

**Ministry of Training,
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October 29, 2015

Dear Employment Ontario Service Providers,

I'm writing to let you know about a change in the delivery of the Summer Jobs Service (SJS).

Like you, the Ontario government believes that all people, regardless of background or circumstance, should have access to effective employment and training programs that give them the skills they need to succeed.

With this in mind, Ontario is working hard to deliver two major commitments.

First, we are taking an evidence-based approach to make our employment and training programs better coordinated, more targeted and more effective for people across the province, especially younger Ontarians. Through our Employment and Training Services Integration (ETSI) initiative, we are modernizing our employment and training programs.

At the same time, as part of [Budget 2015](#), the government is making a major re-investment of \$250 million in the Youth Jobs Strategy to support several new youth employment programs.

As part of this modernization process, we are constantly evaluating existing programs to avoid duplication and to ensure that all of our services build on best practices and serve young people as effectively as possible.

Our government recently conducted a series of consultations to inform the design of these new programs. We heard from many stakeholders that our youth employment and training services should target young people across a broader spectrum.

As part of our commitment to this important goal, we have made the decision to end the Summer Jobs Service program on March 31, 2016, as we introduce a more comprehensive and targeted suite of employment programs and services to help youth.

While we understand that this decision will result in some adjustments for service providers who are currently delivering the SJS program, we are excited to offer these new programs widely across the network, including:

Youth Job Connection, which launched on October 1 and is designed to help youth facing barriers to employment build better futures. The program offers paid pre-employment training, job opportunities and mentorship to youth aged 15 to 29 who are not working, in school, or in training.

Youth Job Connection: Summer, launching in spring 2016, which will provide summer, part-time and after-school job opportunities to high school students aged 15 to 18 who are facing challenging life circumstances and may need support transitioning between school and work.

Youth Job Connection is now open to high-school students seeking part-time employment during the school year, who will later be served by the summer component when it launches in spring 2016.

Youth Job Connection is available at more than 130 Employment Ontario service delivery sites across the province.

We are also preparing to launch **Youth Job Link** in spring 2016, which will be aimed at youth, including students, who do not face significant barriers to employment. Services will include access to job search resources and information to help them transition to the labour market, including summer employment. The program will also feature individual supports and employer incentives to offset the cost of on-the-job training. **We are pleased to note that all Employment Service providers will be offered the opportunity to deliver Youth Job Link.** More information on this new program will be shared as soon as it is available.

In addition, the **Employment Service** will continue to provide services and supports to youth who may be facing some barriers to accessing or excelling in education, training or work, and may benefit from assisted supports.

This new, more comprehensive and targeted suite of employment programs and services for youth builds on the best practices of the Youth Employment Fund, Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Jobs for Youth program, and other employment programs for young people. It also builds on feedback from the winter 2015 stakeholder consultations, of which youth employment programming was a key priority.

Our research and consultations showed that youth facing multiple barriers to employment require more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placements. Youth with fewer barriers require less intensive supports, such as help accessing work experience and building career management skills. This new suite of programs is designed to target services to youth with a broad range of employment needs.

The government is also investing \$20 million over two years in **Experience Ontario**, a new pilot program launched by the Ministry of Education in September 2015. This program helps recent high school graduates across the province get valuable work experience, career coaching and mentorship, so they can identify future goals and better make the transition to postsecondary education and training.

Together, these programs form a new generation of better coordinated, high quality, targeted services to help youth with a broad spectrum of needs determine their career direction, obtain meaningful employment and succeed in the labour market.

Next Steps:

Until March 31, 2016, service providers may continue to refer young people to SJS for help with their job search. However, as the summer has now ended, summer job placements for youth and hiring incentives for employers will no longer be available through SJS.

Service providers can refer youth clients to the Employment Service and Youth Job Connection. Opportunities for youth are also available from more than 30 government programs to help young people build skills, find a job or start a business.

In addition, we have prepared a memo template to support you in sharing information with employers about employer supports through Employment Ontario, which is now available on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG).

We want to make sure the right level of services are available in each community across the province, and as we move forward with ETSI and the new suite of employment programs for youth, the ministry will continue to evaluate the needs of clients and communities across the province and adjust funding allocations and client targets where appropriate. This will ensure service providers can continue to meet evolving needs in the communities they serve.

I would like to thank you once again for your ongoing commitment to helping youth improve their skills, find work and succeed in their path to rewarding employment. I look forward to sharing more details with you about Youth Job Link as they become available.

For more information, please review the Qs and As posted on the EOPG. Please do not hesitate to contact your local ministry office if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

David Fulford
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities