

## **KOOTENAY ROCKIES SEASONAL STAFFING SURVEY 2017**

### **Results Report**

#### **Background:**

During the period of July 24 – September 1, 2017 Kootenay Rockies Tourism and go2HR conducted a Seasonal Staffing survey for the Kootenay Rockies region.

The goal of this survey was to gain insights into the labour market needs and composition of the tourism and hospitality workforce during the peak of the 2017 summer season. This important information will help us identify trends, challenges and opportunities to better provide HR-related support for employers within the region.

#### **Overview:**

A total of 149 responses were received, 109 are qualified responses. 40 responses were removed from the results analysis as the businesses operate outside of the tourism industry (retail stores, HVAC/Plumbing, etc.).

Responses were received from all areas around the entire Kootenay Rockies region, across all sectors of the industry, with the exception of transportation (F&B, accommodation, recreation/entertainment, travel services). The bulk of responses were received from Golden, Revelstoke, Radium, Fernie/Elk Valley & areas around those locations.

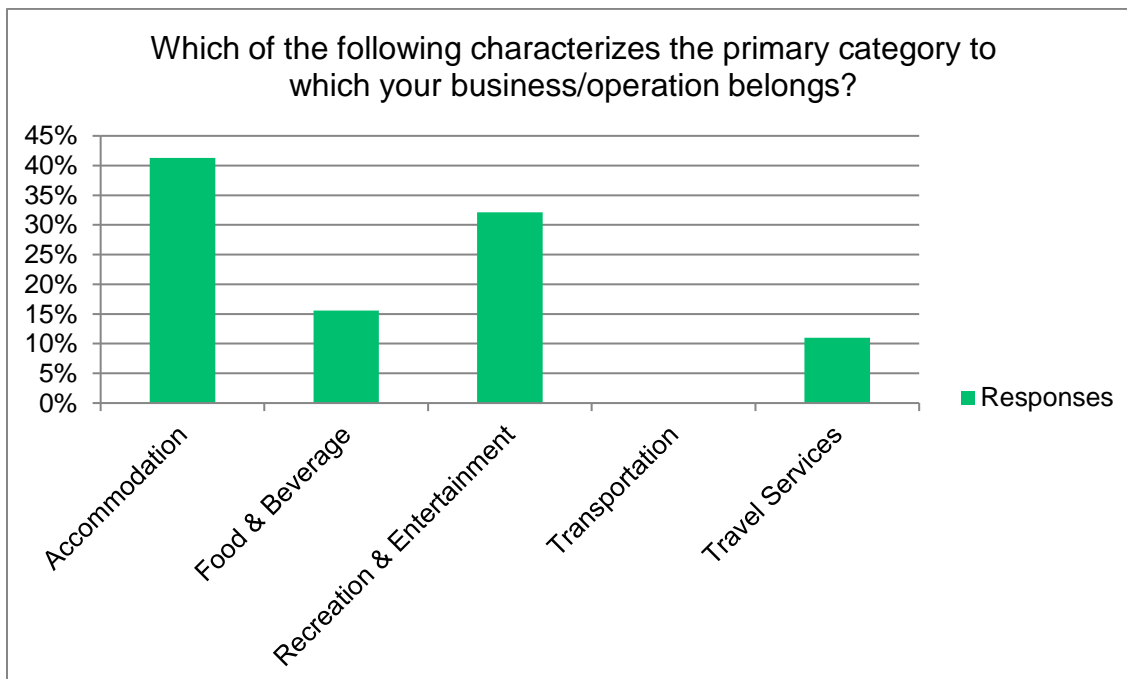
This report is intended to provide an overview of the Staffing Survey results, with a focus on identifying top responses and common themes within each question and focus area. Names and identifying factors have been removed to ensure anonymity. Comments are not verbatim.

Should you have any questions about the results of this survey or this report, please feel to contact Ginger Brunner, Regional HR Specialist 250-860-5999 ext. 210 [gbrunner@go2hr.ca](mailto:gbrunner@go2hr.ca)

Q1:



Q2:



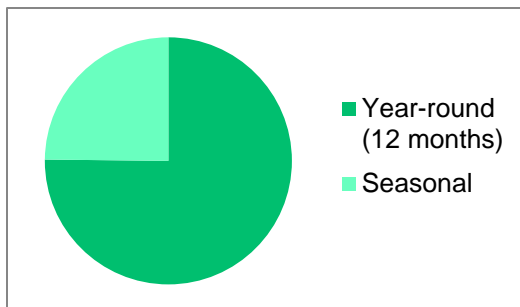
**Q3: Please indicate more specifically your type(s) of business/operation.**

Responses received from all sectors, specifically:

