

Our Voice

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Employment Ontario Bulletin

In early October 2008, Employment Ontario's Employment Services programs (Job Connect, Employment Assistance Services, etc.) received a service provider capacity survey. In this survey programs will submit information about their organizational capacity; their current performance; and other additional resources and strengths they bring to Employment Ontario. The surveys are due to MTCU on October 29, 2008. In November, regional offices will review the surveys, validate the information and finalize Regional Transition Plans.

When fully operational, Regional Transition Plans will identify which service providers will deliver employment services, based on a community assessment. The plans will also identify service providers who do not meet MTCU standards and/or community needs; areas where new (or different) service providers are needed (if any); and French language service requirements.

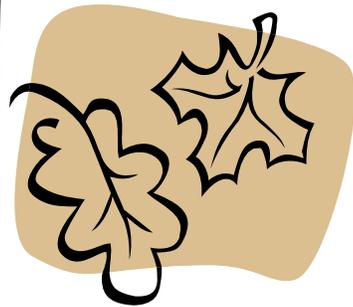
In January 2008, the first group (25%) of service providers will be selected to begin delivery under the new Employment Services model. The remaining 75% of providers will operate under status quo contracts to be negotiated in future months.

Literary and Basic Skills, which fall under Training Services, will **not** be affected by this phase of Employment Ontario transformation. However, learning more about the redesign of Employment Services under Employment Ontario is helpful to literacy agencies because in subsequent years, Training Services will also be assessed.

The best source of Employment Ontario information is the Employment Ontario Partner's Gateway website at www.eopg.ca. Recent information posted on the EOPG includes:

- ⇒ A slide deck on the status of Employment Ontario Transformation
- ⇒ A slide deck on Employment Services Implementation
- ⇒ Guidelines and FAQs for agencies filling out the capacity survey
- ⇒ Information on performance management in Employment Ontario

Source: Various MTCU documents on the EOPG website



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Integrated Local Labour Market Planning (ILLMP)

Under Employment Ontario, MTCU is moving towards a new way of conducting labour market planning called Integrated Local Labour Market Planning (ILLMP). ILLMP will operate under a partnership model, where local communities, MTCU, municipalities, and Services Canada will work together to assess and prioritize local training and labour market needs. The Ministry has developed the preliminary ILLMP framework which is available at www.eopg.ca.

Under ILLMP, Labour Market Planning Committees will be established to assess local trends, issues, opportunities, needs and gaps, as well as the results of the programming offered by Employment Ontario agencies in previous years. Based on this information, this committee will develop an “Integrated Local Labour Market Plan” that is endorsed and supported by community and business leaders and MTCU. This plan will inform program decisions, contribute to setting of budget priorities and identify new program development needs.

Members of the Labour Market Planning Committees will be recruited from various sectors, including business, education and training, health, social and community services, municipal government and labour.

When complete, MTCU is envisioning that there will be 25 planning areas under ILLMP across Ontario. However, initial implementation is beginning with seven demonstration pilot sites that are field-testing the draft ILLMP framework. The demonstration pilots sites are located in Durham, Niagara, Ottawa, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Windsor. Their work is supported by the Local Boards acting in the role of a secretariat. In two communities, no Local Board exists and other community organizations have taken on this role. The field tests began in summer 2008 and will continue until June 2009.

Labour Market Planning Committees will analyze local labour market data such as population, educational attainment, income levels, social indicators, employment trends, and access to education, training and employment. To assist with data collection and analysis, MTCU is in the process of purchasing customized 2006 census data sets for all 25 current local planning areas in Ontario. As well, the ministry will provide funding support for labour market analysis and data interpretation.

For more information on ILLMP please click on: www.eopg.ca/eng/illmp.html where you will find resources such as:

- ⇒ FAQs about ILLMP and the seven demonstration pilot sites
- ⇒ An overview of Local Labour Market Planning
- ⇒ An update on ILLMP from Assistant Deputy Minister Kevin French, MTCU



(Source: various MTCU resources on the EOPG website)

CLO's Online CIPMS Training on Centra

Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS) is an important part of Employment Ontario. In fact, performance management in Employment Ontario's new Employment Services model will be focused on the key CIPMS indicators of effectiveness, customer service and efficiency. Learning more about CIPMS implementation will be a valuable asset for LBS agencies.



