

SARNIA-LAMBTON



BOB BAILEY, MPP

NEWS RELEASE



Ontario Supporting People with Developmental Needs in Sarnia

New program will help 200 workers, jobseekers, and volunteers care for members of the community

NEWS

June 28, 2023

PETROLIA — The Ontario government is investing \$179,400 in an innovative training project to help 200 people gain the skills they need to serve people with developmental needs. Led by Lambton County Developmental Services (LCDS), participants will have the opportunity to train using custom-made virtual reality training modules so they can improve their skills or gain the training needed to start rewarding careers in the industry.

“Our government is on a mission to help people find meaningful work in their communities,” said Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton. “The investments announced today will help more workers in Sarnia-Lambton gain the skills to launch in-demand careers serving those with developmental disabilities and help local employers find the skilled international workers they need to grow our economy.”

More than 65,000 people in Ontario live with a developmental disability, such as autism or Down syndrome, which can increase the risk for poverty, chronic illnesses, and a lower life expectancy. This project will give participants the training to help clients with developmental needs participate in day-to-day activities and community life, including reading, walking and administering medication. Once training is complete for current LCDS staff and volunteers, modules will be made available to the public and jobseekers at job fairs, conventions, and high school events.

“Across Ontario, 300,000 jobs are going unfilled every day, and we need all hands on deck to fill them,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. “That is why our government will continue to invest in training programs that help businesses find the skilled workers they need to grow the economy and help people gain the skills to land meaningful careers and lead purpose-driven lives.”

The Ontario government is also investing \$291,500 in a second project, led by the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, to help 150 local employers find the skilled international graduates they need to help tackle the labour shortage in Sarnia-Lambton. The program will connect 250 jobseekers with networking opportunities, bus tours, and job placements, to address the 11,500 jobs going unfilled daily in the Windsor-Sarnia economic region.

“Lambton County Developmental Services is thrilled to receive Skills Development Funds to establish a virtual reality training program to recruit, retain, and retrain employees for the developmental services sector,” said Nick Salaris, Executive Director at Lambton County Developmental Services. “The funds will go a long way in allowing us to live and breathe our mission of ‘empowering people with developmental disabilities while working to our vision of ‘inclusive communities ~ innovative leaders.’”

Both projects are funded through the government's Skills Development Fund, an over \$700 million initiative, which supports ground-breaking programs that connect jobseekers with the skills and training they need to find well-paying careers close to home.

"The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership is very appreciative of this opportunity and has already seen early successes within the community," said Cari Meloche, Economic Development Officer at Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership. "This funding will be critical to the growth of our economy by connecting newcomers with employment opportunities and supporting the local labour demands."

These investments follow the ground-breaking protections introduced by the government in the [Working for Workers Act, 2023](#), which includes fines for [withholding passports](#), better protections for remote workers during [mass terminations](#) and [cleaner and women's-only washrooms on construction sites](#).

Quick Facts

- Through its first three funding rounds, the Skills Development Fund has supported 596 projects, to help almost 522,000 people around the province take the next step in their careers.
- The Skills Development Fund is supported through labour market transfer agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Additional Resources

- [Skills Development Fund](#)
- [Employment Ontario: Free Programs and Services for Job Seekers, Workers and Employers](#)
- [Skilled Trades in Ontario](#)

MEDIA CONTACTS

Anthony Rizzetto

MPP Bailey's Office

anthony.rizzetto@pc.ola.org

Sydney Dubin

Minister McNaughton's Office

sydney.dubin@ontario.ca