

*****CLO'S December 2007 E-BULLETIN*****

Dear CLO members,

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to present its December 2007 Members' E-Communiqué on Employment Ontario

A Year in Review

The year 2007 was considered one of transition for Employment Ontario. Since the launch of the integrated employment and training system in January, much of the work has occurred behind the scenes. A lot of internal work happened involving the transfer of federal programs and staff, setting up regional offices, and trying to maintain a seamless and uninterrupted level of service delivery to clients.



There are currently 20 different programs being delivered under the Employment Ontario banner, benefiting 520,000 Ontarians and 83,000 employers making it the largest employment and training structure in North America.¹

By coordinating all labour market programs and services in Ontario under the Employment Ontario umbrella, the provincial government is working towards its goal of having *"the most educated people and highly skilled workforce in North America in order to build the province's competitive advantage."*

Key Employment Ontario outcomes were set and achieved in 2007 including:

- Multi-lingual information service available by phone
- Consultations with stakeholders about a new service delivery model
- Improved information and referral across ministries and government

Throughout the transfer and transition stage, agencies heard many references to Employment Ontario's third-party delivery agencies. This refers to the non-government agencies that the government contracted with to deliver its programs and services. In its first year, Employment Ontario had a network of over 1,200 third-party service providers.² These included colleges, school boards, community-based non-profit organizations, private organizations such as career colleges, and union training centres.

¹ Presentation by Sherree Mahood, Director, Western Region, MTCU. Waterloo, Nov. 2, 2007

² Presentation by Sherree Mahood, Director, Western Region, MTCU. Walkerton, May 25, 2007

Over 40 special projects were also funded in 2007 to ensure an effective and relevant training system, service excellence and public satisfaction.³ The projects were spread amongst the program and policy branches of Employment Ontario, including:

- Training and skills development (i.e. LBS, Apprenticeship)
- Labour Market services (i.e. Job Connect, Summer programs)
- Community Planning (i.e. Local Training Boards, Adjustment Advisory Program)
- Employment Benefits and Income Support (i.e. Employment Assistance Services, Skills Development)

These projects will continue into the next year as Employment Ontario leaves its transition stage and moves towards transformation.

New Program Design on the Forefront

Currently, and in the next year, Employment Ontario is looking at the program design delivered by third-party delivery agencies, particularly focusing on outcomes-based, client-centred models. As part of the consultation and assessment process, service delivery is being looked at from the client's perspective, specifically how clients currently access services and how clients find out about services. It is expected that service delivery models will be presented in the spring of 2008 as part of a community consultation process.⁴

Agencies can start thinking about the input they can provide to a consultation process. Examples of questions that can be asked when looking at new program design are:

1. What is the labour market need we have to address?
2. What currently exists to meet the need?
3. Who are the affected clients (individuals, employers, communities, others)?
4. What are we trying to achieve?
5. What services/interventions/programs/incentives would achieve the outcome for the identified client group?
6. How would we know we've achieved the outcome?
7. What would be the most effective delivery method?
8. What information would we need to capture of the program, its participants and its results?

A Program Design Service Delivery External Stakeholder Reference Group (Employment) has been established. Its purpose is to advise the MTCU Program Design Unit on provincial program policies and design for customer-oriented programs and services that enhance labour market outcomes. Among some of its key roles, this group will provide input to, and validation of, key components of program design such as the principles and criteria that guide EO program design, the key characteristics of interventions, programs and incentives that support labour

³ November 7, 2007 letter to stakeholders from Kevin French, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employment Training Division

⁴ Presentation by Sherree Mahood, Director, Western Region, MTCU. Waterloo, Nov. 2, 2007

market attachment and sustainable employment, and the indicators and measures of evaluation and success.

In October 2007 CLO was asked to send a representative to this important reference group. CLO has selected Carynne Arnold, Executive Director of Kingston Literacy to serve on this group. Carynne brings a strong perspective of adult and family literacy and program delivery that includes small group and one-to-one to learners with independence, training and employment goals. Carynne is also a CLO board member and the treasurer of CLO. Carynne is an extremely well-respected and knowledgeable literacy practitioner and we are proud to have her represent CLO and literacy on this important committee. Carynne is well-connected locally, regionally and provincially.

Other representatives to this group include all other deliverers of Employment Ontario services: including the broader College sector (i.e. Colleges Ontario), apprenticeship, employment counseling service providers, Job Connect, and the broader school board sector. MTCU also factored in regional representation, representation from both small and large communities and representation from streams of current employment deliverers (not for profit, for profit, college, school boards, youth, adult, francophone, etc.).

CLO is honoured to be asked to serve on this committee. Among other input, we will bring our perspective of the critical importance of the three main goals paths in literacy: independence, further training and education, and employment. We will highlight the importance of literacy as a key foundational skill within the Employment Ontario system.

Reference group members are to be actual program deliverers. They are not required to represent their entire sector (given the impossibility of such a task!), but rather they are asked to give informed advise on program design to the best of their abilities based on their own experience and knowledge. MTCU will also use others channels to gather information and make decisions around program design issues.

All information and resources from this reference group will be posted on the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway site (www.eopg.ca) pending translation into both English and French.

