

Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex Research Report



Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Methodology.....	8
Survey.....	8
Focus Groups.....	10
Stakeholder Consultations.....	10
Overview of Findings.....	11
Survey Results.....	13
Focus Group Results.....	20
Consultations.....	22
Moving Forward.....	23
Recommendations.....	24
Conclusion.....	27

Executive Summary

From October 2019 to March 2020, Workforce WindsorEssex has been collecting data in the Windsor-Essex region to develop a definition for youth career success. This is a measure that has previously not existed in the region. The main data collection methods were as follows:

- Conducting a literature review of existing career success research and best practices for defining career success;
- Surveying youth aged 19-29 in the Windsor-Essex region;
- Hosting focus groups with various demographics to define youth career success; and
- Surveying/consulting employers, educators, and service providers on how they define career success.

Upon completion of this data collection, Workforce WindsorEssex developed the following definition of career success in Windsor-Essex: having a stable job that is enjoyable and provides opportunities for growth, while also being financially stable. Other important questions in the data collection process were:

- Is career success connected to the age of a worker?
- Is career success connected to the occupation/sector an individual is employed in?
- Is career success related to education or skill level?
- Does career success look different for those within different demographic groups (gender, race, immigration status)?
- What is the relationship between finding employment in a field of choice after graduation and career success?

More detailed survey, focus group, and consultation analysis can be found in the main report. This report also includes an analysis of proposed data collection methods and costing, with recommendations moving forward, so that future tracking of youth career success in Windsor-Essex can be done. Where no research existed before, Workforce WindsorEssex has now developed a career success definition and measurement for the region of Windsor-Essex in order to support the initiatives of the ProsperUS project.

Youth define career success as having a stable job that they enjoy and that provides opportunities for growth, but is also able to support them financially.

Introduction

The ProsperUS Project aims to create a directional plan for the community of Windsor-Essex that will help support individuals making life-changing decisions. The project's vision aims to provide children of all ages within the region the opportunity to unlock possibilities for a positive future, giving them the support necessary to succeed in their career/education. This is an important issue to address because many children in Windsor-Essex currently lack the supports that are necessary to reach their full potential. The Cradle to Career initiative aims to support Windsor-Essex children and youth from a pre-natal stage, all the way through to landing their first job as an adult¹. ProsperUS selected three specific communities to roll out this initiative: West-Windsor, Downtown Windsor, and the municipality of Leamington.

In order to support the Cradle to Career Initiative and to measure success over the long term, ProsperUS and its member organizations recognized that a wide range of community level data would need to be collected. This data aligned to key milestones in a child's life from Cradle to Career as well as tracking key social determinants of health that span all ages. Examples of milestone indicators include measures of kindergarten readiness, high school graduation rates and post-secondary attainment. Underlying these indicators are broader community indicators like low-income rates, mental health access, housing security measures.

There are many different factors that will affect the outcome of a child and youth's life in Windsor-Essex, and perhaps one of the most important decisions a child will make in this regard is selecting a career path. Career path choices will have a large effect on whether or not youth in Windsor-Essex believe they are able to reach their true potential and become successful. But what are the factors in determining whether a career is "successful"? This report aims to answer the following question: "what is career success and how is it measured?" In order to answer this question, past research on the topic must be analyzed to determine the factors that have already been identified as true career success measures. Only then can a methodology be developed to determine how youth in Windsor-Essex define career success.

The most commonly used indicators in career success research are objective measures of career success. Objective career success refers to success that can be externally verified and is often assessed in terms such as: salary, scope of authority, and promotions.^{2,3} For example, an individual who earns a comfortable salary would more than likely be considered successful 'on paper.' Similarly, an individual who continues to receive pay raises due to positive performances, or an individual who continues to see their scope of authority grow over the course of their career, could also be considered successful in their careers. Objective career success is the most concrete and easily identifiable way to measure career success.⁴

Other commonly used indicators to identify career success are subjective measures. These measures are more difficult to define than objective career success, since they measure an individual's own perception of what makes their career successful, such as career or job satisfaction.^{5,6,7,8} Put simply, if an individual is satisfied with what they do in their career or job, despite their objective career success measures, then it can be said they are experiencing career success. For example, an individual who is earning a salary that does not allow them to afford many luxuries in life, but is proud of the work they do, may consider themselves as having a successful career. Individuals may be content in their careers simply based on personal goals they have set and accomplished through self-identification. Subjective career success can also often be identified through an individual's comparison of their own career situation to another.⁹

There are many variables involved in defining career success. In order to create a more accurate understanding, objective and subjective career success factors have been combined in research.^{10,11,12,13} For instance, an individual may earn a comparatively comfortable salary and have a large scope of authority, but might not personally enjoy what they do for work on a daily basis. Would it be fair to say this person has a

successful career solely based on their salary and scope of authority in this scenario? Probably not.

More recent research on career success shows subjective career measurements as being more important to individuals and employees today than in the past. This shift in the overall research has caused difficulties in pinpointing specific career success measurements. Subjective career success measures include many different variables that may affect how an individual defines their career success.

Since subjective career success measures represent an individual or employee's personal way of understanding their own careers, there are a multitude of factors that affect how subjective career success is defined. Research has given rise to two major themes for measuring subjective career success. These themes are career satisfaction and one's own perception of career success.¹⁴ In the case of career satisfaction, a simple question to ask an employee would be, "Do you like your job?" If their answer is yes, then there is a good chance that this individual is satisfied with their career choice. However, there are other factors that may change somebody's answer to this question, such as if they believe the work they are doing is making a difference in their community. When it comes

¹Community is 'All In' on new Cradle to Career Vision," ProsperUS, last modified November 1, 2018, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://weunlockpotential.com/community-is-all-in-on-cradle-to-career-vision/>

²Peter A. Heslin, "Conceptualizing and Evaluating Career Success," *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 26, no. 2 (March 2005): 114.

³Andrea E. Abele, Daniel Spurk, and Judith Volmer, "The Construct of Career Success: Measurement Issues and an Empirical Example," *Journal for Labour Market Research* 43, no. 3 (July 2010): 196.

⁴Andreas Hirschi, Noemi Nagy, Franziska Baumeler, Claire S. Johnston, and Daniel Spurk, "Assessing Key Predictors of Career Success: Development and Validation of the Career Resources Questionnaire," *Journal of Career Assessment* 26, no. 2 (2018): 338-339.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Hannes Zacher, "Career Adaptability Predicts Subjective Career Success Above and Beyond Personality Traits and Core Self-Evaluations," *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 84, no. 1 (2014): 21.

⁷Nicky Dries, Roland Pepermans, and Olivier Carlier, "Career Success: Constructing a Multidimensional Model," *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 73, no. 2 (2008): 254-255.

⁸Heslin, "Conceptualizing and Evaluating Career Success," 113-114.

⁹Margaret Yap, Mark Holmes, Charity-Ann Hannan, and Wendy Cukier, "Correlates of Career Satisfaction in Canada – The Immigrants' Experience," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 15, no. 1 (2014): 50-51.

¹⁰Hirschi et. al, "Assessing Key Predictors of Career Success," 338-339.

¹¹Dries et. al, "Career Success," 254-255.

¹²Timothy A. Judge, Chad A. Higgins, Carl J. Thoresen, and Murray R. Barrick, "The Big Five Personality Traits, General Mental Ability, and Career Success Across the Life Span," *Personnel Psychology* 52, no. 3 (1999): 621-622.

¹³Andrea E. Abele, Tamara Hagmaier, and Daniel Spurk, "Does Career Success Make You Happy? The Mediating Role of Multiple Subjective Success Evaluations," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17, no. 3 (2016): 1615-1616.

¹⁴Heslin, "Conceptualizing and Evaluating Career Success," 114.

to determining one's own perception of their personal career success, this is a more difficult question to answer. Research shows there can be a multitude of variables affecting this outcome, which most often depend on an individual's personal experiences and background.