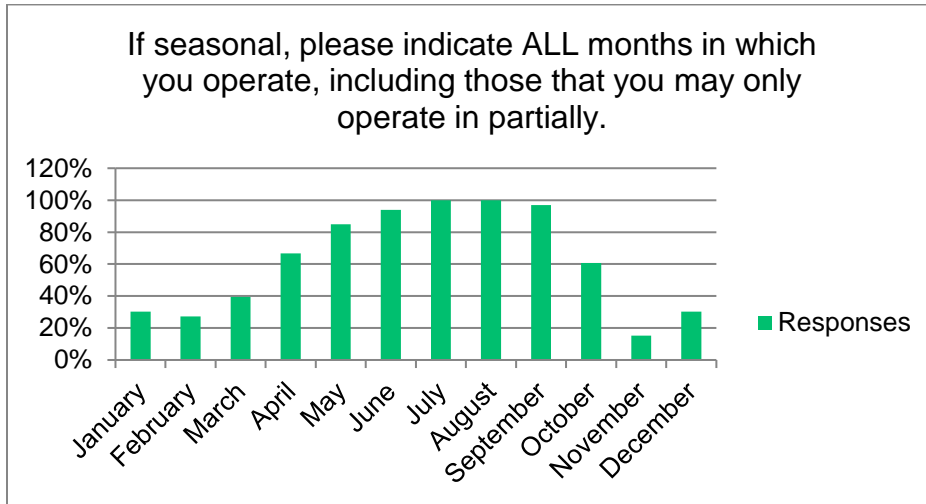
- Hotels & Motels
- Restaurants
- Lodge & Heli Ski Operation
- Wetland education & awareness programs, walking/canoe tours, hiking and biking
- Retreat/Inn
- Whitewater Rafting tours
- Golf Courses
- Municipality - Visitor Centres
- Visitor Centres
- Vacation Rental company
- Hot Springs
- Ski Resort
- Winery and Guest house
- RV Parks
- Brewery
- DJ
- B&B
- Property management /w nightly rentals
- Caterer
- Pub
- Bookstore/bakery (other retail) with cafés
- Back country lodge
- Mountain lodge
- Museum
- Guiding services
- Outdoor camp for kids & retreat
- Brewery
- Zip line tours
- Resorts

**Q4: Which of the following best describes your business operations?**

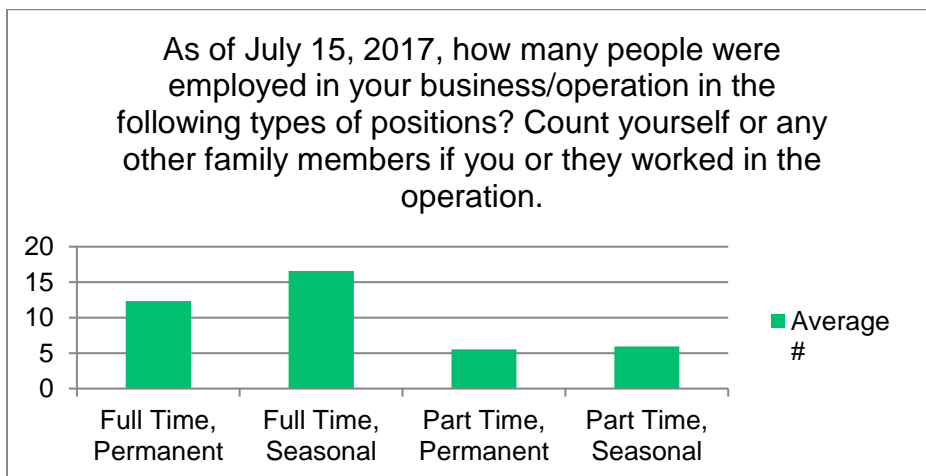
70% (76) respondents indicated that their business operates year-round (12 months)  
30% (33) operate seasonal businesses



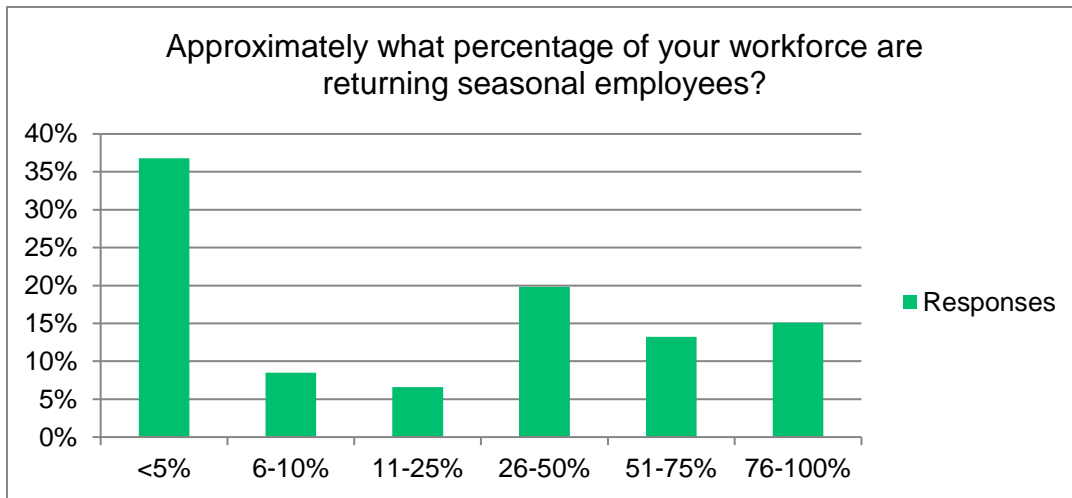
**Q5: If seasonal, please indicate ALL months in which you operate, including those that you may only operate in partially.**



**Q6: As of July 15, 2017, how many people were employed in your business/operation in the following types of positions? Count yourself or any other family members if you or they worked in the operation.**



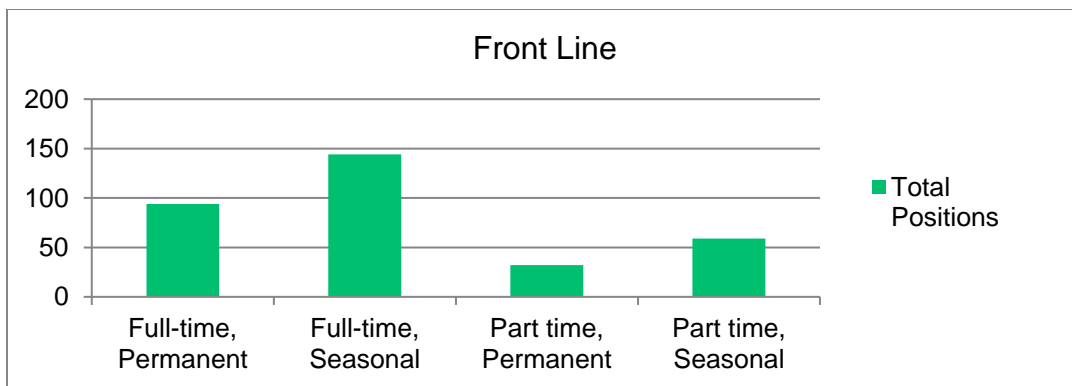
**Q7: Approximately what percentage of your workforce are returning seasonal employees?**



