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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 2025 Durham Labour Market Insights Report provides a comprehensive snapshot of employment activity in Durham Region from January to December 2025, offering insight into how local labour market dynamics are evolving in response to ongoing economic adjustment, demographic pressures, and shifting employer needs.

The report is organized into two core sections. The Job Demand section examines employer hiring activity, recruitment intensity, and workforce requirements, drawing on job postings from over 50 public job boards to assess trends in occupations, industries, wages, skills, and posting duration. This analysis highlights how demand has continued to realign toward essential services, care-related occupations, and infrastructure-supporting roles, while also revealing persistent challenges related to job quality, wage adequacy, and hard-to-fill positions.

The Job Search section focuses on jobseeker behaviour and engagement, using Jobs First Durham platform data to explore how individuals are navigating the labour market. It analyzes patterns in job searches, applications, resume and cover letter activity, and overall engagement levels, offering insight into how jobseekers are responding to available opportunities. The findings indicate rising engagement alongside ongoing mismatches between jobseeker expectations and employer requirements, particularly in relation to wages, scheduling, and credential alignment.

Taken together, the report suggests that Durham's labour market in 2025 is adjusting rather than contracting. Hiring activity remains steady, but the nature of demand continues to shift, underscoring the importance of timely labour market intelligence, targeted workforce supports, and data-informed decision-making. These insights are intended to support employers, service providers, policymakers, and community partners in understanding current conditions and planning responsive workforce strategies that strengthen Durham's economic resilience.



# KEY LABOUR MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Core labour market indicators suggest that hiring activity in Durham Region remained steady in 2025, even as overall posting volumes moderated. A comparison of 2024 and 2025 highlights how the local labour market adjusted during a period of economic moderation, ongoing workforce shortages in key sectors, and a gradual rebalancing of employer demand.

Although fewer job postings were recorded in 2025, positions were filled more quickly, pointing to a labour market that remains competitive and responsive. Employers appear to be hiring more selectively, focusing recruitment on priority and hard-to-fill roles, while still engaging broadly across the region. Faster fill times indicate that available labour is being absorbed efficiently, even as recruitment pressures persist.

Together, these indicators point to a labour market that is adjusting rather than contracting, where hiring efficiency has improved but underlying demand for workers remains resilient. The table below summarizes these core indicators and provides a concise snapshot of how hiring dynamics evolved between 2024 and 2025.

Indicator	2024	2025	Change	Key Insight
Active job postings	49,342	42,328	-14%	Sustained demand across all quarters
Unique employers	8,806	7,329	-16%	Broad-based participation across sectors
Avg. posting duration	28.1 days	17.6 days	-41%	Faster matching and quicker hiring cycles
Job post clicks	50,314	71,466	+42%	Higher engagement with available roles



# EMPLOYMENT COMPOSITION

Between 2024 and 2025, Durham Region's labour market experienced a measurable shift in the composition of employer demand, reflecting broader economic adjustment and changing service needs. While total job posting volumes declined year over year, demand became more concentrated in essential services, care-based occupations, and infrastructure-related sectors.

Overall, the year-over-year comparison highlights a labour market that is not contracting, but restructuring. Demand is gradually shifting away from discretionary, administrative, and retail-heavy employment toward essential services, technical roles, and care-based occupations. These trends underscore the importance of workforce strategies that support skills development, career mobility, and alignment between training pathways and emerging sector needs in Durham Region.



Full-time roles dominated hiring at 77 percent, indicating strong demand for stable, ongoing positions.



Part-time opportunities represented 22 percent of postings, supporting flexible schedules and supplemental income.



Permanent jobs rose to 89 percent of postings, reflecting increased stability compared with last year.



Casual employment accounted for roughly 1 percent, primarily for short-duration or on-call needs.



# SECTORAL TRENDS



In 2024, job posting growth was led by educational services, alongside continued strength in health care and social assistance. These trends reflected post-pandemic stabilization in public services and sustained demand for professionals such as registered nurses, psychiatric nurses, and teachers. Retail trade and accommodation-related sectors, by contrast, experienced notable declines, signalling reduced discretionary spending and evolving consumer behaviour.

