



*Who Does What in
Aboriginal Skills Development
A Reference Document*

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Prepared for The Alliance of Sector Councils by Stonecircle Consulting



Table of Contents

1. Aboriginal Human Resources: An Overview	5
Aboriginal Statistics	5
Aboriginal People in the Labour Market	6
2. Support for Aboriginal Human Resources.....	8
Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC)	8
Service Canada	9
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)	9
National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs)	10
Aboriginal Human Resource Council.....	10
Provincial Governments	10
3. Aboriginal Human Resource Council	12
4. Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement Holders or AHRDAs.....	14
Types of AHRDAs.....	14
National AHRDAs	14
Urban AHRDAs.....	14
Métis AHRDAs.....	15
First Nation AHRDAs.....	15
Inuit AHRDAs	15
Partnerships between AHRDAs and Sector Councils.....	15
Aboriginal Human Resource Council and Treaty 7 Economic Development Corporation: Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project	16
Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council and AHRDAs in northern Manitoba: Snowmobile Maintenance Training Program	16
Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council and various AHRDAs: Ready to Work program	16
Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) and the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (PGNAETA): Trucking Task Force.....	17
Construction Sector Council and AHRDAs across Canada: Ironworkers Aboriginal Career Awareness Project	17
ECO Canada/ Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR) and Pan-Canadian AHRDAs: School Work Experience Program	17

Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) and Aboriginal Human Resource Council: Guide for Aboriginal Communities and Mastering Inclusion.....	17
National Aboriginal Trades Project	18
Wood Manufacturing Council and the Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board: WoodLINKS	18
5. Other Aboriginal Human Resources Initiatives.....	19
ACCESS and Province of British Columbia Bladerunners Project	19
Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO)	19
Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium, Ontario	19
Nunavut Arctic College	20
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)	20
First nations' Wood Product Technical Support Program	20
Institute for Aboriginal Health (IAH) University of British Columbia	20

Until the public release of this document (in November 2008), at which time it will be posted on the TASC web site, copies of this document (paper and electronic) are available from the TASC office.

In addition, a complete list of AHRDAs and communities represented by various AHRDAs and a list of Service Canada regional offices is available from the TASC office.

The Alliance of Sector Councils: info@councils.org

Introduction

Canada is one of the fastest growing economies in the G8, but the availability of a trained workforce is key to sustaining this growth. Many sectors estimate a shortfall of workers, particularly in the skilled and knowledge-oriented sectors. At this time, Canada is also experiencing an Aboriginal baby boom. And the unemployment rate among Aboriginal people in Canada is nearly three times as high as the Canadian average.

More and more businesses, academics, governments and organizations are looking to the current and future Aboriginal labour pool as one important answer to some of the pressing labour market questions in this country.

This document was commissioned by the Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC), which has established a Working Group on Aboriginal Engagement, co-chaired by Kelly Lendsay of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council and Richard Lipman of the Wood Manufacturing Council.

This document is designed to assist organizations, particularly sector councils, understand the nature and context of Aboriginal human resources issues in Canada, and to provide practical information and resources to assist in the development of partnerships and relationships that lead to meaningful work for Aboriginal people and overall prosperity for the sectors of the economy most in need of additional workers and labour market support. It is hoped the information will assist sector councils and other stakeholders better understand the roles and responsibilities of various key organizations working to advance Aboriginal skills development.

As the information in this document is evolving, and contains contact information for a variety of government and non-governmental organizations, the report will be updated from time to time.

Information in the first section of this document is from the 2006 census, unless the information has not yet been released, in which case, the information is from the 2001 census.

Aboriginal Human Resources: An Overview

Aboriginal Statistics

	No.	% of Cdn Population	% of Aboriginal Population
Aboriginal	1,172,790	3.8	--
First Nation	698,025	2.2	59.5
Métis	389,785	1.2	33.2
Inuit	50,485	0.16	4.3
Multiple and other Aboriginal	34,500	0.11	2.9

- **First Nations** are individuals registered with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs who belong to a particular community or reserve. Individuals can be registered with a community but reside elsewhere. A number of people consider themselves First Nations but are non-status, meaning they are not registered with a particular band or reserve. The term "Indian" is not generally used, except in reference or historical documents.
- **Métis** have historically been considered those who are descendents of (usually) French-Canadian fathers and Cree or Ojibway mothers from the fur trade era in Western Canada. Today, Métis are generally considered any combination of mixed racial heritage which includes a First Nation.
- **Inuit** are Aboriginal people who originally inhabited the Arctic regions, particularly Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the northern areas of Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador (Nunatsiavut).

