



Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan

Opening Doors for You

About the Project



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Through community discussions and conversations with partner organizations, the need to develop strategies to promote the benefits of hiring Indigenous people and Newcomers to local employers was identified. The Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan (pronounced “bah-kah-ko-nah-nun shkwahn-deh-monun”) – Opening Doors for You project was launched to address this need. The project will focus on identifying current best practices and promoting existing resources available to employers to support hiring and retaining of Newcomers and Indigenous employees. Our team is committed to helping employers identify and access the knowledge and supports they need to make inclusive hiring choices.

Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan (BI) is a positive reinforcement pilot project that will reward employers for engaging with existing service providers and fostering an inclusive workplace. Employers that complete a certain number of tasks will receive recognition and will be provided with a visual identifier for a storefront window and/or a business website.

BI will be rolled out in several communities and will also include a media campaign across the LEPC area. The media campaign will highlight best practices and recognize employer champions who have demonstrated their commitment to hiring Newcomers and Indigenous workers.

The goal of the BI project is to recognize the efforts made by employers to create inclusive workplaces and to encourage employers to understand the value and benefit to hiring Newcomers and Indigenous job seekers.

Why should you participate?

All employers who participate in the program and achieve 5 or more points will receive the following:

- **Recognition on the LEPC website**
- **Recognition on Northern Policy Institute's website**
- **An opportunity to be featured in media campaigns**
- **Recognition on the LEPC's social media channels**
- **An opportunity to attend a public recognition event**
- **A window decal for your storefront window**
- **An e-decal that you can use in your media efforts**
- **Qualification for the Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan award**

How can you get involved?

If you're an employer in the Thunder Bay District Local Employment Planning Council area and would like to participate in the positive reinforcement project and be known as a welcoming employer, please sign up at:

openingdoors4u.ca/participate-now

If you have a success story or know of an employer you would like to see featured as an Employer Champion please get in touch with us at:

www.openingdoors4u.ca

Check out the "New this Week" section of the site for videos, featured service providers and articles all related to the positive initiatives occurring in Employment and Training for Indigenous Peoples and Newcomers alike.

Be an advocate for the Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan project; send an email to **cmccraw@northernpolicy.ca** for more information.

How does it work?

During the next four months we will be awarding employers 'points' for engaging in certain activities that make their workplaces more inclusive. If you collect 5 or more points, your business will be recognized as an inclusive workplace and will be eligible for multiple benefits.

How can you get points?

If you choose to participate in the BI project, you will be contacted by project staff 1 month after your initial registration. At this time, the staff will ask you which of the following activities you completed in order to tally points. The staff will also work with service providers to track your participation. You will be able to track the activities you have completed online at:

openingdoors4u.ca/self-report-tool

Points	Activity
1	Contact a service provider to learn more about their services
2	Use any of the services offered by a partner service provider
1	Meet with an Employer Champion to learn about their methods for creating an inclusive workplace
3	Attend a workshop hosted by a service provider or Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan project staff
1	Post a job on Magnet that is targeted towards Indigenous/Newcomer job seekers
3	Hold cultural sensitivity training in your workplace
5	Hire a Newcomer/Indigenous person
5	Retain the Indigenous/Newcomer worker for longer than 4 months
2	Access an Indigenous or Newcomer Skilled Inventory Pool

Below is a list of service providers who have participated in the creation of Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan.

Together we can become a stronger, highly skilled and aligned workforce

with evidence based planning and decision making. If you haven't already heard of or worked with the organizations below, give them a call so they can ensure all of your employment needs are being met.

Participating Organizations

Anishnabek Employment and Training Services (AETS)

Phone: 1-800-870-AETS(2387)
Website: www.aets.org

Confederation College – Regional Workforce Development

Phone: 1-807-475-6215
Website: www.confederationc.on.ca/

Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS)

Phone: 1-888-688-4652
Website: www.kkets.ca

March of Dimes

Phone: 1-807-345-6595 (Thunder Bay Office)
Website: www.marchofdimes.ca

Metis Nation of Ontario

Phone: 1-807-624-5025
Website: www.metisnation.org

Nokiiwin Tribal Council

Phone: 1-807-474-4230
Website: www.nokiiwin.com/

Northwest Employment Works (NEW)

