



The COVID-19 Post-Lockdown Effect: Labour Shortages and Struggling Food Retail Businesses

Food Retail Environment Study for Health and Economic Resiliency (FRESHER)

Report prepared under the guidance of Marcello Vecchio and the Human Environment Analysis Laboratory (HEAL)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Introduction	3
Methodology	4
Sampling Method	4
Analysis Method	4
Findings	5
Labour shortage in the food services sector is widespread	5
Implementation of government support programs	6
Food service workers rethink their career paths.	7
Conclusion	8
Limitations	8
Acknowledgements	9
Bibliography	10
Appendix	14



Abstract

The Food Retail Environment Study for Health and Economic Resiliency (FRESHER) is a pilot study tracking the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on restaurants, fast food outlets, grocery stores, cafes, bars, pubs, and alcohol retail stores in Ontario, across all types of communities. The effects of COVID-19 on large- and small-scale food outlets are expected to last even past the end of the pandemic. To view these economic and social impacts on these businesses, the FRESHER project has been conducting surveys of food retail employees and business owners across Ontario. In addition to this, mapping and in-depth interviews are also ongoing. By analyzing the collected information and data, the project aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How has the pandemic affected individual people and impacted subsequent government and other organizational support programs and policies?
2. What strategies have businesses and business owners used to adapt to the pandemic and prevent the closing of their business?

Introduction

The Food Retail Environment Study for Health and Economic Resiliency (FRESHER) is exploring the effects of COVID-19 over time on the retail food environment across urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Evidence from this study will greatly benefit policymakers as they continue to assess the lasting impacts of COVID-19 and adjust policy and programs to ensure food security during future pandemics and emergency situations. This research aims to identify not only the struggles faced by proprietors of the foods industry and their employees, but also the strategies and solutions they have created to keep their businesses afloat during these unprecedented times. The study will also touch base upon government responses to the COVID-19 public health crisis, and explore how current policies and programs are contributing to the adaptability of food retail businesses.



Figure 1. COVID-19 Pandemic Impact On Foods Retail Industry (Chang, 2021).



Methodology


Sampling Method

This media analysis summary is based on a sample of 15 news items regarding labour shortages within the hospitality industry in Canada post COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, and were drawn from two major databases, namely Factiva and Google News. The region for each search was set to Ontario first, and then Canada second, in order to maintain appropriate relevancy of the news items. Database search limitations were also implemented, if available.

The time frame encompasses the last 15 months, between March 2020 to the present. A list of key search terms was entered in each database to create a sample of relevant news items, including COVID-19 pandemic, hospitality/restaurants, re-opening/re-hiring, lockdowns, and struggles (see appendix, table 1). The search terms used are based on keywords found within the scope of the FRESHER project as a whole. Additionally, media limitations were set in all database searches, such that the key words were to be found only in the titles, headings, headlines, and introductory paragraphs of news items. Irrelevant media exclusion criteria include duplicates and republished news content.

Analysis Method

The news items sourced were then combined and organized into a database via Microsoft Excel, and a summary of each news item was generated (see




appendix, table 3). Summaries generated from the news media sources have been systematically reviewed in order to find prevalent responses and themes. The sample was then further divided and refined by the date reported, and then categorized under one of the four overarching themes most prevalent in the news items sample (see appendix, table 2). Themes reflected common vocabulary and overall portrayed sentiments and attitudes towards the economic recovery post COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, and the recent lack of workers to fill vacancies in the Canadian hospitality industry. Themes and its frequency as portrayed throughout news media have been noted and presented in a chart format found in the appendix of this study summary (see appendix, table 3).

Findings

Labour shortage in the food services sector is widespread

One of the many struggles facing the food services sector is the rehiring of the servers and cooks post-lockdown. Due to nation-wide pandemic lockdowns forcing the closures of food retail businesses for public health safety concerns, numerous hospitality workers were found jobless in early 2020. As the number of COVID-19 cases are gradually decreasing and vaccines steadily rolling out, food retail businesses are opening up to the public once again, leading to a demand in finding qualified employees when the former employees are not returning to their old jobs.




