

# Niagara Integrated Local Labour Market Planning

Labour Consultation: Welland Civic Square, Welland, Ontario - April 15, 2009

## Group Discussion Summary

### 1. What are the 2-3 most important issues that require immediate attention?

- Local work for local workforce
  - e.g. construction projects are employing workers from outside of Niagara because many trades people will work for lower wages
- Encourage employers to support local businesses and economy by 'buying local'
  - move away from the 'preferred supplier' or lowest bid model
- Inter-regional transportation is a necessity to allow people to move to where the jobs are
  - Interim solution for the short-term could be that municipalities with existing public transportation infrastructure work together to expand service
- More supports to link employers with job seekers e.g. more job fairs and more accessible services
  - link action centers with other support services
- Support services need to be more user focused - integrated - one stop (even a central phone number - local)

### Longer-term attention?

- Link training supports to EI program, e.g. this initiative existed in the 80's
  - Increased incentives for training, e.g. financial support to acquire tools for skilled trades, and increased tax benefits
  - Track and report on emerging clusters and linked occupations; this should be completed by an unbiased and non-political group
  - Streamline services for job seekers - 'one stop shopping' idea
  - Dialogue with employers - why are they not replacing retiring workers and how can we encourage them to keep these positions
  - Increased mobility across region is critical to our economic success
  - Focus on skilled trades as we will have a shortage
  - Promote importance of long term investment in human resource development - training people, not just training for tasks; engage employers in a training philosophy; person centered not job centered;
- Two key focus areas:
- Youth - train for high flexibility and high skills
  - Unemployed - train for their individual needs - older workers probably want to get to work quickly; others may be interested in longer-term training - provide financial support to make this possible

## **2. What supports/systems do you see as necessary to address these issues?**

- EI qualification rules are too stringent and some require help in manoeuvring through the system (immediate need)
- Integrate supports and services in one location, e.g. EI support through the College, child care services available at employment support centers
- Comprehensive healthcare (hospitals) available in every community
  - supports everyone in the community, particularly seniors and young families
  - Employers benefit as they are able to attract employees to the area
- How do we predict and define retirement? New laws extend work life, economy is influencing people to work longer
- Better daycare services - 'untraditional' waitlists, so children can get in when employment is secured by parent
- Skills Assessment tool to enable laid off workers to fully assess their skill sets
- Economic Development - smart growth and grow south - is access to services matching where the growth is or going to be? Connecting people and services without excessive travel (long term)
- Apprenticeship system needs to change: issues exist around access and process (simplify); enable employers to participate

## **3. What labour market information/tools can help you plan for your workforce/members?**

- Collection of data that is specific to sectors and presented in an easy to understand way
  - identify the emerging sectors and their occupations and provide financial and political support to assist them to grow
- Information on major construction projects planned for the future will provide valuable information on employment prospects for trades people
- Get a handle on the shift from full to part time employment - by sector; Where are the jobs? What are the jobs? What do they pay? (immediate need)
- Description of service sector jobs and wages - understand what the new economy looks like and what percentage of jobs are lower pay - why do we assume service sector jobs are low pay? (immediate need)