

An Ontario-based  
**Aboriginal**  
Apprenticeship Strategy



Supply Meeting  
Demand

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Please visit our website at [www.oaawg.ca](http://www.oaawg.ca)

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## An Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy



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## An Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy



### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The volunteer Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship Working Group (OAAWG) has collaborated on the "Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy - Supply Meeting Demand" to "increase the number of Aboriginal people working in the trades through improved access and opportunity to apprenticeship and long-term gainful employment".

#### Core members of the OAAWG are:

- Ontario Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) holders
- Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) - Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)
- Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC)
- Canadian Union of Skilled Workers (CUSW)
- Private Sector Employer (employer champion to be determined)
- Ministry of Training and Universities (MTCU) - resource role to the OAAWG.

A thorough review of barriers, issues and regulations related to Aboriginal communities, its members and Ontario's ministries that affect and/or support apprenticeships have been considered in the development of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy. The coordinated strategy shall partner with employers and relevant agencies involved in the trades sector to address, recruit and fill predicted, upcoming skill shortages while respecting regional and territorial variations and processes.

#### A number of documents were used as the basis to guide the development of this strategy including:

- Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium Apprenticeship Forum Report, Jan. 2003
- Apprenticeship research papers by York University, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Apprentice Retention in The Skilled Trades
- Ontario Job Futures
- Ontario Labour Market Trends

- Skills Shortages Dead Ahead - [www.apprenticeshipsearch.com](http://www.apprenticeshipsearch.com)
- The Digital Digest February 2004, Canadian Concrete Pipe Association
- Opening Doors, Sharpening Your Competitive Edge, Ontario Ministry of Education.

In January 2003, the Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium (AIC), hosted an Apprenticeship Forum in Toronto to which stakeholders recommended a resounding 139 recommendations to address Aboriginal Apprenticeships.

The volunteer OAAWG was established in response to the January 2003, AIC Apprenticeship Forum. The OAAWG engaged in a process of research and analysis of the AIC Apprenticeship Forum results and developed a "Draft Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy".

On February 15 and 16, 2005, the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Working Group (OAAWG), hosted "The Supply Meeting The Demand 2005 Symposium - Confirming A Strategy for Increasing Aboriginal Apprenticeship in Ontario". The Symposium, held in Toronto, Ontario, saw over one hundred delegates in attendance. There was strong support from the Aboriginal Employment and Training Community as well as representation by apprentices, employers, unions, educators, and the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Throughout these two full days, delegates worked in small group consultative discussions and participated in the networking opportunities this symposium offered.

#### The Goals for the 'OAAWG The Supply Meeting The Demand 2005 Symposium' were to:

- Facilitate consultative processes regarding the draft Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Establish validation of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Determine amendments or adjustments to the Strategy to ensure it is reflective of Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship needs and appropriate actions.
- Seek confirmation from delegates to move forward with the implementation phase of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

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- Determine the "Next Steps" in facilitating forward movement of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.
- Solicit volunteers from the Aboriginal Apprenticeship network to steer the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy Implementation Phase of this strategy, the 'Take Action Phase'.

Individuals at the Symposium were invited and encouraged to define their own 'Calls to Action' or 'Action Plans' that they could implement to further the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Opportunities in their home communities. These documents were forwarded to delegates at a later date to remind them of our time together as well as their commitment to advancing opportunities for Aboriginal people in apprenticeship.

At this symposium, delegates strongly indicated support for the work of the OAAWG and for proceeding with the adjustments to and the implementation of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

It is our pleasure to share this framework document with you and seek your support to achieve the goals of the strategy. This Strategy represents follow up information and the 'Take Action Phase' of 'OAAWG The Supply Meeting The Demand 2005 Symposium'. Implementation of the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy' is planned for fiscal year 2005/2006.

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## An Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy



## 2.0 AN OVERVIEW OF APPRENTICESHIPS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Provincial Government of Ontario and the Federal Government of Canada have been projecting a number of skilled labour shortages for several years. In an effort to address future demands and labour requirements, a number of provincial initiatives are currently being introduced to encourage consideration and entry into the trades.