Many employers, especially in the hospitality industry, have difficulty searching for employees that fit into their qualifications, namely soft skills such as dependability, flexibility, and a desire to learn, thus inevitably leading to a labour shortage. A survey from Harris Poll stated that 59% of Canadian businesses can't find qualified workers to fill job vacancies. Some retailers believe that the stumbling block of hiring qualified workers will exacerbate labour shortages even more in the long run as they are less willing to hire workers they'll have to train.

Implementation of government support programs

Implementation of government support programs such as CERB/CESB/CRB affords the means for workers with lost income to survive the pandemic but with the repercussions of reducing the incentive for workers to return to work.

Government support programs are the game changer during the lockdown as well as post-lockdown. It affords many people who lost their jobs the means to survive during the pandemic. However, some businesses believe that such programs, especially the Canada Recovery Benefit or CRB for short, contributed to the widespread labour shortages by mitigating the incentive of returning to work for many workers.

Food retail businesses made up the second largest portion of job vacancies behind only the health care sector according to the National Post newspaper. It gets increasingly more challenging to entice new highly skilled staff to return, let alone retaining skilled former staff who are willing to stay in the food services



industry. Labour shortages issue is believed to be influenced partly by the extension of the CERB or CRB to September 25th as many workers would rather be on the support programs than returning to their old job. Many people have opted for new career choices or delay their return to work due to savings they've accumulated from government support programs over the pandemic. One restaurant owner stated that a lot of people that were working at her restaurant decided that they'd rather be on CERB than come to work.

Food service workers rethink their career paths.

More than a year into the pandemic, some have found a career/job change, or are pursuing other interests such as returning to school, etc. Many people are still wary of the spread of the new COVID-19 variant, while some remain skeptical of the COVID-19 vaccine efficacy. Many of the food service workers have decided that this is the best time for them to go back to school or switch to a new career. People's lives and circumstances have changed after 18 months of a pandemic, some are scared of getting sick if they return to work or feel too rusty to get back to work after being off the job for so long.



Conclusion

Many in the restaurant industry adapt post-lockdown by shortening the opening hours, increasing the number of working hours of staff on hand as well as owners themselves who must put in more hours, and afford incentives for skilled staff to return by raising the wages and benefits. Some businesses have even tried to ask the government to halt the support programs altogether in order to disincentivize people for not returning to work. Currently, some restaurant owners are scaling back their opening hours as they cannot find enough people to work. It may be years before the food services industry fully recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic in large part due to labour shortages.

Limitations

There have been several limitations encountered in this study summary. The reliance on a small sample size of 15 news items may be a problem due to low statistical power and increase in error margins. In addition, the study area was restricted to Ontario and Canada, which may have implications on generalizability, such as in different countries. This study would benefit further with the use of better statistical analysis tools and implementing interviews and surveys to provide a more precise study model.

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When you say geography is
more than naming places



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Appendix

Table 1

Media Analysis Key Search Terms

Key search terms
COVID-19 pandemic
Hospitality/restaurants
Re-opening/re-hiring
Lockdowns
Struggle(s)

Table 2

Media Analysis Key Narratives and Themes

Key narratives	Key themes
The lives and habits of people have drastically changed following the COVID-19 pandemic	Economic uncertainty and public health fears dominate both business owners and their employees
Labour shortages in the retail food environment is widespread	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions
	Implementation of government support programs (CERB/CESB/CRB) affords the means for workers with lost income to survive with the repercussions of reducing the incentive for workers to return to work
	Employers unable to find workers with relevant skillsets essential to post-pandemic lockdown businesses, such as being dependable, innovative, and can easily adapt to change

