



North Superior
Workforce Planning Board



Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference

Wednesday, November 9, 2011

Victoria Inn, Thunder Bay

FINAL REPORT



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Introduction Letter

“Invest in our Aboriginal population as they are under-represented in virtually all occupational groupings. This talent loss is significant. Given the Aboriginal population growth and demographics, specific and culturally appropriate investments are needed to mitigate educational, employment, and skill development gaps, and accelerate workforce integration opportunities.”

(Strategic Priority from Building a Superior Workforce: 2009-2012 Labour Market Action Plan - 2011 Update)

Dear Conference Participant,

On behalf of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board and the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy’s (TBUAS) Employment & Training Action Circle, thank you for attending our day long forum, *Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference*, held on November 9, 2011 in Thunder Bay!

The goal of this project was to convene a one-day event that would help Thunder Bay’s Urban



Aboriginal Community to become better prepared for the workforce by becoming aware of opportunities, to gain knowledge of how to apply for certain jobs, and to attend workshops on various topics focused on the idea of finding meaningful employment. With twelve 45 minute workshops, a powerful keynote address, seventeen information sharing booths, and the help and cooperation of a great team of volunteers, the planning committee feels confident that this event was a huge success in working toward the goal of creating an environment that is inclusive of Aboriginal people in the city of Thunder Bay. We realize there is a long way to go but with continued efforts such as conferences like this and collaboration between community partners involved in employment and training, we are confident that the Aboriginal community will continue to move toward a position of readiness to meet the needs of the increasingly demanding workforce.

Over the next few months we will be working on processing some of the video footage that was taken during the day into a resource tool for both individuals and organizations who were not able to take part during the conference. We hope to provide a DVD and an online source for viewing these informative workshops and

trust that they will continue to teach, inspire, and direct our Aboriginal people into taking the appropriate steps toward workforce participation.

Thunder Bay is known for its spirit of generosity and this no doubt showed through as we pursued funding for this event. As a committee, we would like to thank all of our sponsors for their incredibly generous contributions to this worthwhile event. We could not have pulled off this event without your support! We also need to express thanks to Brenda Nadjiwan, our keynote speaker, as well as to the many workshop presenters who volunteered their time to present on topics they are involved with and passionate about. Thank you as well to the committee for their hard work and commitment to seeing this event come to fruition, as well as to Kari Chiappetta Consulting for her coordination skills in pulling off a very successful event! Finally, thank you again to the over 160 participants who attended this day! We trust it was all that you hoped it would be.



Madge Richardson
Executive Director
North Superior Workforce Planning Board



Sharon Smith-Baxter
Chair
TBUAS Employment & Training Action Circle

Our Sponsors



Thunder Bay
Indian Friendship Centre



Anishinabek Employment and Training Services



Executive Summary



On November 9, 2011, The Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy Employment and Training Circle, in partnership with North Superior Workforce Planning Board, hosted a one day **Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference**. The focus of this conference was to provide Aboriginal people in our community with information and resources regarding employment, education and training.

Approximately 160 individuals attended the conference, ranging from high school students to unemployed, underemployed, and older workers.

Brenda Nadjiwan, Regional Coordinator of the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, provided a keynote address entitled, "Getting Connected and Staying Connected." The message was well received and evaluations showed that participants appreciated the information that was shared and enjoyed the presentation. The crowd erupted in applause when Brenda stated, "Aboriginal people are so much more than what you read about in the newspapers." Her inspirational message prompted comments such as, "*Outstanding speaker-motivating and insightful*" and "*Best speech I have heard in a long time.*"

In between snacks, lunches and the keynote address, participants had the opportunity to take part in 4 workshop sessions throughout the day, offering 3 different workshops in each session. The only challenge was determining which workshop to attend! Some of the topics included:



- Jobs in Mining and How to Gain Entry
- Jobs in Health and How to Gain Entry
- Apprenticeships
- Recognizing your Transferrable Skills
- Pathways to Post-secondary education
- Career Planning
- How to Present Yourself to Employers
- Learning how to Apply for Entry Level Jobs
- Effective Job Searching

A camera crew from Confederation College's Film Production recorded some of the workshop sessions. As an added component to this project, North Superior Workforce Planning Board is compiling these videos onto a single DVD as well as posting them online to be used as a resource tool for those individuals and organizations that were not able to attend the event. We believe the information provided in these workshops is so important that it should not be confined only

to the 160 who were in attendance! Check out www.nswpb.ca periodically to find out when this great resource will be available.

