

This briefing note explores the factors that can lead to perceptions of simultaneous labour and job shortages, and in doing so it will demonstrate how Niagara's post-COVID recovery will be a very complex challenge.

As Ontario has begun to re-open, two challenges have emerged in the accommodations and food services sector.

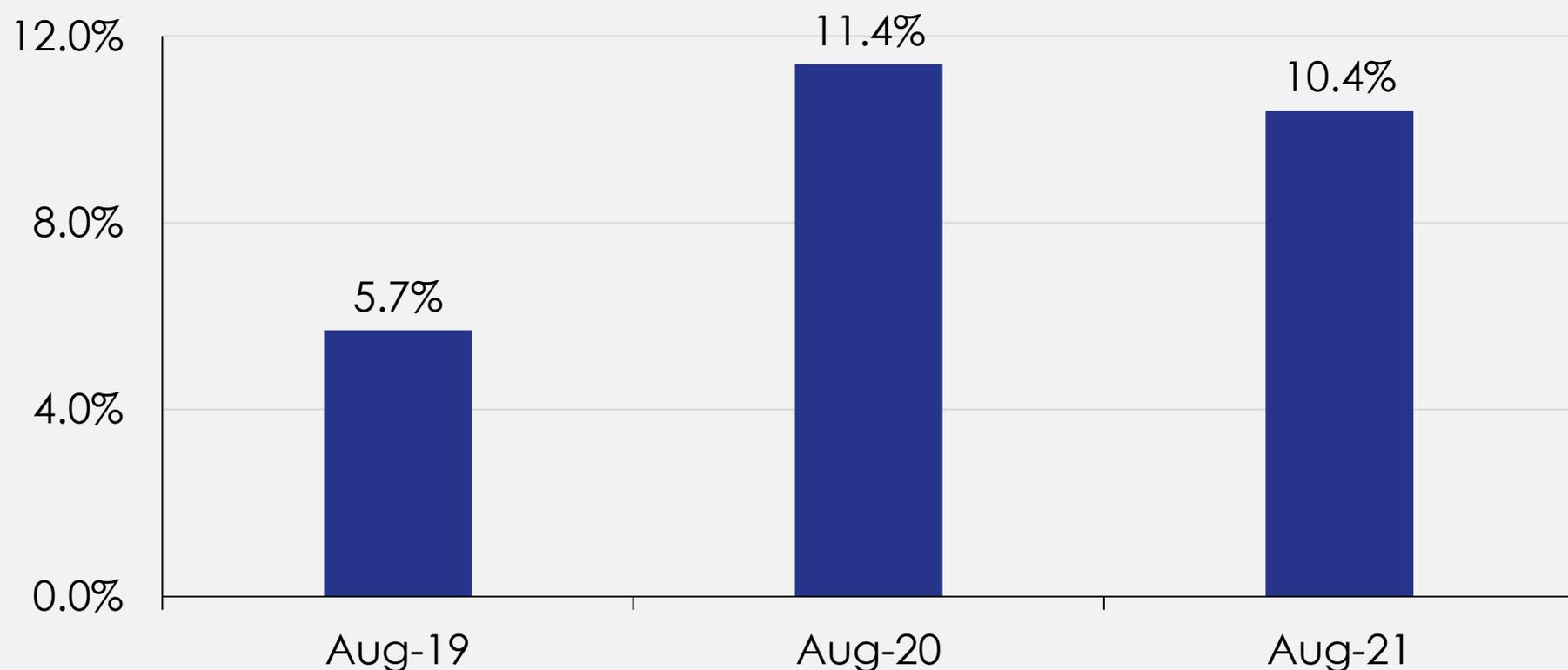
First, we see that food service operators are reporting labour shortages.

At the same time, Ontario reported more than 712,000 active job seekers in August 2021. This amounts to an unemployment rate of 8.7% in Ontario and 23,600 job seekers in Niagara with an unemployment rate of 10.4%.