Table 3

Complete Media Analysis

1	Source link	Date published	Title	Main theme(s)	Summary
2	https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/restaurants-struggle-to-rehire-as-workers-seek-new-careers-ottawa-extends-covid-19-benefits	8/11/2021	Restaurants struggle to rehire as workers seek new careers, Ottawa extends COVID-19 benefits	Employers unable to find workers with relevant skillsets essential to post-pandemic lockdown businesses, such as being dependable, innovative, and can easily adapt to change	Restaurants across Canada are struggling to rehire servers and cooks as COVID-19 restrictions are gradually lifted, with many owners adjusting reopening plans or working reduced hours to eke out a profit. The labour crunch is being blamed on several factors, chiefly a recent trend among food service workers to rethink their career paths and extended COVID-19 benefits for the unemployed. The Liberals had earlier agreed to trim the CRB from \$2,000 a month, but labour shortages have persisted as many people opt for new career choices or delay a return to work due to savings they've accumulated over the pandemic. "A lot of people that were working here decided that they'd rather be on CERB and they just didn't come to work," she said. (context: Donna Timmons, owner of the Rusty Anchor Restaurant on the northern edge of Cape Breton Island, N.S.) Employers across the country were looking to recruit workers for 671,000 positions in May, the most recent month in Statistics Canada data. The pinch is felt by restaurant owners across the country, particularly as many servers or cooks remain hesitant to return to work amid COVID-19. Many business owners say the issue is due to a decision by employees to try new lines of work, while by far the next-highest concern is the federal government's continued support programs for the unemployed.
3	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/restaurants-struggling-find-staff-busy-ottawa-valley-1.6125695	8/1/2021	In-person dining is back — and restaurants are hungry for more workers	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions	Some restaurants in the Ottawa area say they're struggling to find enough staff - and are even having to close down for entire days - as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions ease and more people go out to eat again. While The Barley Mow has offered employees higher wages and benefits, Greer said it seems some workers don't want to come back with employment insurance and the recently extended Canada Recovery Benefit available. Dearing said he's been working 150 to 160 hours every two weeks, and guessed that Saturday was his 55th or 60th day on the job in a row - although he admits he's lost track. VanPelt said she believes people's lives and habits have changed after 16 months of a pandemic, and that some people are either scared of getting sick or feel too rusty to return to work after being laid off for so long. Jocelyn Rumbolt, owner The Courtyard Bistro in Pembroke, Ont., is facing similar challenges despite being willing to pay workers more than before. Rumbolt said she's working 80 hours a week and can only run one of her two dining rooms at a loss of thousand dollars per week. The staff she's retained are working harder than ever due to the need to enforce COVID-19 screening protocols, she said.
4	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-workers-shortage-murphy-wages-1.6140548	8/16/2021	P.E.I. hospitality industry struggling to find staff as tourism booms	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions	"People during the pandemic have left our industry, and some have moved on," said Kevin Murphy, president and CEO of Murphy Hospitality Group. Another reason workers are hard to find, according to Murphy, is "There are a lot of programs out there right now with federal assistance that's probably being a deterrent for people to get back in the workforce." The Murphy Group is now operating with about 450 workers, leaving its restaurants and other businesses short-staffed - and in some cases, having to reduce their opening hours. "What's happened is we've gone from zero to 60, let's call it, in 10 days in our industry," said Murphy. "And that has put it under an enormous stress on operations that were operating under skeleton staffs and now they're trying to staff up and they can't find staff." It's "a wage shortage," said Jillian Kiffoil, executive director of Women's Network P.E.I. "The pandemic and government programs to support Canadians during a global pandemic are not disincentives to work, but instead highlight the poor working conditions that were normalized pre-pandemic," she said. In the meantime, Murphy, Cutmore and others in the industry are taking a cue from the farming and fish processing industries, looking to the temporary foreign worker program as a possible solution to their worker woes. "Immigration is going to be part of the solution of ensuring that we have enough workers if they're not here in Prince Edward Island," said Murphy.
5	https://toronto.cbcnews.ca/ve-ve-closed-labour-shortages-forcing-ontario-restaurants-to-scale-back-operating-hours-1.5540656	8/9/2021	We've closed: Labour shortages forcing Ontario restaurants to scale back operating hours	Economic uncertainty and public health fears dominate both business owners and their employees	It could be years before Ontario's restaurant industry fully bounces back from the COVID-19 pandemic in large part due to labour shortages. This summer, that means some Ontario restaurants are scaling back hours because they cannot find enough people to work. The establishment, which relies on summer cottagers in the Kawartha, has been trying to hire more staff - while employees worked long hours to keep up with demand - but was forced to change course. Its hours have been reduced by more than half because of staffing shortages. The diner is looking forward to making milkshakes around the clock once again if it can find the people and says it's willing to train anyone. "I think in general people are reevaluating their goals and drives while things are feeling so tenuous anyway I think people can afford to be a bit choosy now they spend their time," Bell said. "The hesitation in case we get a fourth wave, they have to close again. Some people are wondering whether they want to take these jobs. The other thing they're facing is they are also trying to get people in the middle of the summer. They didn't start looking until near the end of July. People had already made plans, it's just a tough time to find people," Central Canada Vice President James Rillet said.