Fifty four percent (54%) of the Aboriginal population lives in urban areas. Forty percent (40%) of First Nations individuals live on reserves or settlements with the remainder living off-reserve. Successive Canadian Censuses have indicated a growing trend toward urbanization, as greater numbers of Aboriginal people move into larger urban centres. However, the increase has not been as substantial as it appears due to the high birth rate on reserve.

Between 1996 and 2006, the Aboriginal population in Canada grew by forty-five percent (45%), nearly six times faster than the eight percent (8%) rate for the non-Aboriginal population.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan have the highest percentage of Aboriginal people (15%) as a percentage of the provincial population. Ontario, with an Aboriginal population of 242,195, has the most Aboriginal people of any province

Aboriginal People in the Labour Market

	Non Aboriginal Population	Aboriginal Population (off reserve)	Aboriginal Population (on reserve)
Unemployment	6.8	18.9	24.7

Unemployment figures for Aboriginal people are higher than the non-Aboriginal population, with the average on-reserve figure at nearly twenty five percent (25%).

According to the 2001 census, the average total income of the Canadian population was \$29,769. For the Aboriginal population, the average was \$19,132; on reserve, that average was only \$14,616.

Aboriginal people, in general, are younger than their Canadian counterparts. Aboriginal youth under the age of twenty-four represent nearly fifty percent (50%) of the entire Aboriginal population in Canada, compared to barely thirty percent (30%) for the rest of Canada. In some regions and communities, this number is even higher, and the trend toward a younger Aboriginal population, measured over the last three census periods, is accelerating. This demographic will have a dramatic effect on labour market issues and demands.

Education levels for Aboriginal people are also rising, but figures for academic achievement are still much lower than the average Canadian population. Forty-eight percent (48%) of Aboriginal people have less than a high school diploma, compared to the general population (31%). Only 4.4% of the Aboriginal population have university degrees; compared to the national percentage of 15.4%. These figures also have implications for labour market programming designed to expand opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people face a number of barriers and issues that prevent them from fully participating in the labour market. These issues have been identified in numerous studies, and most recently by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC) through a national series of regional conferences called Workforce Connex, a forum for discussion of Aboriginal HR issues by regional employers, Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement holders, Aboriginal people and governments. For information on past and upcoming forums, go to www.workforceconnex.com.

The following issues and challenges are frequently associated with the Aboriginal labour market. They are consistently raised by Aboriginal human resource stakeholders at events such as Workforce Connex, and they include:

<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPLY availability of Aboriginal workers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DEMAND need for Aboriginal workers</p>
<p>AHRDAs lack information about job opportunities and employers</p>	<p>Employers lack information about AHRDAs, or ways to connect with Aboriginal people</p>
<p>AHRDAs do not have enough capacity to partner, or to communicate with employers about what they offer</p>	<p>Aboriginal people, particularly youth, are not exposed to a wide range of job opportunities and therefore are not able to gain enough experience or understand the range of job options</p>
<p>Aboriginal workers sometimes lack necessary qualifications for available jobs</p>	<p>There is a need for cultural sensitivity and awareness training for employers</p>
<p>Training programs need to be available at the community level</p>	
<p>Misconceptions, stereotypes and racism regarding Aboriginal workers limit employer interest</p>	

Aboriginal people, along with foreign workers, represent one of the most important sources of untapped labour in Canada. With many sectors facing imminent or existing labour shortages, and an aging population, employers in all sectors would be well advised to consider strategies for accessing the Aboriginal labour market as an important resource to the Canadian economy.

Support for Aboriginal Human Resources

Several Federal government departments and Aboriginal organizations are committed to the development of Aboriginal human resources as an element of their mandate, providing a range of different programs, jurisdictions and services.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC)

HRSDC is responsible for developing policy, programs and initiatives related to skills development, employment and the Canadian labour market.

Aboriginal labour market programming within HRSDC has evolved over the years. The first program, Pathways to Success, began in the 1980s. It was followed by the development of Regional Bilateral Agreements (RBAs) with Aboriginal organizations across the country, which in turn led to the first phase of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS). The second phase of the AHRDS began in 2005 and will sunset March 31, 2009.