“With COVID upon us and with so many thousands of employees laid off, we have been hearing of major issues in some areas in finding employees”

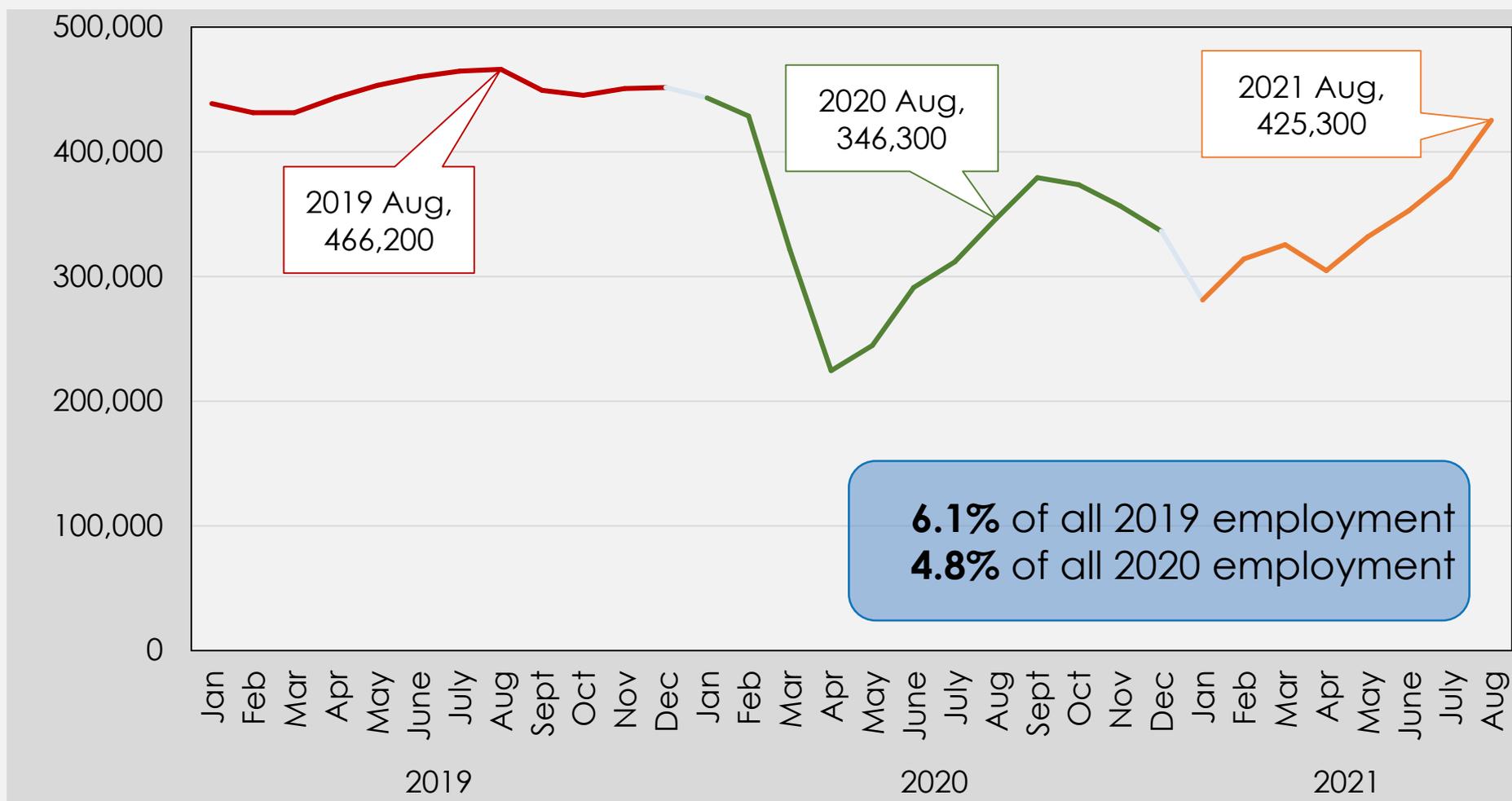
– Tony Elenis, Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association
(source: Toronto Star: June 9, 2021)

