

April 13, 2017

Dear Employment Ontario Service Provider,

In July 2015, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development hired an independent consulting firm, R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd., to evaluate the Second Career (SC) program. The ministry conducted the evaluation to inform future decisions on the program by providing insights on the:

- relevance of the program to the needs of participants and labour market;
- relevance of financial assistance to participant needs; and,
- employment outcomes for different demographic groups and training occupation categories.

The evaluation included wide-ranging data collection and analysis, as well as consultations with ministry staff, service providers and clients.

The evaluation identified numerous strengths as well as opportunities to improve the program, and makes a number of concrete recommendations for how the program can remain relevant and supportive, given changing participant needs and an evolving labour market.

Below is a summary of key recommendations in the report and how we intend to consider these in the consultations that will follow:

1. Modify eligibility and suitability to ensure equitable and timely access to the program

The ministry is committed to reviewing access criteria for the SC program to ensure that a wider range of jobseekers can access training that reflects labour market needs.

2. Provide more post-training supports for older participants

The ministry is committed to explore opportunities to enhance employment supports for all SC participants, including older participants, to ensure that they make informed training decisions and are provided with the supports they need before, during and after training.

3. Revise the financial model to be more flexible and responsive to individual needs, and review the amount of funding allocated to living expenses

The ministry intends to review the costs associated with training and the need for flexibility of the financial support, while taking into consideration other sources of

financial supports available to unemployed individuals seeking further education and employment.

4. Maintain requirement that participants demonstrate good labour market prospects as part of developing their training plan; with the proper supports and guidance

The ministry will consider how employment and training programs like SC can utilize existing and new forms of labour market information to help Ontarians make informed training and employment decisions.

The provision of “easy-to-understand, quality assured labour market information that allows individuals to make decisions about future careers, employers to plan for and find talent, and government to inform policy” is also an important part of the ministry’s mandate to support a highly-skilled workforce.

5. Encourage and support more work placements and paid co-operative placements as these tend to lead to better employment outcomes and greater client satisfaction with training

Experiential learning plays a valuable role in helping individuals make decisions about future careers and employment pathways. Ensuring that adult learners have access to quality experiential learning opportunities is a key recommendation of the Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel.

The ministry will review training and supports offered through SC to ensure that program participants have greater access to experiential learning opportunities, including, but not limited to internships, mentorship, and job placements.

6. Develop a performance measurement framework that clearly identifies desired program outcomes and outcome measurements

The ministry is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of its employment and training programs over time.

Through the transformation and modernization of employment and training services, the government will explore opportunities to strengthen program monitoring, performance management and evaluation to ensure that the SC program is meeting its intended outcomes in the short, medium and long term.

7. Facilitate greater collaboration between employers and training institutions to ensure that training is more closely aligned with the needs of employers, and ensure that participants’ training plans are aligned with the needs of employers

Building the workforce of tomorrow requires a shared sense of responsibility between employers, educational institutions, and intermediaries.

By working closely with key partners in workforce development and improving access to quality labour market information, we believe that the government will be able to better assist SC participants in making informed training and employment decisions based on labour market demand.

The final evaluation report has been posted on the [Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway](#), along with a cover letter from Deputy Minister Sheldon Levy.

It is important to note that the views expressed in the evaluation report belong to the external evaluators and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ministry or of the provincial government.

Through the ongoing modernization and transformation of Ontario's employment and training programs and services, the government is committed to:

- Improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of employment and training services;
- Ensure value-for-money for all employment and training programs; and
- Ensure that programs are providing the best results for clients and meeting the needs of Ontario's labour market.

The ministry plans to undertake stakeholder consultations to discuss skills training. Consultations will consider findings from the evaluation, the recent recommendations of the Ontario Auditor General, and the ministry's mandate to build a highly skilled workforce, among other factors. The scope and timing of consultation will be communicated to the network once details have been confirmed.

We would like to thank you for your support of the evaluation and your continued collaboration as we strive for continuous improvement of our Employment Ontario programs and services.

If you have any questions, please contact your local office.

Sincerely,

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