The Federal Government of Canada is looking to recruit foreign workers to fill the predicted skilled labour shortages. The province of Ontario has a very large and young, Aboriginal population that can be trained and prepared to provide a skilled talent pool to meet the growing needs of employers for skilled and knowledgeable workers.

Apprenticeship is a model for training, entry to and progress in an occupation. In Canada, apprenticeship refers to the training and awarding of certification in designated trades. Each Province and Territory administers its own apprenticeship programs and designates to which trades apprenticeship is applied. Among these are the trades included in a Canada-wide Interprovincial Standards Program, commonly known as the "Red Seal" certification program.

Apprenticeship Training, generally, means learning a skilled trade while employed. The apprenticeship starts after the employer hires the individual. The apprentice works in a trade, learns on the job under the supervision of a qualified journeyman, and obtains trade knowledge and skills through specified in-school training. About 90% of an apprenticeship is provided in the workplace by employers. The remainder involves classroom theory, usually given at a local community college or provided by another approved training organization. After a period of apprenticeship (three to four years) the apprentice takes a certification examination in which successful completion will lead to Journeyman status.

As the demand for skilled workers continues to increase, top performers in some skilled trades are earning more than \$50,000.00 per year. Since skilled workers are in high demand, their salaries can elevate due to overtime and bonuses. With bonuses, an industrial electrician can earn more than \$70,000 per year and a tool and die maker can make more than \$90,000.00 per year.

In each of the next eight years, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada forecasts that there will be 19,500 more jobs in the skilled trades than workers to fill them. By 2013, scarce trades persons could be earning triple digit salaries.

Employment in skilled trades offers broad opportunities to individuals who are concrete thinkers, practical problem solvers and inventors. These individuals are ideal as they are able to problem solve in practical ways rather than through academics.

Apprenticeship is hands-on training for people who enjoy learning by doing and want to work in a skilled trade. Apprentices are paid while gaining work experience and their wages increase with their level of skill.

The apprenticeship model bears similarities to the traditional ways of passing down knowledge and skills in Aboriginal society. Historically, young people were mentored by traditional people or elders in the skills and knowledge associated with their role in the community.

### 2.2 CURRENT ISSUES AND CIRCUMSTANCES

A number of cultural, economic and education agendas have had considerable impact on past, present and future roles of industry trades. The reality of today's issues and circumstances, and their effects on the trades environment, is briefly summarized below.

#### 2.2.1 APPRENTICESHIP IN CANADA - THE BIG PICTURE

While the Government of Ontario has its own issues, it is necessary to have an understanding of the roles and problems with apprenticeship throughout Canada, in order to best apply Ontario Apprenticeship into a mobile trade.

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### The five real issues facing apprenticeship in Canada are:

- Average age of apprentices
- Non-completion rate due to over-recruiting and/or lack of planning
- Single, specialized employers make broad-based training difficult to achieve for many apprentices
- Formal training and/or work experience is not recognized
- Training standards do not reflect emerging technologies.

### Average Age of Apprentices:

The median age for individuals traveling the apprenticeship path in Canada is 27. It can be concluded that the primary purpose of apprenticeship is to provide an avenue of re-entry into the training or education system. It is a means by which individuals without post-secondary training and often without an affinity for classroom-based learning, can get back into the training system to make significant investment in their skills and long-term employability. Apprenticeship in Canada for the most part has not been a means of transition from school to work for young people.

### Non-Completion Rate and Over Recruiting:

The average age of registered apprentices is 30. Many of these apprentices have young families and financial obligations, if work cannot be secured within a reasonable amount of time, apprenticeships are often abandoned.

It is counter-productive to recruit more apprentices than can be employed, a commitment to planning is necessary.

### The following factors should help effective long-term planning for an Ontario-based strategy:

- demand for skilled labour over the next 5 to 19 years
- overall economy and large scale development projects
- anticipated exit rates based on retirement or withdrawal
- current skilled labour shortages by region
- mobility within a region or province.

**Specialized Employers and Broad-based Training:**  
Apprenticeship represents practical and broad based training. This type of training is fundamental to appren-

ticeship and is also one of the justifications for the length of time required to qualify in a trade. Contrary to the above statement, survey work for national trade studies report that nearly two-thirds of apprentices work for only one employer. Apprentices who confine their learning to one employer can be expected to fail the test of skill breadth due to specialization of employers in the industry.

