

**\*\*\*CLO'S June 2007 E-BULLETIN\*\*\***

Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to present an E-Communiqué on:

- #1. CLO's New Website
- #2. Employment Ontario

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**CLO's New Website!**

The board of directors and staff of Community Literacy of Ontario are pleased to launch our revised website. Please visit [www.nald.ca/clo](http://www.nald.ca/clo) to check out our new look and our new information!

You will find information on:

- Literacy in Ontario
- Ontario's community literacy agencies
- CLO and its various Projects
- Newsletters and E-Bulletins
- MTCU Initiatives (including clearly written and up-to-date information on Employment Ontario, Continuous Improvement Performance Management System, and Academic Upgrading Partnerships)
- Quotes from learners, staff and volunteers from various Ontario literacy agencies!

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**What is Employment Ontario?**

On January 1, 2007 the Ministry of Training, College and Universities (MTCU) launched Employment Ontario - Ontario's Employment and Training Network.

Through Employment Ontario, 1,200 third-party service providers are offering labour market and training services at approximately 900 locations across the province. Employment Ontario represents a combination of 17 programs and services offered by the Ontario government and programs previously offered by the federal government. Total public investment in Employment Ontario amounts to nearly one billion dollars. Third party service providers include community-based organizations, colleges, school boards, union training centres and private trainers.

Employment Ontario creates a one-stop training and employment system that has the capacity to serve nearly one million clients. It is designed to streamline and improve access to programs and services by individuals and employers.

Employment Ontario includes all the programs under the Labour Market and Training Division of MTCU, including the federal programs that were transferred to the province's responsibility in January 2007. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs are part of Employment Ontario. Other programs include:

- Job Connect
- Apprenticeship
- Pre-Apprenticeship

- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship program
- Adjustment Advisory program
- Services for New Canadians

The above programs provide services in the area of training and skills development. Employment Ontario also includes programs related to labour market and community needs such as:

- Summer Company program
- Local Training and Adjustment Boards
- Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit

Some of the new programs that were transferred to the province from Skills Canada (HRSDC) are more closely related to employment benefits, such as:

- Skills Development
- Targeted Wage Subsidies
- Self-Employment
- Job Creation Partnerships

Lastly, there are programs included under the Employment Ontario umbrella strictly through an information and referral role. These programs, such as Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), provide training and employment supports and benefits, but are funded by other ministries, in this case the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The goal of Employment Ontario is to “provide clients with the support and information they need, regardless of their point of entry.” (*Source: Employment Ontario Brand Kit Info Sheet for Third Party Service Providers, MTCU, December 2006*).

Information on all the employment and training services is available to clients in person at one of 87 designated Employment Ontario locations, through the Employment Ontario Hotline 1-800-387-5656, and online at [www.ontario.ca/employmentontario](http://www.ontario.ca/employmentontario).

## **Background**

Agencies first heard about an integrated employment and training system in the Ontario government’s May 2004 budget. By 2005, there were discussions and consultations about a ‘one-stop’ model that would provide access to information about all provincial training and employment services regardless of the point of entry.

At the same time, the federal government was exploring a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach to its training and employment services.

In November 2005, the provincial and federal governments signed the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), which allowed plans for an integrated training and employment system in Ontario to move forward. Under the terms of the LMDA, the federal government transferred funding and resources linked to employment supports and benefits, to the provincial government. MTCU, with its new Labour

Market and Development Branch, accepted the transfer of these programs in January 2007. For more information on the LMDA or Labour Market Partnership Agreement visit [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/labourmarket.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/labourmarket.html).

In the summer of 2006, MTCU decided it was necessary to 'brand' this integrated employment and training system. There would be over 1,300 service locations, providing a wide range of programs and potential clients needed to know where to find information about these services, how to access them, and to know who provides them.

The new Employment Ontario brand helps Ontarians identify programs that have not previously been known as an Ontario government service. It also underlines the changes that have been made to the employment and training system as a whole and "captures Ontario's vision for creating the best labour market and training system in North America.". (*Source: Employment Ontario Update, Letter from ADMs, November 21, 2006*).

