

This month's newsletter is about **labour and workforce development**.

While labour and workforce development issues aren't new to the tourism industry, the COVID-19 global pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated the crisis. While we are seeing unemployment rates fall nationally, a labour shortage remains and the tourism industry continues to face the loss of some of its labour force as a result of travel restrictions which saw many of its skilled and unskilled labour depart the sector – some of whom may not return.

While there is no doubt that the tourism industry has been hard hit by the pandemic, there are also positive trends that have emerged and that can be leveraged by the sector. As part of the “great resignation”, people have looked to reevaluate what they're doing from a personal and professional perspective, and perhaps more importantly, ask themselves why they are doing it. Increasingly, people want to feel good about their jobs and that they are contributing to something bigger than themselves and perhaps more than just a bottom line. At the heart of the tourism sector, our work is about creating and curating amazing experiences for people, while nourishing and celebrating what makes our destinations unique and special – this combined with an increased propensity towards regenerative tourism, destinations and operators can appeal to those looking to find a deeper connection with what they do, and why they do it.

As we look towards **national tourism week in Canada**, signifying the start of the spring/summer tourism season, labour and workforce development is likely to be the most significant factor in determining recovery through realizing pent-up travel demand and expenditures.

What's Inside

- [Tourism HR Canada Monthly Tourism Snapshot](#)
- [Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit](#)
- [Federal Temporary Foreign Worker \(TFW\) Program](#)

RTO9 News



Funded by:
Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario



Tourism Relief Fund

Successful applicants will be eligible for financial support ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 for projects that align with the FedDev Ontario Tourism Relief Fund and federal priorities. The intake period closes May 15th, 2022 at 4 PM.

Questions? Or need some clarification? Contact Katherine Hobbs – Project Manager – khobbs@region9tourism.ca

[LEARN MORE & APPLY](#)

RTO 9 Announces Partnership Fund Recipients

We're happy to announce that we have awarded over 15 tourism operators in South Eastern Ontario, with funding to support their upcoming projects. [Learn about the recipients and their projects.](#)

More from the blog:

- [Q4 Marketing Highlights](#)
- [2022 Ontario By Bike Bicycle Friendly Business Award Winners in South Eastern Ontario](#)



RTO 9 Annual General Meeting

Date: June 24th, 2022, Online

Please join this year's virtual meeting and hear what we have been up to, what is on the horizon for the upcoming year, committee and board updates, as well as approval of audited financial statements.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Upcoming Application for RTO 9 Board of Directors Seats

The following Board of Directors Seats for RTO 9 will be up for election: Brockville, At Large, Prince Edward County and Kingston. Stay tuned for a link to the application.

From the Chair:

"Over the past several months, the Board has been partnering with Laridae Consulting to evaluate the structure and governance of the RTO9 Board of Directors and to assist in developing a new framework for enhancing communication and support for our partner destinations in the region. The Board felt that with a changing tourism landscape and feedback from our destinations

on opportunities to improve, that it was time to evaluate our practices and processes against what the best in class boards are doing. Laridae is a leading management consulting firm that specializes in non-profit organizations such as ours. We will be excited to update you at the AGM on progress and on some enhancements that will guide the evolution of the organization.”



Upcoming Workshops & Webinars

- [Destination Bike – Welcoming Cyclists to South Eastern Ontario:](#)
May 11th, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- [Hospitality Connex - Hospitality Readiness Workshops:](#) May 16th - 18th
- [Tips For Operating Safe Events in 2022:](#) May 17th, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- [Navigating LGBT+ Diversity and Inclusion for the Tourism Industry:](#)
June 1st, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM
- **RTO 9 Tourism Summit**, September 9th 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM (Save the date)

[VIEW OUR WORKSHOPS & EVENTS CALENDAR](#)

Human Resources Toolkit

- ✓ Attract & retain employees
- ✓ Understand equity, diversity, and inclusion
- ✓ Develop a roadmap for success



www.rto9.ca

RTO 9 Human Resources Toolkit

This toolkit was designed through research and content shared by topic specialists during our Workforce Development Webinar series which took place in March 2022. We identified important challenges that tourism businesses may face during the recovery period and beyond and have provided insights and resources that align with those needs.