**Q8: For each of the following categories, please indicate the number of positions that remained unfilled, as of July 15, 2017.**

84 respondents reported a total of 329 vacant front line positions:

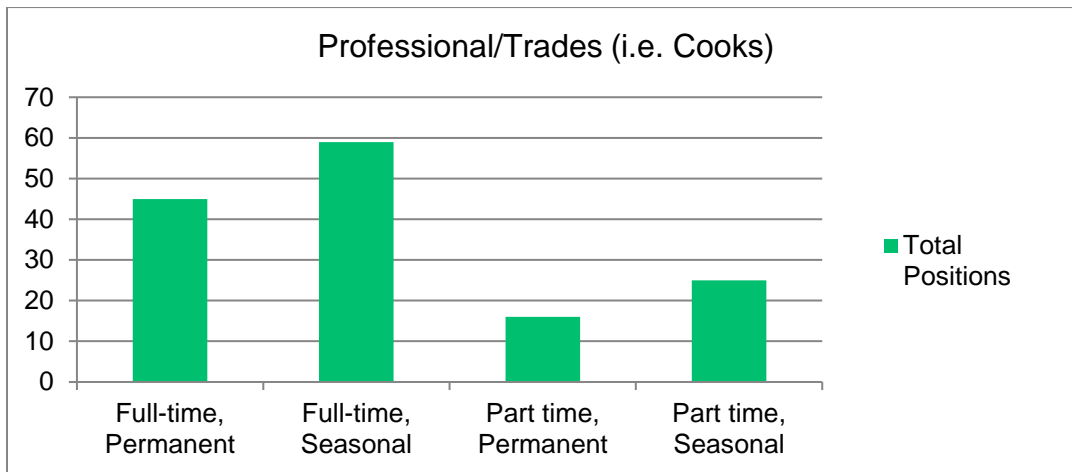
- 94 Full time, permanent
- 144 Full time, seasonal
- 32 Part time, permanent
- 59 Part time, seasonal



**Q9: For each of the following categories, please indicate the number of positions that remained unfilled, as of July 15, 2017.**

59 respondents reported a total of 153 vacant professional/trades (i.e. cooks) positions:

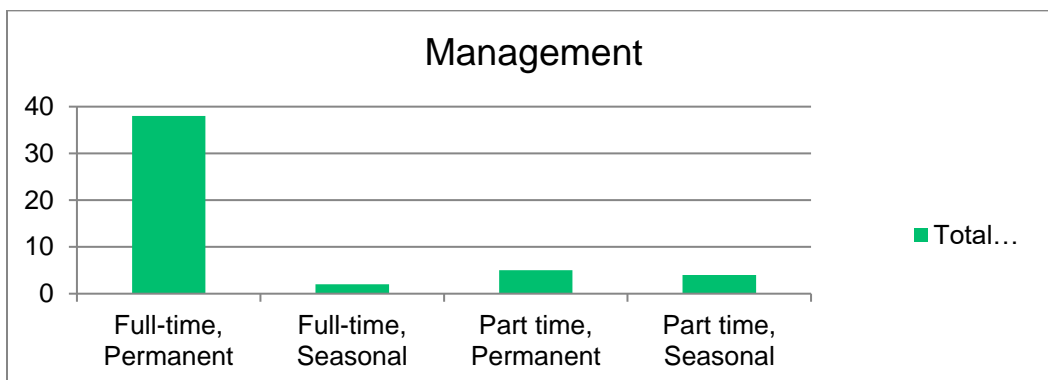
- 45 Full time, permanent
- 59 Full time, seasonal
- 16 Part time, permanent
- 25 Part time, seasonal



**Q10: For each of the following categories, please indicate the number of positions that remained unfilled, as of July 15, 2017.**

55 respondents reported a total of 49 vacant management positions:

- 38 Full time, permanent
- 2 Full time, seasonal
- 5 Part time, permanent
- 4 Part time, seasonal



**Q11: If you used any of the following programs to recruit international workers, please indicate the approx. number of *front line* positions filled by each applicable program, as of July 15, 2017.**

**Working Holiday Visa**

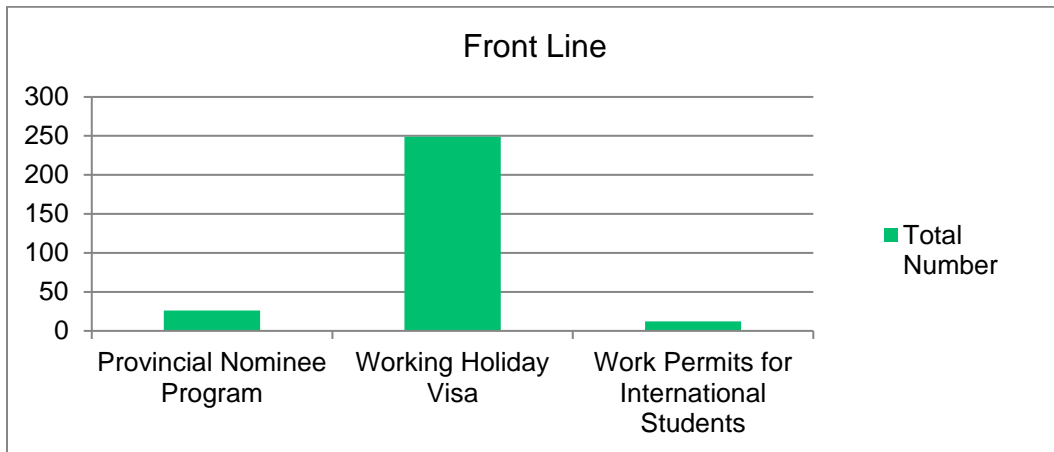
The Working Holiday Visa program is the most popular of the international recruitment programs for front line employees. 23 respondents indicated that they have used this program to recruit a total of 249 front line employees.