By 2025, the sectoral profile had shifted further. Health care and social assistance remained the largest source of job postings, underscoring the ongoing and structural nature of labour demand in care-based services. Retail trade continued to account for a high volume of postings despite a multi-year decline, suggesting persistent turnover rather than expansion. Administrative and support services saw a significant year-over-year contraction, possibly suggesting longer-term adjustments to staffing models, outsourcing practices, and automation.

One of the most notable changes in 2025 was the emergence of utilities as the fastest-growing sector. Although the overall posting volume is smaller, this growth reflects increased demand for specialized, technical, and infrastructure-related roles. This shift signals the growing importance of skilled trades, engineering, and technical occupations in energy, infrastructure maintenance, and public utilities, areas that are likely to remain critical in the medium to long-term.

Sector	Demand	Growth Drivers
Elementary & secondary schools	High	Public service needs
Community health centres	High	Population health demand
Long-term care facilities	High	Aging demographics
Municipal & regional administration	Moderate	Service delivery continuity
Utilities	Rising	Infrastructure and energy projects
Administrative & support services	Declining	Process changes and automation



# OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS

Occupational demand followed a similar pattern of gradual rebalancing. Retail salespersons and visual merchandisers remained among the most frequently posted occupations in both years, but continued to decline overall, reinforcing the trend toward reduced reliance on traditional retail staffing. At the same time, care-oriented occupations, including home support workers, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses, maintained strong and consistent demand, reflecting demographic pressures and increasing service needs across the Region.

Growth in food service and supervisory roles persisted across both years, indicating ongoing demand in accommodation and food services despite lower total posting volumes. These roles continue to play an important role in providing entry-level employment opportunities, though they are often associated with lower wages and higher turnover.

Occupation	Job Posts	Key Insight
Retail salespersons & visual merchandisers	2,146	High turnover; customer-facing demand
Food counter attendants & kitchen helpers	1,626	Sustained service activity; entry points
Home support workers & caregivers	1,066	Growing care needs; aging population
Retail & wholesale trade managers	936	Leadership in sales operations
Cooks	826	Ongoing hospitality demand despite shifts

# JOBSEEKER BEHAVIOUR



Jobseeker engagement increased significantly between 2024 and 2025, reflecting heightened use of Durham Workforce Authority tools and growing reliance on digital job-search platforms. Rather than declining, total engagement increased as jobseekers navigated a more competitive, selective labour market.

Jobseeker interest remained concentrated in sales and service occupations, business and administration roles, and trades and transport, mirroring the structure of available employment opportunities.

Search behaviour was consistent across both years, with keywords such as “warehouse,” “customer service,” “retail,” and “personal support worker” appearing most frequently. These searches reflect strong demand for accessible roles that offer stability, flexibility, or clear entry points into the labour market.

The increase in engagement suggests not only sustained labour force participation, but also greater intensity in job search activity, potentially driven by slower hiring cycles, increased competition for roles, or greater awareness of available employment tools. This trend underscores the importance of maintaining up-to-date labour market information, user-friendly job-matching platforms, and clear pathways to training and employment supports.

Overall, jobseeker behaviour in 2025 reflects an active and engaged workforce responding to evolving labour market conditions, rather than withdrawing from participation.

Indicator	Metric	Key Insight
Total interactions	147,317	Up 30% year-over-year across platforms
Job Board interactions	89,236	Primary access point for seekers
Job post clicks	67,077	High interest in available roles

# SKILLS, WAGES, & EXPERIENCE



Wage trends in Durham Region showed modest but consistent improvement between 2024 and 2025, though gains were uneven across sectors and occupations. Overall, posted wages continued to rise, reflecting employer efforts to remain competitive in a labour market shaped by skill shortages and evolving workforce expectations.

The average posted hourly wage increased from \$27.34 in 2024 to \$27.85 in 2025, up 2 percent, while the median posted wage rose slightly from \$23.18 to \$23.27. Although these increases were incremental, they signal continued upward wage pressure, particularly in specialized and high-demand roles. Wage growth remained strongest in utilities, which saw substantial year-over-year increases in median wages, reinforcing the sector's shift toward higher-skilled, technical occupations.