[VIEW THE TOOLKIT](#)

We also monitor and share key market trends to help you respond strategically on our [COVID-19 resource page on our website.](#)

Market Insights



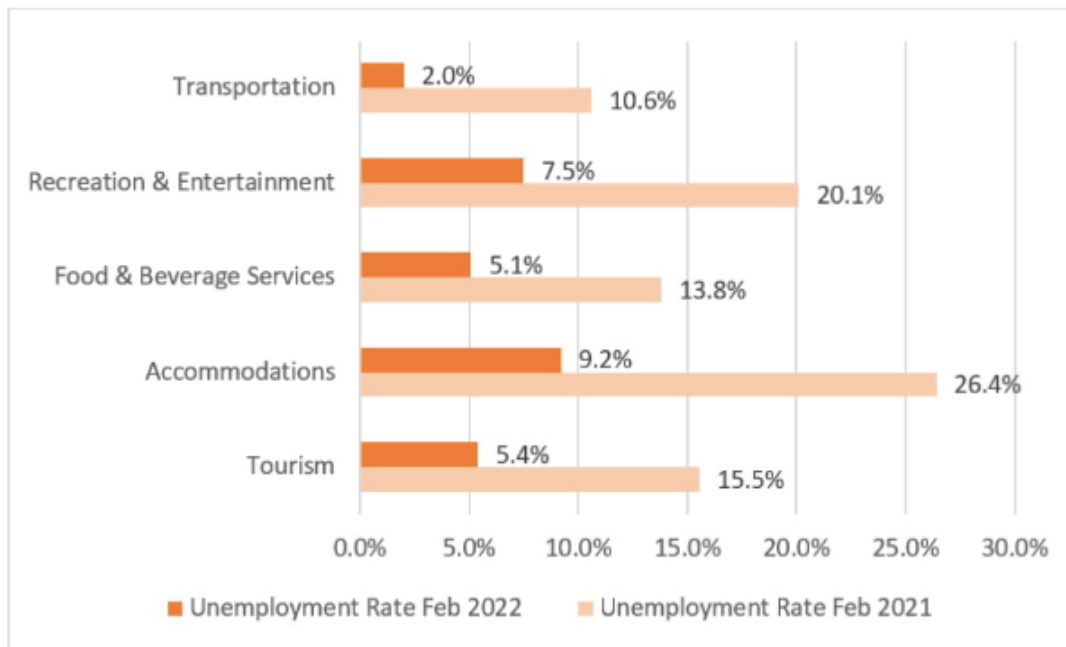
Resident Sentiment

[Destination Canada's Resident Sentiment Report](#) reveals how safe residents feel about travelling to different places in Canada. Here are the highlights for the week of April 5, 2022:

- While 84% of people in Ontario feel safe travelling to within the province, only 43% of Ontarians' feel comfortable travelling to the US. However, international travel saw a 4% increase over the week of March 29 (from 36% to 40%). This suggests that there will continue to be strong potential for domestic visitation for the spring/summer season however, with a rise in international travel, destinations will likely have to increasingly compete for visitors.
- Ontarians' preference for travel to rural destinations continues to climb with a 2% increase (94% as compared to urban 85%) and is in keeping with trend for less crowded or nature/outdoor destinations and experiences. This continues to provide strong potential for RTO9 partners and can be communicated and leveraged through tourism week activities and events and throughout the spring/summer seasons.
- Ontarians' level of comfort with welcoming visitors continued to climb – with 80% of Ontarians' feeling welcoming to visitors from nearby communities, 77% for visitors from other parts of Ontario, and 71% from the rest of Canada.