In addition to the workshops, participants were able to visit a number of displays with representatives eager to provide information on various education and training opportunities available in our community as well as information on some of the employment service providers throughout the city that are able to assist someone looking for employment or training. In total, 17 organizations were present to provide information to those attending the conference:

- Northwest Employment Works
- YES Employment Services
- Aboriginal Employment & Training Services
- Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre
- Negahneewin College
- Confederation College
- KKETS/Matawa
- PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
- Lakehead Adult Education Centre
- Ontario Power Generation
- Service Canada
- Scholars Education Centre
- Passport to Prosperity/NSWPB
- Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
- Academy of Learning



The day concluded with a number of door prize draws donated by the sponsors. All in attendance were honoured to be joined by a local elder who offered prayers at the beginning and end of the day.

Overall, the event was a tremendous success. Comments on the evaluations indicated that the participants appreciated the information provided in the workshops and, after attending the conference, had a better understanding of the programs, services and options available to them within Thunder Bay.

Other comments from the evaluations included:

- *Very encouraging!*
- *Good, practical information*
- *Helped me realize what is possible!*
- *It was awesome!*
- *Excellent knowledge, very good speakers!*

Through its partnership with the North Superior Workforce Planning Board, this was the first project that the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Employment and Training Action Circle undertook as a committee since its inception in March 2010. It was a resounding success due in part to the overwhelming support provided by community organizations and businesses who share the vision of creating an environment that is inclusive of Aboriginal people in the city of Thunder Bay.

Schedule and Workshop Summaries



Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference Schedule and Workshop Summaries



9:00 am

Registration

9:30 am – 10:00 am

Welcome and Opening Prayer

10:00 am – 10:45 am

Concurrent Workshops

Delegates had the opportunity to attend one of the three workshops offered during this time slot

Workshop 1
Carlton Room

Reading Between The Lines: Recognizing Your Transferrable Skills

Presenter(s): Linda McGuire (PARO), Brenda McDougall (PARO), Stewart Kallio (Essential Skills Consultant)

Do you find your job search challenging? Do many jobs that are advertised seem to include skills that you don't think you have?

Reading Between The Lines gives you the opportunity to look at all the things that you do and how they can relate to employment.

Workshop 2
Kensington Room

Overview of Apprenticeship

Presenter(s): Deborah Mikoski (MTCU)

This presentation provided an overview of apprenticeships outlining the following:

- Ontario's Apprenticeship System
- Becoming an Apprentice
- Benefits and Financial Incentives for Apprentices
- Benefits and Financial Incentives for Employers/Sponsors
- The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities - Steps to Apprenticeship

Workshop 3
Ontario Room

Jobs In The Trades And How To Gain Entry

Presenter(s): Gord Milliard (NWO Building & Construction Trades Council), Bob Bruyere (SLAAMB), and Jane Todd (OPG)

This workshop provided an overview of a variety of trade jobs available and how to access these jobs.

Specific information was provided regarding:

- Ontario Power Generation and the future Trades requirements in the company.
- Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board (SLAAMB) and the Northern Ontario Steering Committee whose purpose is to find/identify ways to get more Aboriginal People into the trades, apprenticeship and mining and prepare Aboriginal People for the upcoming employment opportunities in the construction and mining fields.
- Gord Milliard, President and CEO of NWO Building and Construction Trades Council shared the requirements to enter a construction apprenticeship.

11:00 am – 11:45 am
Regency Ballroom

“Getting Connected And Staying Connected”

Keynote address: Brenda Nadjiwan

While potential career seekers search for work environments that value work and life balance, creativity, and relationship, employers are working hard to become an employer of choice: Increased Aboriginal participation can make a difference.