### Formal Training and/or Work Experience is Not Recognized:

Apprenticeship and college-based training (technicians or technologists) in most instances are provided by distinct entities with little chance of 'cross training' being recognized by the other. A non-restrictive path between apprenticeship training and college-based training would significantly improve the image of the skilled trades and support long-term career mobility.

### Training Standards Do Not Reflect Emerging Technologies:

Apprenticeship training has great focus on 'across-the-board' training standards. However, little attention has been placed on emerging technology and/or emerging skill sets. In contrast, this reality is not nearly as detrimental to technicians or technologists receiving a college education.

## 2.2.2 THE SKILLS GAP AND SKILLS SHORTAGE

For decades, society has been groomed to pursue post secondary education as a means to a successful career and life style. Society, during its push for 'educated youth', has placed less value on 'blue collar workers' or those individuals in the trades. This trend has contributed to a serious shortage of skilled 'blue-collar workers'. The shortage in skilled trades will continue and is expected to soar in the next five to ten years.

### The Ontario Chamber of Commerce 2003 Skilled Trades Survey, reported the three top causes of shortages of skilled trades' workers and apprentices, as:

- Skilled trades are not viewed as desirable professions by the general public.
- Education counsellors and systems do not focus on and/or promote skilled trades.

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- Difficulty in attracting apprentices and skilled workers to skilled trades.

A major factor that impacts the predicted shortages is the aging population of skilled workers across Canada. Ontario is not excluded from these effects. By 2011, nearly one-fifth of baby boomers (those born between 1947 and 1966) will be 61 years of age and the proportion of the population 65 years of age or older will begin to expand rapidly. According to a 2001 Conference Board of Canada report, various sectors such as construction, technology, manufacturing, health care and financial services are already experiencing skill shortages, some due to retiring boomers. One survey, of medium to large size companies, reported an 83% shortage of skilled labour and more than 60% expected the shortages to become more pronounced in the future.

Not all trades are projecting dramatic shortages. There are variations across the regions of Ontario.

**Through research and discussions with Ontario based training and adjustment boards, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Skills Canada, the following trades are identified as those in immediate need of increased numbers:**

- Industrial electrician
- Plumber
- Pipe fitter
- Bricklayer
- Masonry
- Sheet metal worker
- Electronic mechanic
- Heavy duty equipment mechanic/operator
- Millwright
- Construction worker
- Tool & die
- Computer systems analyst
- Auto body repair.

### 2.2.3 MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

With Ontario's economy on the rise, major economic development opportunities have increased. Demand for skilled workers increases proportionately with development and infrastructure projects. Economic influences or stressors such as globalization and technology impact directly on the productivity of workers in our society.

These major influences of industry on our economy also impact on the principles of competition in the workforce and the rate of inflation that follows a rise in economic development.

#### **Globalization:**

Trade agreements such as the U.S - Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU) are now part of our economy. These agreements combined with the influences of technology create a global marketplace. This trend indicates that virtually anybody in the world can be a Canadian business customer or client. By contrast, virtually anybody in the world can also be their competitor. Businesses must examine their work and identify ways to ensure that their products or services are as efficient and effective as possible.

#### **Technology:**

Globalization has been facilitated by technology and the advances made in this sector. Technologies such as personal computers, the Internet, fax machines, affordable long distance telephone service, satellites, and cell phones all allow communication across great distance at any time. Technology shapes how work is done currently and in the future (i.e., machines replace workers, computers increase the amount of work that can be done).

#### **Foreign Worker Recruitment to fill future shortages:**

New immigrants and migrant workers are not new to our economy. People have always left their homes in search of better economic opportunities, both within and outside their own homeland. New immigrants and migrant workers in Canada contribute much to the Canadian economy, particularly as farm workers. Migrant workers have traditionally been employed in farming and as domestics in Canada; they have filled these jobs because Canadians could not be recruited for these positions. If Canadians cannot be found to fill highly skilled trades occupations, then foreign workers will be utilized to fill these positions. This situation would place the Canadian who lacks the qualifications for the trade in a disadvantaged position. Often, employers of groups of new immigrants or migrant workers are seeking to obtain the most productivity at the least expense for labour.

