

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Niagara Region Economic Development supports local businesses through regionally significant projects. As laid out in the current MOU with the Local Area Municipalities, those offices have responsibility for Business Retention and Expansion and are the point of contact for businesses in their individual municipalities. Our core mandate is investment attraction, external marketing, business development and expedited services and strategic economic initiatives.

However, throughout COVID-19, work has pivoted to be focused more on support to businesses locally where there was a need and it was appropriate for the work to be done at the regional level.

ECONOMIC RAPID RESPONSE TEAM (ERRT)

The ERRT was announced by the Chair and the Mayors in March 2020. It is a collaboration between the Region and the Municipal Economic Development Offices but the work is carried out by the Regional Team on behalf of the group.

- Biweekly calls to a group of over 90 stakeholders, including economic development offices, chambers, industry associations, BIAs, DMOs, Small Business Enterprise Centres, Brock University, Niagara College, Niagara Workforce Planning Board and Employment groups. The regular attendance is 25-30 but the information is disseminated to the whole group. Working with Public Health, the objective is to inform businesses about COVID-19 protocols and provide an update on the Economic Recovery Plan.
- Support for municipal 'Buy Local' campaigns through marketing initiatives.
- Development of an online Business Directory to expand the local supply chain and opportunities for local businesses. It is currently being used by Niagara Health to source suppliers for the South Niagara Hospital. Also used to promote Canada Summer Games RFPs to local businesses.
- Niagara Canada website provides a portal for federal and provincial government information on funding and support for business.
- Together with Niagara Region Transportation and Communications Divisions, Economic Development is helping to promote the new Niagara Regional Transit routes. This is in effort to support local businesses not only to bring consumers but also provide options for potential employees by offering consistent and reliable public transportation options to our more remote municipalities.
- In collaboration with Innovate Niagara and the Local Area Municipalities, a comprehensive digital and print marketing campaign was launched in the National Post to support and encourage residents to visit downtown storefronts in the region.

TOURISM ADAPTION AND RECOVERY FUND

The ERRT, led by Niagara Economic Development, stepped in at the request of the federal government to administer funding support to tourism-dependant businesses in Niagara. The fund of \$2 million is being distributed through an application and evaluation process with reporting mechanisms in place, to over 160 businesses. This is providing much needed support to the tourism sector, helping to keep businesses open and able to conform to public health protocols through the pandemic.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Economic updates are provided semi-annually, in the spring and the fall. They coincide with regional data becoming available.

Reports:

- Niagara COVID-19 Business Impact Survey - Part 1 (April 14, 2020)
- Niagara COVID-19 Business Impact Survey - Part 2 (June 22, 2020)
- Niagara COVID-19 Business Impact Survey - Part 3 (June 16, 2021)
- Niagara Economic Update (May 13, 2020)
- COVID-19 Impact on Investment and Development in Niagara (October 14, 2020)
- Niagara Economic Update (November 9, 2020)
- Niagara Economic Update (April 14, 2021)

Presentations/Engagements:

- Interview: Niagara Business Impact Survey results with Tim Denis on 610am (April 15, 2020)
- Interview: Business Impact Survey with Gord Howard, Niagara Dailies (April 15, 2020)
- Presentation: Transport Canada/McMaster Institute of Transportation and Logistics on COVID-19 impacts on trade and logistics sector in Niagara (June 17, 2021)
- Interview: Niagara COVID-19 Business Impact Survey – Part 2 with Matt Holmes on 610am (June 24, 2020)
- Presentation: Brock University/Niagara Community Observatory Policy Brief regarding Transportation and Logistics Sector in Niagara (July 7, 2020)
- Interview: COVID-19 Impacts on Investment and Development in Niagara with Tim Denis (October 15, 2021)

- Presentation: Manufacturing update for Hamil Group of Companies (Dec. 3, 2021)
- Presentation: Niagara Economic and Manufacturing Update for Niagara Industrial Association (March 18, 2021)
- Presentation: Niagara Economic Update for South Niagara Chambers of Commerce (March 30, 2021)
- Presentation: Niagara Economic Update for GNCC Government Affairs Council (April 16, 2021)
- Presentation: COVID-19 Business Impact Survey – Part 3 results for South Niagara Chambers of Commerce podcast (May 14, 2021)
- Presentation: Niagara Economic Update for Mastermind Business Group (May 19, 2021)
- Presentation: COVID-19 Business Impact Survey results for ERRT Task Force (Niagara COVID-19 Business Impact Survey – Part 3 presentation (May 19, 2021)
- Presentation: COVID-19 Business Impact Survey – Part 3 for GNCC Espresso Live webinar (June 9, 2021)
- Presentation: COVID-19 Impacts on Women Employment in Niagara for GNCC Women In Niagara Hackathon (June 15, 2021)
- Presentation: COVID-19 Business Impact Survey for Niagara College Research & Innovation division (June 9, 2021)
- Economic Development Overview presentations to Brock University Senior Management and Niagara College focussed on partnerships and collaboration.
- Workshop on supporting local businesses with the South Niagara Chamber of Commerce.
- Supporting Grimsby on a new Economic Development Strategy

SECTOR SUPPORT (AGRIBUSINESS AND TOURISM)

Sector support is ongoing, below are some examples of recent outreach.

- Direct outreach to food processing businesses during Phase 1 of the Vaccine Implementation program to arrange appointments.
- Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund (described above).

EXPORTING SUPPORT THROUGH THE NIAGARA FOREIGN TRADE ZONE (NFTZ)

- Providing direct outreach to the Regional trade community by connecting Niagara's businesses to Trade Incentives and Programs offered by the Regional, Provincial & Federal Governments including: Trade Accelerator Program, Export Development's Global Connections Program, Global Affairs Canada Trade

Commissioners Service, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, and Job Creation and Trade's Foreign Service Program.

NIAGARA'S WORK FORCE

Working with employment groups, Niagara Economic Development is aware of labour market issues and supports programs and funding applications to address them.

- Niagara Economic Development recently convened a meeting with Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Niagara Industrial Association, Employment Agencies and Academia to better understand labour issues in Region.