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COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO E-COMMUNIQUE – JANUARY 2009

In this January 2009 E-Communiqué, Community Literacy of Ontario provides an overview of some of the Employment Ontario projects currently underway in our province.

“HANDBOOK OF EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO TERMS AND REFERENCES” CESBA (ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATORS)

By Jane Barber

In January, 2008, CESBA (www.cesba.com/) received funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to develop a handbook of key terms and references related to Employment Ontario (EO). Such a resource would greatly assist Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) agencies and other Employment Ontario partners in the delivery of information and referral services and support clear communication between stakeholders when discussing Employment Ontario programs and services, and policies and practices.

In the planning phase of the project, CESBA posed the following three questions:

1. What terms and references are key in the effective delivery of information and referral services?
2. What additional information could enhance understanding (i.e. supply the "ahaa" factor) or assist with decision-making on the part of EO agencies?
3. What does Employment Ontario staff need to know and "get" in order to feel confident in the proper use of particular terms and references when communicating with others?

The selection of terms, preparation of text and organization of information was a collaborative effort on behalf of a team of five LBS experts, all with considerable expertise and experience in LBS field development work. The information in this handbook falls into these six categories:

1. Terms and References linked to Employment Ontario
2. Programs, Services and Incentives linked to Employment Ontario
3. Government Partners linked to Employment Ontario
4. Support Organizations Linked to Employment Ontario
5. Communicating and linking with Employment Ontario Partners

6. CIPMS - Continuous Improvement Performance Management System: *The Common Link*

The *Handbook of Employment Ontario Terms and References* contains definitions or descriptions of key terms and references with an accompanying context piece which offers further insight by way of example, elaboration, or further detail and, where possible, web links to more information.

This valuable handbook is available in both English and French. Printed copies of the handbook were mailed to all LBS agencies. As well, an online version of the handbook can be found at:

www.lbspractitionertraining.com/employment_ontario_&_LBS/employmentont&LBS_main.htm.

**“ABORIGINAL INCLUSION IN EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO: DEVELOPING A
NEW UNDERSTANDING”
ONTARIO NATIVE LITERACY COALITION**

By Marnie McIntosh

Through funding from the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund, the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition (ONLC) hosted a project called “Aboriginal Inclusion in Employment Ontario: Developing a New Understanding”. The goal of this project was simple; to teach Employment Ontario staff more about Aboriginal people and their culture to help them better understand their needs and therefore work more effectively with them as clients.

To meet this goal ONLC held a series of regional training workshops based on a comprehensive resource kit containing background information on the culture and history of Aboriginal people along with advice and tips for Native and non-Native EO staff who work with, or might be asked to work with, Aboriginal clients.

Although fewer workshops were held than originally hoped for, they were well attended, drew a good mixture of EO personnel and local service providers, and the response was excellent.

Throughout this process ONLC made a point of trying to model and embed an Aboriginal approach by using a lower key, more informal agenda at the workshops and allowing participants to orally evaluate their experience in a modified ‘Talking Circle’ at the end of each session. The visuals embedded in the CD cover and the content of the resource kit were also wonderful ways to show positive elements of Aboriginal culture.

The obvious and immediate impact of this project was to provide information to EO partner agencies and workers on how to work more effectively with Aboriginal clients to create a WIN/WIN situation for all involved. Feedback was extremely positive with many agencies telling ONLC that this is the type of tool they had wanted access to for many years and that it answered many questions they had.

Knowing that only a small fraction of EO employees could be accommodated in the workshops, ONLC completed the project by mailing out almost 600 copies of the Resource

Kit CD to EO offices across the province and has offered to present additional workshops upon request.

For more information email onlcadm@bellnet.ca or call the ONLC office at 1-800-971-2255 or 519-371-5594. The project summary is also available at the ONLC website at: www.onlc.ca.