1	Source link	Date published	Title	Main theme(s)	Summary
6	https://financialpost.com/executive/executive-summary/posthaste-canadian-businesses-say-they-cant-find-employees-because-applicants-are-lacking-these-crucial-skills	7/30/2021	Posthaste: Canadian businesses say they can't find employees because applicants are lacking these crucial skills	Employers unable to find workers with relevant skillsets essential to post-pandemic lockdown businesses, such as being dependable, innovative, and can easily adapt to change	Canadian businesses say they're struggling to find workers, and it's not because potential hires lack training in their field. According to a new survey from Harris Poll, commissioned by staffing firm Express Employment Professionals, 59 per cent of Canadian businesses say they can't find qualified employees to fill vacancies. A third of those businesses say one big reason is because prospective hires don't have soft skills such as dependability, flexibility and a willingness to learn. It's an issue that could make a labour shortage even worse in the long run, as businesses say those soft skills are proving more valuable than hard skills in a post-pandemic world. If businesses can't find workers who fit the bill, they then become less likely to hire people they'll have to train, which could exacerbate labour shortages. "Employers want workers who have the relevant hard skills and experience, but after a year of unprecedented interruptions caused by the pandemic, many companies want employees who are dependable and innovative self-starters who can adapt to change," he said. Businesses - especially small businesses such as sole traders and family operations - don't always have the resources to dedicate to digital marketing.
7	https://www.cbcnews.ca/business/restaurants-hit-by-labour-shortage-as-economic-reopening-gathers-momentum-1.5463232	6/9/2021	Restaurants hit by labour shortage as economic reopening gathers momentum	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions	George Avgeropoulos said he's spent the last month looking for skilled workers to staff his restaurant in Toronto's Danforth area. As public health restrictions begin to lift and provincial economies slowly reopen across Canada, the country's restaurant industry is struggling to find its workforce in time for the summer. While a dwindling workforce isn't a new challenge for the restaurant sector, industry experts say the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated that struggle. Elenis said workforce issues were the No. 1 obstacle facing the sector pre-pandemic and despite increases in vaccination rates and a drop in COVID cases, restaurants may still struggle. The sector was already short by roughly 60,000 people across Canada before the pandemic started, said Restaurants Canada executive Olivier Bourbeau, and after multiple lockdowns, many workers have found employment in other industries. Martin Vezina, a spokesperson for the Association Restauration Quebec, said restaurants in that province are facing similar obstacles and the labour shortage may prove to hinder the reopening of the industry in the province as the busy summer season nears. Other solutions come with more financial government support, said Bourbeau, which is why Restaurants Canada has been advocating to have the federal emergency wage subsidy - which allowed businesses to hire back laid off workers - extended past the September end date.