Phone: 1-800-465-3935
Website: www.northwestworks.ca

Northern Policy Institute

Phone: 1-807-343-8956
Website: www.northernpolicy.ca

North Superior Workforce Planning Board

Phone: 1-888-800-8893
Website: www.nswpb.ca/lepc

Ontario Native Women's Association

Phone: 1-807-623-3442
Website: www.onwa.ca

Oshki Pimache-O-Win

Phone: 1-866-63-OSHKI (67454)
Website: www.oshki.ca

PARO for Women's Enterprise

Phone: 1-800-584-0252
Website: www.paro.ca

Professions North

Phone: 1-866-210-3020
Website: www.professionsnorth.ca

Réseau Du Nord

Phone: 1-888-248-1712
Website: <http://reseaudunord.ca/fr>

Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC)

Phone: 1-800-668-9360
Website: www.thunderbay.ca/CEDC

Thunder Bay Multicultural Association

Phone: 1-866-831-1144
Website: www.thunderbay.org

YES Employment Services

Phone: 1-807-623-0768
Website: www.yesjobsnow.com/



We would like to thank the following LEPC Working Group partners for their participation and support for this project.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwetch.

Indigenous Peoples and Communities Working Group

Anishnabek Employment and Training Services
Confederation College – Regional Workforce Development
Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services
March of Dimes Canada – Northwest Region
Métis Nation of Ontario
Nokiiwin Tribal Council
Northwest Employment Works
North West Local Health Integration Network
Ontario Native Women's Association
Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute
YES Employment Services

Newcomers Working Group

Anishnabek Employment and Training Services
Lakehead University – Multicultural Centre
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
Professions North/Nord
Réseau Du Nord
Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission
Thunder Bay Multicultural Association



Inclusive Hiring

Apprentices
Indigenous Peoples
Newcomers
Youth



Content has been adapted from these sources:

StepUp BC. "Attract and Hire Youth." Retrieved from <https://www.stepupbc.ca/sites/default/files/downloadable-material/Attract-and-hire-youth.pdf>

Workforce Planning Board of York Region & Bradford West Gwillimbury. (2009). "Newcomers: A resource for your business." Retrieved from http://www.wpboard.ca/english/pdfs/Newcomers_-_a_resource_for_your_business.pdf

Joseph, Bob. (May 14, 2014). "7 First Nation Worker Retention Strategies." Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.ictinc.ca/blog/7-first-nation-worker-retention-strategies>



Sponsoring an Apprentice

Northern Ontario
employers are
facing a **shortage**
of skilled trades workers.

Some employers are already having a difficult time recruiting employees with the skills and qualifications they need. Sponsoring an apprentice is one of the best ways to build your workforce for today and the future. The Thunder Bay Apprenticeship Hub, through the Thunder Bay district LEPC, has all the tools and information you need to do it right.



There are many benefits to sponsoring an apprentice. You will have an employee who is trained to provincial industry standards and also understands the unique needs and conditions of your workplace.

Take a look below to learn about the various grants and tax credits* available to employers for taking on apprentices.

Connect with an Employment Ontario service provider in your community to learn more about becoming a sponsoring employer.

• Apprenticeship Employer Signing Bonus (AESB): Employers can receive a business funding grant of up to \$2000 for registering their business to hire and train apprentices according to Employment Ontario's Job Matching, Placements & Incentives Program.

• Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit: Up to \$2000 per year for the first 2 years of an apprenticeship.

• Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit: Businesses can receive up to \$40K or 35-45% of the apprentice's wages and benefits for the first four years of an apprenticeship (10K/year).

**grant and tax credit programs are subject to change. Please refer to www.nswpb.ca/apprenticeships/employers for up to date information and rates.*

For more information about services in your community that can help you sponsor an apprentice visit: www.nswpb.ca/apprenticeships

Hiring Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous people are an important source of new entrants to the labour market as they represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the population in Canada and Ontario. In addition to a perfect opportunity to find the right people for the jobs you need,

hiring
Indigenous
employees
will help your
business reach
and service
a **diverse**
client base.



Local Employment
Planning Council
www.nswpb.ca/lepc

Below are some useful tips on how you can build an inclusive workforce within your organization:

1 Recognize cultural interests and expectations. A prime example is traditional pursuits such as hunting and fishing - these are time honoured and sometimes necessary activities (the family and or community relies on an individual to complete this activity) and for some Indigenous workers, could take precedence over a job.

2 Consider implementing bereavement policies that are cognizant of Indigenous cultures. In most organizations, only the death of an immediate family member warrants bereavement leave – but, in many First Nation communities the concept of family can be much larger than mainstream culture resulting in the need for more flexible policies. Bereavement policies should be clarified with incoming employees early on to create a common understanding.