The AHRDS is a strategy designed to improve employment opportunities of Aboriginal people, and enable them to fully participate in the Canadian economy. Financial assistance is provided to Aboriginal organizations, referred to as Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), to support the cost of human resource development programs designed and delivered by the AHRDAs to members of the Aboriginal communities they represent. (More details on AHRDAs can be found in Section 4.)

The AHRDS is managed at the national level by the Aboriginal and Youth Programs Directorate of HRSDC, with policy support from the Aboriginal Affairs Directorate at HRSDC. It is a \$1.6 billion, multi-year program.

HRSDC, mainly through the Sector Council Program, also funds and supports the AHRC, an organization mandated to develop partnerships to advance Aboriginal recruitment, retention and employment across Canada. (More details on AHRC can be found in Section 3.)

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP): ASEP is a nationally managed program, providing Aboriginal people with the skills they need to participate in economic opportunities such as northern mining, oil and gas, forestry, and hydro development projects across Canada. ASEP was launched in 2003 as an \$85-million, five year labour market initiative. So far, ten ASEP projects have received multi-year funding. These include a Manitoba Hydro construction project, a mining skills project in the NWT, "Trade Winds", a skilled trades project in Edmonton and Calgary, and other large projects. For more information on ASEP, see

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/aboriginal_training/index.shtml

Service Canada

Service Canada was created in 2005, mandated to provide Canadians with a single point of access to the full range of government products, services and benefits. A list of Service Canada regional offices is available from the TASC office (info@councils.org). Service Canada is housed within HRSDC.

The creation of Service Canada brought about a realignment of functions and management of the AHRDS. Through the Aboriginal Peoples Directorate, Service Canada is now responsible for the service delivery of the AHRDS. Direct communication between AHRDA holders and HRSDC is through regional Service Canada offices. You can contact a regional office for information on the AHRDA responsible for a specific region or community.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

INAC is responsible for meeting the Federal government's obligations to First Nations, Inuit and Northerners. It negotiates land claims on behalf of the government, promotes economic development, and is responsible for delivering education, housing, social assistance and social support services to on-reserve Aboriginal people.

Within INAC, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians coordinates relationships with national Métis and non-status organizations, and is responsible for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. The strategy provides funding that enables organizations to develop partnerships, train personnel, and better represent their constituents.

Specific labour market programs offered through INAC include:

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC): Recently moved from Industry Canada to INAC, ABC is a program that helps Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses. Funding is available to support new and established businesses in the areas of business development, marketing and exporting. Aboriginal organizations can also apply for funding to support research and advocacy activities designed to promote Aboriginal business development, including conferences and workshops, research papers and business skills training. ABC also supports young entrepreneurs and provides help with business start-up costs. For more information, see <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/abc/index-eng.asp>

Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS): Administered by the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, this strategy was created to address the socioeconomic needs of urban Aboriginal people. The UAS has a budget of \$50 million, and is currently funding a number of pilot projects to test innovative approaches to meeting the local needs of urban Aboriginal people. Twelve city-specific projects are currently underway, including some with a labour market focus. For more information, see <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/uas/index-eng.asp>

National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs)

There are a number of national Aboriginal organizations that undertake Aboriginal Human Resource development initiatives. The majority of them are political organizations, with a mandate to represent specific constituents, and administer programs and services and undertake initiatives to improve the lives of the constituents.

There organizations are:

- Assembly of First Nations, representing the majority of on-reserve Aboriginal people;
- Métis National Council, representing the majority of Métis people;
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, representing urban and non-Status Aboriginal people;
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, representing Inuit;
- Native Women's Association of Canada; and
- The National Association of Friendship Centres, which does not represent particular constituents but is the national organization overseeing the majority of Friendship Centres across Canada, a number of which offer labour market programs through agreements with HRSDC.

To address needs in the area of human resources development, the NAOs have each signed a national agreement (referred to in some cases as "National Accords") to administer HRSDC funds as an AHRDA. These funds support activities that include capacity building, and enable the NAOs to develop tailored approaches to developing AHRDA programs and services. National AHRDAs coordinate or oversee the work being done by AHRDAs in the regions.

In addition to their work under the AHRDS, each NAO has its own policies and programs to promote Aboriginal human resource development. Some, for example, are mandated to pursue economic development, while others are developing education and labour policies to assist the communities and populations they represent.