One individual's perception of their own career success often differentiates from another individual's perception of career success. The question of how individuals from different demographics define their own career success is one that research has been recently trying to address. Unfortunately, it has been difficult for researchers to agree on which factors should be used to measure an individual's perception of career success. Researchers have come up with many different variables for measuring an individual's personal view of career success. Some of the more common, identified variables in the research are as follows: career adaptability (the ability to adapt to changes in work environment and/or work values)¹⁵; 'boundarylessness' of careers (careers that can span across different organizations, industries, and fields)^{16,17}; career development

opportunities (opportunities for an employee to grow and develop with assistance from an organization)^{18,19,20}; human capital availability (assets like education, training, intelligence, skills, etc.)^{21,22}; social capital availability (assets like sympathy, friendliness, and social skills)²³; career identity (motivation, interests, and competencies that help form ideal career roles)²⁴; and personality traits (characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours).²⁵ This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it highlights measurement variables that stood out in the analyzed data and research. Researchers continue to analyze new variables in this field and continue to cross-examine existing variables in order to reach a more common consensus on defining career success, especially when it comes to an individual's personal understanding of their own career success. This represents a very important step to accurately defining career success.

There are additional factors that may have an effect on how an individual sees their own career successes. It must be noted that individuals often experience career success differently from others based on demographic factors, including:

gender^{26,27,28,29,30}, age³¹, race, and immigrant status^{32,33}. However, an individual's perception of career success can even be changed by other less obvious demographic factors, such as marital status and number of children. It must also be noted that individuals working in different fields may have different ideas for defining career success. For example, how does an entry-level employee view career success in comparison to an executive-level employee? Or how does a 'white-collar' worker's view of career success compare to that of a 'blue-collar' worker?

This literature review provides a basis for the commonly used measurements in career success research. Over the past six months, Workforce WindsorEssex has worked towards defining a career success measurement for youth in Windsor-Essex. Through surveys and focus groups with youth and others from many backgrounds in the Windsor-Essex region, Workforce WindsorEssex has developed a replicable study to measure career success for youth in Windsor-Essex.

¹⁵Yanjun Guan, Wenxia Zhou, Lihui Ye, Peng Jiang, and Yixin Zhou, "Perceived Organizational Career Management and Career Adaptability as Predictors of Success and Turnover Intention Among Chinese Employees," *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 88 (2015).

¹⁶Yanjun Guan, Michael B. Arthur, Svetlana N. Khapova, Rosalie J. Hall, and Robert G. Lord, "Career Boundarylessness and Career Success: A Review, Integration, and Guide to Future Research," *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 110 (2019).

¹⁷Michael B. Arthur, Svetlana N. Khapova, and Celeste PM Wilderom, "Career Success in a Boundaryless Career World," *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 26, no. 2 (March 2005).

¹⁸Dr. Ruth Simpson, Dr. Jane Sturges, Prof. Adrian Woods, and Prof. Yochanan Altman, "Career Progress and Career Barriers: Women MBA Graduates in Canada and the UK," *Career Development International* 9, no. 5 (2004).

¹⁹Jos Akkermans and Maria Tims, "Crafting Your Career: How Career Competencies Relate to Career Success via Job Crafting," *Applied Psychology* 66, no. 1 (2017): 168-195.

²⁰Nikos Bozionelos, "Mentoring Provided: Relation to Mentor's Career Success, Personality, and Mentoring Received," *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 64, no. 1 (2004): 24-46.

²¹Sandy J. Wayne, Robert C. Liden, Maria L. Kraimer, and Isabel K. Graf, "The Role of Human Capital, Motivation, and Supervisor Sponsorship in Predicting Career Success," *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 20, no. 5 (September 1999): 577-595.

²²Tony Fang, Jelena Zikic, and Milorad M. Novicevic, "Career Success of Immigrant Professionals: Stock and Flow of Their Career Capital," *International Journal of Manpower* 30 (2009): 472-488.

²³Jeffery A. Thompson, "Proactive Personality and Job Performance: A Social Capital Perspective," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90, no. 5 (October 2005): 1101-1107.

²⁴Zacher, "Career Adaptability Predicts Subjective Career Success Above and Beyond Personality Traits and Core Self-Evaluations," 22.

²⁵Kristen Shockley, Heather Ureskoy, Ozgun Burcu Rodopman, Laura F. Poteat, and Timothy Ryan Dullaghan, "Development of a New Scale to Measure Subjective Career Success: A Mixed-Methods Study," *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 37, no. 1 (August 2015): 35-69.

²⁶Simpson et. al, "Career Progress and Career Barriers."

²⁷Pamela Lirio, Terri Lituchy, Silvia Ines Monserrat, Miguel R. Olivas-Luján, Jo Ann Duffy, Suzy Fox, Ann Gregory, B.J. Punnett, and Neusa Santos, "Exploring Career-Life Success and Family Social Support of Successful Women in Canada, Argentina, and Mexico," *Career Development International* 12, no. 1 (2007): 28-50.

²⁸Barbara Orser, "Gender Influences on Career Success Outcomes," *Gender in Management* 25, no. 5 (2010): 386-407.

²⁹Denis Chênevert and Michel Tremblay, "Managerial Success in Canadian Organizations: Is Gender a Determinant?" *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 13, no. 6 (2002): 920-941.

³⁰Jane Sturges, "What it Means to Succeed: Personal Conceptions of Career Success Held by Male and Female Managers at Different Ages," *British Journal of Management* 10, no. 3 (1999): 239-252.

³¹Ibid.

³²Fang et. al, "Career Success of Immigrant Professionals."

³³Yap et. al, "Correlates of Career Satisfaction in Canada."



Methodology

Following the literature review, the data collection process was executed through two main methods: an online Windsor-Essex region survey targeted at youth ages 19-29, called 'Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex' and focus groups with select demographics of Windsor-Essex residents. The other method of data collection included surveying and consulting various Windsor-Essex employers, educators, and service providers.

Survey

On December 16, 2019, Workforce WindsorEssex created an online survey, titled, "Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex." This survey was created using SurveyMonkey and remained open until January 19, 2020. It was disseminated through social media by Workforce WindsorEssex and its partner organizations, as well as through direct emails. An incentive was offered for respondents for a chance to win one of three gift cards, following their participation. In total, the survey collected 283 responses, with a completion rate of 77%. On average, the survey took approximately eight minutes to complete.

This survey was targeted specifically at youth in the Windsor-Essex region aged 19-29, but was open to all ages. Those aged 19-29 were targeted as they best represent youth who are recent graduates of high school or post-secondary programs, searching for a job, or newly employed. This age group was also targeted as it was most representative of the Cradle to Career target youth population for defining career success. The survey allowed respondents to self-identify their gender, race, and/or immigrant status, providing information on their demographic characteristics that may play a role in how they define career success.

The two main questions asked on the survey were, "How do you define career success," and a ranking question of the importance of career success variables. The objective variables included:

- Salary
- Salary growth (raises)
- Status/scope of authority
- History of promotions
- Job title

The subjective variables included:

- Enjoyment of work
- Pride in accomplishments
- Relationships/connections with coworkers
- Meaningful work/company mission
- Work-life/family balance
- Satisfaction of work achievements
- Satisfaction of career progression
- Satisfaction of income development

Survey respondents were asked to rank each identified objective and subjective variable as not at all important (scored as 1), somewhat important (scored as 2), neutral (scored as 3), very important (scored as 4), or extremely important (scored as 5). Attributing a score of 1-5 for each of these answers allowed for a final, weighted response to be calculated from all survey respondent's rankings. This weighted score was given by calculating the average of survey respondent's answers.

