

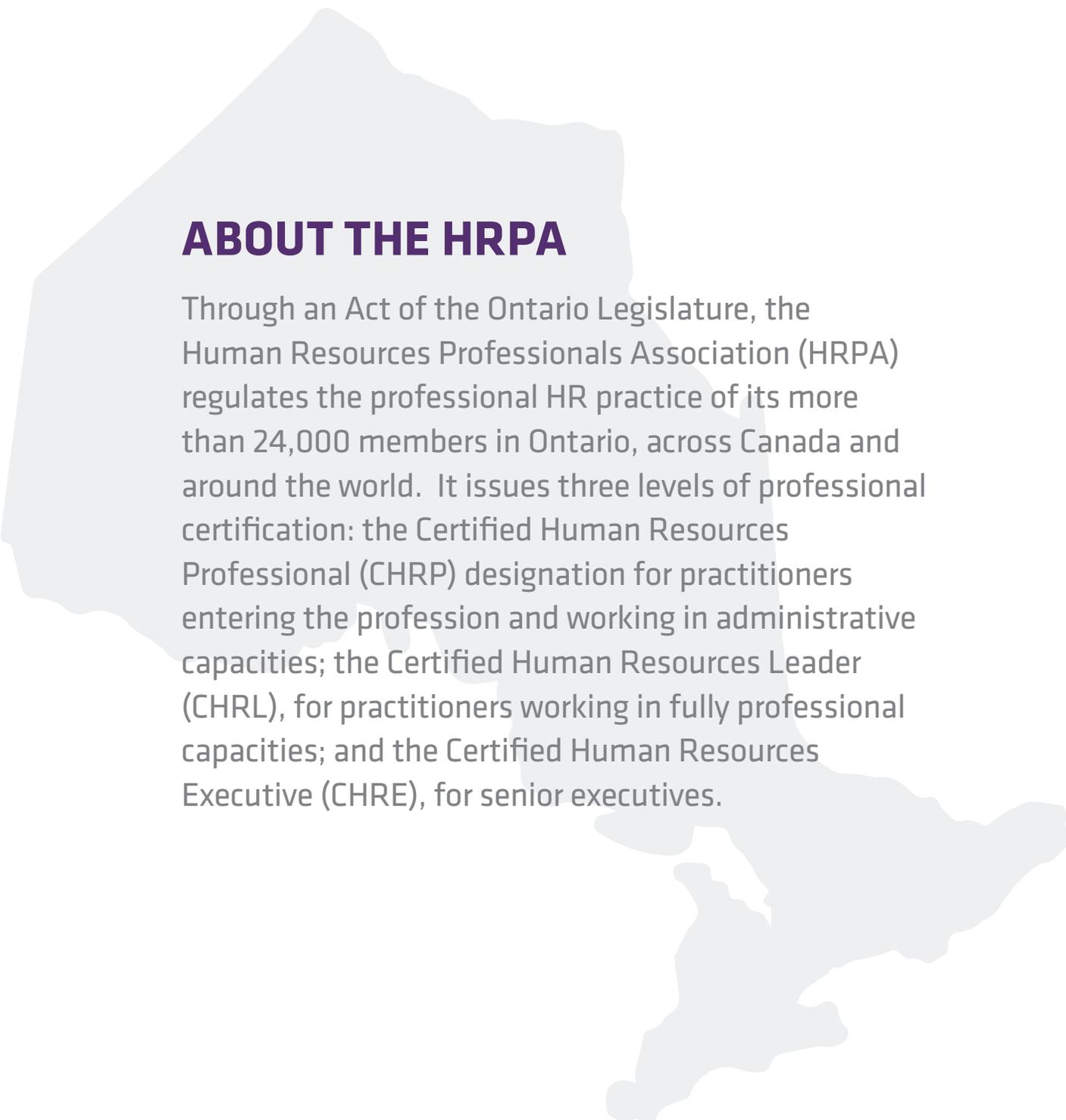


Human Resources
Professionals
Association



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ABOUT THE HRPA

Through an Act of the Ontario Legislature, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) regulates the professional HR practice of its more than 24,000 members in Ontario, across Canada and around the world. It issues three levels of professional certification: the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation for practitioners entering the profession and working in administrative capacities; the Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL), for practitioners working in fully professional capacities; and the Certified Human Resources Executive (CHRE), for senior executives.

