

Recruitment and Workforce Retention in Hearst

Strategies

The strategic objective is to recruit and retain the workforce to meet short, medium, and long-term market needs.

To ensure the recruitment and retention of the workforce in the community, it is important to follow a well-defined strategy. The following key steps should be considered:

- 1) **Promotion of job opportunities:** Actively promote available job opportunities in the region, highlighting the benefits of working in Hearst, such as quality of life, career opportunities, and social benefits.
- 2) **Collaboration with local businesses:** Work closely with local businesses to better understand their workforce needs and develop tailored training or adaptive professional retraining programs.
- 3) **Development of training/support programs:** Implement training programs for different cultures and support for newcomers.
- 4) **Promotion of quality of life:** Highlight the benefits of living in Hearst, such as affordable cost of living, recreational infrastructure, health services, etc., to attract potential workers and encourage them to stay in the region long-term.
- 5) **Collaboration with educational institutions:** Partner with local educational institutions to develop educational programs tailored to the needs of the local labor market, thus promoting the training of the local workforce.



Action Plan for Workforce Recruitment and Retention

The following action steps, gathered from data collection, aim to address workforce shortage issues in the Hearst region. Actions are categorized into short-term, medium-term, and long-term steps.

Short-term	
Action	Short description and justification
Adopting a plan to ensure an adequate supply of housing (as well as a variety of housing types) for future new community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is necessary to have housing available to accommodate new individuals in the community. Without housing, these workers and families cannot relocate to Hearst and therefore cannot fill the labor shortage.
Developing promotional tools to capitalize on the differences and strengths of the town of Hearst.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional tools could further promote the town of Hearst and thus attract workforce.
Establishing partnerships between schools and post-secondary institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships between schools, post-secondary institutions, and employers would establish a direct link between young individuals and the job market, which could contribute to their retention and thus address labor shortages.
Leveraging internship programs in post-secondary institutions to integrate students into the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internship programs increase the likelihood that hosting organizations will hire students upon completion of the internship. Indeed, the internship serves as a training period without necessarily remunerating the student, which is advantageous for both the organization and the student, who may secure employment.
Providing support for international students/newcomers to better integrate them into the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural differences can pose various challenges in the labor market. Having a locally educated population at this level and providing tools for newcomers to better integrate into the workforce would lead to better workforce retention.
Encouraging employers to cover training costs for students with the intention of hiring them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid training costs can be an attractive incentive for students and individuals seeking employment that requires specific training.



Medium-term	
Establishing partnerships with educational institutions to align training programs with the needs of the labor market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete practice and alignment with the labor market enable students to develop skills that they can leverage in the job market.
Developing a strategy to attract and increase immigration of newcomers to Hearst.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration will help address labor shortages.
Long-term	
Improving access to healthcare, daycare, and public transportation services (e.g., a second daycare, more full-time staff, etc.) and veterinary services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to healthcare and childcare services is a significant asset in attracting workforce. Indeed, if a family does not have access to childcare services, one of the parents may be reluctant to seek employment in the region in order to stay with the children.
Increasing the availability of recreational activities in Hearst to attract more workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability of recreational activities (e.g., sports clubs, activities, etc.) allows the population to entertain themselves and get to know each other, which contributes to workforce retention.

Incentive Programs

The incentive program for workforce attraction and retention will not be as comprehensive as the housing program for several reasons, stated as follows:

- Precedent:** There is no precedent for a CIP offering incentives for workforce in a community. CIPs, registered under the Municipal Act and Planning Act, are primarily focused on economic growth based on adequate planning and efficient management of municipal land, stimulating the private sector in improving and developing economic infrastructure. However, these same laws, along with the PPS, mention that the workforce is a crucial factor in ensuring community vitality and the well-being of its members.
- Complexity:** Creating incentives to address workforce needs in Hearst already raises several concerns at the municipal level, including:
 - How to assess and determine priority economic sectors?
 - How to evaluate if employers are using fair practices in workforce recruitment and retention?
- Management overload:** It would represent a significant burden on the municipal team in terms of program management, both for requests, evaluations, and follow-ups, and



keeping in mind that such a program could potentially create circumstances of municipal interference in the private sector.

Following a reflection session and team meetings, it was determined that the best way for the Town of Hearst to contribute to workforce recruitment and retention would not be to offer employers other types of subsidies or loans to hire workforce, but rather to provide resources to find and access this workforce.

Indeed, the Town of Hearst must focus on a recruitment strategy, finding ways to attract this workforce to the region rather than leaving employers to find it themselves. The Town of Hearst, employment support institutions, and private and public employers in the region must focus on concrete partnerships and collaborations to address the workforce shortage.

Two recommendations that would significantly contribute to workforce attraction and retention in the community are as follows:

Workforce	
Recommendations	Additional details
<p>Expand the existing municipal incentive program towards physicians, optometrists, and veterinarians to include other highly demanded professions in the region, such as nurse practitioners, auxiliary nurses, as well as professions in priority sectors that will be in high demand in the coming years (FNETB, 2023).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The professions that will be highly in demand in the next ten years come from the following sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education, law, and social community, and government services; ○ Trades, transport, and equipment operators and related; ○ Natural resources, agriculture, and related production; ○ Business, finance, and administration; ○ Health. ● Adding in-demand professions to the current program could increase the chances of recruiting workforce from outside the region.
<p>Create a municipal agent position for the promotion, attraction, and retention of newcomers in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The municipal agent could play a central role in designing and implementing a comprehensive promotion strategy aimed at attracting new residents to the community. ● The municipal agent would not only be responsible for promoting Hearst but also for supporting employers in the region in training and assisting newcomers within their company and the community. This would increase the workforce in the region and help address part of the labor shortage expected due to planned



retirements in the next ten years.

- By working closely with employment support institutions as well as local private and public employers, the agent could facilitate understanding of the workforce needs of these businesses and propose steps to address those needs.

Budget

Regarding the workforce incentive program, the recommendations to the Municipality are to allocate a budget line for expanding the existing incentive program by potentially adding a few strategic professions, as well as a second budget line for creating a position for the promotion, attraction, and retention of newcomers in the community.

Since the priority for the first year will be to promote and encourage the creation of new housing units, Municipal Council and municipal staff can determine whether a budget for workforce is needed for the year 2024, or if it would be more feasible for the year 2025.