Below are the objective and subjective measures, ranked by importance for measuring career success by those aged 19-29:

Objective Career Measures	Weighted Response
Salary	4.32
Salary growth (raises)	4.40
History of promotions	3.89
Status/scope of authority	3.77
Job title	3.76

Subjective Career Measures	Weighted Response
Enjoyment of work	4.79
Work-life/family balance	4.78
Pride in accomplishments	4.72
Satisfaction of work achievements	4.67
Satisfaction of career progression	4.60
Meaningful work/company mission	4.58
Satisfaction of income development	4.57
Relationships/connections with co-workers	4.40

Focus Groups

In order to gather more qualitative and in-depth data, Workforce WindsorEssex conducted focus groups. These focus groups allowed Workforce WindsorEssex to target specific groups, such as individuals who currently reside in the target neighbourhoods of West Windsor (Sandwich), Downtown Windsor, and Leamington, as well as other demographic factors, such as immigrant status or employment status. Each focus group consisted of 4-12 individuals. In total, eight focus groups were hosted, with a total of 47 participants. Six of these focus groups were hosted in collaboration with the following partner organizations: Windsor – YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, New Canadians’ Centre of Excellence Inc., South Essex Community Council, City of Windsor Employment & Training Services, and Our West End. Two of the eight focus groups were conducted at the Workforce WindsorEssex office, outside of the target neighbourhoods. The rest of the focus groups were hosted in the ProsperUS target neighbourhoods, which included: three focus groups in Downtown Windsor, two focus groups in Leamington, and one focus group in West Windsor (Sandwich).

Each focus group consisted of three discussions topics: how do you define career success; do you currently believe you are experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex – why or why not; and what are some supports that are currently available or should be made available in Windsor-Essex to ensure youth are able to experience career success in the region. Each topic was discussed for 15 to 30 minutes, with each focus group being approximately 45 minutes – 90 minutes in length.

There was a note taker present at each of these groups, as well as a facilitator to ensure that the discussion stayed on topic and relevant

data was being shared and collected. The focus groups were also recorded, with permission of all participants, to be transcribed and added to the notes at a later date.

Stakeholder Consultations

During the data collection process, it was also necessary to collect data from educational institutions and employers. Both of these parties have great impacts on how youth and others in Windsor-Essex view and define career success. Educational institutions represent key organizations responsible for training youth in the region to be ready for a career. Employers represent those who hire these individuals and can be the defining factor on how youth in the region view and define career success. Employment service providers were also engaged as they support those looking for meaningful employment in Windsor-Essex.

In order to capture data from both of these parties, Workforce WindsorEssex leveraged online surveys for employers and educators, as well as hosted focus groups with employers, educators, and employment service providers. These surveys and discussions collected information such as how these institutions and organizations define career success themselves, as well as if they currently have any official measurements they use to define career success for their current and past students and/or clients. In total, 15 employers from a variety of industries were consulted, as well as representatives of employment and settlement service provider organizations, and four academic institutions, including St. Clair College and the University of Windsor.

Overview of Findings

The main purpose of the data collection process was to answer the question, “how do youth define career success in Windsor-Essex?” The following section will examine the results of each method of data collection used to attempt to answer the research question, while answering questions regarding correlations between career success and demographic factors.

Is career success connected to the age of a worker?



The most suitable data gathered to answer this question was collected in the general community survey. The survey results showed that there was no real correlation between career success and the age of the worker. Those in the targeted age range of 19-29 had very similar responses to those outside of the target age range, which included individuals of ages ranging from 16-18 and 30-59.

Is career success connected to the occupation/sector an individual is employed in?



The survey results showed little correlation to connect career success to the occupation/sector in which individual is working. Respondents from a multitude of different occupations and sectors again had very similar responses to how they define career success. However, some of the focus groups did share some insight into a correlation. For example, some focus group participants expressed that there were not a lot of jobs available in Windsor-Essex in their field(s), so that was restricting them from fully being able to experience career success. These were often more specialized occupations or sectors where Windsor-Essex does not have many opportunities. For example, it was mentioned that Windsor-Essex does not have enough diverse employment options for graduates of social work or anatomy, specifically.

Is career success related to education or skill level?

There was no data collected that showed evidence of a correlation between education or skill level requirements and experiencing career success. Individuals from many different educational and skill levels had the same ideas of what career success should be defined as. However, focus group discussions found there were some barriers identified by those who had more limited education or skill levels than others. For example, those with specific learning or behavioural difficulties stated there were not enough supports in the Windsor-Essex region to assist them with getting a job or entering a career.

Does career success look different for those within different demographic groups (gender, race, immigration status)?

Despite the literature review showing evidence that ideas of career success change depending on demographic groups, there was little evidence collected through the survey and focus groups to correlate demographic backgrounds to career success.

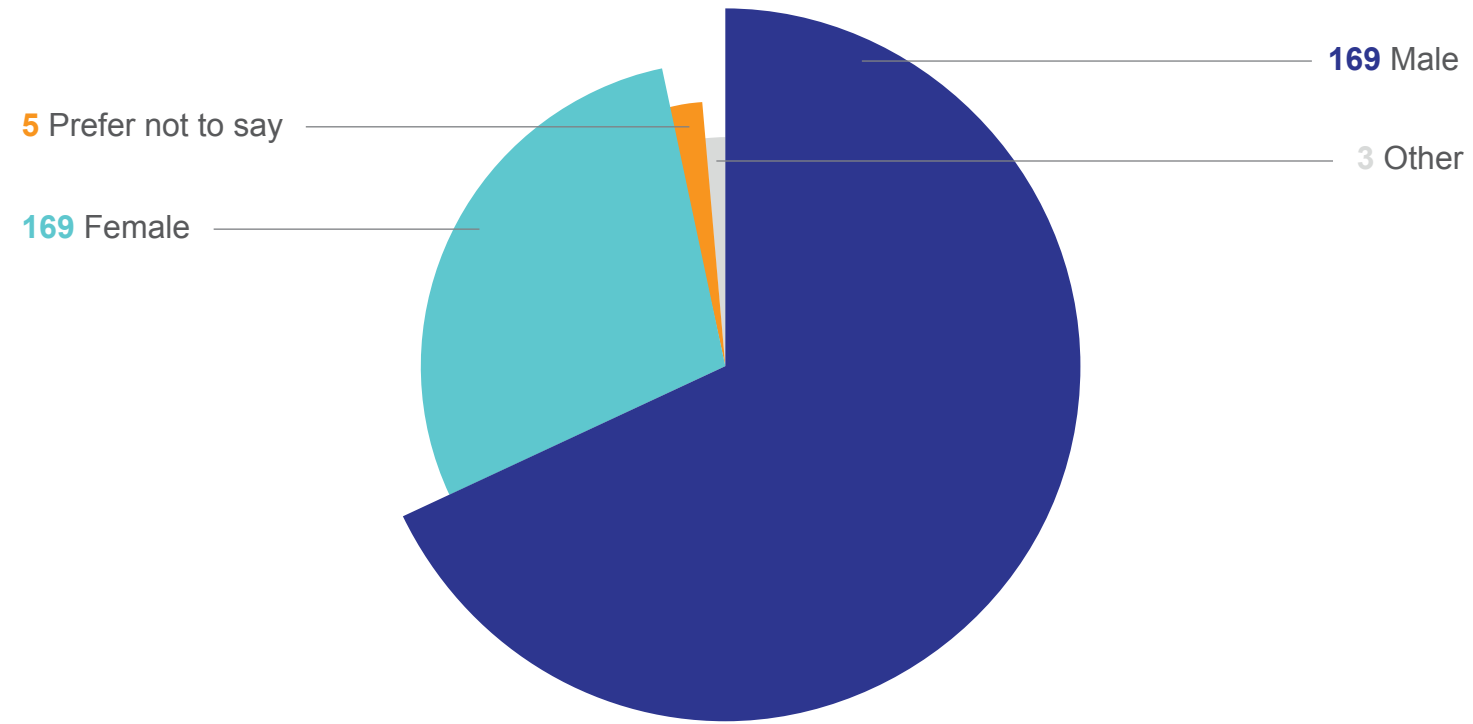
What is the relationship between finding employment in a field of choice after graduation and career success?

There seems to be a correlation between finding employment in a field of choice after graduation and career success. Focus group participants stated multiple times that they would be happier in their careers if they were able to land a career in their field of choice, or a field they were trained in during their education. For example, some focus group participants stated they were unable to find employment in their field of choice or training and this has affected how they define their career success. Also, service providers and educators often base their measures of career success on whether or not a former client or graduate has secured employment in their field of choice or training.