8	https://lethbridgenewsnow.com/2021/07/19/as-alberta-emerges-from-the-pandemic-restaurants-struggling-to-hire-enough-staff/	7/19/2021	As Alberta emerges from the pandemic, restaurants struggling to hire enough staff	Economic uncertainty and public health fears dominate both business owners and their employees	"I think that the uncertainty caused by opening and closing over and over again has made the industry a little less attractive to people to work in. I think that the closing of restaurants during the pandemic caused a lot of people to look elsewhere for careers." (context: Jeff Jamieson, a board member of the Alberta Hospitality Association (AHA) and a local restaurant owner in Calgary) A report from the Alberta Government says, prior to the pandemic in 2019, about 146,100 Albertans worked in the accommodation and food services industry, making up around 5.2 per cent of the entire workforce. "You're going to see a little bit of a correction period where restaurants may not exist in the way they had prior to the pandemic for a while while they try and get their feet back underneath them." While there are no exact dates for when many of the federal government's financial aid programs will end, Jamieson believes that more people will look for work when they do inevitably get scrapped, and those working seasonal jobs in the summer will look for something to tide them over for the next several months. He adds that restaurants are going to have to find creative ways to recruit and retain staff they want to ensure they have enough people on hand. "Some people are offering recruitment bonuses to their current staff, so if you bring in a staff member and they're retained for any period of time, you as the staff member who recruited that person into the business will receive a bonus - those have been in place in some businesses for a while. We're seeing an expansion of benefits to full-time staff or putting carrots out there for retention." The Alberta Hospitality Association represents around 300 restaurants in the province since being founded 14 months ago.
9	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/restaurant-gym-quebec-la-cage-vaccine-passport-1.6136832	8/11/2021	Quebec restaurant and gym to test province's new vaccine passport system	The lives and habits of people have drastically changed following the COVID-19 pandemic	With Quebec's new vaccine passport system set to launch Sept. 1, test runs will be conducted this week and next to fine tune what will be a first for the province - allowing only fully vaccinated people into non-essential businesses. Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé explained the vaccination passport plan on Tuesday, saying the goal is to "Allow people who are adequately vaccinated to have access to high-traffic public events and activities with a high rate of social contacts." Bédard said La Cage's management has been encouraging staff to get vaccinated. "We will recommend it strongly," he said, but he thinks the government made a good decision by not forcing employees to get vaccinated. Participating clients will have their passport scanned and staff will see the person's name and vaccination status - green if they are fully vaccinated, red if they aren't. During the pilot project, people who don't have their vaccine passports will be informed how to track theirs down. Felletier said, and those who don't want to participate will be shown in their table. In his case, Beaudry said Ministry of Health officials contacted his company to see about collaborating on the pilot project and he said public health staff will be helping out at the gym during the two day trial run.