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### **Deregulation:**

Deregulation of certain industries has been making significant impacts on the lives of Canadians and the Canadian Economy for some time now. Some industries that have experienced deregulation include utilities, e.g.: hydro and telephone; and services such as airlines and provincial parks. Deregulation has provided governments, consumers and industries with opportunities to become competitive in an otherwise closed market.

### **Privatization:**

As the shift from public sector (services and products) to private sector continues to grow, our economy changes. This situation requires workers who are multi-skilled and who possess more generalist, broad based skills as compared to specific skills related to only one component of their occupation.

### **Economic Factors influencing Apprenticeship in Ontario include:**

- Convergence of industries and skills
- Employer demand for multi-skilling and multi-trading of workers
- Skills shortages in specific occupations
- Contingent Workers, i.e., workers from employment agencies, out-sourcing, casual/occasional, foreign worker recruitment, labour and hiring halls
- Shift from public ownership to private ownership of companies.

Work place trends are moving toward less hierarchical structures with more team centered approaches and a greater emphasis on entrepreneurial skills. All of these trends support the importance of the individual taking initiative. Future workers will need to focus on the skills to do the work versus focusing on the job, and they must be committed to continually upgrading their skills. A strategy to meet skilled trades demand is critical.

### **2.2.4 IMPENDING CHANGES FOR TRAINING AND AWARDING CREDENTIALS TO APPRENTICES IN ONTARIO**

The Ontario government has proposed and implemented many new programs over the past several years aimed at assisting individuals and employers in the area of apprenticeship.

### **The five major categories of resources aimed at assisting individuals and employers are:**

- Employee training programs
- Recruiting new employees or trainees
- Employer tax credit
- Critical skills development programs
- Programs and resources related to economic trends and human resource planning.

The most recent proposed change of the Provincial Government of Ontario is to "transform the training and apprenticeship system by creating a One-Stop Training and Employment System that will integrate federal and provincial training and employment programs. It will also be more efficient in meeting the needs of employers for skilled workers." The proposed system will depend on employers sharing their expertise, experience and skills to identify the needs of both the system and apprentices.

The motivation of the Government of Ontario's efforts, with respect to apprenticeship, appears to be more concentrated on employers, a shift from the traditional retraining system of Canada to a school-to-work approach geared at recruiting young unskilled workers into apprenticeship.

### **2.2.5 ISSUES AND IMPEDIMENTS TO ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN ONTARIO AND IN THE TRADES**

Ontario Aboriginal communities are geographically located throughout many parts of the province, often in underdeveloped or resource-limited territories. Cultural differences coupled with remoteness contribute to the complexity of Aboriginal specific barriers for employment and/or access to apprenticeships in the trades. A systematic, collaborative approach to address impediments to employment (see list on page 8) would significantly increase opportunity for Ontario's Aboriginal population into the trades.

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### Barriers to Aboriginal Employment include:

- Barriers that affect individuals are:
  - Limited on-reserve job market and on-reserve training opportunities
  - Lack of general knowledge and/or requirements of the trade
  - Lack of awareness regarding employment opportunities
  - Lack of mobility due to family requirements or transportation issues
  - Inadequate employability skills and/or educational requirements
  - Lack of self marketing skills to connect and establish relationships with employers
  - Lack of financial resources to attend training and/or provide for supports required to attend training, i.e., child care, transportation.
- Barriers that are Institution or Employer related include:
  - Partnerships with local colleges require delivery of local training at standard costs
  - Aboriginal Service providers require resources and expertise in Employer Services and job seeker marketing
  - Not enough flexibility to address cultural needs
  - Formal agreements and protocols are required to ensure Aboriginal workers are employed on large infrastructure projects in or near their communities.
- Barriers which are policy and/or government related include:
  - Funding needs to be adjusted to reflect actual numbers and levels of needs of Aboriginal people in a given area
  - Ontario's apprenticeship program is unclear or not well understood
  - Financial assistance is required for Aboriginal Peoples to collaborate on programs
  - Aboriginal Peoples are not always given an opportunity to input and/or control community programs.