In order to support agencies with the implementation of CIPMS, CLO is pleased to announce that a recorded version of the *ABCs of CIPMS* workshop is now available online via Contact North.

This two-hour online workshop includes an introduction to performance management and also looks closely at how CIPMS can be systematically implemented in Ontario literacy agencies. The workshop features tips and tools along with a number of forms that have been developed by literacy delivery agencies. MTCU's *Agency Assessment Guide* is also examined. Links for all documents and other CIPMS material are provided during the workshop.

The *ABCs of CIPMS* workshop includes a number of questions for reflection to help participants think about how they can incorporate ideas and strategies in their agencies.

The *ABCs of CIPMS* workshop can help prepare you to understand key concepts related to CIPMS. It will also provide you with strategies to effectively collect and analyze program data and use that data to identify areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. The workshop, and the accompanying tools and resources, provide information and ideas about how to plan, prepare for and implement CIPMS.

Anyone can freely access the *ABCs of CIPMS* recorded workshop via Contact North. You do not need a special account, and you do not need to download any software. The site is very secure and you can use it safely. Simply go to www.e-channel-login.ca and click on "public recordings" at the top left of the page. Then, click on the *ABCs of CIPMS* from the list of recorded workshops. Click on "playback" and then enter your e-mail address where requested. You will then be asked to enter your first and last name. Then, you will be given the choice of starting the playback immediately or downloading the recorded workshop to your hard drive. The choice is up to you.

CLO hopes that this informative workshop will be helpful to you.

Educational Interviews and Displaced Workers

By: Tamara Kaattari, Executive Director, Literacy Link South Central



Literacy practitioners are flexible; we're used to delivering programs and services when and where people need them. Sometimes, we need to create new services to respond to emerging needs. Such is the case with Rapid Re-employment.

The recent closures in the manufacturing and forestry sectors are taking their toll in western Ontario, as well as in other parts of the province. These closures are affecting families and communities, and those of us in the literacy field expected to see an increase in the number of clients accessing literacy programs, since we know that a good number of people who are impacted by plant closures do not have a Grade 12 education. In some parts of Ontario, displaced workers are beginning to make their way to adult literacy programs.

Workers who lose their jobs due to plant closures have much to think about and a lot of information to access and manage. They are presented with information on Employment Insurance, severance, retirement, employment services, and a host of other topics. Literacy practitioners began to wonder at what point displaced workers were being presented with information on upgrading and literacy. We began to suspect even if the workers were getting information on upgrading, that they may not be getting this information in a timely way. And let's face it - accessing educational services isn't always easy. The average worker is aware of Grade 12 as an educational destination, but what about GED (General Educational Development)? Pre-apprenticeship? ACE (Academic and Career Entrance)? English as a Second Language? How do you present information on this array of educational opportunities and on literacy as the gateway to many of these options to displaced workers, many of whom are focused on getting another job, preferably as quickly as possible?

In the western part of Ontario, we believe that the answer lies in Educational Interviews. Building on a model that was first tested in eastern Ontario in 1993, Literacy Link South Central (www.llsc.on.ca) in partnership with six other western regional networks received funding from Adjustment Services to conduct 400 Educational Interviews. We felt it was important that displaced workers be given the opportunity to discuss their educational backgrounds and goals with people who were from the educational sector, and that the workers be given this opportunity even before they are officially displaced.

The western regional literacy networks are not offering Literacy Interviews - many of the individuals we've interviewed so far never would have thought of themselves as literacy or upgrading candidates. Many never would have signed up for a Literacy Interview. By offering Educational Interviews, we believe that we can reduce the stigma that is associated with literacy. We are also acknowledging that upgrading and literacy are a part of a larger path for most people - a path that might include GED, ACE, high school credits or postsecondary options.

The Educational Interviews are also confidential. Workers meet one on one with someone from the literacy field. This gives displaced workers privacy to talk about their skill levels. Once an interviewer conducts an interview, we make a commitment to send information on displaced workers' educational options directly to workers' homes. This approach further ensures confidentiality.

Four to six weeks after the interview, the interviewer follows up with the workers to see if they have any more questions or if they have followed up on any of the recommendations.