“STRENGTHENING THE FRONT DOOR OF EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO” PROJECT READ LITERACY NETWORK

By Anne Ramsay

Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington managed the project ‘*Strengthening the Front Door of Employment Ontario: A Regional Model for Training and Development*’ from March-December 2008 with funding from the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund (EODNF). Project READ’s overall vision was to enhance the existing information and referral network in its region amongst Employment Ontario agencies.

The outcomes by the end of the project were that participants would have:

- Increased knowledge of Employment Ontario system of employment and training programs
- Understanding of how to implement customer-centred service via referrals and individualized training/employment plans
- Increased awareness and knowledge of local Employment Ontario services including the development of referral partnerships

Objectives were to:

- Constitute a Training Advisory Committee consisting of six representatives, one each from LBS, Job Connect, EAS, Apprenticeship Program, MTCU and Project READ
- Conduct a needs assessment with Employment Ontario agencies in Waterloo-Wellington for training topics based on the ultimate goal of developing an effective and efficient service delivery network
- Coordinate a training schedule – a series of five workshops with outcomes relating to the ultimate goal
- Conduct evaluation with all participants to document the changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as changes in future practice
- Complete a “Guide to Training for Employment Ontario Agencies” and disseminate electronically

Project Highlights:

To accomplish the overall outcomes and objectives, we identified the key skills, knowledge and attitudes that supported the provision of information, referrals and assessments. Once those were identified, we developed a schedule of topics including networking opportunities that supported the development of those skills. Over the course of the project, we accomplished the following:

- 130 training assessment surveys completed by staff from amongst 60 agencies to determine the 5 key workshop topics
- Advisory Committee consisting of key stakeholder representatives to guide the project
- Eight workshop sessions (face-to-face) and 2 online workshops provided to 211 participants from a variety of MTCU funded agencies and other community agencies
- The majority of the participants indicated the workshop topics had an important link to their program's core functions, their role as part of the EO system, and their program's ability to meet funding expectations
- Most participants agreed participating in the workshop increased their ability to fulfill their program's core function and to be an effective part of the EO system
- The project and the training enhanced the region's information and referral system as indicated through the increase in participant skills, the commitment to use tools and strategies provided in the training over the next six months

We developed a final Guide to Coordinating and Delivering Training to Employment Ontario Staff (which will be available for download at the Project READ website at www.projectread.ca later in January 2009). The guide includes all templates, planning steps and key recommendations for providing workshops in other regions of the province. For more information please refer to the Guide or contact Anne Ramsay at anne@projectread.ca

“GETTING CONNECTED” PROJECT TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

By Andrea Dickinson

Since 2006, the **Tri-County Literacy Network** (TCL) has taken a leadership role in bringing together Employment Ontario service providers in the tri-county region of Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex.

Getting Connected I was held in partnership with the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board in Wallaceburg on June 16, 2006 for 44 Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and Apprenticeship service providers from Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton. A similar forum was held in partnership with the South Western Ontario Industry-Education Council in Windsor on June 2, 2006 for 28 Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and Apprenticeship service providers from Windsor-Essex. The forum was designed to build rapport and dialogue between MTCU funded delivery agencies in order to increase and improve information and referrals and to discuss needs for future relationship building. The opening address was provided by the Apprenticeship Service Delivery Manager, stakeholder presentations were provided by Apprenticeship, Job Connect and Literacy and Basic Skills and then there was an opportunity for discussion groups with a mixture of representation at the tables from Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and Apprenticeship. Networking was identified as the most beneficial aspect of the forums and an overwhelming interest in meeting again on a bi-annually or annual basis was expressed in the evaluations.

In response to Getting Connected I, we held **Getting Connected II** in partnership with the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board on October 20, 2006 in Chatham for 60 Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and Apprenticeship service providers from Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex. We invited Karen Geraci to present and facilitate discussion on essential skills, resources on essential skills and the application of essential

skills for literacy, apprenticeship and employment. Evaluation feedback was very positive and indicated an interest in further incorporation of essential skills into service delivery.