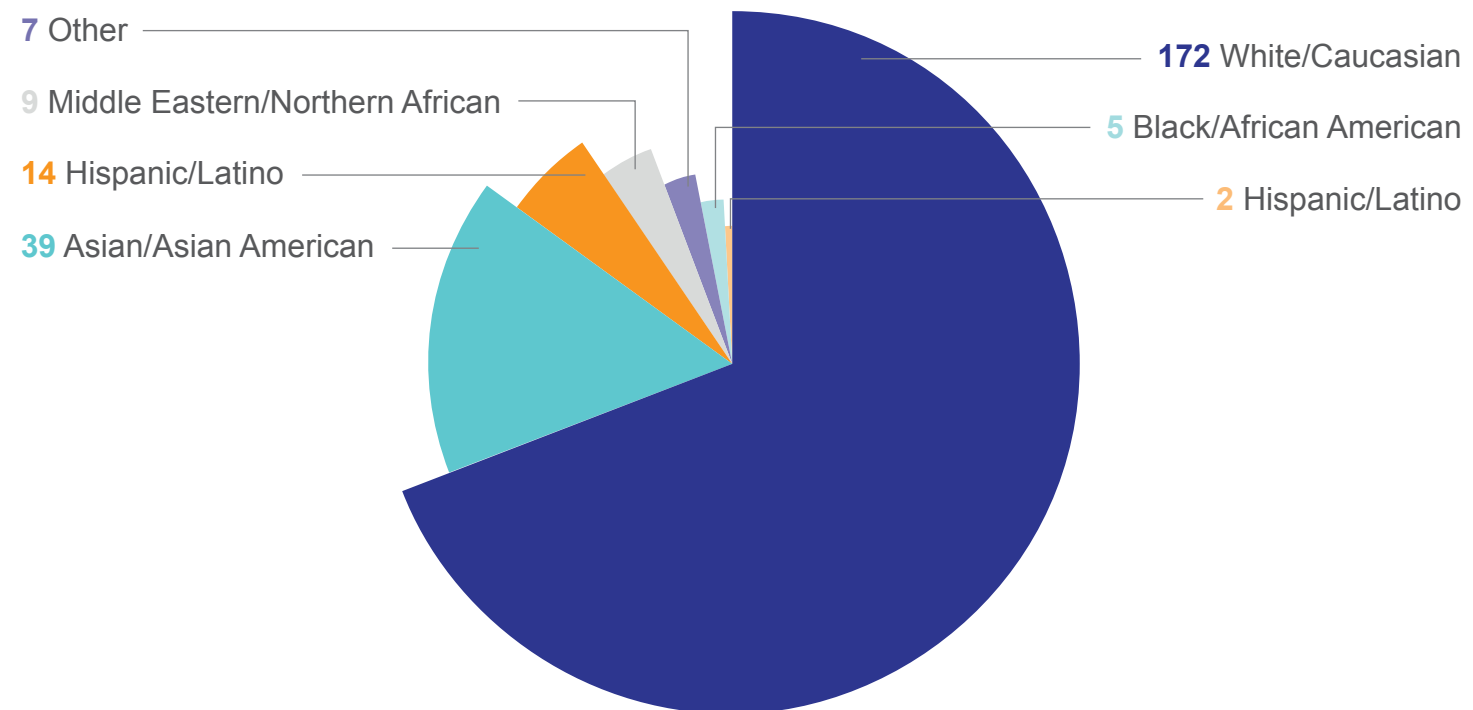
Survey Results

The *Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex* survey was originally analyzed at a macro level, considering all survey respondents' answers. It was proven in the survey that career success is important to all survey respondents aged 19-29, with a weighted value of 4.74, with the highest possible value being 5. Specific sub-groups were also formed to gather more detailed views of how different groups of individuals define career success in Windsor-Essex. These sub-groups are listed on the following pages, accompanied with a short overview of each sub-group's survey participation. Note that all of these listed sub-groups were part of the target age group (19-29). All other ages' data was collected as its own sub-group.