**Provincial Nominee Program**

7 respondents indicated that they have used the Provincial Nominee Program to recruit a total of 26 PNP front line employees.

**Work Permits for International Students**

3 respondents indicated that they have used the Work Permits for International Students to recruit a total of 12 front line employees.



**Q12: If you used any of the following programs to recruit international workers, please indicate the approx. number of *Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks)* positions filled by each applicable program, as of July 15, 2017.**

**Working Holiday Visa**

The Working Holiday Visa program is the most popular of the international recruitment programs for Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks).

4 respondents indicated that they have used this program to recruit a total of 23 employees.

**Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program**

2 respondents have used this program to recruit a total of 2 Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks) employees.

**Provincial Nominee Program**

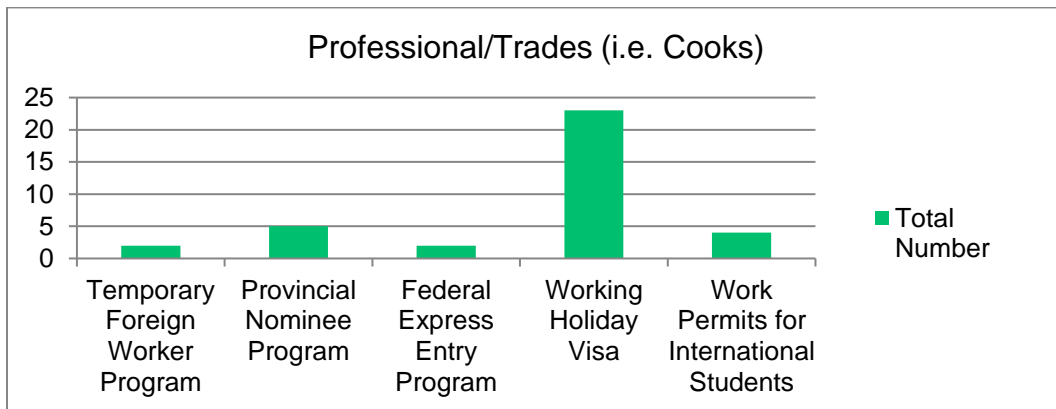
2 respondents have used this program to recruit a total of 5 Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks) employees.

**Federal Express Entry Program**

1 respondent has used this program to recruit a total of 2 Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks) employees.

**Work Permits for International Students**

2 respondents have used the Work Permits for International Students to recruit a total of 4 Professional/Trades (i.e. Cooks) employees.



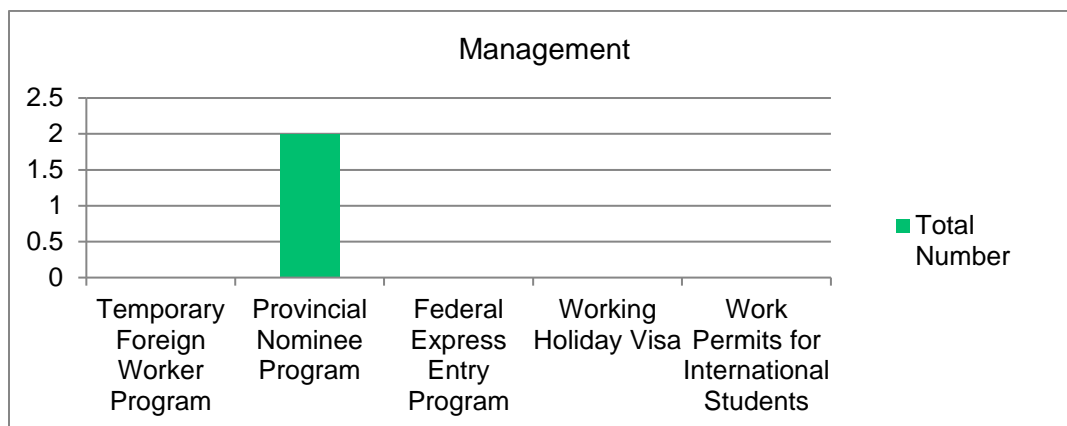


**Q13: If you used any of the following programs to recruit international workers, please indicate the approx. number of *management* positions filled by each applicable program, as of July 15, 2017.**

**Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)**

1 respondent has used the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) program to recruit a total of 2 management employees.

Zero (0) respondents indicated that they have used the Federal Express Entry Program, Working Holiday Visa, or Work Permits for International Students to recruit management employees.