Despite these gains, wage growth remained concentrated in a relatively narrow set of occupations. Health professions, natural and applied sciences, and senior management roles continued to command the highest wages, while many high-volume roles in retail, food services, and administrative support remained lower-paying. This dynamic highlights a challenge in Durham's labour market that, while employment remains accessible, higher-quality and higher-wage opportunities are more limited and often require specialized training or credentials.

Overall, wage trends in 2025 point to a labour market where job quality is improving gradually, but unevenly. Addressing this imbalance will require sustained investment in skills development and career progression pathways that enable workers to move from entry-level roles into more stable, higher-paying employment.



## Foundational skills

Across both years, the most frequently requested skills remained consistent. Communication, customer service, management, interpersonal, organizational, and driving skills were most often cited, reflecting the importance of foundational competencies across industries. These skills are highly transferable and support workforce mobility, but they also place greater emphasis on on-the-job learning and employer-led training.

## Accessibility

Job accessibility remained a defining feature of Durham Region's labour market across both 2024 and 2025. In both years, the majority of job postings continued to list few or no formal barriers to entry.

In 2024, most job postings did not specify education or experience requirements, and this pattern persisted into 2025. Nearly 90 percent of postings in 2025 continued to omit formal education or experience criteria, suggesting that employers are prioritizing availability, adaptability, and transferable skills over credentials alone. This trend was particularly evident in sales, service, care, and support occupations, which continue to make up a large share of overall demand.

While high accessibility creates important entry points for jobseekers, it also underscores the need for structured pathways that support upskilling and advancement. Without clear progression routes, many workers may remain concentrated in lower-wage, higher-turnover roles. Strengthening connections between accessible entry-level employment and longer-term career development should remain a key opportunity for Durham's workforce system.



# REGIONAL COMPARISON



Labour demand across Durham Region continued to reflect the distribution of population, employment centres, and economic activity in 2025, with hiring concentrated in the region's urban municipalities, while smaller communities supported more localized labour markets.

Among Durham municipalities, Oshawa recorded the highest level of hiring activity, with 12,519 active job postings and 2,497 companies hiring. This reflects Oshawa's role as a regional employment hub, supported by major institutions, manufacturing activity, health care facilities, and retail centres.

Whitby and Pickering also recorded substantial hiring volumes, while Ajax and Clarington showed moderate but steady employer participation. North Durham, which includes the more rural communities of Scugog, Brock and Uxbridge, reported the fewest postings and employers, reflecting a smaller labour market base rather than reduced economic activity.