Community Planning

Another focus for the coming year will be around community planning. Employment Ontario has provided many tools and promotional materials to complement the planning process, including an Information and Referral Guide. The guide, updated in October 2007, is available on-line through the Employment Ontario website and now includes Ontario Works and federal Service Canada information.

Again, the new planning process, or service mapping as it has sometimes been referred to, is envisioned from the client's standpoint. Employment Ontario agencies are being encouraged to work together, to look closely at labour market information, and to understand and be aware of all the services needed by a client in relation to his or her goal path. In many communities the starting point is developing a common language since the terminology used in the former federal programs often means something different in the provincial programs.

Employment Ontario consists of four regions—Central, Western, Eastern and Northern. The challenge for MTCU, and its funded agencies, is to facilitate a local perspective on planning and priority setting and also ensure consistency and equity across the province.⁵

Sherree Mahood, Western Region Director, addressed Employment Ontario agencies at a meeting in Waterloo in November 2007, and assured those in attendance that the role LBS can play in the integrated training system is attainable. She said a ‘true planning process’ is expected to be rolled out in Spring 2008, and that currently, third-party delivery agencies, as well as Ministry staff, need to look at how they can “leverage current expertise and knowledge and be able to respond to community needs.”

Employer involvement will also hold a focus in the enhanced planning process. One of the over 40 projects referenced earlier is looking at how to improve planning and coordination services to employers. As well, a pilot project in the Durham region involves distributing the EO Information and Referral Guide to over 1,300 employers to solicit feedback on how to increase the guide’s usefulness to employers.

Strong Emphasis Still On Information and Referral

In 2007, agencies were told to focus on their information and referral services, especially with how they fit within the Employment Ontario training system. This will continue to be a focus into 2007-08. In fact, in the next fiscal year, agencies will be asked to collect and report on baseline data so that standards for information and referral can be developed.⁶

Potential indicators and measures around information and referral services will be developed with input from Ministry staff and third-party stakeholders. Ministry field consultants will continue to monitor agencies on this service while any new ministry expectations and reporting procedures will be introduced as part of the annual business planning process.

The Information and Referral Resource Guide provides details about the current expectations and outcomes for this delivery function, but the guiding principals listed state Employment Ontario agencies need to ensure their information and referral services are:

- Accessible
- Accountable
- Client-centred
- Flexible
- Results-based

Previous Community Literacy of Ontario communiqués and electronic bulletins have provided more detailed information and step-by-step suggestions for LBS agencies related to providing information and referral services. You can find CLO’s information on our website at www.nald.ca/clo (click under MTCU initiatives).

⁵ Employment Ontario Central Region Stakeholder Meetings Final Report, October 2007

⁶ Employment Ontario Information and Referral Resource Guide, October 2007.

Along with the Resource Guide, the Employment Ontario website (www.ontario.ca/employmentontario) has also been updated to reflect new information and stakeholders. It's important for agencies to check the site regularly to ensure its information is correct and up-to-date.

The Employment Ontario Partners Gateway website (www.eopg.ca) provides step-by-step instruction for updating the EO database so that your agency information is correct. As a brief overview, the steps are as follows:

1. Select the "Find Employment and Training Services" tab at the right of the page of the Employment Ontario homepage.
2. On the "Find employment services in your area" page, select the city and program name from the drop down lists, and click "GO".
3. When the results appear, click on "Suggest a Record" to add new or missing information.
4. Click on the name of the service provider, then click on "Update Info" at the top of the screen to change information that is needed.
5. Use the "Notes" section, to describe why information should be deleted.
6. Complete the "Update information" form.

Changes can take 7-14 days to be validated and processed and agencies may be contacted for confirmation or to get more information.

Looking Forward

MTCU is looking at 2008 as its 'transformation' year. Specific plans include:

- Working with delivery partners to further its transition and transformation activities
- Continuing to build a regional delivery structure, supported by province-wide strategic policy
- Developing a local labour market planning framework
- Implementing strategies to support the rapid re-employment initiative

MTCU has committed to making no major changes to existing programs or funding arrangement in 2007-08, but will be looking at changes in policy, administration (including a new integrated information management system), and physical infrastructure which includes fully functional regional and head office locations.⁷

Umbrella organization such as CLO will continue to be part of the consultation process through committees like the Service Delivery Advisory Group. The Ministry will work closely with these groups to explore training and employment-related opportunities for the coming and future years.

⁷ Presentation by Sherree Mahood, Director, Western Region, MTCU. Walkerton, May 25, 2007

Employment Ontario Information Sharing on AlphaCom

From November 2007 until February 2008, Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to announce that Cindy Davidson will be sharing information about Employment Ontario on CLO's AlphaCom discussion called "Community Based Literacy". Cindy is a former network ED, MTCU program consultant, and she has been involved with a wide variety of provincial and regional literacy projects and initiatives. This is a closed discussion (to ensure a free exchange of ideas and information) for the staff of community literacy agencies only. Community-based literacy practitioners who have not already joined the Community-Based Discussion group on AlphaCom can contact Joan at CLO (clo@bellnet.ca or 705-733-2312) to be added to this dynamic discussion group.
