

# Niagara Region CAO

## Summary of the CAO Recruitment Survey Results

April, 2021

**Niagara**  **Region**

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	Questions	#	Responses
Q1	<p>"Core competencies" required by an ideal candidate based on our understanding are mentioned below.</p>	1	Yes, and/or equivalent in private sector as a optionlower the budget experience - give a range between \$500m - \$1b. Change to: Proven experience and achievement in organizational development through building large and diverse teams between 400 and 1000 employees
		2	I disagree and believe these are too restrictive around requiring specific experience, and not focused enough on skills. I think we should be considering highly skilled administrators with strong transferrable skills, even if they have less experience as a municipal CEO. The following I would remove as requirements and make assets to have: - education requirement in a topic of municipal function, and a master's degree. Academic degrees don't make one a good executive. - 7-10 years experience in municipal government, public sector, or private sector is basically saying any work experience. This means nothing - Handling a budget of over \$1 billion. A commissioner or department head in municipal government would be excluded by this. I think experience with a complex budget should be sufficient. - understanding of Fortune 500 companies and how to attract them is very niche. I think it will make the pool very small. It's also unrealistic that Niagara will recruit a Fortune 500 company, so it isn't a sensible expectation for this position. Additions to the job should include - building a high-performance culture - Engaging staff - collaborative leadership, which builds on our existing leadership culture - political acumen. The job is enormously political and that's a singularly critical trait.
		3	I'm fine with this.
		4	no additional comments
		5	Agreed
		6	Yes, and/or equivalent in private sector as a option
		7	Is 1,000 employees a good marker? How many lower tier municipalities would have 1,000 employees? Would a single tier municipality like Guelph have 1,000 if the police department was not included?
		8	Looks good
		9	I agree
		10	Agree although the \$billion budgets may exclude otherwise good candidates
		11	I agree with the core competencies
		12	Fully agree. You hit on all important characteristics and skills.
		13	I would agree with the above statements. Multiple years of experience in municipal government, in an organization of this size
		14	I am in agreement but I would also like to add that they must be willing to live in Niagara. If you are good enough to take a paycheque from Niagara you should be willing to pay taxes to Niagara.
		15	Agree
		16	Yes
		17	Yes I agree
		18	I agree with most items -- the last one, I believe the sentence "Proven experience in fiscal and financial matters" should be completed with "in complex municipal settings".
		19	Agree

Q2	<p>The Executive Competency Library chart provided a list of the following "soft skills" as some of the related competencies.</p>	<b>1</b>	I think there needs to be one about building organizational culture. Otherwise this is an excellent list.
		<b>2</b>	No
		<b>3</b>	Communication: Ability to effectively communicate the mandated responsibilities of the Region to stakeholders and the public.
		<b>4</b>	No
		<b>5</b>	No
		<b>6</b>	High ethical and moral standards: Will be guided by what is right, as opposed to what is expedient or easiest.
		<b>7</b>	No. Looks good.
		<b>8</b>	No I agree with this
		<b>9</b>	no
		<b>10</b>	No revisions or additions
		<b>11</b>	Agree. I like specifically the stress on communication skills.
		<b>12</b>	No
		<b>13</b>	For Relationship Builder, you should add able to work with the media.
		<b>14</b>	No
		<b>15</b>	No
		<b>16</b>	Effective communicator, with the ability to inspire and lead through others,
		<b>17</b>	I am good with this list.
		<b>18</b>	Integrity , honesty and a strong moral compass

**Q3**

What according to you are 2 or 3 of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing the Niagara Region?