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## PART II

### 3.0 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

To assist with development of a strategic plan, it is imperative to have a 'balanced scorecard'. The following table represents the strengths and challenges of an Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

#### **ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY POSITION IN ONTARIO**

##### **Strengths**

- Real employment opportunities in skilled trades
- Aboriginal Employment Service Providers have a good understanding of Aboriginal community and their needs
- Basis for a strong management and advisory team
- Large Ontario population of Aboriginals and youth to justify needs and related expenses
- Apprenticeship model resembles traditional Aboriginal teaching methods
- Experienced and dedicated helpers in the Aboriginal Employment Field
- Results driven management principles
- Ontario is pro-active in apprenticeship reform
- Strategy was developed inclusive of Ontario Apprenticeship Stakeholders.

##### **Challenges**

- Large demographic area with distinct labour markets, demographics, needs and opportunities
- Volume of skilled trades and difficulty in defining a "one size fits all" solution
- Research into best practices, actual skill shortages is required
- Provincial, Federal jurisdictional issues/boundaries with respect to mobility
- The Federal government is looking beyond Canada to fit the skills shortage gap - there is potential to increase unemployment rates
- Lobbying government and private sector to view Canada's Aboriginal population as a viable solution to the skill shortage gap
- Regional, provincial reform does not always allow Aboriginal control, input or provide for culturally appropriate services.

### 3.1 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Working Group, through this strategy, plans to engage partnerships from the trades, industry, governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, public and private businesses/employers, sector councils and unions, training institutions and Local Delivery Mechanisms to implement a successful collaboration. The overall theme of the collaboration is "supply meets the demands of the trades". Issues affecting Aboriginal Apprenticeships are multi-faceted and require a collaborative approach for resolution.

This Ontario - based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy will partner with employers and relevant partners involved in the trades sector to address, recruit and fill predicted skill shortages while respecting regional and territorial variations and processes.

The following strategy will build on internal strengths, recognize weaknesses, exploit opportunities and address ways to avoid threats to apprenticeships and skilled trades in Ontario.

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## 4.0 THE ONTARIO-BASED ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

### 4.1 STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The role and primary guiding principle of the OAAWG is to achieve a unique, Ontario specific, solution to apprenticeship with primary benefits realized by Aboriginal workers.

#### **Purpose/Mission:**

To increase the number of Aboriginal people working in the trades through improved access and opportunity to apprenticeships and long-term gainful employment to trades journeyman status.

#### **Values:**

The values governing the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy development include:

- Assurance that discussions and decisions reflect an Ontario-wide perspective and respects regional, territorial variations and processes
- Effective communication, liaison, advocacy and networking opportunities are conducted with relevant and related organizations and strategies
- The principle that any Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy be inclusive of Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders, i.e., employers, unions, educators, apprentices, AHRDAs, LDMs and
- The principle that the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy reflect and consider regional and local labour market and aboriginal community needs and developmental requirements.

### 4.2 THE ONTARIO-BASED ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY

The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy is fueled in part by 139 recommendations put forth by the Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium [AIC] Apprenticeship Forum held in Toronto, January 2003. These recommendations were confirmed or adjusted during "The Meeting The Demand 2005 Symposium" February 2005 in Toronto.

The recommendations were reviewed and categorized into seven components that represent the action stages of The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy:

- Outreach
- Marketing/Promotion
- Education
- Partnerships
- Finance
- Policy/Government
- Research and Development.

#### 4.2.1 OUTREACH

For decades, society has been groomed to pursue post secondary education as a means to a successful career and lifestyle. College and university entrances have flourished, increasing both enrolment and educational opportunities. During the push for 'educated youth', less value has been placed on 'blue collar workers' or those individuals working in the trades. To increase apprenticeships and meet predicted future demands for skilled trade workers, considerable effort must be done to change the negative perception of the trades that has been widely adopted by the general public.