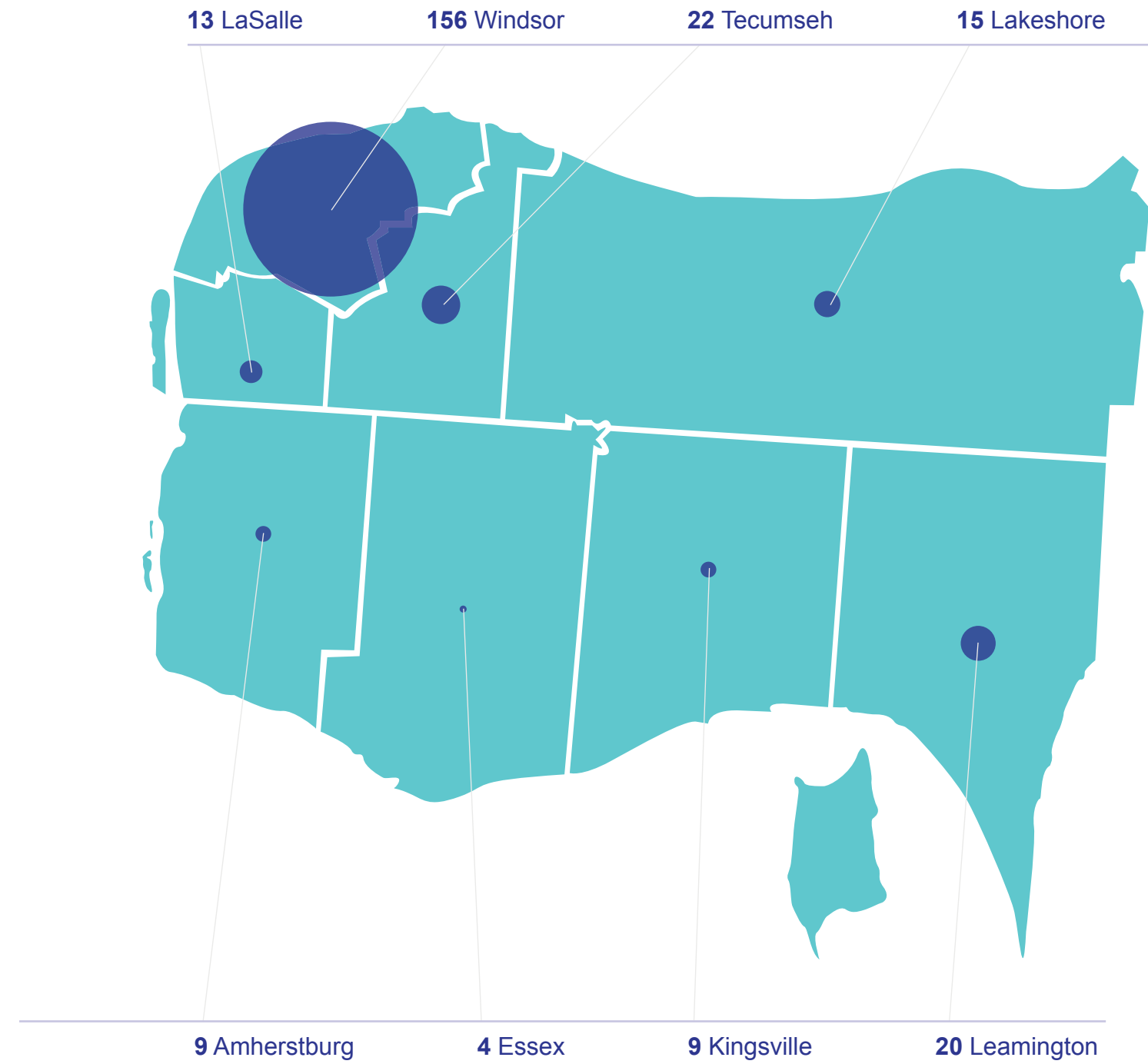
Respondents by Gender



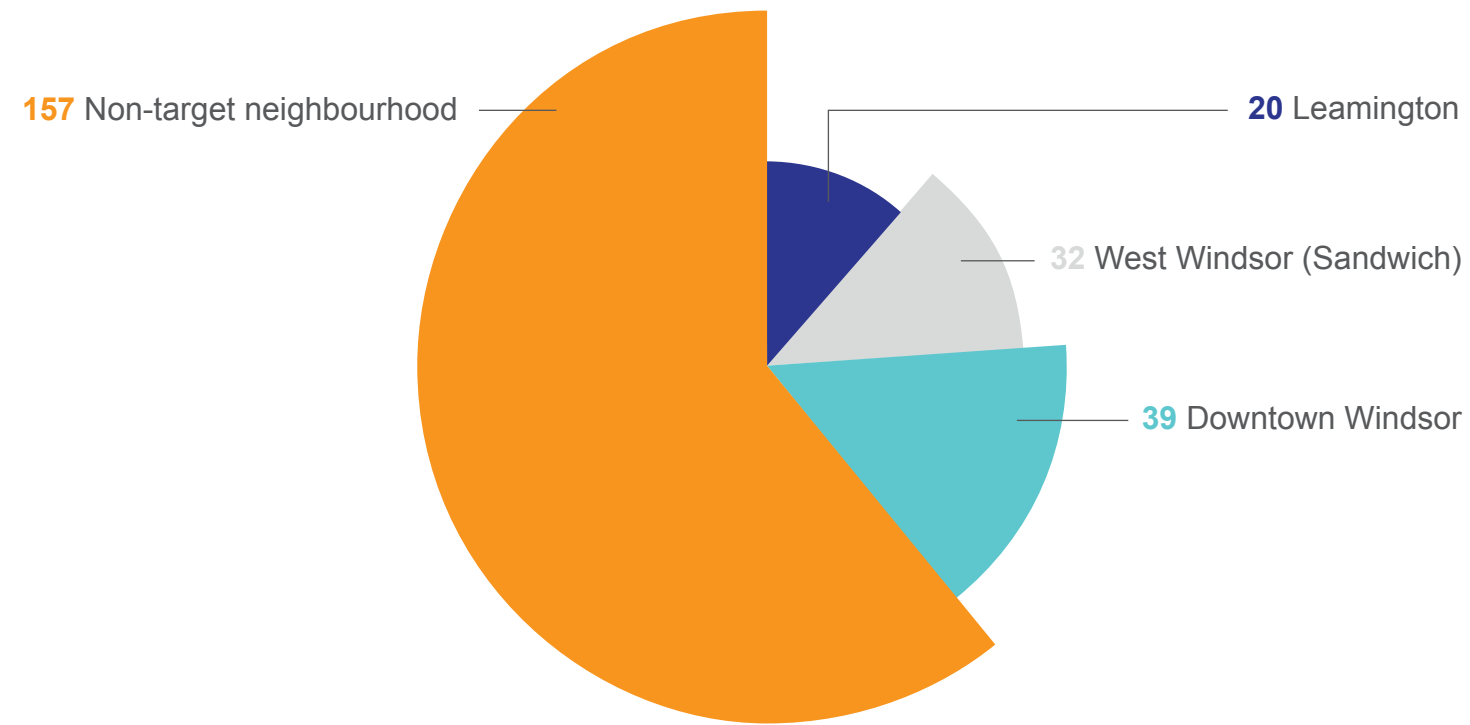
Respondents by Race



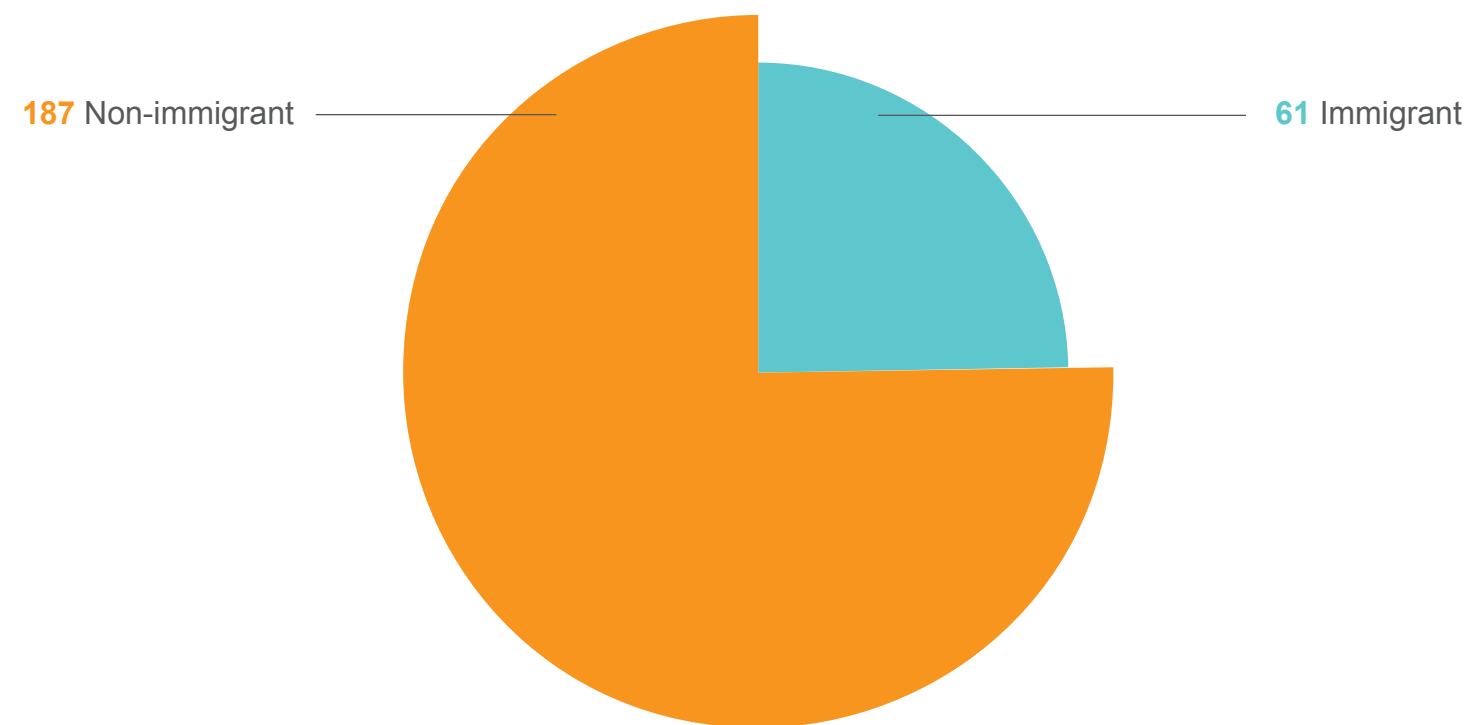
Respondents by Place of Residence



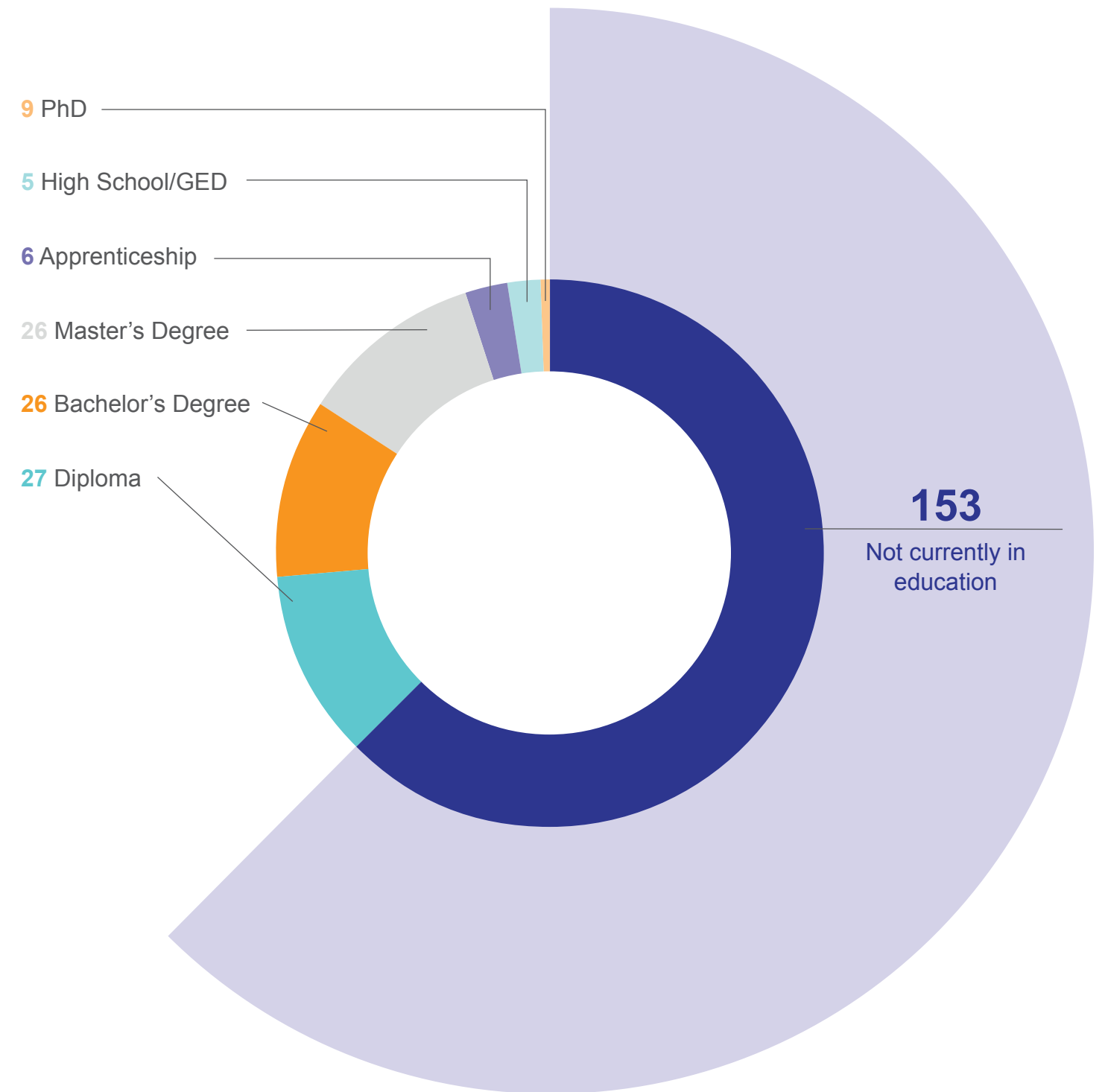
Respondents by Target Neighbourhood



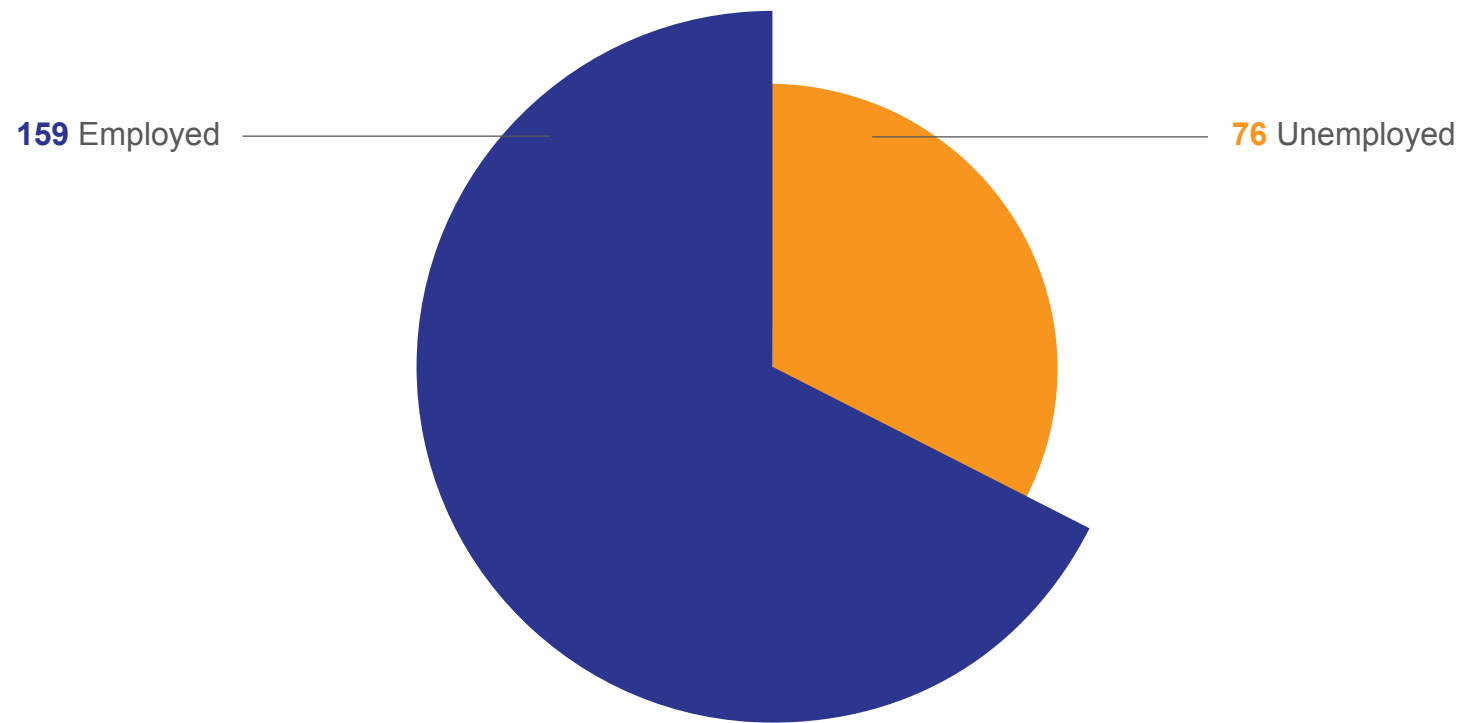
Respondents by Immigration Status



Respondents by Educational Status



Respondents by Employment Status



The literature review showed that individuals from different demographic backgrounds often have different definitions of how to define career success. This is not only related to their personal definitions, but also to the objective and subjective factors they believe are the most important when considering career success. However, the results from the 'Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex' survey show that individuals living in Windsor-Essex often have very similar definitions of career success, despite differing demographic backgrounds.

The majority of survey respondents believe that subjective career measures are more important to defining a successful career than objective measures, but having a combination of both in a career is still quite important. The most important objective measure was 'salary growth (raises),' with a value of 4.40, while the most important subjective measure was 'enjoyment of work,' with a value of 4.79.

When asked to define a successful career in an open-ended question, the above results were confirmed. Of all individuals aged 19-29 who answered this question, 106 out of 202 (52.48%) respondents mentioned the importance of enjoying their work and 77 out of 202 respondents (38.12%) mentioned the importance of money or financial stability in a successful career. These were the two most commonly mentioned aspects of a successful career. 55 responses also mentioned the importance of opportunity for growth and development in a career, making it the third most commonly mentioned aspect to defining career success.

