

Social Sector Case Study

Forging Links

Introduction



AWES raises public awareness of the vital role Workforce Essential skills play in career development.

At AWES, it is our mission to bring Essential Skills to the Workforce. It means raising public awareness of the vital role that Workforce essential skills play in the careers of every Albertan. During the height of the economic boom in 2007, it meant maximizing the opportunity to forge links with the social sector to raise awareness and usage of WES in Alberta and across Canada. The Forging Links project partnered with many different providers and included several different methods and locales of delivery. We discussed, trained, learned, presented and collaborated with colleges, learning centers, and pre-employment programs across Canada in both urban and rural communities. The social sector was a vested partner in Forging Links.

Step-by-Step Approach

This project wasn't just about being on the road, but about "being on the right road". "AWES wasn't just building WES capabilities in the social sector, but working closely with agencies of social change to figure out which communities to travel to and build capacity in," says Lorene Anderson. We began by proposing to deliver a series of workshops about the *Process Model for Integrating Workplace Essential Skills into Curricula* with colleges, learning centers, and pre-employment programs across Canada. The delivery led AWES practitioners to develop and provide workshops to coordinators, instructors and tutors in rural Alberta communities to familiarize them with workplace essential skills and materials. AWES also worked in partnership with an Alberta-based college to develop materials with a workplace focus for learners who have very low literacy skills. The learners needed WES integrated into the materials used in the basic literacy program to prepare them to succeed in pre-employment training, in getting employment and keeping it.

"The social sector is a vital strategic partner in bringing Workforce Essential Skills to the career opportunities of every Albertan."

- Lorene Anderson, AWES consultant

Results

A few years on, AWES has continued to enhance the capabilities of WES practitioners in Alberta. Yet, more than this, we have come to recognize the strengths of our WES peers and to work closely to define ourselves as a compliment to their strengths, instead of a competitor. Together, AWES and other not-for-profits employ Essential Skills to prepare the workplace, the workers and the workplace culture for a more successful present and a better prepared future.