Niagara's Unemployment Rate

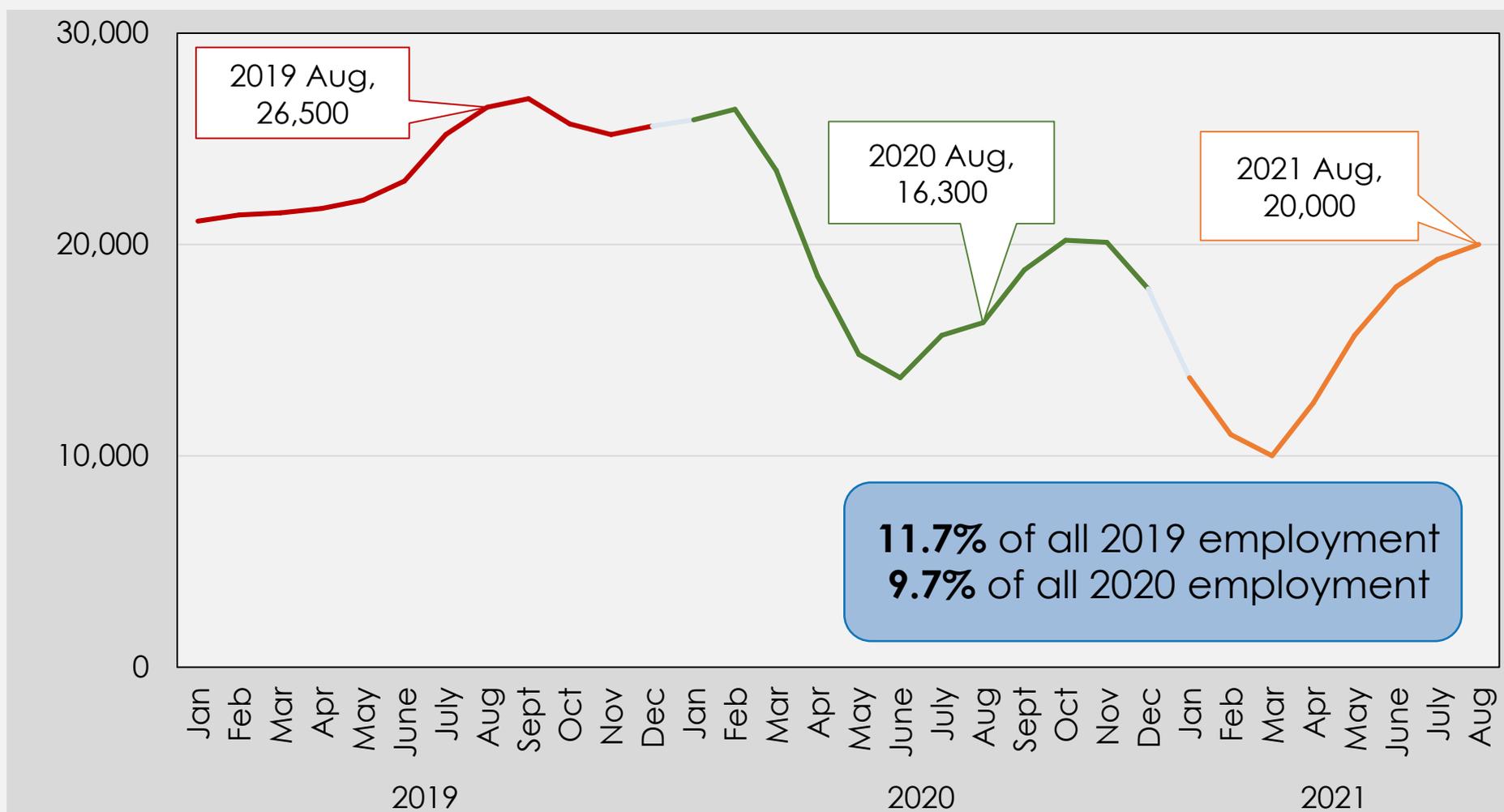


How Big is the Accommodations and Food Service Sector?

In Ontario we see the following employment trends...

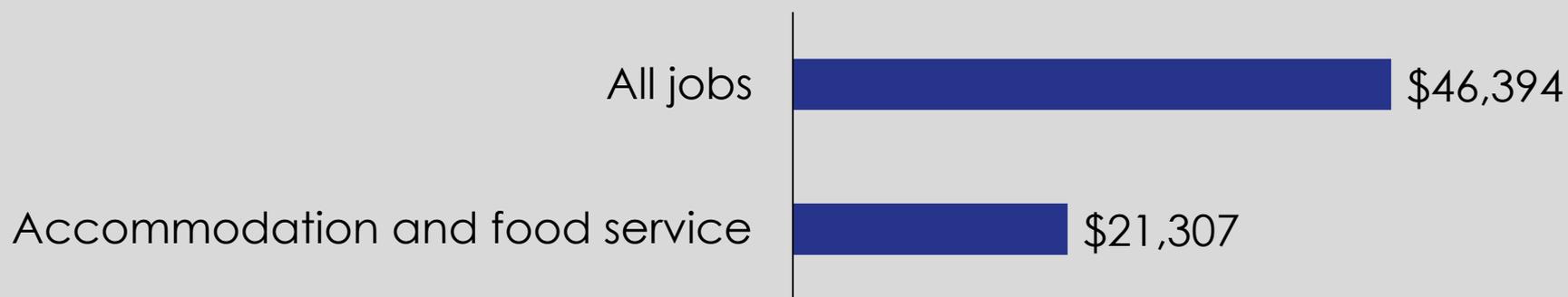


In Niagara we see the following employment trends...