INTRODUCTION

Ontario's economy is changing at an unprecedented rate and we find ourselves at a tipping point.

Our workforce is aging, and as a result 89% of Ontario's population growth in the coming years will have to come from net migration.

Our industries are shifting and technological innovation is changing what types of jobs will be available in the future as well as what skills and training will be required to fill those jobs.

Over the next ten years the future of work in Ontario will be reshaped by both global and local forces, and this presents both an opportunity and a threat to the future success/growth of Ontario's economy. Together, this makes the 2018 election a pivotal moment for policy makers.

The decisions made by the next government will determine our economic future. If Ontario can properly position its workforce to take advantage of these changes, it will be highly competitive in the global economy and we will benefit with well-paying jobs. However, if we do not properly prepare now we risk losing jobs and businesses as our economy falls further and further behind.

The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) is uniquely positioned to understand the challenges facing Ontario's economy, and more importantly, to understand the solutions required to navigate these changes and keep Ontario working. Our members are the front-line experts who have a detailed understanding of the pending changes to their businesses and industries. The HRPA has harnessed this expertise to develop 'Ideas 2018,' its election platform. This plan identifies the four key ideas to building a strong workforce in Ontario:

1. *Strengthening our Human Capital Investment*
2. *Expanding Educational Capabilities*
3. *Establishing a More Efficient Government*
2. *Reimagining Workforce Regulations*

It then lays out a series of recommendations for policy makers to follow that will help keep our province competitive.

CORE IDEAS



01 STRENGTHENING
OUR HUMAN CAPITAL
INVESTMENT

02 EXPANDING
EDUCATIONAL
CAPABILITIES

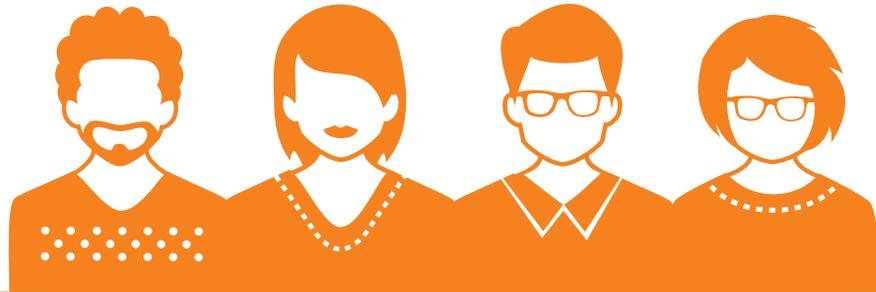


03 ESTABLISHING A
MORE EFFICIENT
GOVERNMENT



04 REIMAGINING
WORKFORCE
REGULATIONS





IDEA 01

STRENGTHENING OUR HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Ontario's economy is changing at a rapid pace, and this change directly impacts workforce needs. This change has been driven by global competition as well as technological advances including automation. The impact of automation alone has been estimated to threaten somewhere between 35 and 42 per cent of jobs. The speed of these changes has made it difficult for organizations and workers to adapt, and the government has been even slower.

Governments, businesses and workers must understand the direction of these changes in order to stay ahead of them. Knowing what industries are growing and which are shrinking are critical pieces of information for governments, educators, and students. Accurate labour market information allows decision makers to ensure resources are allocated in the appropriate direction and "is clearly a necessary condition" for matching the needs of businesses with skills people learn. Unfortunately, this accurate information is lacking in Canada. Today, there is a patchwork of federal, provincial, local, and community sources where different labour market data points are available, and this must be rectified.