On the following page is a chart showing how each sub-group weighed the objective and subjective measures of career success. These values provided in this table represent the average weight of each objective and subjective career success variable. Each measure has a minimum value of one and a maximum value of five.

Importance of Objective and Subjective Career Measures by Sub-Group

Sub-group	Importance of objective career success measures	Importance of subjective career success measures
Male	3.94	4.57
Female	4.06	4.67
Visible minority	4.18	4.68
County residents	4.00	4.65
West Windsor-Sandwich residents	4.25	4.72
Downtown Windsor residents	4.24	4.65
Leamington residents	3.96	4.70
Immigrants	4.29	4.70
In education	4.08	4.63
Employed	4.02	4.68
Unemployed	4.06	4.56
Other age groups (those not in 19-29 age range)	3.93	4.46
All survey respondents	4.03	4.64

Despite belonging to different sub-groups, it seems individuals have a very similar opinion of the importance of objective (4.03) and subjective career measures (4.64) when it comes to defining overall career success. A main takeaway is that subjective career measures were identified as being more important than objective measures by every sub-group. It should be considered that some individuals may be categorized into multiple sub-groups, which could be part of the explanation why the results are so evenly spread. However, each sub-group being ranked so similarly should prove that no matter what sub-group individuals are grouped into, they all have very similar views on the importance of objective and subjective career success measures to defining career success.

