

MLPAO Report on the Current MLT Labour Shortages in Ontario

Earlier this year, we learned that the healthcare professionals who staff Ontario's medical laboratories are set to see a large cohort retire in the next 4-8 years. This cohort that represents 44% of the medical laboratory professionals who we currently have no way of adequately replacing.

This health human resource issue will have a rippling effect throughout our healthcare system, one that could undo much of the streamlining and progress the Ministry of Health is looking to accomplish. The absence of this workforce has the potential to cost the province millions of dollars in lengthening hospital stays and increasing wait times while adding an additional barrier in accessing vital services, particularly for those living in rural and remote communities.

To provide a snapshot of current openings in laboratories across the province, we asked lab managers and other employers from our membership to complete a survey about shortages in their workplaces. The following report indicates that the timeline for labour shortages is sooner than we expected. Data collected across the province indicates the shortages are being experienced not in 4-8 years, but now.

Date:	Issued July 22, 2019 and open until August 8, 2019
Response:	Out of 222 Ontario Laboratories, 74 responded = 33% response rate
Workplace:	87% Hospitals, 13% Other
Lab Location:	28% Large Urban Centers 23% Mid-Size Urban Center 39% Rural Center 7% Remote 3% Other

General Medical Laboratory Technologist Scarcity

65% of the listed openings were for General Medical Laboratory Technologists (231)

- The other 35% were divided across Leadership (12), Sr. Technologist (20), Cytotechnologist (3), Clinical Genetics (2), and MLA/T (89).

45% of the General MLT openings were in rural and remote areas (104)

- The other 55% were in Large Urban Centres (63), Mid-Sized Urban Centres (54), and Other (10).
- This is significant, given the small workforce and lab sizes.
- General MLT Positions represent 83% of the total openings in rural and remote areas.

Labour Shortage in Rural and Remote Laboratories

35% of the submitted openings were in rural and remote laboratories (125).

- 34% Large Urban Centres (123), 22% in Mid-Sized Centres (81), and 8% in Other (28).

This is particularly stark given the small staff sizes in rural and remote areas. There are several labs facing extreme shortages. We heard from a lab with 5 people and 4 empty positions in rural Ontario, or a lab with only 2 staff looking for 1 empty position in a remote lab:

	Remote	Rural Centre	Mid-Sized Urban	Large Urban
Staff Size	2-26 (12 avg.)	2-83 (25 avg.)	7-86 (91 avg.)	3-800 (144 avg.)
Current Open	Up to 33%	Up to 44%	Up to 36%	Up to 14%

Medical Laboratory Positions Remain Empty - Open 12+ Months

39% of the listed openings were on the market for 12+ months (139).

- 19% were unmarked (70), 26% were open for 0-3 months (93), 2% were open for 4-6 months (31), 7% were open 6-12 months (24).

78% of the jobs open 12+ months are for Medical Laboratory Technologists (108)

- 20% are looking for Medical Laboratory Assistant/Technicians (28), .7% are looking for Clinical Genetics (1), and 1.4% are looking for Sr. Technologists (2)
- 59% of all MLT jobs open 12+ months are in Rural and Remote Areas (64)

60% of all the MLT openings in rural and remote laboratories have been on the market for 12+ months.

	Unmarked	0-3 months	4-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
Leadership	2	9		1	
Sr. Technologist	2	8	5	3	2
FT - General MLT	18	19	2	2	41
PT - General MLT	28	23	18	13	67
Cytotechnologist		3			
Clinical Genetics		1			1
FT - MLA/T	3	18			
PT - MLA/T	17	12	6	5	28
TOTAL	70	93	31	24	139

The **Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario** is a non-profit health professional organization founded in 1963 with more than 3,000 members across the province. MLPAO members serve in urban, rural, and remote settings in the public and private sectors. Hospitals, physicians' offices, diagnostic labs, clinics, specimen collection sites, and blood centers all require their services. The MLPAO represents the interests of Medical Laboratory Professionals in Ontario with government, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, health care professions, and other stakeholders.