



Niagara Community
Observatory

Economic Development

By Charles Conteh, Professor of Political Science

What is the Municipality Responsible for in Economic Development?

Niagara Region and its 12 local municipalities share the following economic development responsibilities:

- Marketing Niagara to attract and retain businesses and investment.
- Supporting local employers and entrepreneurs.
- Planning and approving employment lands and business development projects.
- Coordinating infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, transit, broadband, serviced industrial land) that enables economic growth.

Trends and Developments

Macroeconomic Trends

- Total job growth of 2.7 per cent from 2023 to 2025
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP): \$20.8 billion in 2023, \$21.1 billion in 2024, and \$21.6 billion in 2025
- GDP growth of approximately 1.4 per cent between 2023 and 2024; outperformed Ontario's growth of 0.8 per cent during the same period.



GDP measures the total value of all finished goods and services produced within a specific place during a particular time period

Industry Trends by Sector

Manufacturing

Manufacturing employment in Niagara increased by 1.2 per cent from 2022 to 2025. The sector's continued expansion is significant given the broader structural challenges facing manufacturing across North America. However, there are serious headwinds from growing U.S. protectionism.

Tourism

Tourism remains one of Niagara's largest employment sectors and continues to drive the economy. Tourism has **36,000+** employed in the sector and had the largest absolute employment increase in Niagara (3.8 per cent) between 2022 and 2025.

Marine

The marine sector builds on Niagara's strategic location on the Great Lakes and along major transportation corridors. Jobs **grew by 4.5 per cent** between 2022 and 2025. That lags behind Ontario's growth of 6.6 per cent, but outperforms the national growth rate of 3.2 per cent.



Information and Communication Technology

ICT is emerging as a high-growth industry, showing the strongest percentage job growth in Niagara from 2022 to 2025. Employment notably increased by 8.5 per cent, exceeding Ontario's 1.5 per cent and Canada's 3.9 per cent.

Agribusiness

Agribusiness is a cornerstone of Niagara's economy but faces employment challenges. Employment declined by 3.3 per cent from 2022 to 2025. This contrasts with growth in both Ontario (3.7 per cent) and Canada (0.1 per cent), suggesting local agriculture and food-processing businesses may face labour, productivity, land-use, or market-related challenges that differ from broader provincial and national trends.

Contributes
\$1.71 billion
to regional
GDP



25,000+ jobs



208,000+ acres of farmland



108 wineries

Ongoing Challenges for Niagara



Affordable housing and workforce attraction: Employers increasingly report difficulty attracting workers because of housing costs.



Industrial land and infrastructure readiness: Economic growth depends on serviced employment lands, transportation networks, and utility capacity



Farmland protection versus urban expansion: Niagara must balance housing growth with preservation of prime agricultural land



Economic diversification: the region must continue expanding higher-wage sectors such as advanced manufacturing, technology, and clean energy while maintaining strengths in tourism and agriculture



Labour productivity and skills development: matching workforce skills with employer demand remains a long-term challenge

Questions for Municipal Candidates



What specific actions will you take to attract higher-paying jobs and new investment to Niagara?



How will you balance housing growth with the protection of Niagara's agricultural lands and agri-food economy?



What infrastructure investments (industrial lands, transportation, water/wastewater, broadband) will you prioritize to support economic growth and business expansion?

For More Information:

Signal49 (formerly the Conference Board of Canada research division): <https://www.signal49.ca/solutions/data/>

Statistics Canada 2025, sourced from Lightcast: <https://lightcast.io/>

Niagara Economic Development: <https://niagaracanada.com>

Niagara Community Observatory: [https://brocku.ca/niagara-community-observatory/wp-](https://brocku.ca/niagara-community-observatory/wp-content/uploads/sites/117/NCO-Report-1-Next-Frontier-of-Economic-Development-FINAL-Sept-2024.pdf)

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