**Suggested approaches to increase awareness and promote the trades as a positive, career opportunity are to:**

- Engage employers, Unions and Trade Sector Councils in any outreach strategy
- Expose students during early years to the benefits and opportunities in the trades as well as personal and education requirements of the trades
- Increase awareness of available support mechanism to apprentices and apprenticeship candidates
- Invite skills departments of federal and provincial governments to schools to talk about apprenticeships, provide a summary of the presentation to be distributed to parents
- Educate/inform the Aboriginal public about the process and benefit of apprenticeship training
- Encourage the public to view apprenticeship training as another form of education that is no less credible than pursuing a university or college diploma
- Host career fairs that provide individuals with the opportunity to practice hands-on trades skills

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- Establish outreach by Aboriginal leaders, organizations, training institutes and employment agencies to support an increase in apprenticeship opportunities
- Encourage peer approaches/youth groups to participate in trade fairs, workshops and discussion groups related to future goals
- Utilize youth in Trades as role models and mentors to youth
- Introduce classroom curriculum at all grades that demonstrates an understanding of self-reliance and entrepreneurial type skills
- Provide opportunity for students to understand what their "own way" is and to broaden their perspective about their future and all employment fields.

### 4.2.2 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Promotional strategies must continue through, newly developed and distributed materials to ensure general public knowledge of available programs and services in the skilled trades are gained.

#### They must:

- Recruit Aboriginal Trades people as champions
- Recruit Aboriginal and mainstream employers as champions
- Develop Aboriginal specific skilled trades promotional materials for all stakeholder groups
- Ensure promotional materials are appropriate to the target group i.e. Aboriginal Youth, Women, Adult Students
- Target promotional materials at the employer market
- Utilize Aboriginal channels of marketing i.e. APTN, gatherings, protocol, word of mouth (reputation)
- Include hands on Aboriginal Skilled Trades Fairs and Youth Camps
- Initiate skill recognition and certification  
Aboriginal Skilled Trades people presently working in the Trades environment

### 4.2.3 EDUCATION

Ontario's education reform has been very pro-active for the past several years, introducing a variety of standards across the province. The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy would like to propose another standard to be introduced into Ontario curriculum to increase awareness and education of Canada's skilled labour requirements.

#### Components of the proposed Ontario curriculum would include:

- Engaging Industry and Employer involvement in the School systems
- Recruiting trades people into the schools as role models and/or teachers to promote the trades (including sector and regional information) as well as future opportunities
- Training counselors on how to market and provide information about apprenticeships and essential skills required for skill trades
- Developing programs such as 'women in trades' to actively recruit and prepare Aboriginal females for the trades
- Preparing and distributing an age appropriate Aboriginal Apprenticeship Training Resource guide
- Developing and initiating a multi-media events or trade fairs to reach parents and students in the elementary and secondary school systems to change perceptions about apprenticeships as a valuable and viable option, to breakdown prejudices and stereotypes
- Develop a specific Aboriginal Youth Apprenticeship Program in the Education system.

For a host of reasons, many Aboriginal people have considerable work experience in a skilled trade yet lack the formal education requirement to register as an apprentice. Additional supports are required to assist individuals wishing to increase their formal education in order to pursue an apprenticeship.

#### Possible solutions would be to:

- Lobby for alternative methods of achieving grade 12 requirement by the end of an apprenticeship period rather than an entry requirement

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- Prioritize grade 12 as an essential employability skills
- Increase community based or distance education to allow apprentices to stay in their own community
- Examine jurisdictional issues with education issues and encourage partnerships in achieving higher education levels among Aboriginal people.
- Develop satellite or alternative high schools on-reserve
- Provide local opportunity for individuals seeking grade 12 outside the 'normal work day'
- Support one-on-one counselors, mentors, tutors to ensure success in education and to provide essential employability skills
- Train Youth Workers in trades exposure and opportunities
- Introduce a 'credit' or 'challenge' system that recognizes experience in a trade to reduce the overall length of an apprenticeship
- Institute sensitivity training for educational personnel, employers and other related stakeholders.
- Update infrastructure of Northern Colleges and Aboriginal Institutes to ensure training is conducted on par with southern training institutes with up to date equipment and materials used in industry.