Another aspect of this data collection was to determine what sort of supports individuals were

looking for in Windsor-Essex to better ensure they are able to experience career success. These are likely actions that need to be taken to ensure individuals in the Windsor-Essex region are best able to experience career success. The survey received 182 responses to this question from individuals aged 19-29. The most commonly mentioned supports that individuals would like to see made available in Windsor-Essex were as follows:

- More job opportunities/more employers/diversification of employment options – 38 responses
- More job search/job training/mentorship programs – 22 responses
- More professional development opportunities – 14 responses

Focus Group Results

Workforce WindsorEssex conducted eight focus groups with a total of 47 participants. Each focus group followed the same discussion guideline, which consisted of three discussion topics. Below are findings from each topic of discussion.

Discussion Topic 1: How do you define career success?

When asked how to define career success, most participants shared or agreed with a definition that career success is represented by a stable, permanent job that is enjoyable – with the opportunity for growth. Despite many of the focus group participants having different employment and immigration statuses, this was an idea that the majority of focus group participants shared. Most participants stressed the need to enjoy the job and have opportunities for growth and professional experience, with job stability being of secondary importance. A stable job in this sense typically meant an occupation that was able to support the individual financially, with little to no risk of turnover.

“How do we define a successful career? For me, it provides a level of stability professionally and financially, suited to my interests, and has long-term goals... Being interested in your career is a key aspect of it”

– focus group participant

In addition to being asked to define career success, focus group members were also asked if they placed more importance on objective or subjective career measures. The majority of focus

group members placed more significance on the importance of subjective measures. However, it was also commonly agreed upon that subjective measures should ideally be combined with objective measures for ideal career success.

“Subjective measures have always been more important for me, but right now I am focused on objective measures ... I think I am ready to transition to a job with higher financial benefits”

– West Windsor (Sandwich) focus group participant

Discussion Topic 2: Do you currently believe you are experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex? Why or why not?

When focus group participants were asked if they currently believe they are experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex, the majority of responses indicated it was difficult to experience career success in Windsor due to two main factors. The first of these factors is the belief that there needs to be a larger diversity of job opportunities offered in Windsor-Essex. It was noted that too many career opportunities in Windsor-Essex are focused in select industries, not offering a diversity of jobs which often leaves individuals to accept jobs that are not in their field of choice and/or study. The idea of career success also being tied to landing a career in an individual's field of choice and/or study came up as a second factor in these focus groups.

“Windsor does not have jobs in my field; applying for jobs outside my field has either led me to not having the qualifications or being overqualified and seen as less likely to stay at the job”

– focus group participant

Discussion Topic 3: What community supports are available or should be made available in order to ensure more youth in our region are able to experience career success?

Focus group participants were given the opportunity to share community resources that are available to assist with career success, as well as community supports that should be made more readily available. Focus group participants mainly had similar ideas of what supports are available, despite the location of the focus group they participated in. One type of support that many participants referred to that are a positive in the Windsor-Essex community are service provider organizations offering employment services. Some organizations that were mentioned were the Unemployed Help Centre, the Multicultural Council of Windsor & Essex County, New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc., and City of Windsor Employment & Training Services. These organizations were praised for their programming, such as Youth Job Connect (YJC) workshops targeted at helping youth in the Windsor-Essex region secure employment.

In terms of supports that should be made more readily available, two common themes were brought up across all focus groups. One of these themes was the need for more job training and professional development opportunities to be

made available in Windsor-Essex. Many focus group participants believed they would be able to experience career success if they were able to upskill through these types of programs. These opportunities could range from specific workshops that offer training for individuals to increase their skill sets or obtain more certifications in a field, to more experiential learning opportunities, such as co-op and internship placements offered by employers for students/professionals to obtain more professional experience in a Canadian workplace setting. An issue that was brought up specifically among immigrant focus group participants was the fact that their educational credentials from other countries were often not recognized in Canada, preventing them from experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex.

“Opportunities for training would be helpful for newcomers; training for engineering in Canada, for example”

- Downtown Windsor focus group participant

Other community supports that should be made available or improved upon mentioned in the focus groups included the need for more career guidance of students early on in school and an improved public transit system, especially for those living in Leamington or other county areas outside of Windsor.

“I have had issues with working in Essex and getting transport there and back ... It's harder to access transportation in smaller towns”

– Leamington focus group participant

Consultations

Supplemental data collection was undertaken to gather responses from organizations and institutions that are often involved in tracking career success, such as employers, service providers, and educational institutions. This data collection involved in-person consultations, as well as the use of an online survey. This section will give an overview of the data collected from these target audiences when asked about career success in Windsor-Essex.

Employers

A brief survey was created in the data collection process to define how employers in the Windsor-Essex region define career success. In total, 15 employers answered the survey, including representation from the following industries: agriculture; manufacturing; finance and insurance; professional, scientific, and technical services; healthcare; and non-profit. These employers also represent a wide range of business sizes, ranging from 1-4 employees to 100-499 employees.

Employers were asked how they define a successful career, and the answers most commonly mentioned enjoyment of work and an opportunity to grow in their field. This is very similar to how individuals answered in the main survey when asked to define a successful career. Employers were also asked how they currently measure their own employees' career success. Over half of the respondents indicated they typically set goals for their employees and then measure their career success based on how they have grown professionally and worked towards achieving these goals. Once again, this is similar to how individuals in the general survey defined a successful career.

Employers were asked to rank the importance of objective and subjective career measures (the same lists provided in the main survey), and here were the weighted results:

- Importance of objective career success measures – 3.61
- Importance of subjective career success measures – 4.51

Again, this is similar to the results of the main survey, showing that employers also believe subjective career success measures are more important in defining a successful career. However, the main difference here is that employers place a lower importance on objective career success measures than individuals in the Windsor-Essex community (3.61 for employers vs. 4.03 for survey respondents). The results of the importance of subjective career success measures are more closely related between both surveys (4.51 for employers and 4.64 for individuals).

Service Providers and Educators

Service providers and educators were also surveyed as a part of the data collection process for this research. These audiences were asked two open-ended questions in particular to find out how they measure the career success of their clients and/or students.

Service providers noted they measured career success by determining if their past and existing clients are able to retain the jobs they are employed in, as well as if they are happy with the work they are performing. Educators mentioned they determine career success by determining if their past students had secured a job in their field of study, which is similar to what was identified in the focus groups as being a determinant of career success.

Moving Forward

Career success is an ambiguous term that is not easily identifiable by measuring one or two concrete variables. It is rather a combination of different objective and subjective variables that lead to career success, with stress on the enjoyment of work, opportunities for growth/professional development, financial stability (salary and salary growth), and being employed in a field of choice and/or study. Based on the research findings, the following variables should be examined when conducting future studies defining career success – weighted out of a total scale of 100.

Career Success Variable	Weighted Value
Enjoyment of work	35
Financial stability - salary/salary growth (raises)	30
Opportunities for growth/professional development	15
Employment in field of choice and/or study	10
Work-life/family balance	10

These weighted values (adding to a total of 100) were developed based on the frequency each variable was mentioned in the data collection process. Enjoyment of work was the most mentioned variable when defining career success in the open-ended survey question, “How do you define career success?” Financial stability was the second most mentioned variable. These variables, on average, were mentioned twice as often as other variables listed in this chart. Enjoyment of work and financial stability were also the most commonly mentioned variables among focus group participants when asked to define career success.

Opportunities for growth and professional development in a career was also frequently mentioned when youth were asked to define career success in Windsor-Essex. This was the third most mentioned variable in the open-ended survey question, “How do you define career

success.” This was also commonly mentioned among focus group participants. Employers also stressed opportunities for growth and professional development as important to defining career success.

Employment in field of choice and/or study must be considered, as well. This variable was most commonly used by educators and service providers in Windsor-Essex to measure career success of their students/recent graduates. It was also brought up by numerous focus group participants. Its lower ranking is based on the lack of mention in the open-ended survey questions.

Work-life/family balance was also included on the final variables list due to the high ranking it received in the survey. It was valued at 4.78/5, whereas the top variable for defining career success, enjoyment of work, was valued at 4.79/5. Work-life/family balance needs to be

considered for this reason. It was not given a higher value due to the fact that it was rarely mentioned as an important variable in defining career success in open-ended questions.