11:45 am – 12:30 pm
Regency Ballroom

Lunch

12:30 pm – 1:15 pm

Concurrent Workshops

Delegates had the opportunity to attend one of the three workshops offered during this time slot

Workshop 4
Carlton Room

How Do I Apply For An Entry Level Job

Presenter(s): Sharon Kovacic (YES), Lorraine MacPhail (City of Thunder Bay)

How do you apply for an entry level position?

1. State your skills
2. Demonstrate your skills
3. Keep the focus on the position you are applying for

This presentation provided the tools to apply these steps.

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How to Apply for an Entry Level Job with the City of Thunder Bay

This portion of the workshop highlighted how to apply for entry level positions at the City of Thunder Bay and focused on addressing frequently asked questions. Helpful hints were also provided.

Workshop 5
Kensington Room

Jobs In Health And How To Gain Entry

Pre-Health Program- Confederation College

Presenter(s): Tony Wood (Confederation College), Sandra Cornell (Lakehead University)

The Student Recruitment Officer for the School of Health and Community Services at Confederation College provided an overview of the college’s health care programming, including the Pre-Health program, a preparatory program designed to help students prepare for entry into post-secondary health care education. He also briefly touched on

the availability of health care positions in Thunder Bay.

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Native Nurses Entry Program-Lakehead University

An overview of the Native Nurses Entry Program, history and success rates in the program. The presenter identified the mandatory admission criteria for NNEP and health careers programs in general.

Workshop 6
Ontario Room

Dreams And Schemes: Career Planning and Identifying Goals

Presenter(s): Brenda Nadjiwan

An interactive workshop that helped identify a career and build strategies to getting there.

1:30 pm – 2:15 pm

Concurrent Workshops

Delegates had the opportunity to attend one of the three workshops offered during this time slot

Workshop 7
Carlton Room

**Discovering Your Skills And What You Are Passionate About:
If you can't find the work you need, create the work you want**

Presenter(s): Heidi Strobl (FedNor), Rhonda Bill (A Fine Fit Catering), John Guarasci (BDO)

Participants learned some basics about starting a business and were provided an opportunity to collaborate with a small business owner about her path to entrepreneurship.

Workshop 8
Kensington Room

Pathways To Post Secondary

Presenter(s): Sam Peotto (Lakehead Public Schools), Leslie McGregor (Confederation College), Gloria Hendrick (Lakehead University)

Native Access Program: This workshop provided an overview of alternative routes to gaining a post-secondary education for students of Aboriginal descent. The workshop dealt specifically with the Native Access Program at Lakehead University, the application process and the program itself; as well as the supports and networks that assist with academic success. The presenter spoke to other access programs throughout the province as well and shared her personal experience and student profiles of those who do not "fit the mold" and yet have persevered to achieve success (personal or academic).

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Lakehead Adult Education Centre: This session provided participants with an introduction to the Lakehead Adult Education Centre and the services offered.

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Academic Upgrading/ ACE Program Confederation College

This session provided an overview of the Academic Upgrading program at Confederation College.

Workshop 9
Ontario Room

Jobs In Mining and How To Gain Entry

Presenter(s): Suzanne Halet (Community Liaison Officer, Magma Metals)

An introduction to the many employment possibilities available within, and surrounding the mining industry. Time was spent discussing each of the stages of mining: using real Northwestern Ontario examples from grassroots exploration, development and production, to mine closures in order to gain a greater overall idea of how this industry works. Attendees gained insight into how to access these jobs by taking a look at the various training and education paths, and also learned how to direct themselves toward future employment and career growth in the industry.

2:30 pm – 3:15 pm

Concurrent Workshops

Delegates had the opportunity to attend one of the three workshops offered during this time slot

Workshop 10
Carlton Room

Recipe for Success: How to Present Yourself to Employers

Presenter(s): Linda McGuire (PARO), Brenda McDougall (PARO)

Recipe for Success provided attendees with a unique view of successful role models and some simple tools and ideas on how they can present themselves to an employer in one minute or less.

