



Building a resilient workforce: Key insights from the Cobourg Workforce Development Symposium

Our economic development team was pleased to deliver the second annual Cobourg Workforce Development Symposium. This symposium was held at the Venture13 Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre on May 28, 2025 for the Cobourg business community.

This year's program addressed labour market trends, succession planning, change management and recognizing foreign credentials. Some of the key insights by theme area that our team gathered from this year's presenters were:

Labour Market Trends

Health care and manufacturing industries are slated to experience job growth in the Northumberland area. The health care industry hires the most immigrants. In addition, the most in-demand job skills employers are seeking are communication, driving, and customer service skills and management competencies.



Labour Force Succession Planning

This type of planning boosts employee morale and ensures consistency. The presenter mentioned that employers should identify vital positions in an organization, identify the competencies among their talent pool, identify where the vital positions will open and determine how to fill these positions.



Change Management

A management team member from a Cobourg manufacturer deployed a digital system to capture real time machine performance. This significant process change experience was shared with the attendees. Some learnings that were shared were:

- generate short term wins
- remove barriers that impede progress and
- sustain the acceleration of change.

The role of leadership was to align this change with the vision of the organization and be visible and involved at the ground level of process improvement changes.



Recognizing Foreign Credentials

Northumberland County's settlement services coordinator outlined the role of the federal and provincial governments have in recognizing credentials. It is common for there to be a credential assessment from a professional body followed by a licensing exam. In addition, there is typically a language proficiency standard required by the professional body. Some of the common challenges that immigrants face are:

- Lack of recognition for professional experience
- Costs and time requirements to progress through the accreditation process
- Lack of employment opportunities to gain Canadian workplace experience
- The complexities of a fragmented accreditation system
- The language barrier of being employed in an English or French speaking workplace
- Emotional and psychological stress and
- Lack of professional connections.

This symposium is an annual economic development programming offering for the Cobourg business community. Initial planning will start in late 2025 with a program returning in May 2026. Subscribe to the [Economic Development Newsletter](#) to stay current on programming, marketing efforts and development projects.

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