### 4.2.4 PARTNERSHIPS

The complexity of issues and circumstances, which currently face the skilled trades, employers, Aboriginals and the economy, dictates the necessity for a collaborative intervention. A host of stakeholders with a multitude of expertise, needs and successes in the skilled trades are invited to actively participate in the Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy. This focuses on developing Ontario's solution to increasing Aboriginal participation in apprenticeships and the skilled trades. Aboriginal partnerships can move the apprenticeship program forward.

#### **Expected activities or tasks that need to be addressed through partnerships include:**

- Developing partnerships with Education and Aboriginal Communities
- Utilizing financial resources that currently through existing partnerships i.e. ASEP, AHRDCC, HRSDC,

- MTCU, Employer Tax Credits
- Streamlining changes to existing policy to advance the apprenticeship process i.e. classroom fees
- Exploring the potential for multiple trade certificates
- Accessing local training advisory boards employer data or suggest revisions to data collection as necessary.
- Developing a communication structure with employers, government (as funding agencies) and unions
- Collaborating with all stakeholders to address Aboriginal Health issues that threaten the development of a the Aboriginal Labour Force i.e. diabetes
- Collaborating with Federal and Provincial governments to ensure policy and funding frameworks accommodate Aboriginal approaches
- Utilizing existing programs to circulate information about skilled trades and apprenticeship programs such as Entrepreneurship programs, Aboriginal Co-operative Education programs
- Developing and maintaining a database of Aboriginal businesses on Aboriginal territories and major economic development projects operating in communities
- Strengthening relationships between Aboriginal organizations/communities and MTCU apprenticeship offices
- Establishing linkages and meet with sector and district labour councils to establish Aboriginal apprenticeship training opportunities in each region
- Undertaking a process to eliminate issues and impediments to Aboriginal employment in Ontario and the trades
- Implementing and maintaining studies to get statistical data on Aboriginal apprenticeships and potential large scale projects that can affect demand for skilled trades.
- Building and strengthening relationships with colleges to facilitate training delivery and access to business and corporate partnerships:
  - More linkages between colleges, universities, funding agents and Aboriginal institutes for purposes of training

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- Exploring partnerships with unions to
  - Establish stronger networks between Aboriginal organizations, communities, the members of AIC, trade unions and
  - Ontario Federation of Labour - discuss establishing Aboriginal apprenticeship-training with all trade unions in Ontario

### 4.2.5 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

It is recognized that extensive research has been conducted in this area, continued research is required to ensure programming is meeting goals, measurements and objectives. Research and development of inclusive and comprehensive Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiatives must occur.

#### **The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy recommendations with respect to Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiatives in Ontario include:**

- An emphasis on local community and regional Aboriginal Apprenticeship program development.
- Research into community demographics and needs (use for planning purposes).
- Research of Demand occupations to accurately forecast skill shortages.
- Research various Partnership Agreement Models.
- Research and examine other successful trades training models i.e. Habitat for Humanity, a sustainable program that emphasizes the benefits to the trainer and trainee.
- Research and examine U.S. and European Apprenticeship models to identify best practices that could be incorporated in the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy to support Aboriginal Apprenticeship.
- Review of existing models for promoting trades careers for Aboriginal women
- Encourage the development of advocacy or liaison functions within existing employment and training structures to help individuals establish apprenticeship relationships with prospective employers.

### 4.2.6 POLICY AND GOVERNMENT

Collaboration between all levels of government is required in the development of initiatives to increase Aboriginal participation in Apprenticeships and skilled trades occupations in Ontario.

#### **The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy has the following recommendations;**

- Develop and prepare a communications plan to lobby HRSDC, MTCU, AHRDA's, Indian and Northern Affairs, Labour and other related stakeholders to ensure that Aboriginal Apprenticeship Reform is a priority.
- It is incumbent on both federal and provincial levels of government to work closely with Aboriginal representatives in order that policies and funding frameworks accommodate Aboriginal community approaches to Apprenticeship.
- Lobby for changes to Ontario Legislation to encourage companies, union and employees to work together for the benefits of apprenticeships,
- Ontario requires a new approach that recognizes Aboriginal Institutes as delivery agents and work with them towards accreditation on par with colleges.
- More coordination is required among Aboriginal communities and organizations to facilitate the development of Aboriginal Training Institutes.
- Policy makers must recognize that funding levels must be adjusted to reflect actual needs and numbers of Aboriginal People in a given geographical area.
- Any Ontario Labour Market Agreement needs Aboriginal involvement to ensure that training needs of Aboriginal people are recognized.
- INAC needs to provide funds for maintaining infrastructure in Aboriginal communities
- Consult with Local Training Adjustment Boards to identify immediate labour shortages in specific trades and future skilled worker supply.

