

June 2, 2016

Dear Employment Ontario Service Provider,

Over the past year Employment Ontario has undergone a significant amount of change as a result of our ongoing transformation of employment and training services. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the successes we have achieved together, as well as update you on some of our ongoing transformation efforts.

As you may know, the transformation of employment and training services is modernizing and transforming employment and training programs and services across government and integrating them into Employment Ontario. The goal of transformation is to achieve better outcomes for our clients through more streamlined and evidence-based programming.

As part of these efforts, we are building on best practices of earlier programs and implementing a number of new programs and initiatives to more effectively help all Ontarians improve their skills and find work.

### **Youth employment programming**

In October 2015 we successfully launched Youth Job Connection (YJC), which provides young people facing complex barriers to employment with intensive employment supports to help them obtain meaningful employment and succeed in the labour market.

In April 2016 we also launched the summer component of YJC, which provides summer, part-time and after-school job opportunities for high school students facing challenging life circumstances, who may need support transitioning between school and work.

In addition, in April 2016 we launched Youth Job Link to help youth, including students, who do not face significant barriers to employment but could benefit from some extra help to plan their careers and transition to the labour market.

Along with the existing Employment Service, which already helps 70,000 youth per year on average, these programs form a new, more comprehensive and targeted suite of employment programs and services to better help youth across a broader spectrum of needs improve their skills and find work.

## **Local Employment Planning Council pilots**

The Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC) pilots were launched in December 2015 following an open Call for Proposals to identify organizations to pilot the LEPC model in eight communities across Ontario. The eight communities that were selected offer a representative sample of unique labour market conditions across Ontario.

The goal of the LEPC pilots is to support and provide resources for local approaches to the planning and delivery of employment and training programs and services, and to improve local labour market conditions through enhanced collection and dissemination of local labour market information and community engagement.

During their start-up phase, the LEPCs were responsible for three core deliverables, including creating an accessible bilingual website, setting up a governance structure that includes community partners, and submitting a strategic plan that outlines activities and deliverables to be completed during the activity phase (April 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017).

The LEPC pilots, which will operate for 18 months until May 2017, will provide critical insights to help guide the future direction of our employment and training system, and will allow us to test the LEPC model in communities, evaluate and refine our approach, and determine next steps.

## **Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation**

In February 2016, following a public Call for Proposals, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities officially launched the Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation (the Centre) and announced that Ryerson University, working with twelve partner organizations, was the successful candidate to run the Centre.

The Centre's mandate is to drive innovative approaches in employment and training programming and service delivery across the province, based on solid evidence. The Centre will assist Ontario's employment and training service providers by providing a single window for sharing best practices on program delivery, as well as address labour market challenges.

One of the first key priorities the Centre will undertake will be to engage and collaborate with employment and training partners, including the Employment Ontario service delivery network. These efforts will help shape the Centre's key research, innovation and capacity building priorities.

Currently, the Centre is consulting with stakeholders to gather input and advice on critical and thematic workforce development challenges to investigate. It is also implementing its start-up phase, including governance structure and bilingual website, as well as developing its two-year business plan and operational processes for its research, innovation, capacity building, training and demonstration projects.

### **SkillsAdvance Ontario pilot**

The ministry is exploring options to pilot a sector-focused employment and training model that would combine intensive employment services for adult jobseekers facing barriers to employment with sector-focused skills training to support employers with their workforce development needs.

The proposed pilot would help jobseekers build employability “soft skills” and sector-specific “hard skills” so they can obtain, succeed and advance in entry-level jobs in participating sectors. At the same time, it would help employers in participating sectors fill vacancies to meet workforce needs.

A sector-focused employment and training services model would also support partnerships between sector-based employers and employment and training service providers to help better align jobseekers’ training with employers’ needs.

More information on the proposed pilot and other transformation initiatives will be shared as soon it becomes available.

I would like to once again thank you for your ongoing partnership as we continue our efforts to modernize and transform our employment and training programs and services to more effectively help all Ontarians find jobs and build the skills they need to succeed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your local ministry office.

Sincerely,

### ***Original signed by***

David Fulford  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Employment and Training Division