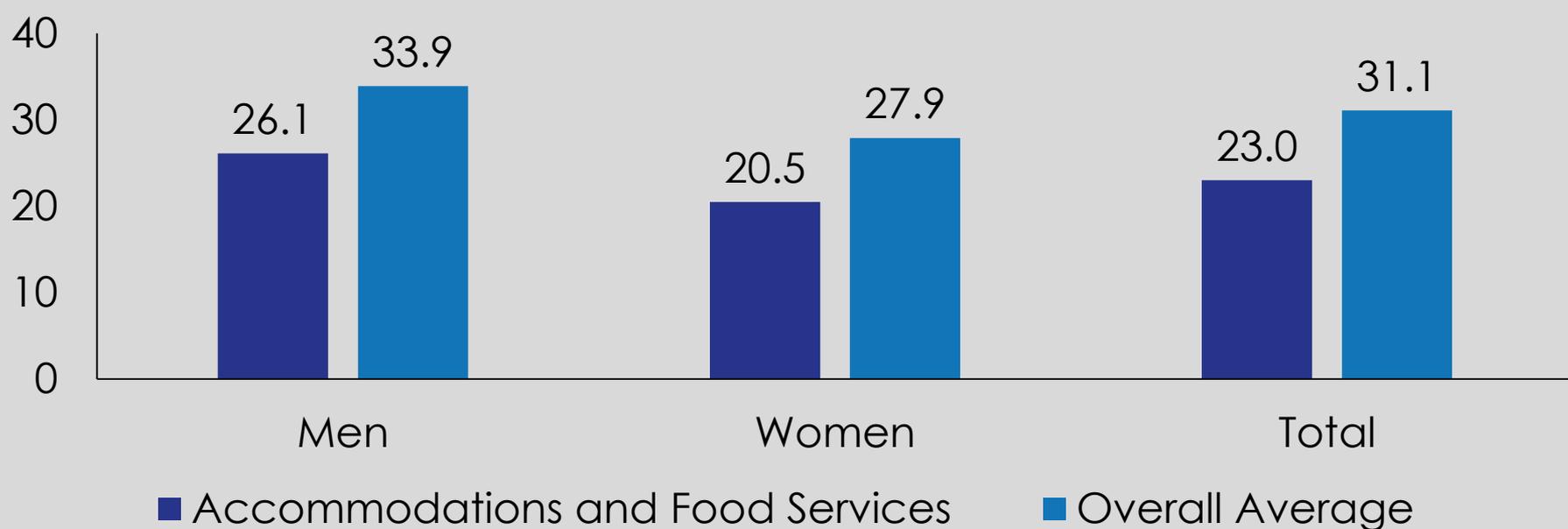


Employment Characteristics

2020 Average Income, Niagara



Provincial data for 2020 lets us estimate how many hours per week a person typically worked when they were employed in this sector



Because a large volume of work in this sector is part-time or part-year, the average annual income falls well below minimum wage. **What does that mean for job seekers and employers?**

Full-time, full-year work in this sector will likely be the exception rather than the rule