# Supply Meeting Demand

## An Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy



### 4.2.7 FINANCE

In order to improve access to apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people in Ontario, additional funding will need to occur at all levels of private and public sectors. In the Ontario MTCU report "Ontario A Leader in Learning", released Feb. 07. 2005, the Honorable Bob Rae recommended that the Ontario Government should "Enhance the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy, target growth in the professional and skilled trades and extend support to Aboriginal Institutes for recognized post secondary programming." This is an opportune time to work with all levels of government to access additional funding for the Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

**The Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy recommends the following changes and improvements to the current funding of Aboriginal Apprenticeship funding models:**

- Financial collaboration among all stakeholders is a must.
  - Utilize current funding programs to access funds for Aboriginal Apprenticeship initiatives.
  - Identify financial costs that employers and apprentices undertake.
  - Inventory financial resources and levels of funding opportunities from all stakeholders.
  - Redirect EI Surplus to Apprenticeship interventions.
  - Increase financial incentives to small and medium employers for longer periods.
  - Aboriginal communities require equitable access to funding with mainstream organizations and individuals.
  - Additional funding is required to enable Aboriginal groups to collaborate on Apprenticeship programming.
  - Additional funding is required from all levels of governments for the development of Aboriginal Training Institutes.
  - Funding levels must be adjusted to reflect actual needs and numbers of Aboriginal people in a given geographical area.
- Due to shrinking resources, programmers are challenged to develop and fund programs with limited resources. Both levels of government need to provide additional resources. Industry and business should also contribute additional funding towards the development of apprenticeship programs.
  - Collaborate with AHRDAs for strategic funding to meet future skilled labour demands
  - There is a need for employers to view apprenticeship training as part of their corporate responsibility towards the investment of future skill demands.

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## An Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy



### 5.0 NEXT STEPS

#### The blueprint of what needs to happen next must:

- Include recognition of all parties that need to be engaged in the strategy.
- Encourage action.
- Include a reporting mechanism.
- Involve engagement of employers and legislators.
- Recognize the current capacity or lack thereof for apprenticeship service delivery.
- Include a provincial representative at the working group level and committee or sub-committee level.
- Be long-term and viable and
- Contribute to community building.

### 6.0 CONCLUSION

Apprenticeship in Ontario is not a panacea for all economic difficulties faced by Aboriginal people in Ontario. It is a viable option for many Aboriginal individuals who learn by interacting with knowledgeable people who pass on the skills by conversation and practical application. This method has been used by Indigenous cultures to pass on their knowledge, which in turn serves the community.

There will be opportunities in certain skilled trades for years to come because many skilled trades people are retiring. The challenge for the labour market of Canada and its' employer community represents an opportunity for Aboriginal people to assist Canada in meeting skill demands while achieving success in employment that is meaningful and long term.

Have you ever considered a job as a mason? The job is heavy. You sweat in the summer and freeze in the winter. Masonry is also a highly skilled trade where you see the product of your work for years to come. That building you help build may well outlive you. There is pride in seeing a job well done. Wages are good with opportunities for overtime and travel. Learning is 90% on the job and 10% in class, you learn by doing, it is physical work and the work can be rewarding and long term.

Challenges and action step recommendations for Aboriginal communities in accessing Apprenticeships in the Skilled Trades have been outlined in this Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy document.

This document is intended to facilitate change in the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Experience. Through partnership and collaboration the goal of assisting Aboriginal individuals to access apprenticeship opportunities and long term meaningful employment in skilled trades is realistic and achievable. Continued collaborative effort is required to develop and implement specific, measurable and timely goals and action steps for the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

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# Supply Meeting Demand

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