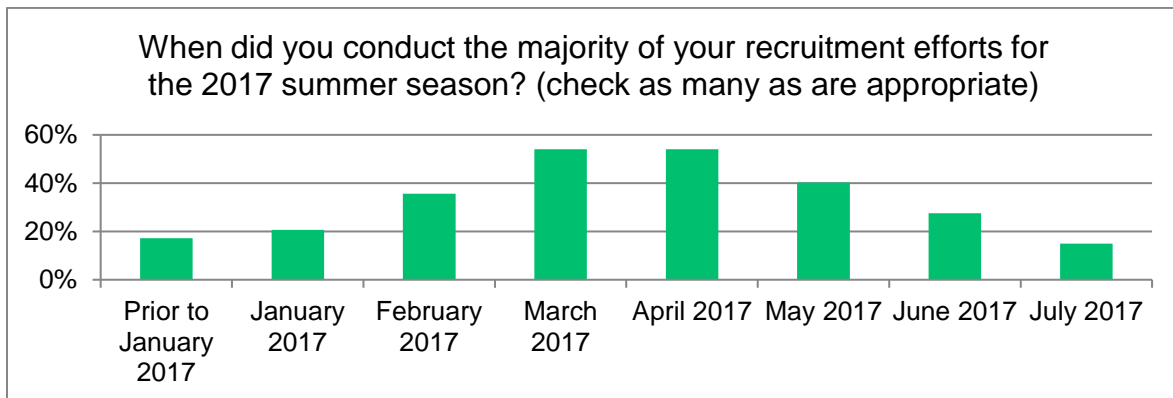


**Q14: Please indicate the approx. number of offers declined and no-shows, as of July 15, 2017.**

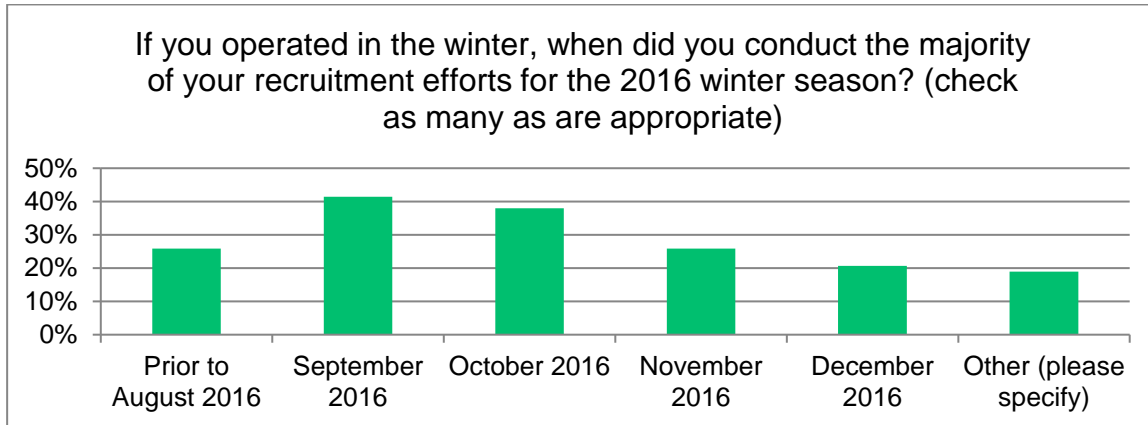
- 36 respondents indicated that an average of 7 Canadians declined employment offers, representing a total of 336 positions
- 29 respondents indicated an average of 3 Canadians accepted the job, but didn't show up for work, a total of 146 positions.
- 9 respondents indicated that an average of 3 Other Visa Holders (Sponsored, WHV, etc.) declined employment offers, a total of 62 positions.
- 6 respondents indicated an average of 2 Other Visa Holders (Sponsored, WHV, etc.) accepted the job but didn't show up for work, a total of 32 positions.



**Q15: When did you conduct the majority of your recruitment efforts for the 2017 summer season? (check as many as are appropriate)**



**Q16: If you operated in the winter, when did you conduct the majority of your recruitment efforts for the 2016 winter season? (check as many as are appropriate)**



**Comments:**

I almost keep a job posting up year-round  
 Present employees fill our part time winter hours  
 Filled by permanent staff  
 We closed for the winter last year due to lack of staff  
 We do not hire additional staff in the winter  
 fully staffed  
 none invested is some of my seasonal staff  
 August/September 2016  
 had two foreign workers, one quit and one is PNP  
 no seasonal workers in winter

**Q17: What method(s) does your organization use to recruit staff and managers? (Please indicate the effectiveness for all that apply)**

	Effective		Not Effective		Total
Word of mouth	88%	70	13%	10	80
Help Wanted Sign	20%	10	80%	39	49
Staff Referrals	85%	58	15%	10	68
Unsolicited resumes/walk ins	53%	34	47%	30	64
Company/organization's website	55%	29	45%	24	53
go2HR Job Board	38%	15	62%	24	39
Other Job Boards (i.e. hcareers, Castanet, indeed, Kijiji, Kootenay Business Mag, etc.)	75%	46	25%	15	61
Social Media	69%	46	31%	21	67
Online daily newspaper (i.e. Castanet)	0%	0	0%	0	0
Other websites (i.e. Kijiji, Craigs List, etc.)	0%	0	0%	0	0
Job Fairs	19%	7	81%	30	37
Under Represented Labour Pools (i.e. Aboriginal, immigrants, youth, persons with disabilities)	3%	1	97%	29	30
Relationships/partnerships with other Employers	49%	20	51%	21	41
Recruitment through high schools	0%	0	0%	0	0
High Schools, Colleges or Universities	53%	27	47%	24	51
Colleges or universities	0%	0	0%	0	0
Job postings with community agencies	0%	0	0%	0	0
Community newspapers	47%	27	53%	30	57
Industry/Trade publications	3%	1	97%	30	31
Private Recruitment/Placement Agency	24%	8	76%	26	34
Local Employment Agencies (i.e. WorkBC)	57%	29	43%	22	51
International Hiring Fairs	3%	1	97%	28	29
Immigration Recruitment Agency	12%	3	88%	23	26

**Q18: Do you use any other effective recruitment methods that are not included in the choices above? If so, please describe below:**

PinkBike. Bike forums  
 Facebook  
 Treat staff super good so they stay and want to work here  
 Job postings in chamber newsletter  
 Temporary foreign workers  
 Nothing helps - there are no workers to fill these jobs!  
 Stoke List/Revy Sell

### **Q19: What would help your organization address the challenges of recruiting?**

Affordable housing, access to foreign recruitment options and students as well as improved HR practices were mentioned most amongst the responses to this question. Below is a snapshot of verbatim comments.