### **What Does This Mean for Literacy Agencies?**

Before Employment Ontario was launched, Literacy and Basics Skills programs fell under the Literacy and Basic Skills Unit of the Skills Investment Branch of MTCU. That Unit and Branch no longer exist within MTCU. LBS now falls under the Labour Market Training Division. However, the current policies and guidelines of the LBS program have not changed as a result of Employment Ontario.

The primary role all Employment Ontario agencies are expected to play in this first year of implementation is in providing information and referral services. The expectation is that agencies will provide potential clients with information about the types of programs and services available in their community. They will then be able to direct them to the most appropriate entry point into the training and employment system. It is not expected that agencies will assist clients in contacting or making appointments with other referral agencies though that may be a policy of your agency.

Agencies can enhance their information and referral services by:

- Reviewing the 'Information and Referral Guide' that was distributed electronically to all Employment Ontario agencies in December 2006 (See AlphaCom's "Info-LBS" message of November 6, 2006 called "Resources to Enhance Current Information Provision and Referral Practices")
- Visiting the MTCU website [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu) and the Employment Ontario website [www.ontario.ca/employmentontario](http://www.ontario.ca/employmentontario) and becoming familiar with the content and search features, specifically the link to programs and services
- Ensuring your current information and referral protocols include the new services available to adults in the Employment Ontario network
- Ensuring that all staff who provide information and referral services are up-to-date on the new Employment Ontario services
- Displaying the Employment Ontario signs and brochures prominently so the public is aware that you are part of this new training and employment system

While LBS agencies have not received additional core funding to provide enhanced information and referral linked to Employment Ontario, one-time funding was made

available to agencies in January 2007. The funding was allocated to agencies and networks to enhance their capacity to respond to adjustment situations and meet the needs of laid off or job-threatened workers, and “to maximize their ability to operate effectively in the new Employment Ontario framework”. Agencies were encouraged to use the funding to carry out specific activities including the “establishment of operating protocols with training deliverers to ensure enhanced referrals can take place”. (Source: *Letter to LBS agencies from Anne Rachlis, Senior LBS Manager, December 21, 2006*).

## **Sample Referral**

Below is an example of how a referral may occur:

1. A potential client contacts an Employment Ontario agency either by phone or in person.
2. The client asks for help based on a specific need.
3. If the client knows what he or she is looking for they can be referred to a specific program or to self-assistance such as the Employment Ontario website.
4. If clients don't self-identify, agency staff can ask a few questions to help determine specific needs and the most suitable program.
5. Based on the answers, a referral can be made to another program or a more thorough intake assessment may be done for intake into your program.

It should be noted that some programs in the Employment Ontario network are only available once a formal assessment is completed at an Employment Assessment Service Centre. These programs are usually tied to employment benefits such as Skills Development, Targeted Wage Subsidy or Self-Employment Benefits. In these cases, a 'return to work action plan' is developed and a referral to a specific program is made by the Assessment Centre. (Source: *Labour Market and Training Division Information and Referral Resource Package, December 2006*).

LBS agencies still need to complete their own assessments with referred or potential clients to determine eligibility.

## **Sample Questions**

To help direct people to the most suitable program, LBS agencies may need to update or add to their current intake forms and protocols. To determine some specific paths, agencies may want to consider some of the following questions:

1. *Are you in immediate financial need?*

This could determine whether a client needs to be referred to Ontario Works or other programs providing financial assistance.

2. *What is your current employment situation? Have you been laid off? Have you applied for EI?*

This could help determine if the client is eligible for Employment Insurance/Benefits and needs to be referred to an Employment Resource Centre where their eligibility

would be reviewed.

3. *What have you been doing in your search for work? Have you run into any problems during your job search? What are your current skills and job experiences?*

This can give you a sense of any challenges the person may be facing and could help determine whether they should be referred to any agency that provides employment counseling or skills upgrading such as Job Connect or Literacy and Basic Skills.

4. *Are you a recent immigrant?*

This may result in a referral to the Ministry of Citizenship to determine if the person is eligible to work in Ontario.

