

Niagara Integrated Local Labour Market Planning

Agency Executive Directors Meeting

St. Catharines, Ontario - April 14, 2009

Integrated Local Labour Market Planning Feedback

- Transportation continues to be an issue related to workforce mobility
 - Region is completing some research in this area; Lori Watson will investigate initiatives/research currently going on at the Region and will update the group
- Agencies need to put a positive spin on the current employment situation because they serve a clientele who are struggling with employment issues and need encouragement/good news
 - Media feeds into the doom & gloom scenario, profiling residents who are laid off and their struggles etc.
- Re: emerging sectors, agencies need information on what jobs will be linked to these sectors;
- Agencies are dealing with laid off workers who are struggling with the reality that the available jobs are not as high paying as their previous manufacturing jobs
 - These workers are hesitant to take lower paying jobs
 - Jobs exist in the tourism industry, but some municipalities have shut down their tourism support offices so the supports at this level have disappeared
 - The recession has not affected the traditional 'hard-to-serve' clientele – this client base has always existed
 - The new 'hard-to-serve' clients are those who have never been in the system and have lost higher wage jobs that may not be replaced
 - There is a resistance to go back to school or get re-trained by some of these clients
 - Some agencies are dealing with clients with anger and mental healthy problems that are exacerbated by their frustrations with the employment situation
- Focus of social assistance has moved to a “sustainable employment” model
 - Service philosophy dictates that the system supports training for their clients but some segments of the job seeking client base leave training programs at the first opportunity of work e.g. new Canadians are anxious to take work
- There is a need for reciprocal information between the agencies and the Region's social assistance department

- Sustainable industries will bring sustainable employment long-term, but short-term action is required to provide interim fast-tracked training for current jobs e.g. WMIS training
 - We need to identify all the short-term training programs
- There continues to be a “hidden” job market and this dictates the need for a central jobs database in the region e.g. city of Brantford has a good example: <https://www.brantjobs.ca/>
- Employers need to be educated on what constitutes essential skills
 - Many still only recognize a grade 12 diploma
- Second Career continues to have a huge up-take in Niagara
 - BEC is seeing up to 500 per week – up to 6 weeks to see a counsellor
 - Training provided is higher level/future jobs directed, not essential skills
 - Application process is lengthy and difficult for some applicants
- Government programs change the rules frequently, e.g. EI regulations
 - Agencies need to be briefed on these changes; can be helpful if a spokesperson can come in and speak to the staff (EI will do this)
- Human Resource staff at many employers do not have correct information to advise laid off employees on community services and programs available
- Employer initiated action centers do not always help the re-employment process
 - Peer counselling services provided do not replace professional career counselling

Professional Development Workshop Series for Career Practitioners

- Sandra Summerhayes did a great job assembling this training tool
- Consists of 6 sections that may be delivered for a full day over 5-6 weeks
- Agencies are anxious to start the training and are willing to pay fee-for-service for the delivery
- Facilitated sessions are preferred over in-house employee trained trainers
- MacBain Centre (YMCA Niagara Falls) could possibly be used as delivery location
- June delivery is possible, with break for summer, and 2nd session in September; to be confirmed

Other Business

- Several agencies have worked together to produce the “Job Seeker’s Journey to Employment in Niagara” publication
 - Features real case studies of jobseekers
 - 6,000 copies will be printed and available in May or June 2009
 - it is currently being translated to French
 - application has been made to MTCU for funding to design a training module based on the work completed