#### **Affordable Housing**

- more affordable housing for staff to live in
- more affordable housing (both rentals and purchase, both number of units and price)
- Too many rentals are being used as Airb&b and taking away from long term rentals
- housing available in the area so we actually can have people live here and therefore work here
- Housing is the number one problem for staff, my staff costs have gone up 20% in 2 years
- Affordable housing- crack down of illegal VRBO's
- More accommodation options in Nelson and less expensive accommodation
- We would have been able to offer to at least 10 potential employees had we been able to secure staff housing. Staff housing is the reason we are not able to fill all our positions due to the fact we have no where to house people
- Accommodation for seasonal employees to stay
- The area we live in we currently not viable to live in comfortably for those who work in the tourism industry. We lack infrastructure from housing to transportation
- Addressing the housing challenges in our community

#### **Foreign Recruitment**

- More/easier hiring for foreign workers
- Making the LMIA program more suitable for lower skilled positions and more cost effective
- Easing on the LMIA/Temporary Foreign Worker Program.
- Make the foreign worker policy easier to use. Less restrictive work permit processes
- Some kind of temporary foreign worker program for Golden as a whole for the months of June, July and August
- Opening of foreign workers for non-skilled positions
- Temporary Foreign Workers. The bigger employers who could afford the fees and accommodation required would alleviate some of the demand that makes it difficult for the smaller businesses
- Canadians do not want to do these jobs
- Allowing temporary foreign workers more opportunities, they want to work!

#### **Students**

- More co-op placement options
- Students were encouraged to apply instead of leaving it up to them - they seem not sure of whether to apply or not.
- Listing of organizations/school in Canada that have coop programs with students looking for work for the summer season, preferably in hospitality.

HR Practices

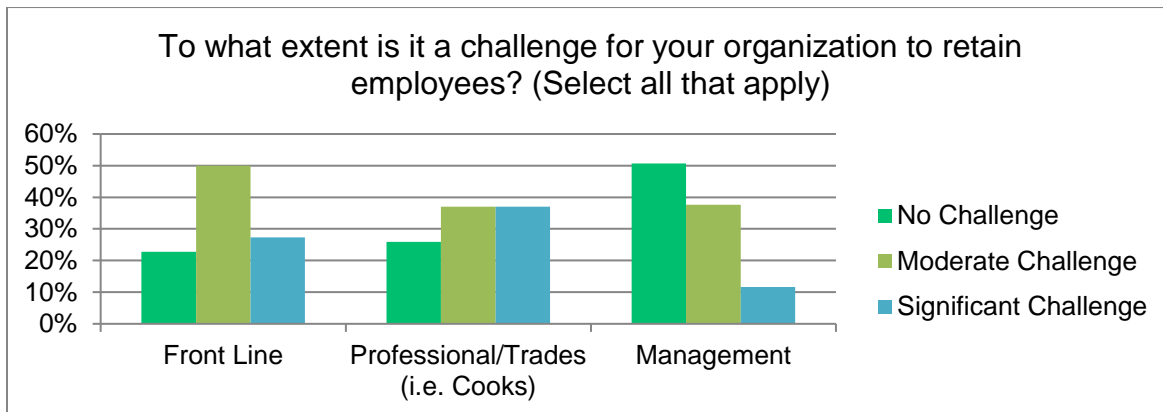
- We need to have better internal practices but finding talent pools in any market is our biggest challenge.
- Rural recruiting help
- Job fairs have been very useful in the past, no job fairs held for the past 2 years
- How to advertise and market the positions

Other

- Increasing the profile of our community as a place to live and work.
- Better buzz about the town as a summer job destination
- A more consistent tourism industry in the winter months
- More permanent residents and families in area with partners or older teenagers desiring and capable of working
- More interest from people from out of town
- Not giving EI to ski bums and other young and able people in the area
- Government incentives for Canadian Youth

**Q20: To what extent is it a challenge for your organization to retain employees? (Select all that apply)**

Of 91 respondents who answered this question, 77% indicated a moderate to significant challenge to retain front line employees. 74% indicated similar challenges to retain professionals/trades (i.e. Chefs).



**Q21: What challenges do you face in recruiting and retaining employees? (Select all that apply)**

91 responses to this question indicate that the challenges vary slightly between front line, professional/trade and management positions. The top 3 challenges for each employment category were as follows:

Front Line

1. Lack of community infrastructure (e.g. transportation, etc.)
2. Lack of affordable housing
3. Lack of time/resources to recruit

Professional/ Trades (i.e. Cooks)

1. Lack of affordable housing
2. Lack of community infrastructure (e.g. transportation, etc.)
3. Lack of employment for spouse

Management

1. Lack of time/resources to recruit
2. Lack of employment for spouse
3. Lack of affordable housing



Overview of respondent comments:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Cost of living
- Competition with higher wages in other industries (i.e. oil and mills)
- Cost of daycare is a barrier to recruiting/retaining employees with small children
- Working holiday visa holders don't have as much commitment (as other employees)
- Training is constant and tiring
- Training funding and customer service programs would be useful
- Grants for summer students restrict rehiring those same students
- Cost of living
- Employees don't want to work weekends or when the employer needs
- Inefficient transportation between Radium, Edgewater and Invermere
- One employer pays above average wages, provides medical/dental benefits and staff accommodation and still has a difficult time finding help outside of Nelson
- Small seasonal businesses don't have resources to entice new employees to the area

**Q22: Which incentives/supports does your organization find to be the most effective for retaining employees? (Select all that apply)**