Aboriginal Human Resource Council

The AHRC (formerly the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada) was established in 1998 as a result of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. AHRC was created to "see full participation of Aboriginal people in Canadian labour markets." It is a national public-private organization that creates partnerships between Aboriginal organizations, the private sector and all levels of government. AHRC is a Member of the Alliance of Sector Councils, and funded primarily through the Sector Council program of HRSDC. For more details, please see Section 3.

Provincial Governments

Each provincial government offers programs and services to meet the labour market needs of the province's Aboriginal people. In Ontario, for example, the provincial government

provides funding for scholarships to Aboriginal business students. The government also funds the Aboriginal Community Capital Grants Program, which assists in the construction or expansion of community, friendship or small business centres. In Manitoba, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs provides funding and support for career placements, Aboriginal employment partnership agreements and other partnership agreements to support the Aboriginal labour market.

Aboriginal Human Resource Council

The Aboriginal Human Resource Council was formed in 1998 as a private-public non-profit organization with a mandate to address Aboriginal labour market issues on a national level. The need for such an organization was outlined in the report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The AHRC receives the majority of its infrastructure funding from the Sector Council program at HRSDC, and leverages additional funds from a variety of sources to develop programs, services and initiatives with partners. The AHRC is a Member of the Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC).

AHRC's mission statement is "to see full participation of Aboriginal people in Canadian labour markets. Through unique partnerships with corporate, education, government and Aboriginal leaders, the AHRC pioneers new ways to increase skills and training opportunities for Aboriginal people." AHRC creates partnerships at all levels and across all sectors of the economy.

The AHRC promotes the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people in the workforce. Programs and services offered by AHRC are divided into several components:

Education and Advocacy—this includes but is not limited to:

- A *Champions Event*, which is an annual colloquium of business, government, labour and Aboriginal leaders discussing employment issues and encouraging Aboriginal inclusion;
- Various speeches, presentations, roundtables. Some of these include a presentation to the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions, a Trucking Sector Essential Skills roundtable, and presentations to government standing committees; and
- The National Aboriginal Human Resource Conference, most recently held in May 2008, is an annual Aboriginal recruitment, retention, and advancement conference that brings together more than 250 HR and Aboriginal diversity professions for two days of learning and networking.

Products and Services—these include:

- The *Inclusion Network*, a job bank of thousands of CVs from Aboriginal people across Canada. www.inclusionnetwork.ca AHRC partners with Workopolis to provide this service
- *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* is an ensemble of learning tools for companies and organizations that walk through the seven stages of Aboriginal inclusion. The program consists of five modules, each containing a detailed explanation and a wide variety of tutorials, tip sheets, fact sheets, models, templates, guides and tools.

Human Resources Development—this includes:

- Development of research papers on labour market issues. Some of the research papers include "A Study of Perceptions, Expectations and Career Choices of Aboriginal

Youth”, “Lessons Learned in Product Development”, “Aboriginal Labour Market Strategies: Increasing Return and Productivity” ;

- Development of *Guiding Circles*, an Aboriginal-specific program to help career counsellors assist Aboriginal people as they determine their career paths. The program is a holistic, interactive program. Guiding Circles has successfully been used in schools, AHRDAs and learning centres across Canada;
- Best practices and lessons learned. AHRC has compiled a list of best practices in the areas of successful Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement by profiling companies with successful Aboriginal inclusion initiatives;
- A quarterly newsletter called *The National Report on Aboriginal inclusion* which includes success stories, tips and contacts in Aboriginal Human Resource projects and initiatives;
- Working with sector councils and connecting sector councils to AHRDAs. For more information on connections between AHRC/AHRDAs and sector councils, see Section 4; and
- Developing templates and strategies.

Innovative Partnerships

- Coordinating workshops and conferences, including a conference on skilled trades in BC and Alberta, a National Aboriginal Trades Symposium, National Aboriginal Human Resource Conference;
- *Workforce Connex*, a national forum that links employers, AHRDAs and Aboriginal workers. The forums offer roundtable discussions, promising practices sessions, and networking opportunities. AHRC has hosted nine forums in the past three years, in communities across Canada. More forums are planned for 2008. See www.workforceconnex.com for more information ;
- *Aboriginal Trades and Apprenticeship Project*. With looming shortages across many of the skilled trades, AHRC has focused its attention on matching the Aboriginal labour pool with industry demand and need. The three-year project (see www.aboriginaltrades.ca) is designed to develop new partnership and employment strategies to get Aboriginal people into skilled trades. AHRC also supports the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, encouraging Aboriginal people in Alberta to enter and complete apprenticeships. See www.thinktrades.ca for more information ; and
- Other national and regional partnerships. These include:
 - Job Horizons, a program to place Aboriginal people from northern Saskatchewan in jobs in the oil sands of northern Alberta;
 - Racism-Free Workplace Strategy, an initiative to develop and distribute information on racism and Aboriginal inclusion in the workplace;
 - Alberta Aboriginal Essential Skills Preparation Project, a pilot project with a community college in Lethbridge, to develop curriculum for Aboriginal apprenticeship candidates, and
 - A partnership with the Association for Canadian Community Colleges and work with the Aboriginal Affinity Group