1	Source link	Date published	Title	Main theme(s)	Summary
10	https://globalnews.ca/news/8046893/kingston-restaurants-short-staffed-covid-19/	7/21/2021	Some Kingston restaurants short-staffed during reopening due to COVID-19 pandemic	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions	Restaurants may be allowed to offer indoor dining under Ontario's Step 3 of its reopening framework, but some Kingston restaurateurs are significantly understaffed. One Kingston restaurant that is feeling the pinch is Tommy's, which has been so understaffed, that owner Tommy Hunter is out on the floor himself waiting tables. "So on the weekend, when we've got people lined up, they see tables that are available. And we have to let them know that we don't have staff to serve those tables. We would love to, we just don't." Demands from certain customers prompted Hunter to post on social media, begging customers to be patient with staff as the restaurant tries to serve the overwhelming crowds with low staff and continued COVID-19 restrictions. Hunter said there have been instances of customers becoming irritable due to slower service. "I think COVID gave a lot of people in the service industry some time to think, and also some time to scramble. You know, they had to survive as well, just like everyone else," said Marjio Cuernier, executive director of the BIA. So now, the focus is on recruiting workers to join or rejoin the hospitality industry. Until things truly go back to normal, restaurant owners like Hunter ask for their clients' continued patience as the industry readjusts.
11	https://www.quejphd.com/local-news/high-demand-low-staff-many-quejphd-restaurants-struggle-to-keep-up-5971489	7/21/2021	High demand, low staff many Guelph restaurants struggle to keep up	Discovery of newfound interests and other careers as a result of government implemented pandemic restrictions	With uncertainty of their jobs during the pandemic, many restaurant staff are leaving the industry. While you may have been struggling booking dining reservations recently, many restaurants in Guelph are scrambling to find staff to serve you. James Rilett of Restaurants Canada - a not-for-profit association which represents Canada's food service industry - said it is hearing of staff shortages in cities and rural areas of every province. "The biggest thing is a lot of people took jobs that had some certainty. So restaurants are now trying to find people to either replace them or convince people that had left the industry to come back," said Rilett, adding that people fear for security and don't want to be in the same position if there is another shutdown. Restaurant staff aren't just leaving their jobs for other industries. "People had no idea what they were doing and I know a couple of restaurants that stayed closed Friday, didn't even open because it's too much," said McQueen, adding that many staff members worked 13 consecutive hours that night. "That's what started happening with us, and we just looked at that and said okay, 'What are the key pieces that we need to be aware of and people are usually moving toward?' Money is a big factor. After the pandemic, we raised almost \$60,000 for our staff, we had health benefits, and all these other things and so we've haven't actually gone after any other employees but we've had other people from other restaurants apply, because they know that they are supported."
12	https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/restaurant-rehiring-pandemic-jobs-1.6058110	6/9/2021	Rehiring is finally on the table for more restaurants — but not all workers are coming back	Labour shortages in the retail food environment is widespread	As restrictions begin to lift in some parts of the country, restaurants are dusting off their patios or reopening their dining rooms and calling back staff — but not all employees are returning. The restaurant, located in Toronto's entertainment district, had no issues finding staff pre-pandemic who were eager to work in the busy area. As restaurants in Ontario prepare to reopen patios on June 11, competition for staff is heating up. Cibo Wine Bar's general manager Lora Pankova held a job fair in hopes of hiring dozens of experienced staff as quickly as possible. The restaurant sector was already struggling to fill more than 60,000 vacant positions, according to industry group Restaurants Canada, and it says the pandemic has exacerbated the situation. "It's an extreme shortage," said Yacoub, who's using head-hunters to expand his staff search to Toronto and Calgary. Paul Grunberg, owner and operator of several restaurants in the Vancouver area, including Caffè la Tana, Osteria, Savio Volpe and Pepino's Spaghetti House, had to lay off 60 staff in March, and about half are choosing not to return.
13	https://lindsayadvocate.ca/in-the-struggle-to-find-staff-what-are-the-reasons-behind-the-labour-shortage/	8/14/2021	In the struggle to find staff, what are the reasons behind the labour shortage?	Economic uncertainty and public health fears dominate both business owners and their employees	She says even her own fully vaccinated staff are a bit nervous about meeting people face to face. (context: Brenda Roxburgh is the executive director of Victoria County Career Services (VCCS), the area's main employment agency) "You can't live on minimum wage in Lindsay anymore. There was a time when that was possible, but it's long gone now. Housing costs are ridiculous. People are often not guaranteed a full-time work week with a predictable pay cheque. It's the precarity that's the problem," says Roxburgh. Precarious work - also known as the gig economy - has ballooned over the years and can be characterized usually by low wages, unpredictable and on-call work, usually with no benefits. That's why if an employer is having a hard time finding staff, "We gingerly highlight their wages," says the executive director, especially if they are only paying minimum wage which is \$14.25 in Ontario. While minimum wage is the legal amount an employer must pay, a living wage reflects what earners in a family need to bring home based on the actual costs of living in a specific community. A living wage is \$18.42 an hour in Kawartha Lakes, according to the Ontario Living Wage Network, the third highest in Ontario after Toronto and Haliburton. The Pie Eyed Monk's Burley says they have raised their wages from \$2-4 an hour, with cooks making as much as \$22 an hour and even dishwashers starting at \$15 instead of minimum wage.