Getting Connected III was a professional development opportunity titled "Essential Skills – The Common Thread". It was held in partnership with the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and the Literacy and Basic Skills programs on June 6, 2008 in Sarnia for 59 Employment Ontario staff including Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect, Apprenticeship, Employment Assistance Services as well as Employment Benefits and Support Measures staff. A similar forum was held in partnership with the South Western Ontario Industry-Education Council and Literacy and Basic Skills programs in Windsor on June 13, 2008 for 62 Windsor-Essex Employment Ontario staff. This was an opportunity to learn about essential skills and how to integrate this concept into the Employment Ontario service delivery for client and learners. Sandra Hennessey presented on essential skills, facilitated roundtable discussions on essential skills profile case studies and participants had the opportunity for networking amongst the different agencies and programs. Evaluations were very positive with 97% (combined results from both forums based on 101 evaluations submitted) rating the session as highly increasing their understanding of the workshop subject, 86 % indicated that they highly expected to use the workshop information, 97% felt that the workshop highly increased their program's ability to fulfill its Employment Ontario role and 96% thought the overall quality of the workshop was high. There was a strong interest expressed in the evaluations to meet again to learn more about the services provided by the different agencies and discuss how we can work together on common issues such as unemployment and poverty.

TCL's Getting Connected projects were funded through a variety of sources. Getting Connected I was funded by Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, South Western Ontario Industry-Education Council, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Getting Connected II was funded by the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and participant fees. Getting Connected III was funded by the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, South Western Ontario Industry-Education Council, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Tri-County Literacy and Basic Skills programs.

For further information, please contact Andrea Dickinson at the Tri-County Literacy Network at 519-355-1771 or toll-free at 1-877-333-3833 or by email at a.dickinson@cogeco.net or via their website at: www.tcln.on.ca/

"ENGAGING THE FRONTLINES" PROJECT COLLEGE SECTOR COMMITTEE FOR ADULT UPGRADING

By Lynn Wallace

The College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC), Heads of Apprenticeship Training (HAT) and College Sector Employment Services (CSES), which represents college-delivered Job Connect and Employment Assistance Services (EAS) programming, partnered through funding from the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund to promote the closer integration of college upgrading, apprenticeship, Job Connect and EAS programming. These three provincial college organizations have been working together since the spring of 2006 to promote closer program ties and to prepare colleges for the implementation of Employment Ontario. In June 2007 they organized "Riding the Wave" a provincial conference attended by staff from all four programs at all 24 colleges.

During the spring of 2008, more than 600 management and frontline staff attended 22 individual college events. These college forums provided management and frontline staff an opportunity to discuss improved referral processes and integration of services, to identify additional resources for students and clients and to network and gain additional insights into the Employment Ontario programs offered at each college. Evaluations indicated that 97% of participants identified their knowledge about EO programs and services at their college had increased and the college referral process would likely improve as a result of the event.

These individual training sessions were followed by four regional training days attended by 125 representatives of the 24 colleges. Each region developed a **TOP 10 Actions** list. Actions identified by all four regions included: developing and documenting client pathways and service flowcharts, improving information for prospective clients and students, enhancing marketing and internal communications, and providing additional staff development.

Three bulletins in French and English were produced summarizing the events, highlighting best practice and identifying next steps. In addition, individual college newsletters were developed which summarized the actions the group had agreed to. To view the "*Engaging the Frontlines*" report and bulletins go to www.collegeupgradingon.ca Current Initiatives and Publications/Employment Ontario. To read the "*Riding the Wave*" report and documents go to the Provincial Conference Reports section of the CSC website.

"EASING TRANSITIONS OF CLIENTS BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO AGENCIES PROJECT" LITERACY LINK NIAGARA

By Ashley Hoath

In hopes of expanding our current information and referral to our Employment Ontario partners that specialize in employment preparation, Literacy Link Niagara (LLN) (www.literacylinkniagara.org/) has been funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to conduct some important research.

