and in turn disengage from the program as they begin to contribute income tax, knowing they would not lose this 'safety net'. With the appropriate support, it could be a major step in boosting the labour pool and reduce the number of people accessing ODSP.

According to the Province, there were more than 595,000 (families and single adults) in Ontario's social assistance programs during 2020-21. Among these, 64% (approximately 378,145) were ODSP recipients, while as of November of 2022, there were just under 369,000 ODSP caseloads.[170]

Also, many employers continue to face a 'revolving door' of new hires, each of whom requires provincially mandated WHMIS training. Providing this training to secondary school students could be a benefit to employers, considering many go directly into the workforce. The 2021 census results indicate at least 40% of workers aged of 25 to 64 are not post-secondary graduates.[171] However, until any such change as this could occur employers have been left covering the costs of this training, which can take several hours to complete via a process that must be repeated with each new hire, taking them away from their work duties.

To assist employers cost recovery opportunities surrounding provincially regulated training programs, like WHMIS, should be considered to ease some of this burden.

Recommendations

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Ontario Government to:

1. Develop all potential partnerships within local municipalities and community organizations to ensure that language training is made available for new immigrants.
2. Allow those on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) who can work full time to do so without risking loss of their provincially funded benefits (i.e., prescribed medications) if their employer does not provide those services.
3. Investigate a form of remuneration (i.e., tax credit) for employers when it comes to providing provincially regulated training, such as WHMIS, and their associated costs.

Effective Date: April 29, 2023
Sunset Date: April 29, 2026

[170] https://bit.ly/3kKElyZ-Province of Ontario website
[171] https://tgam.ca/3Rn1qnn-Census shows high rate of undergraduate and college education among Canadians, but complex trends lie behind it – Globe & Mail