1	Source link	Date published	Title	Main theme(s)	Summary
14	https://globalnews.ca/news/7942412/covid-19-coronavirus-restaurant-staff-layoffs-industry/	6/11/2021	Ontario restaurants 'scrambling' to find new staff as some choose not to return	Economic uncertainty and public health fears dominate both business owners and their employees	As Canadians get ready to storm the patios of freshly-opened restaurants across Ontario, some of the regular staff they once looked forward to seeing won't be there to greet them. "Some people, when they started calling staff back, are finding 50 to 60 percent of their staff has left the industry they've taken jobs elsewhere," said James Rilett, vice president for the Ontario region at Restaurants Canada. "That's been a big hit to a lot of people, because it's really valuable employees that have made the tough decision to move on. So there's going to be some scrambling, trying to find staff and recruiting from different sources than typically." On top of that, at least 45 percent of food service businesses have been consistently losing money since reopening at reduced capacity last year, according to Restaurants Canada, the national not-for-profit association representing Canada's foodservice industry. With so many veteran employees leaving the restaurants, owners are having to bring on new hires to replace them. "So where people would start to find jobs at 16, they may wait until they're out of the university to get jobs. So that's a whole cohort of people that just weren't available to us anymore," he said. With many of their most experienced workers gone, some of the staff will be waiting tables at Ontario's restaurants for the very first time.
15	https://nationalpost.com/news/ontario-government-moves-to-protect-workers-affected-by-covid-19	3/16/2020	Ontario urges bars, restaurants to close amid COVID-19 pandemic, hours after telling public they could stay open	The lives and habits of people have drastically changed following the COVID-19 pandemic	Public life in Canada's largest city was set to grind to a near-total halt Monday after Toronto's top health official issued what amounted to an order that bars, nightclubs, theatres and dine-in restaurants close by the stroke of midnight. She told reporters Monday she would order any bars, restaurants and similar establishments still open Tuesday to close immediately and would issue heavy fines to any that defy the ban. (context: Toronto's medical officer of health, Dr. Eileen de Villa) The twin messages from Ontario and Toronto's top doctors capped a seesaw day in the province, where confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to grow at alarming speed. At a press conference Monday morning, Ontario Premier Doug Ford urged the federal government to do more to secure the Canadian border amid reports of lax screening and big crowds at major airports. Just hours later, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the Canadian borders would be closed to most non-citizens and permanent residents and that, beginning Wednesday, no international flights would be allowed to land at any airport outside Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. Ford also said Tuesday morning that bars and restaurants would not be asked to close on the eve of St. Patrick's Day, one of the busiest drinking nights of the year. Hours later, provincial and municipal health officials all but begged bars and restaurants to close, an indication of how quickly evidence can evolve in a pandemic galloping out of control.
16	https://capitalcurrent.ca/many-students-losing-an-economic-lifeline-as-restaurant-jobs-in-ottawa-hit-hard-by-covid-19/	10/2020	Many students losing an economic lifeline as restaurant jobs in Ottawa hit hard by COVID-19	The lives and habits of people have drastically changed following the COVID-19 pandemic	The camaraderie, the food and the tips are just a few of the reasons why so many Ottawa students are drawn to part-time employment in the restaurant industry. COVID-19 is imposing an ever-intensifying impact on local businesses, restaurant workers - including thousands of university and college students. For students who need the work, the latest restrictions will only make an already difficult situation - months of reduced hours and pay, or job losses - that much harder. Student servers are everywhere in Ottawa's restaurant industry and these are daunting times for student workers who don't have the businesses of relatives to fall back on for their employment. Yameen Bhuya, a second year student in Carleton University's law program, is another local restaurant worker who has lost hours and income. Hussein Farhat, a fourth-year criminology student at the University of Ottawa, agreed that this has been an extremely challenging year for many of his fellow students who work at local restaurants. Now, with the second-wave return to more restrictive rules for restaurants, the employment hardships for Ottawa students will likely only worsen.