Workshop 11
Kensington Room

Effective Job Searching

Presenter(s): Tracy Roblin (NEW), Mary Louise Bizzarino (NEW)

At this workshop participants learned effective techniques to conduct a successful job search. The workshop focused on required marketing tools and techniques, gaining confidence and motivation, how it relates to job search and how to network to employers.

Workshop 12
Ontario Room

Apprenticeship Trades and Alternative Trade Career Paths

Presenter(s): Frank Michon

This workshop covered the traditional trades found under the umbrella of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, and trades found under other agencies such as Technical Standards and Safety Branch, The Ministry of Environment, Canadian Armed Forces, and Transport Canada Ships Safety Branch.

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm
Regency Ballroom

Wrap up, Door prizes, Evaluations and Closing Prayer

DVD Resource Tool

Due to support received from our generous sponsors, graduates from the Confederation College Film Production program were hired to film the keynote address as well as 8 of the 12 workshops that were offered throughout the day. Once processed and edited, these workshops will be available on DVD and online (youtube.com) for any individual or organization interested in accessing them.

These DVDs will be distributed to schools and employment/training agencies so that they can be used as a resource tool for clients. A short introductory video will also be placed on the North Superior Workforce Planning Board's website as well as any other partner's website who would like to link to this excellent resource.



If you would like a copy of the DVD(s), please send an email to steven@nswpb.ca or call 807.346.2940 and ask for Steven. Information for online viewing will be available at www.nswpb.ca.

Evaluation of Event

Evaluations completed at the end of the conference reflected that the workshops were well received with many people noting that they especially appreciated the keynote address by Brenda Nadjiwan.

Of the 160 in attendance, 48 delegates returned their evaluations. Of these, 78% rated the workshops and keynote presentation as either “good” or “great.” Many of the comments coming from the other 22% of respondents indicated that they had trouble hearing the presentations due to sound difficulties and acoustics within the room.



Full evaluation results can be found as an Appendix to this report.

What Went Well

- There were a variety of workshops that addressed a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to the workforce; from sessions on getting the education credentials required for the trades to sessions providing information on how someone can use their passions to become an entrepreneur.
- Networking was effective. Attendees and presenters had ample opportunity to interact and make connections.
- Many of the workshops were engaging and drew participants in. Interactive workshops showed higher scores in the evaluations than did workshops with a lecture presentation style.
- Media coverage was extensive.
- Display/information tables were well-received and provided detailed information pertinent to those in attendance.

Recommendations for Improvement

- This event was open to all age groups. Accordingly, workshops had both a younger and older demographic that they had to tailor their presentations to. This was met with varied levels of success. Those not tailored to the younger demographic faced distractions, talking, and acting up during the session from some participants.

Future workshops should be specifically tailored to one demographic, allowing presentations to focus on one demographic and present information accordingly.

- Interaction with the audience would be helpful for all presentations as it ensures information is being communicated effectively and engages the participants. Presenters had a mixture of “presentation” and “facilitation” styles. Facilitation engages the audience and was more effective for the student participants. Lecture style was difficult to sit through for some of the audience.
- 45 minutes for workshops was not sufficient for several of the sessions. These workshops either went over time, conflicting with the rest of the day’s schedule or were cut short and important information might not have been shared. Future events should ensure that the timeframe for a presentation is sufficient and try to accommodate the workshop presenters.
- Youth appear to need more interactive, energetic workshops and sometimes have difficulty listening to lecture style presentations for any length of time.