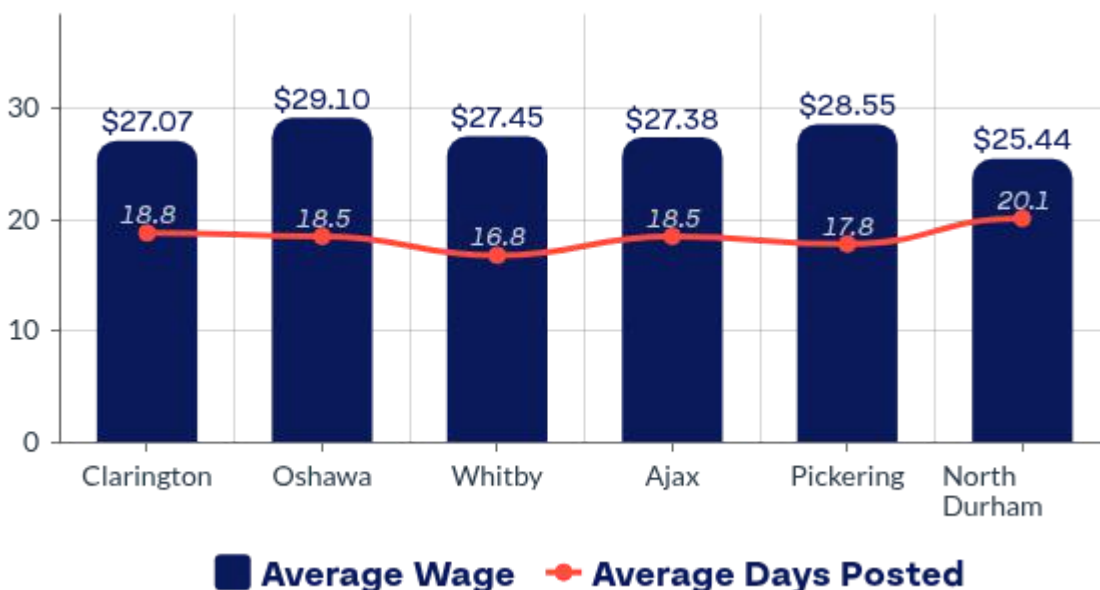


Employment types were also distributed across the region in a way that reflects the local labour market structure. Full-time, part-time, permanent, and temporary opportunities were all present across municipalities, though their concentration varied with population size and employer presence. Larger urban centres accounted for the majority of both full-time and permanent roles, while smaller municipalities contributed a smaller but still important share of employment opportunities.



Posting duration remained relatively consistent across the region, with most municipalities averaging between 16.8 and 20.1 days before positions were filled. Whitby recorded the shortest average posting duration at 16.8 days, suggesting a relatively efficient matching of employers and workers in that area. By contrast, North Durham saw slightly longer posting durations, which may reflect a smaller labour pool or greater challenges in filling certain roles in rural communities.

Wage levels also varied across municipalities, highlighting differences in occupational composition and industry presence. Oshawa recorded the highest average posted wage at \$29.10 per hour, followed by Pickering at \$28.55, while North Durham reported the lowest average posted wage at \$25.44. These differences are consistent with the concentration of higher-paying technical, professional, and industrial occupations in urban centres.



Despite these variations, the underlying skill requirements across municipalities were broadly similar. Employers consistently emphasized foundational, interpersonal, technical, analytical, and resource management skills, reflecting the transferable competencies required across a wide range of occupations. Communication, coordination, and problem-solving remain essential skills regardless of location or industry.

Overall, the regional comparison highlights a labour market that is interconnected but locally differentiated. Urban centres such as Oshawa, Whitby, and Pickering continue to anchor employment activity, while surrounding municipalities contribute to a diverse regional workforce ecosystem.

Understanding these local variations is essential for workforce planning, helping employers, service providers, and policymakers tailor strategies that reflect the unique labour market dynamics of each community within Durham Region.



# CONCLUSION

The 2025 labour market in Durham Region showed stability, accessibility, and gradual adjustment. While overall hiring remained strong, sectoral shifts and uneven wage growth highlighted ongoing challenges in job quality and workforce sustainability. Comparing 2024 to 2025, the market is adapting rather than shrinking. Although job postings declined, hiring activity stayed competitive and resilient, reflecting broader economic moderation alongside steady demand in essential and skilled sectors.

Fewer job postings were recorded in 2025, but employers filled positions faster, as seen in shorter average posting durations. This indicates better alignment between employer needs and available labour, even as hiring became more selective. The drop in employer participation suggests consolidation rather than withdrawal, with many continuing to post roles but at lower volumes.

Labour demand shifted towards health care, care services, and infrastructure roles, while discretionary and administrative sectors declined. The rise of utilities as a growth area underscores the increasing importance of technical and skilled occupations, highlighting the need for long-term workforce planning aligned with regional investments and demographic changes.

Wage trends show modest improvements in job quality but remain uneven. Average and median wages rose slightly, mainly in specialized sectors. High-volume sales and service roles stayed lower-wage, emphasizing a persistent gap between job accessibility and quality. This highlights the need to strengthen pathways for skill development and progression into better-paying jobs.

Job accessibility remained high, with most postings not requiring formal education or experience, supporting entry-level participation. However, reliance on transferable skills and on-the-job learning places greater responsibility on employers, educators, and workforce partners to ensure accessible roles lead to long-term stability.

Jobseeker engagement also increased significantly in 2025, with more use of Durham Workforce Authority tools. This reflects active job searching in a competitive market rather than disengagement, as jobseekers seek clarity and alignment with available opportunities.

Overall, the year-over-year trends point to a labour market that is evolving in structure and focus, rather than weakening. Durham Region's workforce system continues to support high levels of participation and accessibility, while facing ongoing challenges related to job quality, sectoral concentration, and skills alignment. Addressing these challenges will require sustained collaboration among employers, educators, service providers, and policymakers to ensure that labour market adjustment translates into long-term resilience and inclusive economic growth.