The top 3 incentives/supports indicated as most effective in retaining employees are:

1. Flexible work schedule
2. Training
3. Special Benefits (i.e. ski passes, discounts, etc.)

Signing bonuses	5%
Stay bonuses	34%
Season return bonuses	13%
Flexible work schedule	63%
Training	46%
Mentoring	38%
Special benefits	40%
Professional development	22%
Travel	12%
Other (please specify)	27%



“Other” effective incentives/supports, included:

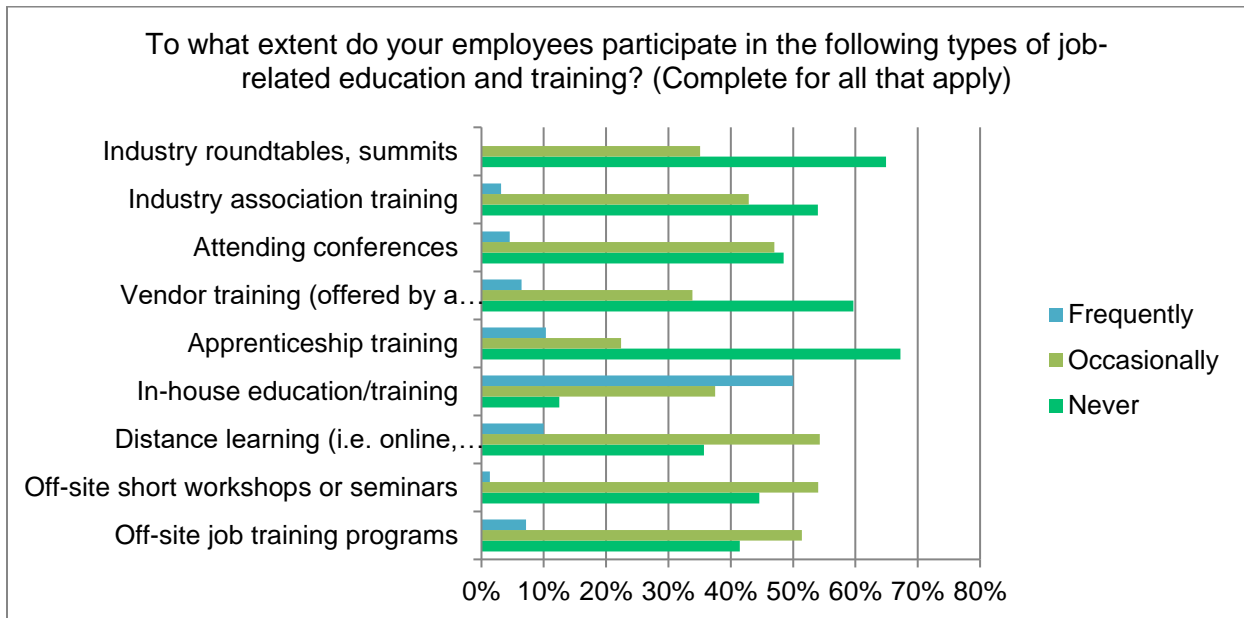
- Paying employees well and treating them fairly
- Building personal relationships- make the job fun
- Varied work tasks so work is interesting
- Staff passes (for amenities and retail); subsidized housing; free lunch
- Allowing staff to bring their children to work
- Paying a fair living wage
- Pay travel time to drive to work
- Communicate positive feedback from customers
- Ski pass, parks pass, gym membership, pro deals, discounts, flexible health benefits
- Staff accommodation and end of season bonuses
- The nature of our work is fulfilling and attracts a certain type of person
- Working outside of their regular environment, at special events, fairs, and markets

**Q23: To what extent do your employees participate in the following types of job-related education and training? (Complete for all that apply)**

83 respondents who answered this question indicated that their employees participate in:

- Inhouse training/education (88%)
- Distance learning (i.e. online, webinars) (64%)
- Off-site job training programs (59%)

Respondent comments indicate that training often happens on the spot and just in time, as needed.



**Q24: What types of training do staff and/or managers in your organization need? (select all that apply)**

The top 3 training needs identified are:

1. Soft Skills (68%)
2. Customer service (66%)
3. Industry -specific (e.g. Serving it Right, FOODSAFE, WHMIS) (56%)

“Other” training needs include: time management, social media training, First Aid, bullying and harassment and other safety related courses, and job specific/trades-related training (i.e. lawn mowing skills).

Some employers offer extensive training and orientation programs that include basic career skills, workplace bullying and harassment, how to dress for the job, rules of conduct, termination guidelines, etc. Some employers also offer on-the-job mentoring.



