

Canadian Auto Workers, Local 1520, Pre-Layoff Course

Language	English
Provider	Canadian Auto Workers, specifically Local 1520, St. Thomas, Ontario Ford plant
Location	Ontario
Highlights	<p>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</p> <p>A comprehensive eight-hour adjustment course delivered on paid time to all workers, designed to prepare them for the challenges of plant closure.</p>
Overview	<p>HOW THE PROGRAM STARTED</p> <p>The CAW rose to the challenge trying to protect thousands of its members employed by the “Big Three” automakers during the industry’s financial crisis over the last few years. Securing good jobs for workers, their families and the economic sustainability of local communities is a top priority for the CAW. However, despite all of the union’s efforts, the Ford St. Thomas assembly plant could not be saved. Ford slated the closure of the plant for August 2011 which will result in a loss of 1500 jobs. The closure is not only devastating to CAW Local 1520 members but as the union’s economist, Jim Stanford stated “as many as 10,000 jobs in total could be lost due to the spinoff effects on the community of St. Thomas and surrounding areas.” The CAW negotiated transferring some workers to the Bramalea and Oakville plants but it could not accommodate all workers due to Ford’s aggressive cost-cutting measures and imposed concessions. The financial crisis impacting the global economy and the auto industry left the union with limited bargaining power to protect all the jobs in the St. Thomas plant.</p> <p>Building on its long history and commitment to workplace training and education as well as its adjustment expertise and support of its laid-off members, the CAW customized a special pre-layoff course for its Ford members. The union pressed Ford to allot paid training hours to make this course accessible and mandatory for all members of Local 1520. The union was guided by the notion that its members need support and representation, both while they are working and also when they lose their jobs. The CAW also recognized the value of reaching all workers before the layoff so as to build a strong foundation for successful adjustment activities after the plant closes.</p> <p>The eight-hour course covers the fundamentals of plant closures and adjustment in the current labour market. Key components of the program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Closure Agreement outlines the bargained provisions and gives participants a

	<p>sense of what's coming in the period leading to the closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour Market Information provides an insight into employment, occupational, wage and workplace trends and economic indicators - Employment Insurance looks at regular and special EI benefits, training supports and Employment Ontario services - Adjustment Process and Action Centre reviews CAW's labour adjustment program for laid-off members - Know Your Skills helps workers recognize the skills and abilities which they can transfer to future employment and other areas of life - Needs Assessment seeks a "snapshot" of workers' needs and will help the Adjustment Committee and Action Centre prioritize and plan programs and services - Landing on Your Feet looks at the impact of layoff on social, emotional and physical health and how to plan and take action to move ahead <p>Another support provided to CAW members at Ford St. Thomas is the Labour Market Readiness Certificate, an innovative educational program offered by CAW in partnership with McMaster University's School of Labour Studies. Funded under the negotiated tuition assistance program, the Certificate offers a series of after-hour courses designed to sharpen basic skills (such as computers, word processing, writing), enhance understanding of the local labour market, and explore supports to manage transition into training and re-employment.</p>
<p>Issues Targeted</p>	<p>Building on its long history and commitment to workplace training and education as well as its adjustment expertise and support of its laid-off members, the CAW customized a special pre-layoff course for its Ford members. The union pressed Ford to allot paid training hours to make this course accessible and mandatory for all members of Local 1520. The union was guided by the notion that its members need support and representation, both while they are working and also when they lose their jobs. The CAW also recognized the value of reaching all workers before the layoff so as to build a strong foundation for successful adjustment activities after the plant closes.</p> <p>The eight-hour course covers the fundamentals of plant closures and adjustment in the current labour market. Key components of the program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Closure Agreement outlines the bargained provisions and gives participants a sense of what's coming in the period leading to the closure - Labour Market Information provides an insight into employment, occupational, wage and workplace trends and economic indicators - Employment Insurance looks at regular and special EI benefits, training supports and Employment Ontario services - Adjustment Process and Action Centre reviews CAW's labour adjustment program for