[READ MORE](#)

Tourism Unemployment Rates by Industry Feb. 2021 vs. Feb. 2022 (seasonally unadjusted)



Tourism HR Canada Monthly Tourism Snapshot

Tourism HR Canada provides a monthly Jobs and Employment Report. For the week of March 23, 2022, here are the key highlights:

- While the size of the overall tourism labour forces continues to decline, tourism employees continue recovery efforts and find available employment.
- Tourism's unemployment rate for February 2021 (seasonally unadjusted) has dropped significantly from that of the year prior (from 15.5% to 5.4%).
- Ontario's tourism labour force is lower than the total labour force (4.7% vs. 5.6%) which can be attributed to both a rise in full time and part-time employment.

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Target Audiences by Tourism Product

To better understand Ontario visitors who frequent different experiences within the province, Environics analyzed 16 tourism product categories provided by Destination Ontario. The outcome of the analysis will allow Ontario Tourism

Operators to better understand who local and non–local visitors to the 16 product categories are.

[READ MORE](#)

Workforce Development

Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit

This practical and FREE web program is designed specifically to help tourism operators to confidently build a resilient workforce and rebuild from COVID-19. Leveraging a range of strategies, the toolkit includes webinars and 5 content models including communications, workforce, budget & finance, marketing, and strategy.

[VIEW THE TOOLKIT](#)

Federal Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program

Recent updates to the Federal TFW Program, announced in April 2022 by Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusions, Honourable Carla Qualtrough, looks to alleviate staggering labour shortages that are impeding Canada's tourism sector's recovery and growth.

Effective immediately, there are 3 key policy updates:

- To address seasonal peaks, there will no longer be a limit to the number of low-wage positions that employers in seasonal industries can fill through the TFW Program. In addition, the maximum duration of these positions will be increased from 180 days to 270 days per year.
- Labour Market Impact Assessments will be valid for 18 months, an increase from 9 months and 6 months prior to COVID.
- The maximum duration for employment for High-Wage and Global Talent Streams workers is extended from 2 to 3 years, helping workers access

pathways to qualify for permanent residency, enabling them to contribute to the workforce long-term.

Effective as of April 30:

- For 7 sectors with demonstrated labour shortages (i.e., Accommodation and Food Services), employers will be able to hire up to 30% of their workforce through the TFW Program for low-wage positions for one year. All other employers are allowed to hire up to 20% of their workforce through the TFW Program for low-wage positions until further notice (an increase from 10%)
- The Government will end the current policy that automatically refuses Labour Market Impact Assessments applications for low-wage occupations in the Accommodation and Food Services sector in regions with unemployment rate of 6% or higher.

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Destination Inclusion

Designed to empower racialized individuals to succeed in tourism, Destination Inclusion offers learning and mentorship opportunities across Eastern Ontario.

RTO9 destinations can explore opportunities to hire graduates of the program to fill a variety of roles within the sector. In addition to hiring, RTO9 partners can seek to serve as a mentor and showcase the many opportunities for meaningful employment within the tourism sector by providing support and encouragement of skill development and learning.

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Featured Operators/ Destinations



New Brunswick Tourism Workforce Development Plan

Updated in the wake of COVID-19 (2020), the New Brunswick Tourism Workforce Development Plan identifies key issues that are contributing to the increase in tourism labour market shortage, while providing measurable and strategic initiatives to support the recovery and ultimately increase resiliency of the sector in their province.

The Plan concentrates specifically on new training needs that have come to the forefront as a result of COVID-19; promoting tourism career awareness and providing experiential learning for high school and post-secondary students; boosting tourism education and training across the province; strengthening HR practices within the industry; and targeting specific demographic segments (e.g., Indigenous workers, 55+ workforce, immigrants, bilingual students, etc.).

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Media Spotlight

Budget 2022: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable

On April 7, 2022, the Government of Canada released its annual budget, which included several pieces that will benefit Canada's tourism industry directly:

- The development of new tourism policy: The Minister of Tourism will work with the tourism industry, provincial and territorial counterparts, and Indigenous tourism operators to develop a new post-pandemic Federal Tourism Growth Strategy, which will plot a course for growth, investment, and stability.
- Indigenous Tourism: Budget 2022 proposed to provide \$20 million over two years in support of a new Indigenous Tourism fund to support the recovery of the sector. It also proposes to provide \$4.8 million in operational funding, over two years to the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
- Trans-Canada Trail: Budget 2022 proposes \$55 million over 5 years to Parks Canada for the Trans Canada Trail which seeks to continue to develop a network of recreational trails that stretch across Canada.