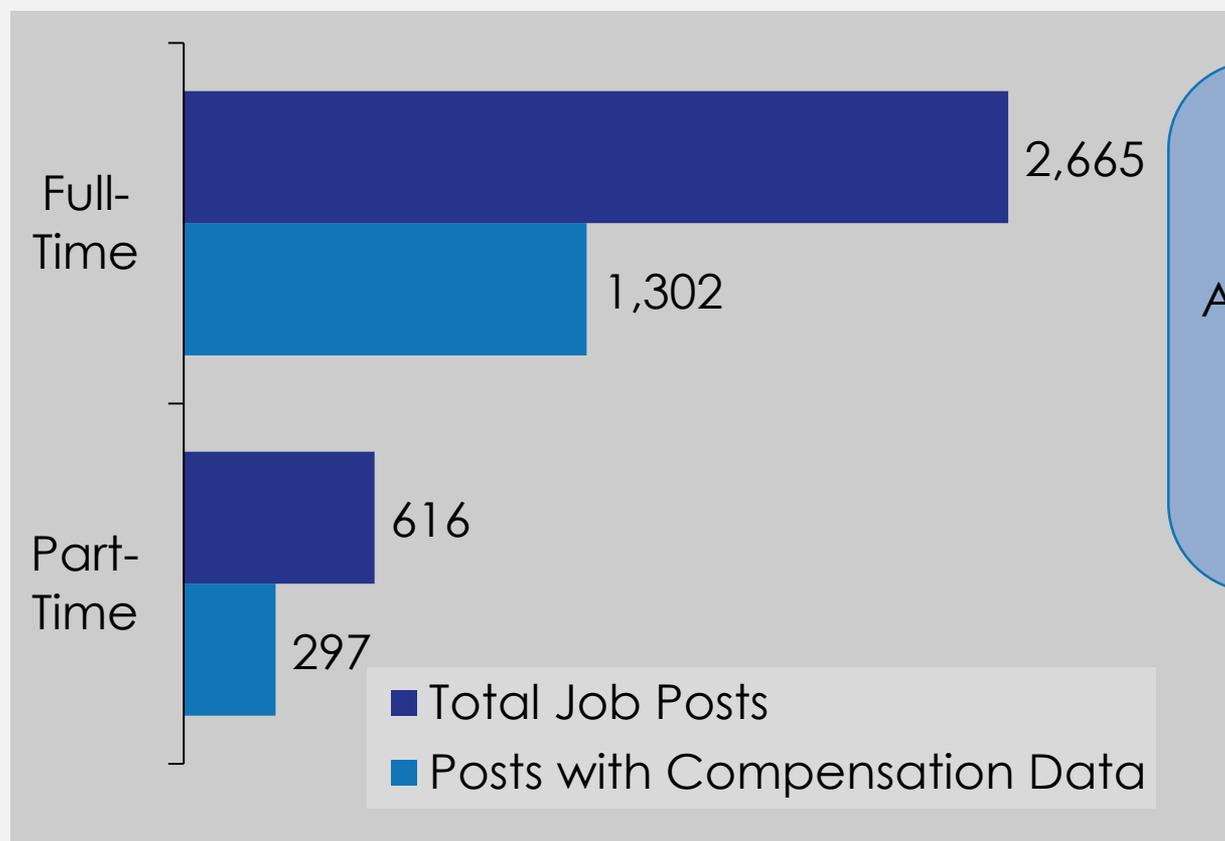
Job seekers may need to hold down **multiple jobs** to meet financial obligations

Increased competition among employers to find a workforce that can meet their needs

What Can Be Done In the Short Term?

One possible path to attracting more candidates to working in this sector is to increase the visibility of the job opportunities.

NWPB reviewed **3,281** accommodation and food services job postings between March and August. These data showed compensation rates are often not found within a job posting.



Why post compensation data?

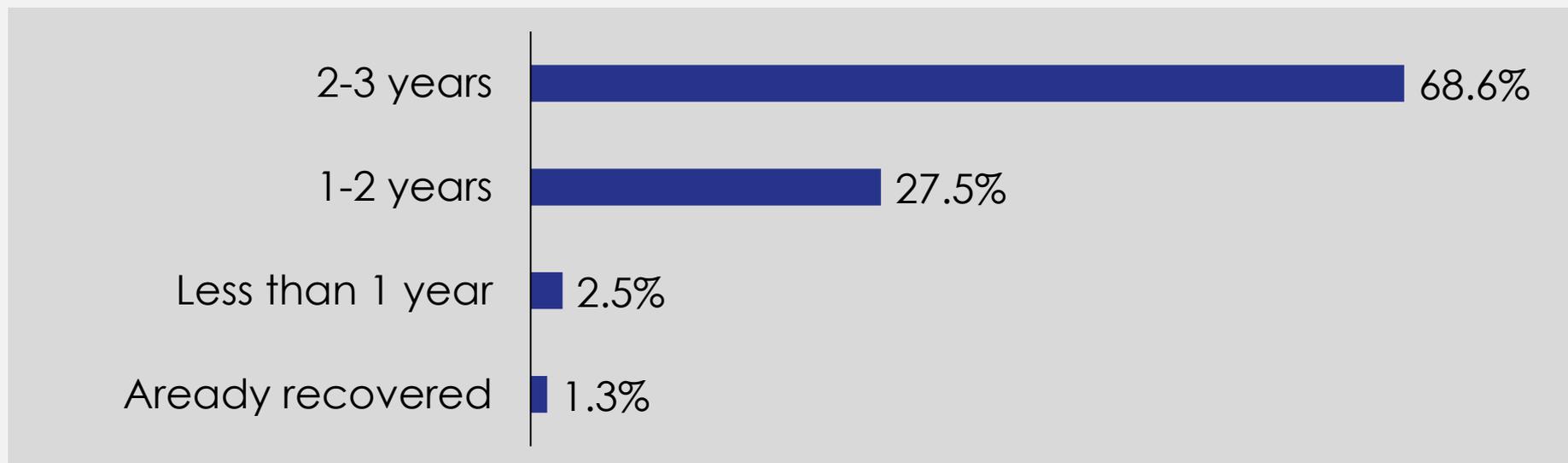
A 2018 study from Statistics Canada reported compensation is the key motivator for 51% of job seekers.