	<p>laid-off members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know Your Skills helps workers recognize the skills and abilities which they can transfer to future employment and other areas of life - Needs Assessment seeks a “snapshot” of workers’ needs and will help the Adjustment Committee and Action Centre prioritize and plan programs and services - Landing on Your Feet looks at the impact of layoff on social, emotional and physical health and how to plan and take action to move ahead <p>Another support provided to CAW members at Ford St. Thomas is the Labour Market Readiness Certificate, an innovative educational program offered by CAW in partnership with McMaster University’s School of Labour Studies. Funded under the negotiated tuition assistance program, the Certificate offers a series of after-hour courses designed to sharpen basic skills (such as computers, word processing, writing), enhance understanding of the local labour market, and explore supports to manage transition into training and re-employment.</p> <p>LOGISTICS</p> <p>The CAW negotiated with Ford to include this Pre-Layoff Course as part of the Workplace Training Program for workers at the St. Thomas plant. As with other courses within CAW’s Big Three Workplace Training Program, the Pre-Layoff Course is facilitated by peer trainers who are experiencing the same transition. The course takes place during workers’ regular shifts and at the workplace.</p>
<p>Key Features</p>	<p>OBJECTIVES AND METHODS</p> <p>The main objective of this course is to support workers in a critical time as they face losing their jobs. Some have been working with Ford for the majority of their working lives and have not had to prepare a resume or conceive of alternative employment for years.</p> <p>Learning methods are the same as other courses in the CAW’s Workplace Training Program which allow for the diverse ways that adults learn. Peer facilitators use interactive methods to provide participants opportunities to discuss issues and raise questions. Slide presentations, a “jeopardy” game to review labour market information, skills inventory and helpful handouts are among the resources used.</p> <p>The course components allow workers’ individual and collective needs to be addressed. Individual follow-up with workers will be undertaken to ensure their needs are met after the course is complete.</p>
<p>Key Results</p>	<p>IMPACTS OF PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES</p>

	<p>Getting workers together in the classroom during this difficult transition has enormous impacts. Workers learn the tools they need to re-enter the workforce, and the classroom itself becomes a source of collective moral support. It is very common that workers experiencing this calamitous event in their lives suffer from anger, resentment and stress. This course provides a space to bring these feelings and emotions to the classroom and a structure to deal with them collectively with their peers.</p> <p>The goal of adjustment is to help workers make the transition toward “what’s next.” This varies from one worker to another. For most, a new job is an urgent priority. Others may look to retire, while many will consider retraining. Early intervention – acting before the layoff actually occurs – is of proven benefit. Access to services and information right away means better choices. The sooner the adjustment process can get under way, the better the chance of success.</p> <p>The CAW’s pre-layoff course is an example of early intervention. Its impact will provide lessons that will prove useful to other unions facing layoffs, and to governments which in the last 15 years have provided no or limited adjustment funding for pre-layoff programs and services.</p>
Contact Details	<p>CONTACT PERSON David Robertson, Director of Work Organization and Training cawwork@caw.ca, 416-495-3761</p>
Sectors	<p>Manufacturing</p>
Projects	<p>Union-Led Work-Related Learning</p>
Sponsors	<p>Trade Union, Labour federation or Labour-affiliated Group</p>
Target Audiences	<p>Workers</p>
Initiative Types	<p>Program</p>
Sources	<p>FURTHER REFERENCES CAW Local 1520 http://www.cawlocal.ca/1520/</p>

Conclusion

WHAT'S NEXT

The course will continue to run at the workers' Action Centre when the plant closes in the summer of 2011. Through this course, workers can see that CAW is committed to their well-being beyond the workplace. The union remains relevant and important in their lives and communities.

The CAW will continue to press provincial and federal governments to create conditions for stable and secure jobs. At the moment, St. Thomas workers have to prepare for a hostile labour market where precarious and "flexible" jobs are the overwhelming norms.