At the same time, appropriate supports must be put in place to help workers adapt to the changing economy. Universal basic income is a concept where people are provided with a minimum income by the government regardless of whether they have a job. Ontario is following other jurisdictions, and has just completed the first phase of its pilot program around universal basic income. The study is meant to test whether a basic income provides vulnerable people with better support and improved education and health levels, while at the same time streamlining delivery and reducing administration. Given the potential workplace disruptions from the new economy, this program can be extremely valuable to workers, and should be further explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Ontario should continue on the path to conduct its own labour market research to project demand for skills in both the near and distant future, as well as amend those projections on a rolling basis as the data changes. The current federal model takes too long, and the province can do a better job in determining what skilled professions are needed.

The province should consolidate labour market data sources into one user-focused website that easily allows students, educators and businesses to understand the projected trends of industries.



Continue the basic income pilot to address the prospect of job losses due to automation. A vast number of policy options are available for this type of program and Ontario needs to have a more robust discussion.



IDEA 02

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL CAPABILITIES

Employers continue to voice concerns that new graduates entering the workforce are lacking the core skills required to take on entry-level jobs. The Conference Board of Canada noted in 2013 that the “province-wide skills gap” may cost the economy as much as \$24.3 billion in lost economic activity. According to human resources professionals, many entry-level workers are not currently prepared for work. The HRP recently surveyed its members and found that 41.2 per cent of respondents believed their entry-level hires over the last year had not been sufficiently prepared by their education to do the jobs they were hired for. The same survey revealed that soft skills are what employers feel are missing, in particular “problem solving” and “attention to detail.”

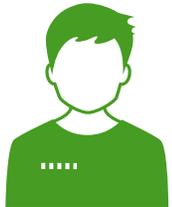
As the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) highlighted, students need to be prepared “for jobs that have not yet been created, to use technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve social problems that we do not yet know will arise.” Unfortunately, this is not happening, and that must be fixed.

Armed with proper labour market information, Ontario must ensure its workforce is well positioned to fill the jobs of tomorrow if we are to compete in the global economy. Students need to be better prepared for jobs of the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Make experiential learning mandatory. Given the direct connection between the benefits of experiential learning and the soft skills missing in entry-level employees, the government should make programs like co-ops mandatory for high school students.



Encourage small and medium sized employers to participate in experiential learning programs, by:

- Expanding the Provincial Partnership Council's Ontario Employer designation.
- Encouraging a greater number of employers to participate in co-operative education programs.
- Increasing promotion in the Jobs and Prosperity Fund to encourage businesses to participate in co-op programs.

Explore the Swiss Model for apprenticeship, where secondary students have two high school models available to them. One prepares them to go to university, and another gives them the opportunity to participate in an apprenticeship program. This model also pays students for their work, and students sign contracts with their employers that can last up to four years.



Enhance partnerships between schools and local businesses and provide support to organizations like Industry Education Councils. This will give both students and educators a direct understanding of the needs of the workforce.



Reimagine Ontario's education system and overhaul the curriculum to ensure students are acquiring the capabilities needed to succeed in a digital world. This overhauled curriculum would place a greater emphasis on teaching the integrated capabilities needed for the future instead of individual subjects.





IDEA 03

ESTABLISHING A MORE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

As Ontario's economy evolves, it is critical we have in place proper safety nets to protect our workers and our most vulnerable. At the same time, it is imperative these policies and programs operate in efficient and effective ways and do not overly burden employers. The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario ("OHRT") is one area where reforms could establish a more efficient process for both workers and employers.