Identifying skills that employers look for also provides insight on the potential responsibilities that would be expected of job seekers. Throughout the first half of 2021, we saw that the **most commonly posted skills** in this sector were...

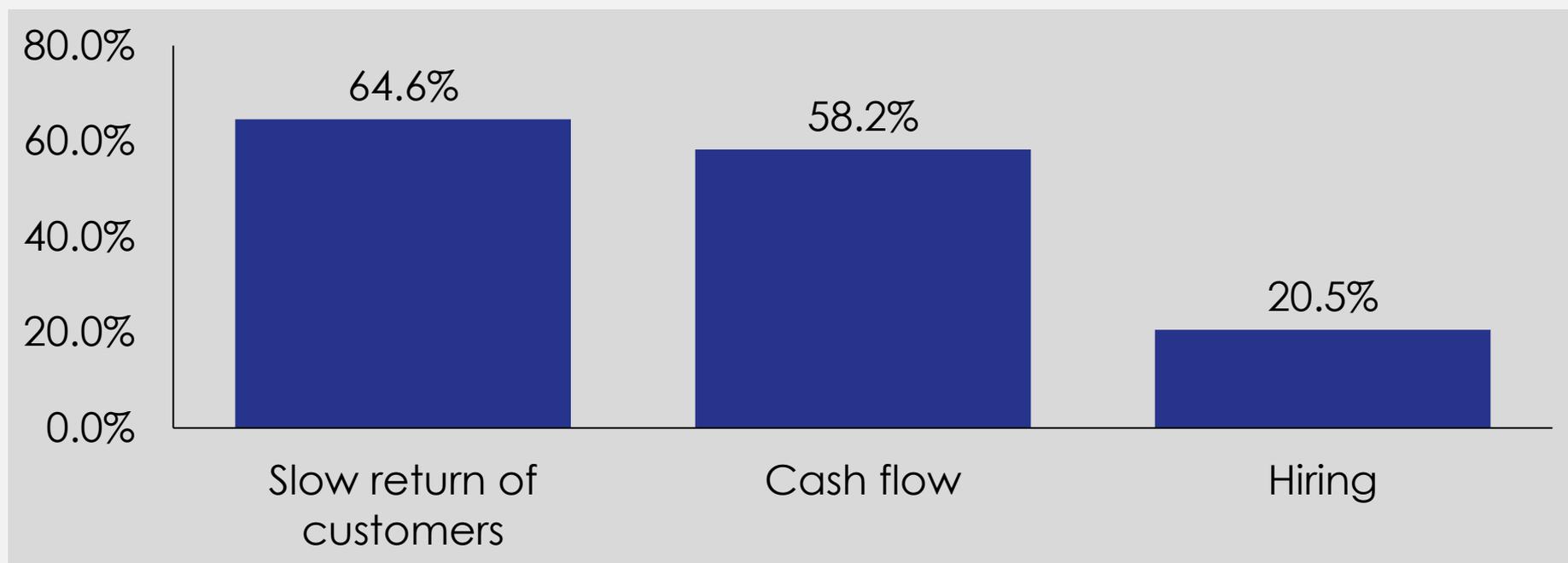
Cleanliness Interpersonal
Cooking Operations Hospitality
Communications Management
Career Development
Customer Service Hardworking
Work Independently Attention to Detail Recipes
Interpersonal Skills Time Management
Leadership Teamwork Sanitation
Problem Solving Sales

The long-term road to recovery for accommodation and food services

A recent employer survey suggests the challenges of finding and keeping labour are going to be one among many in this sector. Below we see employers' estimated time to recover from COVID-19.



Ensuring customers return and cashflow were seen as **top priorities** for business recovery.



Would you like to know more?

To access other job demand tools and resources like:

- [Monthly interactive job demand dashboards](#)
- [2021 Interim Labour Market Report](#)

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