Photo Gallery





Appendix: Evaluation Findings

Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference Evaluation Summary *48 Evaluations completed*

A. I am a(n)				
Aboriginal - 30	Internationally Trained Worker - 2	Teacher/Guidance Counselor - 2		
Adult Worker (Ages 18 – 65) - 8	Older Worker (54+) - 1	Woman - 19		
Displaced Worker	Parent - 10	Prefer not to say - 1		
Francophone	Person with Disabilities - 1	Other - 6		
General Public - 2	Student/ Youth - 7			
1 = It was not effective	2 = It was ok	3 = It was satisfactory	4 = It was good	5 = It was great

Keynote Address Brenda Nadjiwan

“Getting Connected And Staying Connected

1	2	3	4	5
0	3	6	11	21

Comments:

- Best speech I have heard in a long time
- Too much talking
- She spoke well but she didn’t know her audience and seemed to be speaking to employers X2
- Outstanding speaker- motivating and insightful
- Too many people talking in the Regency room
- Great presentation
- They presented everything effectively
- Amazing
- Good
- Rushed
- Personality and professional role delivered in a most enjoyable manner

Workshop Series 1: 10:00 am – 10:45 am

Reading Between The Lines: *Recognizing Your Transferrable Skills*

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	5	8

Comments:

- Very engaging
- It was awesome
- Short on time
- Eye opener, never thought of wording resumes like that before

Overview of Apprenticeship

1	2	3	4	5
1	0	2	0	0

Comments:

- Very dry - thank goodness for the other people in the room who engaged
- Should be geared to audience more

Jobs In The Trades And How To Gain Entry

1	2	3	4	5
2	0	0	4	8

Comments:

- Not engaging for high school students
- Very informative – I learned a lot about the trades. Stuff I needed to know!
- Could use more employers next time

Workshop Series 2: 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm

How Do I Apply For An Entry Level Job

1	2	3	4	5
1	0	2	2	2

Comments:

- Speaker needs to be more understanding
- Could have been more interactive
- Not geared towards students

Jobs In Health And How To Gain Entry

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	3	3

Comments:

- I enjoyed it
- Good, practical information
- Ran fairly long
- Didn't get a chance to ask questions- good information

Dreams And Schemes

Career Planning and Identifying Goals

1	2	3	4	5
0	1	2	5	6

Comments:

- Too noisy with kids acting up
- Supportive and informative – Great!
- Great presentation
- Helped me realize what is possible

Workshop Series 3: 1:30 pm – 2:15 pm

Discovering Your Skills And What You Are Passionate About

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	6	2	6

Comments:

- Really informative
- The youth need to quiet down
- Kids in audience were noisy
- Lots of information
- The youth in the back were loud and I couldn't hear the presenter

Pathways To Post Secondary

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	0	1	3

Comments:

- I have more ideas to attend post secondary
- Very understanding, I loved it and am considering taking this course in the future!

Jobs In Mining And How To Gain Entry

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	3	5

Comments:

- Excellent speaker, great information
- Great presentation
- Excellent knowledge, very excellent speaker
- Straight forward power point

Workshop Series 4: 2:30 pm – 3:15 pm

Recipe for Success

How to Present Yourself to Employers

1	2	3	4	5
0	0	1	3	3

Comments:

- none

Effective Job Searching

1	2	3	4	5
		2	2	2

Comments:

- Learned tips on networking
- Great way to get the job you love

Apprenticeship Trades and Alternative Trade Career Paths

1	2	3	4	5
		2	2	2

Comments:

- Engaging and interesting
- Engaging and practical information

Please score the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, where: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral (neither agree nor disagree) 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I was satisfied with the Aboriginal Workforce Resource Conference	0	0	0	3	1
I would recommend this event to others	0	0	0	2	1

Additional comments

- The only suggestion that I would have would be to possibly separate the Employers, Education and Training Professionals from the people who may be job searching (for workshop purposes only). If you could offer separate workshops that are applicable to each to choose from that would be best.
- Well done! Everything went smooth and I gained valuable information!
- Very good information on trades. I learned to gain entry in certain jobs
- The sessions could last longer
- The displays were also great and informative. I also enjoyed the casual and approachable ways of the presenters
- Awesome
- Interesting and informative
- Well done
- Not relevant to everyone in the crowd- good talk/ topics just disconnected
- I would like to recommend this AWRC again
- Good audience but should allow time in the agenda specifically for checking out the displays - perhaps a scavenger hunt-type game



North Superior
Workforce Planning Board

“Connecting community partners to improve the quality of life in our communities through workforce development.”