<b>1</b>	Affordability of Region
<b>2</b>	1. Niagara has an enormously complex and challenging political environment. 4 layers of government, 13 municipal governments, local area municipalities that are extremely independent and rarely have consensus. The political environment is also one that rejects the value of regional government in favour of local government, and therefore doesn't adequately fund regional government. Navigating and managing this political environment is a key challenge. 2. Organizational fiscal health. Niagara Region has a sizeable, deferred maintenance list. Our reserves are almost depleted. We are in weak fiscal health due to lack of investment over the years by political leaders. Right sizing the fiscal health of the organization is important. 3. Niagara has great potential with educational institutions, a strong health sector, opportunity to attract talent with high quality of living, location on the US border, having air/road/rail travel links, proximity to the GTHA. Strategizing and seizing the potential to move our region forward is possible for a new CAO.
<b>3</b>	Infrastructure investments,
<b>4</b>	Relationships with Local Area Municipalities. Balancing Provincial policy with requirements of Regional policy/service delivery.
<b>5</b>	Niagara Region as a geographic entity, the greatest challenge is balancing growth with sustainable management of resources. For Niagara Region as a corporation that would be reshaping service delivery and governance for Niagara Region, respecting autonomy of local area municipalities.
<b>6</b>	Recruitment of Top level employees
<b>7</b>	1. Managing a large, diverse work force 2. Managing growth with divergent views on how that should be done among the various local municipalities 3. Ensuring long-term financial sustainability of the Region, perhaps by creating more and better strategic alliances and partnerships
<b>8</b>	Finding efficiencies/budget, cooperation with 12 LAMs., economic recovery management
<b>9</b>	Development, job creation, housing (homeless, low income, affordable)
<b>10</b>	effectively engaging LAM's and integrating service delivery in a timely fashion. Ensuring that council is fully informed but not attempting to impose the "corporate will" on politicians and political decision-making processes.
<b>11</b>	Attracting long term employment, managing residential growth and maintaining the Niagara brand. Financing growth today and tomorrow
<b>12</b>	Image and Image! is the challenge Growing!! We need to capitalize on all funding and opportunities that are available.
<b>13</b>	We must continue to find cost savings in shared governance Build affordable housing Continue to do inside analysis to make sure Regional government remains lean, but capable
<b>14</b>	Influx of newcomers (150,000) Affordable housing Saving good farmland from being developed because we then lose our draw and become just another vanilla municipality.
<b>15</b>	Affordability, which impacts housing, food security, childcare, etc., etc. Obviously, economic and social recovery from the pandemic
<b>16</b>	Maintaining a consolidated approach to the future with all municipalities being treated equally
<b>17</b>	Pandemic recovery in a economy overly reliant on the tourism and hospitality industry; significant capital infrastructure needs while facing historically lean budgeting and underfunding of capital reserves; an overly large council without a clear vision for the future (including significant parochialism due to the demands of 12 local municipalities)

	<b>18</b>	Niagara is about to see unprecedented growth; leadership will be required to ensure a Region that is prepared for this type of challenge. The Region has very much been reactionary given the challenges of the past number of years, but a proactive future focus, post COVID and other challenges, will be critical to any future success.
	<b>19</b>	How we will provide services in a time where more and more people are in bad financial situation and raising taxes should not be the only answer - balancing the needs ,,ignoring the “wants “ of those who DO have wealth to manage and thrive in this environment - securing the future of our natural heritage systems , dealing with climate change in a responsible manner to be sustainable

<b>Q4</b>	Do you have any further suggestions regarding core competencies that an ideal CAO needs to possess in order for them to be successful with the Niagara Region?	<b>1</b>	No
		<b>2</b>	No additional comments
		<b>3</b>	No
		<b>4</b>	No
		<b>5</b>	Experienced, honest, hard-working, open, accountable, able to make difficult decisions, able to manage people effectively
		<b>6</b>	Political intuition (understanding public tolerance) and a desire to improve customer experience and service.
		<b>7</b>	Strong voice, doesn't have any problems with standing by his decisions and letting Council know this, decisiveness
		<b>8</b>	no
		<b>9</b>	Must have the ability to rebuild the corporation and create succession planning for the future.
		<b>10</b>	Ethical. Honest. Value for the tax payers dollar. Able to stretch a dollar. Admit when they may have been wrong. Respect the public purse.
		<b>11</b>	Honesty...absolutely no hint of a scandal in his/her past
		<b>12</b>	I'm good with the competencies but we need to ask the candidates what her/his feeling is about Niagara. Tell us from the candidate's perspective what the good, the bad and the ugly is in Niagara. Ask this person what changes if any would they make after giving their views of Niagara.
		<b>13</b>	No
		<b>14</b>	No
		<b>15</b>	Inspiring leadership, that is strength based and shows integrity and humility. Solid political acumen to navigate a complex and somewhat conflicted political environment
		<b>16</b>	A thorough understanding of the municipal act certainly is in order.
		<b>17</b>	Be trustworthy, be open and available