3 Recognize that the lack of a high school diploma does not render a person unable to work. A stable employment situation often inspires workers to take high school completion courses online or in the evening. Some companies that maintain a stable Indigenous workforce offer incentives for workers to complete their Grade 12 education while working.

4 Implement a program that matches new employees with a culturally aware co-worker. Having a “go to” person on site to answer questions and help new employees establish relationships within the workforce will foster a sense of belonging. Indigenous workers may be more comfortable discussing issues with this person than they would with authority figures.

5 Recognize that new-to-employment Indigenous people may need cultural support. Being away from their community for extended periods of time can be stressful. Having Indigenous councilors, or Elders from the workers' community on site or in the community provides a safety net as the worker adjusts to his or her new environment.

6 Recognize that previous work experience may have been more lenient. Remote Indigenous communities have fewer employment options, so a worker's previous experience may have been through the band office or from a member of the community. This work experience may not have required some of the more typical expectations placed on workers in a traditional workplace. Thus, it is important to make sure your expectations as an employer are clear and explain the reasoning behind these expectations.

7 Try to offer cultural awareness training for all of your staff. A workforce that maintains an appropriate level of cultural awareness will ensure that non-Indigenous workers understand and support cultural values and diversity.

8 Conduct exit interviews. If a company's retention efforts fall short and Indigenous employees decide to leave, try to sit down and have an informal exit interview with the departing employee to find out the reasons that the individual has decided to leave. This will help you learn from past experiences and make changes for the future.

Hiring Youth

Hiring youth can offer a number of benefits to your organization.

Youth bring
new perspectives
and fresh ideas to
the table.

Youth bring
up to date and relevant
skills from their education,
and tend to be **adaptable**
to change and are more
comfortable with technology.
In addition to the benefits of
hiring youth, employers may
also be eligible to access
various training incentives.



Local Employment
Planning Council
www.nswpb.ca/lepc

Below are some useful tips on how you can build a more youth-friendly business or organization:

- Learn about government incentive programs that exist for hiring youth by speaking with your local Employment Ontario service provider

- Review your hiring and interviewing processes to ensure an open, bias-free and inclusive system is in place

- Use various social media channels and platforms like Magnet, to promote career opportunities

- After hiring, consider implementing a buddy system to match the new employee with someone who can act as a mentor and provide information on how the organization works.

- Consider offering flexible work options, opportunities for professional development and training, as well as advancement.

For additional resources, visit
www.civicaaction.ca/escalator

Hiring Newcomers

Newcomers,
including
internationally
trained
professionals,
are a resource
for your
businesses.

The demand for labour in Northern Ontario is growing and Newcomers will continue to be a valuable source of talent for businesses in the region, especially those with specialized skills, and multilingualism.



Local Employment
Planning Council
www.nswpb.ca/lepc

Below are some tips on how you can build an inclusive workforce within your organization:

Consider new strategies for sourcing Newcomers

- Try local community centres, connecting with service providers who work with Newcomers, and using word of mouth

When posting a job, consider the following

- Emphasize competencies rather than past experience
- Be sure that the qualifications for the position are really needed to do the job, and not based simply on historical assumptions
- Be open to international equivalencies.
- Use plain, clear language and avoid slang terms and acronyms. If you are unsure, ask for help from an employment resource centre.

Try out these strategies for interviewing

- To reduce potential for personal bias ensure that two or more people interview each candidate
- Outline the process right at the beginning or beforehand if possible so people will know what to expect (e.g. panel-style, written portion, any specific tests that will be given)
- Choose a location that is quiet and private, so people can feel free to speak and so you aren't interrupted
- Develop job descriptions and interview questions based on the exact qualifications required for the position

Creating a culturally inclusive workspace

- Host training for all of your employees on cultural competency
- Develop a buddy/mentor program to connect your new hires with current employees. This can help your new employee learn about the workplace culture and ask questions confidentially that they may not ask otherwise.
- Be aware of, and consider providing time off for, culturally significant events and holy days. Learn what you can about the cultural backgrounds of your employees by asking questions.

Conduct exit interviews

- Sit down and have an informal exit interview with the departing employee to find out the reasons that the individual has decided to leave.
- This will help you learn from past experiences and make changes for the future.

For more information about services in your community that can help you hire newcomers, visit the

Employer Resource Link at: www.nswpb.ca/lepc