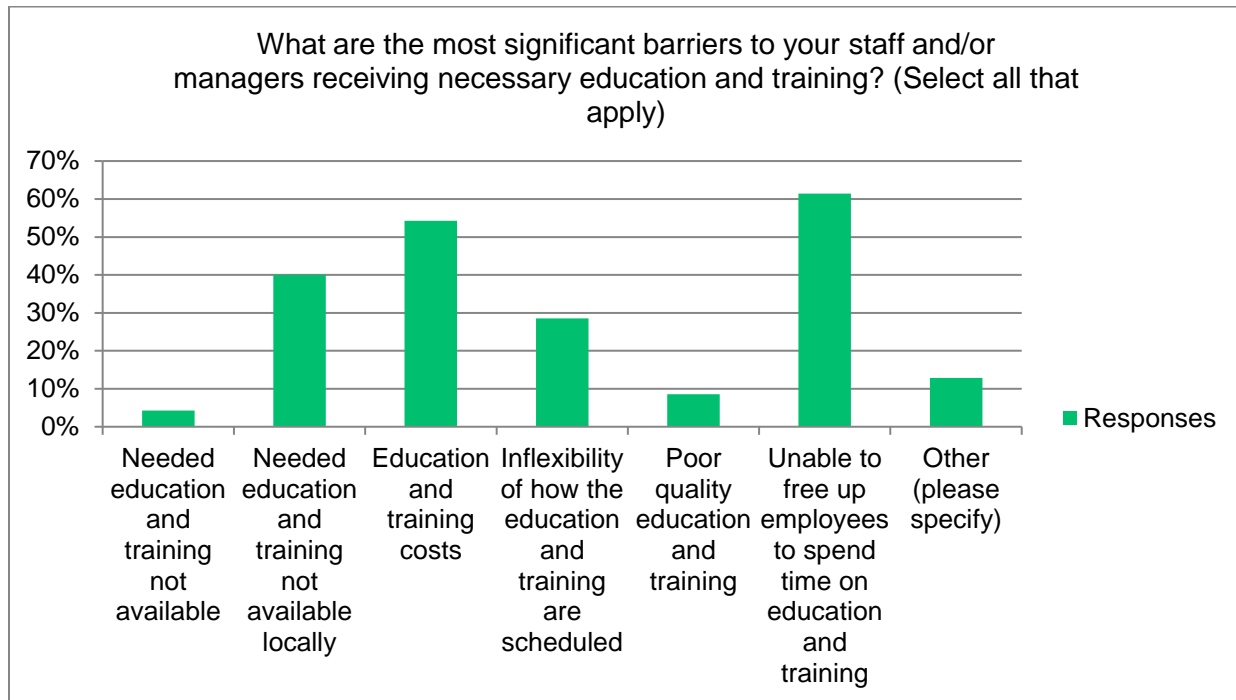
**Q25: What are the most significant barriers to your staff and/or managers receiving necessary education and training? (Select all that apply)**

Of the respondents who answered this question:

- 61% indicated that the most significant barrier to training and education is their inability to free up employees to participate.
- Costs (54%) and lack of needed training and education being available locally (40%) were also identified as most significant barriers.

Other Barriers mentioned, include:

- Lack of time
- Can't find people to work
- Travel within isolated areas (lack of vehicle/inefficient transportation options)



**Q26: What is your TOP CHALLENGE related to recruitment, retention and training of your employees?**

Respondents indicated a wide range of challenges however *the* most common challenge for recruitment and retention is the **lack of affordable housing**.

**Recruitment**

- Lack of affordable housing & staff accommodations
- Isolated areas, no public transportation
- Lack of interest & low responses to job ads
- Small populations to draw from
- Seasonality of employment
- Lack of employee commitment
- Limited (skilled) candidates
- Job not seen as socially desirable for young workers
- unattractive jobs/wages
- Finding certified massage therapists and estheticians that live locally
- High demand for kitchen staff in the summer and the competition between all restaurants in town
- People not showing up for the interview
- Staff who have a strong understanding of the area

#### Retention

- Lack of affordable housing
- Cost of living & low wages
- Seasonality of employment
- Hours & type of work
- Employee expectations (weekends off, transient/will leave for better jobs)

#### Training

- Lack of time & budget
- Location (lack of local programs as well as cost if travel required to larger centers)
- Gathering staff together at the same time to train

### **Q27: What type(s) of information/resources would help you to effectively plan, manage and develop your organization's human resources?**

#### Overview of respondent comments:

- International recruitment – Process & where to start
- staff housing is the biggest issue
- Information/resources on to manage the new (younger) generations
- Help with recruiting
- Locally available training
- Direct support from an HR professional to visit and tell us how
- Information geared to a VERY small office: 1-3 people
- Since we are a non-profit organization, funding for training is always an issue. We require personnel with specific certificates to work for us and we would like to offer education for that.
- It is impossible to plan or manage HR when there simply are no people to hire, nor places for them to live if you can bring them from somewhere else.
- job board of some kind for our community that focuses on students (we obtain grants to hire students)
- A guide to refer to for staff planning and management would be helpful
- Ideas for a HR plan what not to forget for the person doing it for the first time

**Q28: Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your recruitment, retention or training challenges or practices?**

The following are verbatim comments from respondents:

- Air bnb is taking away our long term rental pool which is affecting families and workers ability to stay in town and work year round
- People who chose to remain loyal to a seasonal operation are put through the wringer with gov't programs such as EI. How can you remain loyal to a seasonal employer if you are expected to be looking for another job...so they find year round employment and cannot give that up for small time seasonal...it would be good if there were some linked incentives for industry education and advancement that were affordable for young people in the off season
- Most of our employees return year after year. We treat them really well.
- We think outside of the box when it comes to hiring by contacting people in our circle to reach out to attract qualified staff. We have gotten them here but have been unable to keep them due to the cost of living in this valley. Our business is profitable 5 out of the 12 months a year so we are not in a position to pay more in salaries unless business levels in this valley pick up.
- Some concern that an employer is not paying fair wages to Housekeeping employees
- 1) \$15 Minimum wage would level playing field 2) Affordable housing for seasonal and entry level workers 3) If community insisted on all employees having the same service certificate in soft skills, area knowledge, and ethics of being a good employee - say a three-day course - paid for by tourism/town that would also help.
- The workbc website is atrocious for rural BC.
- A year round marketing plan needs developed to attract employees and customers (to the area)
- There should be grants for staff for babysitting and or accommodation
- Getting the job done takes all our staff time, so developing resources like policy guides and procedures manuals get neglected.
- Other businesses in town can offer staff more perks then we can provide. We hire staff, train them and then they leave to work for the "big" employer in.
- Young people do not seem to have any sort of focus or work ethic and have no initiative to work unless told every little thing to do.
- Government assistance of any kind for support in building or purchasing appropriate housing for staff