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Canada's Newest ULCC Lynx Air Takes Off

Canada's newest ultra low cost carrier (ULCC) took off on April 7, 2022 with its inaugural flight from Calgary to Vancouver. Lynx operates a brand-new fleet of Boeing 737 aircrafts. With Calgary-Toronto flights starting May 12 and flights to and from Hamilton expected later this summer, Canadians can now book one-way travel starting at just \$39.

While travel with one of Canada's major national carriers can sometimes be equivalent to international travel, RTO9 will now have a more accessible option to connect with central and western-Canadian visitors and an opportunity to increasingly leverage the domestic market.

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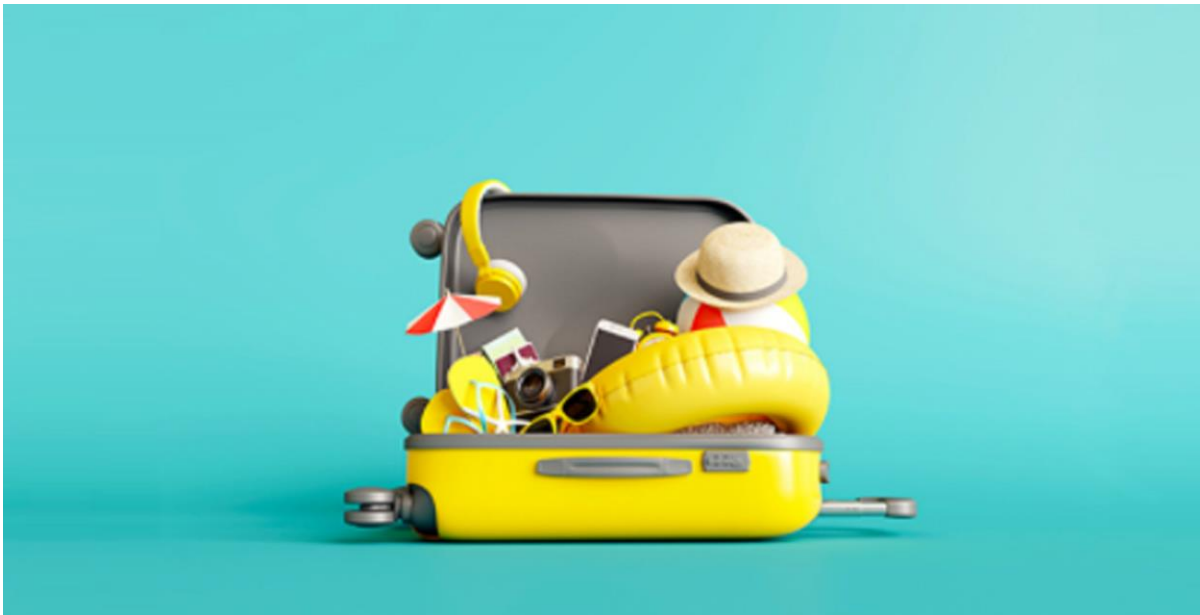
Demand Surges for Passports as COVID-19 Rules Relax

As travel restrictions are easing in Canada and around the world, the demand for travel is increasing, and so is the demand for passports. The Government of Canada says it's experiencing high volumes of calls right now and that wait times are longer than usual.

This increased demand has been likely spurred by the Government of Canada's announcement that as of April 1, fully vaccinated travellers no longer require a negative COVID-19 test to enter (or return to) Canada, meaning that increasingly, Canadian destinations will have to compete with international destinations for visitors.

[READ MORE](#)

Opportunities



'Safe Travels' Stamp Application

The specially designed stamp will allow travellers and other Travel & Tourism stakeholders to recognise destination authorities and companies around the world that have implemented health and hygiene protocols that are aligned with WTTC's Global Safe Travels Protocols.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Every month, we'll be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO 9.

If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email Imedeiros@region9tourism.com with your ideas.

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