In addition to providing displaced workers with timely, personalized information on their educational options, the Educational Interviews have other benefits as well. We provide aggregate reports to the Action Centres so they have a better idea of how many of their workers have identified literacy as a potential issue. Since Action Centres bring in training to benefit their workers, we believe it's important that they have an accurate idea of what sorts of training would benefit the workers. As a result of the Educational Interviews and the relationships that get built with individual Action Centres and Action Centre Coordinators, we have been able to talk about other literacy programs and services, such as Employment Track Express and plain language workshops.

Employment Track Express - a 60-hour program that provides displaced workers with labour market information and information on their Essential Skills could increasingly be a gateway to Second Career Strategy. The Educational Interviews have given literacy practitioners the chance to engage Action Centres with literacy and upgrading.

To date, we have conducted or have commitments to conduct 325 of the 400 interviews we were originally allotted, with several other companies with recent layoffs waiting in the wings. The interviews have been a huge success. They have helped to position literacy as a critical part of Rapid Re-employment.

The following regional literacy networks are partners on the Educational Interviews:

- ⇒ Tri-County Literacy Network
- ⇒ QUILL Learning Network
- ⇒ Project READ Literacy Network
- ⇒ Literacy Link Niagara
- ⇒ ABEA Hamilton
- ⇒ Literacy Link South Central
- ⇒ Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network

CLO's Online Training Module on Employment Ontario

CLO is pleased to present an online, self study training module on "Employment Ontario". This module will provide literacy agencies and other stakeholders in the Employment Ontario delivery network with information, tools, best practices, and resources that explore:

- ⇒ The basics of Employment Ontario
- ⇒ Partnerships and partnership strategies
- ⇒ Effective marketing strategies



To access this informative training module, please visit:

www.nald.ca/literacybasics/

Employment Track Express

A Community-Based/College Partnership

By Sandi Hennessey, College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading

The manufacturing sector has been hard hit in Ontario. Thousands of employees experiencing down-sizing and plant closures have been faced with finding new employment opportunities. Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) consultants Laura Hamilton and Sande Minke have been involved with Employment Ontario Labour Adjustment teams providing support to companies and employees affected by down-sizing or closure in the Western Region of the province. Laura and Sande saw the potential for LBS programs to provide support to laid-off workers to acquire the basic computer skills needed for job search and applications, to find out about Essential Skills and their importance to finding new jobs, to learn about Labour Market Information (LMI) and to identify skills gaps. Availability of fourth quarter funding enabled the potential to become reality.

A development and delivery partnership was created between eight community-based LBS agencies and the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC). The CSC developed a computer skills curriculum, Employment Track Express (ETE), based on modules from the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) Computer Fundamentals course, incorporated labour market research and made Essential Skills explicit throughout. The LBS organizations piloted these draft materials with individuals attached to local Labour Adjustment Committees. Pilot organizations were provided funding to purchase laptops and software to deliver programming using portable computer labs at various locations. Following the pilot delivery, feedback was provided to the CSC in order to revise and finalize the materials for distribution. All pilots have received both a hard copy and CD of the pilot evaluation, student manual and instructor manual. The evaluation and student manual will soon be freely available for download on the CSC website (www.collegeupgradingon.ca). The instructor manual will be available to practitioners from the CSC by request. (The instructor manual contains tests and answer keys and is therefore not available for download.)

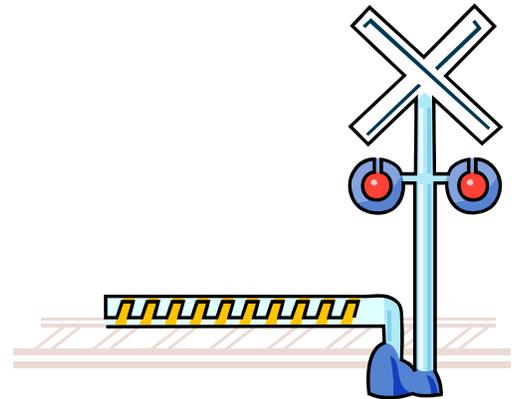
Employment Track Express is delivered three hours per day for four weeks, and is considered part of job search for individuals on Employment Insurance. Most participants completed TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) to be able to compare their results to occupations they were interested in exploring, or to identify a skills gap they may want to address. An informal assessment using *Measure Up!* at <http://measureup.towes.com> was also used in some cases.

Participants who complete the ETE modules can register with their local college to complete the last three modules of "Computer Fundamentals" to obtain a credit towards the ACE certificate. The ACE certificate is grade 12 equivalent for the purpose of entry to apprenticeship, college postsecondary programs or employment. The modules may be completed online or in a classroom setting at a college.