Full details on AHRC’s programs and services can be found at www.aboriginalhr.ca

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement Holders or AHRDAs

There are eighty AHRDAs across Canada meeting the labour market needs of Inuit, First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Métis people. Each AHRDA administers funding for a variety of programs and services based on a contribution agreement with HRSDC.

While programs and services offered by AHRDAs vary widely, the majority of AHRDAs provide three streams of funding; general labour market programs, youth programs and programs for people with disabilities.

Examples of labour market programs include: wage subsidies, skills development, career placement programs, purchase of training, income supports, labour market partnerships, temporary employment supports and employment assistance.

Examples of youth programming include: skills link, career focus programs and summer career placements.

Programs for persons with disabilities include all labour market programs supplemented by support measures such as advocacy, office mobility/access, and special equipment.

AHRDAs have the flexibility to provide whatever local or regional-specific programming best meets the needs of their specific constituency. Some AHRDAs have joined together to provide joint programming; examples include a partnership between two BC AHRDAs to create an Essential Skills training centre, or a province-wide Aboriginal apprenticeship strategy developed by Ontario AHRDAs.

Types of AHRDAs

National AHRDAs

As noted above, HRSDC has a number of agreements with NAOs to administer the AHRDAs at the national level. Each Accord or agreement is different; some use the funding to organize meetings with regional AHRDAs, some supplement support provided to clients by regional AHRDAs, and others fund development of national policies, templates and strategies for constituent AHRDAs.

Urban AHRDAs

Most provinces have AHRDAs that are designated as urban AHRDAs. These AHRDAs are mandated to assist any Aboriginal person who lives within that urban area, regardless of status, or home community. The urban AHRDAs are:

- Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC) — Toronto

- Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres/Grand River Employment and Training Initiative (O-GI)—all urban centres in Ontario outside Toronto
- Aboriginal Community Careers Employment Services Society (ACCESS) — Vancouver
- Centre for Aboriginal Human Resources Development (CAHRD) — Winnipeg,
- Federation of Newfoundland Indians—all urban centres in Newfoundland
- L'assemblée des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador (Urbaine)—all urban centres in Quebec and Labrador
- Native Council of Nova Scotia—all urban centres in Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council—all urban centres in New Brunswick
- Oteenow Employment and Training Society—Edmonton

Métis AHRDAs

The Métis National Council has a national accord with HRSDC to oversee all the Métis AHRDAs, as represented by members of the Métis Nation Governing Members. These are generally coordinated by provincial Métis organizations such as the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Each organization has established its own structures and initiatives to best meet the needs of Métis people in their region.

First Nation AHRDAs

In most cases, regional Aboriginal organizations oversee AHRDAs at the community level. For example, the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle in Ontario is an AHRDA holder, responsible for eleven First Nations in south and central Ontario. Other communities, such as Six Nations, have their own AHRDA (Grand River Employment and Training).

Inuit AHRDAs

There are six Inuit AHRDA holders, representing the four major northern land claims regions. There is one AHRDA in each of Labrador, which the Inuit call Nunatsiavut, Northern Quebec, called Nunavik, and the Inuit communities in the NWT, called Inuvialuit, as well as three AHRDA holders in Nunavut. Several Inuit AHRDA holders also service Inuit clients living in urban centres across Canada. For example, Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) is a sub-agreement holder of Kakivak Association, the Inuit AHRDA holder in the Baffin region mandated to deliver programs and services for more than 100 Inuit living in Ottawa.

Partnerships between AHRDAs and Sector Councils

A complete list of AHRDAs and communities represented by various AHRDAs is available from the TASC office (info@councils.org).