Based on this measurement, an individual who achieves a score of near 100 after surveying, would be considered to have an extremely successful career. An individual with a final score of 50 would be considered to have 'average' career success, while a lower final score would presume they have garnered poorer career success. Using this measurement when surveying youth in the future should allow for an accurate calculation of career success in Windsor-Essex.

Recommendations

Survey

One of the most effective methods to track youth career success in Windsor-Essex is conducting a survey. This survey should highlight the most important variables identified in the original data collection process for defining career success in Windsor-Essex. Respondents should be asked to rank the main variables for defining career success identified in the original research:

- Enjoyment of work;
- Financial stability (salary & salary growth);
- Opportunities for growth/professional development;
- Employment in field of choice and/or study;
- And work-life/family balance.

The original survey collected a total of 283 responses, with a 77% completion rate, which allows for a confidence level of 95% and 6% margin of error based on the survey sample size for the entire Windsor-Essex population. However, the accuracy for the population of 19-29 year old individuals in Windsor-Essex would be higher.

A sample size of 250 should be the goal for future surveying to achieve a similar level of confidence and margin error.

It can be determined if individual survey respondents are experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex based on how they rank the main variables listed above. If they rank each variable highly, it can be said they are experiencing career success. It is also important to add a couple of open-ended questions in the survey, especially for those who indicate they are not experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex. There should be an open-ended question that asks individuals to define career success in their own words. There should also be an open-ended question to ask survey respondents what can be done in the Windsor-Essex region or their neighbourhood to ensure more youth are able to experience career success.

The survey should be conducted on an annual basis and be targeted at youth aged 19-29 in Windsor-Essex. It is recommended that social media be used to promote this survey, as well as including incentives for individuals to respond to the survey. Facebook is a good social media platform to promote the survey, especially since it also includes ads on Instagram in the overall cost.

From December 20, 2019 – January 27, 2020, a total of \$375.85 was spent on promoted ads to market the survey in Windsor-Essex. The survey was also incentivized with the possibility to win one of three \$50 gift cards to Devonshire Mall, totaling \$150.

This survey could be created on a platform like SurveyMonkey. A subscription to SurveyMonkey business plan costs \$75 per user per month for a 'Team Premier' subscription, starting at 3 users, billed annually. This equates to approximately \$2,700 annually. It is recommended to purchase a 'Team Premier' subscription due to the extra

features included. For example, one of these features is the ability to make a survey multilingual. Some feedback Workforce WindsorEssex received in the initial research phase was that ESL students had trouble filling out the 'Defining Career Success in Windsor-Essex' survey, especially when providing answers to open-ended questions.

An alternative method to an organization promoting and administering the survey itself would be hiring a third-party polling & research firm to complete the work. A third-party organization could be able to contact employers to survey their employees, but may have more difficulty reaching individuals who are unemployed or those who are still enrolled in education. However, this may be an effective method if the organization doing the surveying does not have the internal workforce capacity to be able to dedicate a staff member to conducting the survey.

Focus Groups

Another important aspect of the data collection process is to host focus groups to gather qualitative data to further define youth career success. It is recommended that these focus groups are hosted in the target neighbourhoods of the ProsperUS project: West-Windsor, Downtown Windsor, and Leamington. Two focus groups should be hosted in each target neighbourhood to ensure more data collection accuracy. It is also recommended that these focus groups take place after the annual survey has closed to gather data that can potentially support or refute the survey findings. These focus groups could also be conducted on an annual basis to maintain consistency of data collection procedures.

Costs associated with hosting focus groups would include: rental of room/location to host the focus group, catering/ordering of food for the focus group participants, creation of promotional materials/

marketing the focus groups to attract participants, purchasing incentives for focus group participation and to show appreciation to the participants, and providing transportation to focus group members if necessary. The cost of renting a room/location for these focus groups could be avoided by organizing through a partner organization who would be willing to offer a space for free.

Workforce WindsorEssex managed to host focus groups either at its own organizational location or in partnership with other organizations in Windsor-Essex, which nullified the cost of potentially having to rent a location. Research shows the average cost of renting a venue for the purposes of a focus group is typically between \$450-600. If six focus groups were to be held, this would be an approximate cost of \$4,200. The original focus groups were marketed on social media through promoted ads and through printed materials. The total cost of promoting the focus groups on Facebook was \$94.07. The cost of printed materials at VistaPrint was \$71.33 (for 250 printed cards). The cost of food for each focus group was approximately \$100, totaling approximately \$800. Each focus group participant (47 total) was also provided with a \$10 gift card to Tim Hortons for their participation, totaling \$470. Only three total focus group participants required transportation to be covered by Workforce WindsorEssex, which amounted to approximately \$75 in taxi fares. Another cost that may need to be considered is reimbursing of mileage for staff members who are facilitating the focus groups.

The costs of an individual performing this work are based on an hourly wage of \$30, working approximately 25 hours per week over a maximum timeframe of two months. To offset the expenses of the work, relevant available grants should be considered. In conclusion, future costs would include surveying work (hosting/creation, incentivization, and promotion), focus

groups (organizing venues, incentivization, food, promotion, and arrangement of transportation), and researcher/report-writing costs (wages and reimbursement of travel expenses).

The following table shows approximate costs that can be built into future budgets for this data collection process (based on costs accumulated in original research process):

Surveying Costs

Hosting / creating survey	\$2,700
Incentivization	\$150
Promotion	\$375
Total Surveying Costs	\$3,225

Focus Group Costs

Venue rental (x 8)	\$4,200
Incentivization	\$470
Food	\$800
Promotion	\$165
Transportation	\$150
Total Focus Group Costs	\$5,785

Research / Report Writing Costs

Researcher wages (research and report writing)	\$6,000
Travel expenses	\$250
Total Research / Report Writing Costs	\$6,250
TOTAL	\$15,260

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to identify the most important factors that contribute to an individual's definition of career success and what can be done to help ensure that individuals are able to experience career success in the Windsor-Essex region. The initial literature review showed that career success definitions often differentiate depending on an individual's demographic background. However, upon surveying individuals aged 19-29 in Windsor-Essex, the definitions of career success provided by respondents seemed to be very similar, despite having different demographic backgrounds. It was found that individuals in the Windsor-Essex region believe subjective career success measures are most important in defining a successful career, but that objective career measures should still also be considered and are still quite important.

It must also be noted that youth may have a hard time experiencing career success in Windsor-Essex, whether it is because of a lack of diverse career opportunities, or not enough opportunity for upskilling and gaining experience through job training workshops or professional placements like co-ops, internships, or apprenticeships. It is recommended that more of these types of opportunities be introduced in Windsor-Essex to help support youth who are having a hard time experiencing career success.

Subjective career success measures are the most important to defining career success, specifically enjoyment of work and the chance for career development and progression. Objective career success measures are not considered to be as important as subjective measures, but still hold value in defining overall career success. The most

important objective career success factors seem to be a good salary and opportunity for salary growth as careers advance. Individuals want to enjoy what they do in their careers, but also want to ensure they are able to financially support themselves to be able to live a comfortable lifestyle. It was also identified through the focus groups and surveying of service providers and educators that finding a career in a field of choice after graduation or training is important in defining a successful career.

In conclusion, youth typically define career success as having a stable job that they enjoy and provides opportunities for growth, but is also able to support them financially. There is no specific numerical value of what type of salary would be accepted, it just needs to be enough to 'cover the costs of living comfortably. Subjective career success variables must be considered more important when defining career success in Windsor-Essex. Enjoyment of work in a career should be viewed at the most important subjective career success variable. The second most important variable is to determine if an individual is making enough to cover their costs of living. If both of the above criteria have been met (enjoyment of work and financial stability) it can be safe to assume the individual is experiencing some form of career success. To reach the most accurate conclusion, employment in a field of choice and/or study should also be considered as a supplemental determinant of career success. Work-life/family balance was also ranked as being very important to an individual's definition of career success according to survey rankings, but was mentioned considerably less in open-ended responses and focus groups.



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



226.674.3220
info@workforcewindsoressex.com
www.weunlockpotential.com