



# Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan

Opening Doors for You

**About the Project**



# Baakaakonaanan Ishkwaandemonan

## Opening Doors for You

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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.aets.org)

#### **Confederation College – Regional Workforce Development**

Phone: 1-807-475-6215  
Website: [www.confederationc.on.ca/](http://www.confederationc.on.ca/)

#### **Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS)**

Phone: 1-888-688-4652  
Website: [www.kkets.ca](http://www.kkets.ca)

#### **March of Dimes**

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

#### **Metis Nation of Ontario**

Phone: 1-807-624-5025  
Website: [www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)

#### **Nokiiwin Tribal Council**

Phone: 1-807-474-4230  
Website: [www.nokiiwin.com/](http://www.nokiiwin.com/)

#### **Northwest Employment Works (NEW)**

Phone: 1-800-465-3935  
Website: [www.northwestworks.ca](http://www.northwestworks.ca)

#### **Northern Policy Institute**

Phone: 1-807-343-8956  
Website: [www.northernpolicy.ca](http://www.northernpolicy.ca)

#### **North Superior Workforce Planning Board**

Phone: 1-888-800-8893  
Website: [www.nswpb.ca/lepc](http://www.nswpb.ca/lepc)

#### **Ontario Native Women's Association**

Phone: 1-807-623-3442  
Website: [www.onwa.ca](http://www.onwa.ca)

#### **Oshki Pimache-O-Win**

Phone: 1-866-63-OSHKI (67454)  
Website: [www.oshki.ca](http://www.oshki.ca)

#### **PARO for Women's Enterprise**

Phone: 1-800-584-0252  
Website: [www.paro.ca](http://www.paro.ca)

#### **Professions North**

Phone: 1-866-210-3020  
Website: [www.professionsnorth.ca](http://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](http://www.thunderbay.ca/CEDC)

#### **Thunder Bay Multicultural Association**

Phone: 1-866-831-1144  
Website: [www.thunderbay.org](http://www.thunderbay.org)

#### **YES Employment Services**

Phone: 1-807-623-0768  
Website: [www.yesjobsnow.com/](http://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](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.



**Local Employment**  
Planning Council  
[www.nswpb.ca/lepc](http://www.nswpb.ca/lepc)

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 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](http://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.



**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](http://www.nswpb.ca/lepc)**

### **Inter-census estimation tool .....**

The Census is an excellent source of labour market information at the community level, but only occurs every five years. A common message we heard in our discussions with community members was that it would be valuable to have access to Census measures on a more frequent basis.

The goal of this initiative is to develop a tool that will allow community level census indicators to be estimated in years where a census is not performed. Overall, the inter-census estimation tool will allow the LEPC and other partners to estimate community level labour market indicators including employment, unemployment and labour market participation for the general population as well as for larger sub groups including the Indigenous and Francophone populations.

### **Increasing Indigenous participation in the labour market .....**

According to Statistics Canada (2011 data), the employment rate for the Aboriginal working age population is 63%, lower than the rate for Non-Indigenous individuals (76%). The unemployment rate for the working age Aboriginal population is more than twice the rate for other Canadians of the same age (13% versus 6%).

Finding innovative solutions to enhance Indigenous participation in the labour market is imperative. In order to obtain different perspectives and approaches to this labour market issue the LEPC issued a request for proposals for an applied research project to explore proactive ways to support residents

## **Research Projects**

of remote communities who wish to connect to the broader regional labour market.

### **Demographic dependency ratio .....**

Statistics Canada reports that the LEPC region is seeing a decline in the working age population. Discussions with employers and policy makers across the region identified the need for better and more current information to help clarify and target responses to this challenge. The LEPC will create a report on key measures relating to the decline in the working age population. The goal is to provide up-to-date and locally relevant information regarding the decline in the working age population to community members and decision makers.

### **Regional human resource strategy .....**

The Regional HR Strategy is a collaborative venture of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) Local Employment Planning Council. The purpose of the Regional HR Strategy is to mobilize current and emerging knowledge of the workforce to better align labour supply with labour demand and become a significant driver of economic growth and enhanced well-being in this region.



# **Local Employment Planning Council**



*This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.*

The Local Employment Planning Council (**LEPC**) in the Thunder Bay district is a pilot project led by the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (**NSWPB**) with the support of Northern Policy Institute (**NPI**) as data and research partner. The LEPC uses community consultation, research, and evidence-based practices to spur innovation in workforce development in our region.

LEPC's vision is to foster a culture of **inclusive collaboration, research and innovation** in response to Northern challenges and opportunities.

To learn more and find out how you can get involved, please contact us:

**(807) 346-2940**  
**Toll Free: 1 (888) 800-8893**  
**admin@nswpb.ca**  
**www.nswpb.ca/lepc**

The Local Employment Planning Council is passionate about its commitment to Northwestern Ontario and is dedicated to serving employers, stakeholders and the public by:

Acting as a hub for communication, collaboration and education;

Conducting and disseminating labour market research that will aid in ensuring that our stakeholders are prepared to meet the future social and economic demands across Northwestern Ontario;

Ensuring that the LEPC remains a dynamic and forward looking organization that is able to evolve as required to meet the changing needs of our stakeholders;

Identifying and eliminating barriers to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the labour market in the LEPC region;

Informing stakeholders of labour market services and opportunities;

Reflecting the unique challenges and realities faced by Northwestern Ontario;

Serving as a positive environment where stakeholders can focus on relationship building and sharing knowledge and experience.

A key component of the LEPC pilot is to **increase the availability of local labour market information** and to encourage employers and organizations to utilize the data to create evidence based decision practices. To this end, the NSWPB and Northern Policy Institute are partnering through the LEPC on multiple projects.

Working with the Local Employment Planning Council for the Far Northeast region, we have employed a data analyst to create community level labour market reports and to work with communities to put this new information to work. Data collected by LEPC will also be made available as part of a regional labour market plan and through an online portal. **Ensuring our community has as much information as possible about labour demand and supply before making decisions about the future.**

**For more information please visit:**  
**[www.nswpb.ca/lepc/projects](http://www.nswpb.ca/lepc/projects)**

**About**  
**The Local Employment**  
**Planning Council**



**North Superior**  
Workforce Planning Board



**Local Employment**  
Planning Council

**NORTHERN**  
POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES  
**DU NORD**

**Labour Market**  
**Information**