More on Employment Track Express

Program participants and Labour Adjustment Committee staff were surveyed after completion of the pilots. In spite of a very large range of participant skills and English language abilities, the strong evaluation results spoke to the success of the project and included:

- ⇒ 98% of participants agreed that their computer skills and understanding of Essential Skills had increased
- ⇒ 100% of surveyed Labour Adjustment staff would recommend Employment Track Express to workers who need to start a job search or need to learn about their transferable skills.



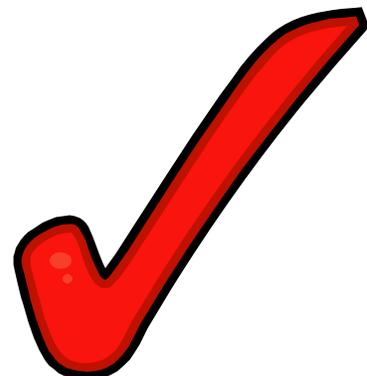
The full evaluation of the Employment Track Express Pilot Project contains other examples of participant, Labour Adjustment Committee and pilot program staff assessments of the program, information about lessons learned and recommendations resulting from the material development and piloting. It is available on the CSC website at www.collegeupgradingon.ca.

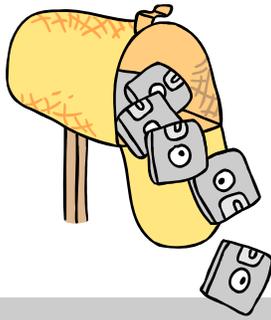
Delivery of the ETE pilot was funded as part of the partnership project. Subsequent offerings are funded through purchase by Labour Adjustment Committees, and several of the pilot organizations have had additional offerings purchased. The curriculum will be freely available to all LBS-funded organizations through the CSC website. LBS-funded organizations not involved in the pilots are now making Employment Track Express available in their communities.

This project, funded, developed and delivered in a very short period, has provided materials which will evolve through use and revision, knowledge that can be shared in the literacy field and a positive experience for participants. Funding to translate the materials to French for use by Francophone programs is currently being sought.

If you would like further information about Employment Track Express, contact the College Sector Committee or one of the project partners:

- ⇒ Action Read Community Literacy Centre (Guelph)
- ⇒ Adult Learning Centres: Grey-Bruce-Georgian
- ⇒ College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading
- ⇒ Lambton Kent District School Board
- ⇒ Literacy Council of Brantford and District
- ⇒ Literacy London
- ⇒ Niagara Region Literacy Council
- ⇒ The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
- ⇒ Unemployed Help Centre (Windsor)





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OCTOBER OURVOICE NEWSLETTER

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EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Employment Ontario Information System

The information management systems that are used currently in Employment Ontario (i.e. by Literacy and Basic Skills and Job Connect) are not common across the Employment Ontario network and are not networked. As a result , agencies cannot track individual progress as clients move between different programs, nor can data be reported and compared in a common way.

Employment Ontario's need for a common information management system has led to the development of the Employment Ontario Information System (EOIS). EOIS will be a single integrated information system that will provide improved data sharing and improved reporting capacity.

The new EOIS will be a web-based application, which means that literacy agencies will access it directly from a website, rather than downloading an application to their computers. Web-based systems have many advantages: updates happen automatically; data is stored and backed up automatically; information can be accessed and input from virtually anywhere, at any time, using standard operating systems (e.g. PC, Mac) and common web browsers (e.g. Explorer, Netscape); there is no need to install any software; they are secure ; and access is only available to registered users.

MTCU plans to engage service providers during the development and implementation of the EOIS. MTCU held initial discussions about EOIS with agencies during the regional consultations in February 2008 and further engagement opportunities are planned.

MTCU's planned implementation timelines are as follows:

- ⇒ Information gathering to better understand agency and client needs (Fall 2008 – Spring 2009)
- ⇒ Prototype testing (Spring 2009)
- ⇒ Testing of the new system (Fall 2009 – Spring 2010)
- ⇒ Training on the use of the new system (Fall 2009 – Spring 2010)

More details about the EOIS can be found at www.eopg.ca/eng/sdag.html (click on August 2008 "SDAG-EOIS") and at www.eopg.ca/eng/documents/QsAs_Employment.pdf.