Through research conducted in its "Easing Transitions of Clients between Employment Ontario Agencies" project, LLN hopes to better understand the literacy levels necessary to fully participate in the employment preparation programs offered. This knowledge will help ensure that literacy learners referred to employment programs will be appropriate and more likely to be successful.

Short term outcomes will include:

- Clearer understanding of literacy needs required for EO referral
- Increased appropriate referrals to EO agencies
- Identification of barriers and obstacles for clients moving between EO agencies
- Enhanced working relationship with EO partners

Long term outcomes may be:

- Changes to EO system to provide greater access for clients

- Heightened client mobility between EO programs

For more information, please visit the website of Literacy Link Niagara at:
www.literacylinkniagara.org/

“JOB DEVELOPMENT FUNDAMENTALS ONLINE TRAINING PROJECT” ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CENTRES

By Susan Kachmar

Job Developers are responsible for bridging the gap between unemployed job seekers and the work available in their communities. They play a critical role in assessing and matching the skills and energy of the available labour force with the needs of employer. Up until this program, there was little formal training available to assist the job developers. With the funding support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres saw this need and proactively filled the gap.

Working with Conestoga College and an advisory committee of practitioners and managers, a 45 credit-hour course, with a hybrid-delivery design, was developed. The result is a unique professional development course designed with:

- College-level curriculum
- Face-to-face as well as on-line, distance education for a total of 45 credit hours.
- Suitability for the novice or veteran job developers.

Specific topics covered include:

- *Skill requirements for successful job development*
- *How to work with diverse client groups*
- *Developing strong employer relationships*
- *Creating a comprehensive employer base*
- *Selling and marketing technique*
- *Enhance skills to make appropriate clients referrals to employers*
- *Improve placement retention strategies*

The response to and evaluation of the Job Developers Institute has been awesome with the April and September 2008 Institutes at maximum enrollment. Clearly, importance of professional development for job developers is an important priority in challenge economic times.

Please contact Susan at OAYEC for further information via email at skachmar@oayec.org or by telephone at 416-323-9557. You can also visit the OAYEC website at: www.oayec.org/.

“EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO AND LITERACY – ONLINE TRAINING” PROJECT COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO

By Joanne Kaattari

Thanks to funding from the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund, Community Literacy of Ontario researched and wrote the curriculum for an online, self-study training module called "*Employment Ontario and Literacy*." This training module is available on CLO's highly popular *Literacy Basics* self-directed training website (www.nald.ca/literacybasics/employ-o/intro/01.htm).

This module is available any time, any where, free-of-charge to literacy practitioners and other Employment Ontario stakeholders across Ontario. CLO's "*Employment Ontario*" online training module will help users to become familiar with the basics of Employment Ontario. In addition, it will provide tools, resources, success stories, and information on effective partnership development and marketing within the Employment Ontario system.

There are three main chapters in CLO's "*Employment Ontario*" online training module.

Section 1, **Introduction to Employment Ontario**, includes information on:

- Overview of Employment Ontario
- Service Categories, Programs and Services
- Literacy within the Employment Ontario Network
- Employment Ontario Information Service
- Integrating Local Labour Market Planning
- Community Information Resource and Referral Service
- Success Stories, Tools and Resources

Section 2, **Employment Ontario Partnerships**, includes information on:

- Introduction to Partnerships
- Partnership Benefits and Roles
- Creating Successful Partnerships
- Partnership Agreements
- Success Stories, Tools and Resources

Section 3, **Employment Ontario and Marketing**, includes information on:

- The New Marketing Environment
- Best Practices in Marketing
- The Marketing Circle
- Employment Ontario and Marketing
- Success Stories, Tools and Resources

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to announce the creation of a new online discussion forum for our organizational members. Come and join your fellow community-based literacy agencies and discuss resources, instructional strategies, learner support,

volunteer management, professional development and other key topics in a private, user-friendly online environment.

For more information, please see www.nald.ca/litweb/province/on/clo/forum.htm