According to recent HRPAs research, there is almost universal agreement amongst our members that the OHRT could be improved or fixed. Today the system is overburdened by frivolous claims, which bog down the process for those claims that have merit, and cost organizations thousands of dollars in unnecessary legal fees. Steps need to be taken to reduce these frivolous claims, including introducing a mandatory pre-screening process for all complaints before any action is launched, as well as charging an administrative fee for complaint submissions, which would be refunded if the complaint is deemed credible. Additionally, specially trained judges, similar to those in family law courts could be used to review cases related to discrimination in order to move the province towards an evidence-based system.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Consider additional reforms to the OHRT that will establish a more efficient process for both workers and employers.



Implement a system to pre-screen all complaints received by the OHRT, allowing the tribunal to decrease the amount of time it takes to begin their initial investigation.



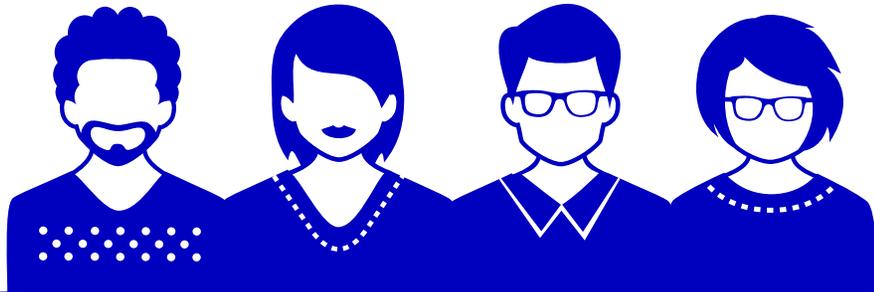
Implement a process to better identify repeat, unfounded claims so further action can be taken by the tribunal. 94% of HRPAs members agree that this type of process should be put in place.

Begin charging an administrative fee to anyone who submits a complaint to the tribunal. If the complaint is deemed to be credible, the administrative fee is then reimbursed to the complainant.



Complaints of discrimination should go to specially trained judges, similar to those in family law courts, which would move the province towards an “evidence-based” system.





IDEA 04

REIMAGINING WORKFORCE REGULATIONS

Ontario's economy is dramatically different than it was even a few short years ago. Capital is mobile, and businesses looking to expand their operations can now turn to markets all around the world. At the same time, today's workforce has become mobile as well. As migration has become easier, competition between jurisdictions is fierce. The "war for talent" is raging on.

To adapt to the current and future challenges facing the economy, the province must look to streamline, and improve workforce regulations. This includes preparing for the legalization of marijuana in the workplace. It also includes providing greater clarity and resources to help organizations implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

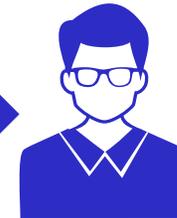
It is imperative that the province foster an environment that helps businesses compete, and encourages them to grow and expand here, over any other jurisdiction in the world. At the same time, government must create the working conditions that will continue to attract and retain workers. By actively working to remove barriers that prevent businesses from being competitive, policy makers can make Ontario the best jurisdiction to live, work and raise a family.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepare employers for the legalization of cannabis in the Ontario workplace by setting a clear legal definition of “impairment” with cannabis as well as the grounds under which an employee can be tested in relation to cannabis use. Special considerations for safety-sensitive industries may be necessary.

Provide support for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as a recent survey of HRPAs Members showed that greater clarity, training, and resources around requirements of the AODA would help organizations more effectively implement the standards.



The Ontario government should work with other provincial governments to coordinate recreational marijuana legislation and regulations as much as possible to ensure that employers with a national workforce can easily adhere to the policies and communicate these rules to their employees.

CONCLUSION

By implementing these key ideas, policy makers will help build a stronger workforce in Ontario. It will ensure our economy is resilient to change, will help attract business investment and create well-paying jobs. Our front-line experts know that by better understanding our workforce needs, educating our workforce, and improving our workforce regulations, we can make Ontario the best jurisdiction to live, work and raise a family.

The HRPAs and its membership encourages all policy makers to adopt this approach, and we look forward to working with the next government to ensure Ontario gets to work.

ENDNOTES

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