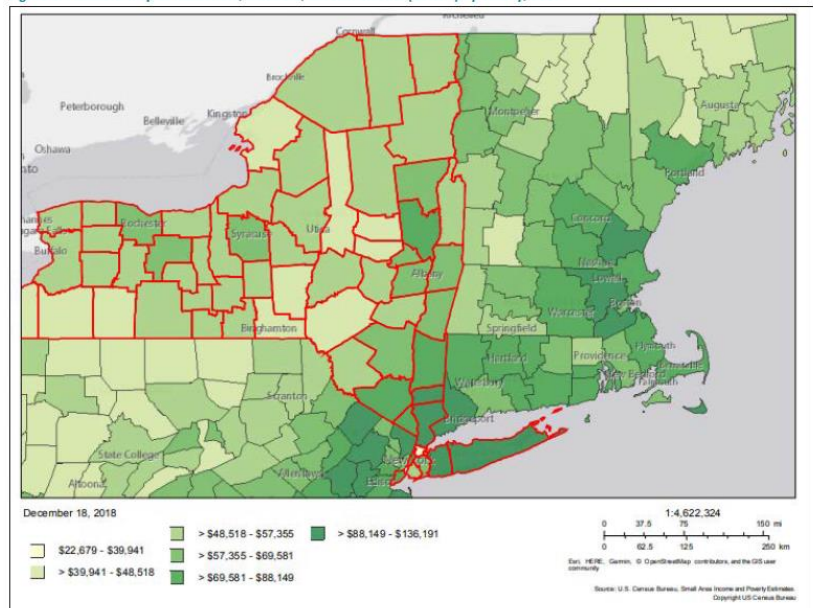
Tioga County contracted MDB Insight to conduct a comprehensive data analysis of Tioga’s workforce and talent pipeline. The first of a two-phase project, it supports a better understanding of the characteristics of the current labor force, the talent needs of local stakeholders, and it examines the link between businesses, education institutions and other stakeholders to strengthen the creation of highly skilled labor talent pool capable of meeting current and future labor demand.

Phase one combined research and analysis of the current economic and workforce context in the Tioga County, the Southern Tier Region, and the State of New York with a comprehensive statistical review and input from 33 local businesses. This study also focused on five key industries for the Tioga County economy. These industries include advanced manufacturing; health care services; warehousing and distribution; hospitality; and professional services.

MDB Insight was also contracted to complete Phase Two of this project, which will result in the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy that builds on the findings of phase one and presents a series of strategic priorities and tangible actions that will address identified challenges and opportunities. The workforce strategy will improve the ability of stakeholders to train, attract, and retain a quality workforce. It will further a sense of collaboration and partnership among stakeholders as they work collectively towards a common goal of labor supply and demand alignment.

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Figure 8: Thematic map of household; estimate; median income (dollars) by county, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates



City of Abbotsford Labour Force Analysis and Attraction & Retention Strategy (2018)

Like many medium-sized cities in Canada, Abbotsford competes within its region for talent that has historically been attracted to larger centres within BC. Extreme housing cost increases coupled with a retiring generation and a shift in the middle-aged workforce have created a dynamic the City has chosen to address proactively. This initiative facilitated and supported talent development, attraction, and retention while strengthening the labour market ecosystem. The goal was to ensure that Abbotsford has a talent pipeline that meets the current and future needs of its key economic sectors.

MDB Insight provided a strategy that supports business in recruitment and retention of talent, focused on 5 key goals:

- A statistically sound labour market analysis informing current and projected supply and demand for Abbotsford
- Assessment of the size of the labour market including historical growth and workforce implications
- Provide resources that strengthen approaches to attract the right talent in a timely manner
- Inform and fuel a longer-term strategy to build and maintain engagement among those that need to be part of the talent alignment conversation – ensuring labour supply and demand alignment, so people and jobs are better matched
- Create a movement that is grounded in the success of local businesses to attract talent, retain talent, and share success stories that raise awareness, and peak interest of those looking to find satisfying work, and a lifestyle that Abbotsford has to offer

The approach used to conduct the analysis and inform the strategic plan combined research of the current economic context using both public and private (subscription) sources with a consultation and engagement process. This consultation and engagement involved a range of stakeholders from throughout Abbotsford and included employers, community organizations, municipal leaders, and sector associations. The insights, perspectives, and knowledge shared created a foundation that resulted in informed strategic directions and actions to advance solutions and drive impact.

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