5. *How old are you? Are you a recent graduate?*

This helps determine whether the person needs to be referred to a program that is geared towards youth or adults.

6. *Where do you live? What is your postal code?*

This will help you use the Employment Ontario referral guide or website to make a referral to a location that is most accessible to the person.

### **Where Does Literacy Fit Within the Employment Ontario System?**

Within the Employment Ontario framework there are four main service categories:

1. Services for Apprenticeship
2. Services for Job Seekers
3. Services for Employers
4. Services for Employees

Anyone using the Employment Ontario referral resources, such as the website, can view these categories to see the list of services available. Most of the agencies listed are under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, though some are under other Ministries such as Community and Social Services (Ontario Works) and Small Business and Entrepreneurship (Summer Company).

The Literacy and Basic Skills program is listed under all but one of the service categories. It is not currently listed under Services for Employers.

LBS is considered an area of 'skills enhancement' and 'on-the-job training/workplace skills' in the Employment Ontario system and is promoted on the Employment Ontario website as a program that *"provides free literacy, numeracy and essential skills services that help individuals achieve their goals related to further education or training, employment or increased independence"*.

This means that a person contacting any Employment Ontario agency may be referred to an LBS program if during the initial intake the person identifies he or she needs to upgrade basic skills. Other Employment Ontario programs that may be

appropriate for this person could include Apprenticeship, Bridge Training, Summer Job Service, or Employment Assistance Service.

Though LBS is not currently listed under the Services for Employers category, it's quite possible employers may still contact an LBS agency for information. Again, a few simple questions may determine the employer is in fact looking for services for employees and therefore may be interested in the services offered by your program. According to the Information and Referral Resource Package of December 2006 some sample questions that can be asked to an employer include:

1. What are your training needs?
2. Are you looking for assistance in recruiting new employees?
3. Are you looking for financial assistance?
4. Are you looking to develop critical skill shortages?
5. Are you looking for programs and resources related to economic trends and human resource planning?

The answers to these questions will determine whether you are able to offer services or whether you need to refer them to other services within Employment Ontario such as Apprenticeship Tax Credit, Employer Signing Bonus or Adjustment Advisory Program.

In line with the launching of Employment Ontario, MTCU underwent its own transformation, moving to a more regional model of service delivery. As noted earlier, the Literacy and Basic Skills Unit and the Skills Development Branch no longer exist. LBS is now within the Labour Market and Training (LMT) Division. There are other divisions responsible for Postsecondary Education, Corporate Management, Transition Manager and IT Community Services.

Within the LMT Division, there are 8 branches including four regional branches--- Central, East, North, and West. The other four branches deal with areas of policy development and service standards. Employment Ontario agencies funded through MTCU, including Literacy and Basic Skills, are supported by one of the four regional branches, depending on the geographical location of the agency. For details on geographical boundaries and other divisions of MTCU contact your MTCU field consultant.

Each regional branch is headed by a regional director and also includes managers of resources and planning, regional program managers, and service delivery managers. LBS field consultants now report to the service delivery managers in their respective regions.

### **How Does The Employment Ontario System Help the Learner?**

Potential or existing LBS learners don't need to understand the organizational structure of Employment Ontario or the Labour Market Training Division to get services. The goal is that through agencies' awareness of the system, staff can provide better information, clear pathways, and easier navigation among the full range of training and employment services.

Within this new system, it is hoped clients will have:

- Access to information about all provincial training and employment services

- regardless of the point of entry
- Consistent and streamlined intake into all training and employment services
- Consistent and equitable access to a broader range of training and employment services
- Consistent approach to service coordination and referral

### **What's Next For Employment Ontario Agencies?**

2007-08 is considered the 'transition year' for Employment Ontario. The primary focus for right now is to ensure they have enhanced information and referral services to include all the new and integrated programs.

Over the next fiscal year, MTCU will begin to collect baseline data so that guidelines for information and referral can be developed if needed. LBS agencies may be asked to provide input into potential indicators and measures for information and referral. As well, agencies may be asked to track referrals. While more information about this will be coming from MTCU and field consultants, agencies can begin tracking this activity at any time for their own planning processes.

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