As AHRDAs are generally community-driven and developed at the local and regional level, they are particularly interested in partnerships and opportunities that create jobs for their local clientele.

Sector Councils can approach the AHRC to partner on any Aboriginal initiatives. They can also partner with specific AHRDAs in specific regions, on specific initiatives. The following initiatives are examples of the various kinds of partnerships and initiatives that have been successfully developed.

***Aboriginal Human Resource Council and Treaty 7 Economic Development Corporation:
Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project***

The Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP) was established in 2001 to promote apprenticeship and industry training to Aboriginal people, communities, and organizations in Alberta. It is a partnership between the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, several AHRDAs in Alberta, as well as government and industry representatives. The project helps Aboriginal people enter and complete apprenticeship programs. Project sponsors include Aboriginal groups, industry, educational jurisdictions, and federal and provincial governments. The project can provide a template for Aboriginal groups and other organizations across Canada developing similar labour market projects.

The Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project recently wrapped up in 2008. It operated in five Alberta communities: Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, High Level and Lethbridge. In each of these communities a Project Officer worked with Aboriginal people, communities, and organizations to build support for the Alberta apprenticeship training system, under the jurisdiction of Alberta Advanced Education, Apprenticeship and Industry Training. As a result of AAAP, just over 300 Aboriginal apprentices were registered.

<http://www.thinktrades.com/>

***Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council and AHRDAs in northern Manitoba:
Snowmobile Maintenance Training Program***

CARS developed a basic snowmobile maintenance training program for First Nations communities that accommodate the specialized learning requirements of adult community members with limited essential skills. It was created in collaboration with Aboriginal communities in northern Manitoba, with input from band staff, community training coordinators, and the Fishermen and Trappers' Association of the Pas.

Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council and various AHRDAs: Ready to Work program

The Tourism Council has developed a successful program for entry-level workers in the tourism industry called Ready to Work. The program has been targeted to Aboriginal communities and AHRDAs, as well as other under-represented groups. A case study on the

program in Saskatchewan has resulted in high numbers of Aboriginal workers successfully entering the tourism job market.

Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) and the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (PGNAETA): Trucking Task Force

PGNAETA has developed a unique relationship with the national CTHRC and the provincial BC Trucking Association through the Aboriginal Trucking Strategy Task Force, formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding with the BC Trucking Association. The Task Force allows all stakeholders within the BC trucking industry to come together and ensure that industry hiring needs are matched with the training needs of the Aboriginal community. The Aboriginal Trucking School and Mobile Driver Assessment Unit were developed through this partnership. These initiatives give Aboriginal people in remote communities interested in working in the trucking industry access to training and industry-recognized accreditation.

Construction Sector Council and AHRDAs across Canada: Ironworkers Aboriginal Career Awareness Project

The CSC/AHRC partnership developed the Ironworkers Aboriginal Career Awareness project. Building upon a history of Aboriginal ironworkers, this program encourages Aboriginal youth to consider construction as a career.

ECO Canada/ Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR) and Pan-Canadian AHRDAs: School Work Experience Program

BEAHR is a national initiative of ECO Canada, which represents the environmental sector. It was also the first partnership between AHRC and a sector council. BEAHR is mandated to increase Aboriginal employment in the environment sector through career awareness programs, training and employment resources, and recognition of environmental excellence. Its School Work Experience Program, focusing on environmental programs at universities and colleges, was developed through consultation with AHRDAs and negotiation with educational institutions across Canada. The program increases rates and levels of student success by providing Aboriginal students with an “access” year in which students can upgrade their mathematics and science knowledge in preparation for the environmental curriculum. BEAHR’s Environmental Monitors Program for Aboriginal communities is an Aboriginal-specific program and curriculum geared to Aboriginal students interested in this field. The program boasts an impressive retention rate of 90% and an interest in the program from many communities across Canada. www.beahr.com

Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) and Aboriginal Human Resource Council: Guide for Aboriginal Communities and Mastering Inclusion

Building on their prior work with other stakeholders, the MiHR is undertaking a project to develop the Mining Industry Human Resources Guide for Aboriginal Communities. This

“how-to” guide will fill an identified information gap limiting the entry of potential Aboriginal workers to the mining industry. The guide will create a better understanding among Aboriginal human resource officers, AHRDA holders, community leaders and academic institutions of the employment opportunities in the mining industry; it will also detail support available to those who choose to pursue a job or career in the sector. The MiHR is also collaborating with the AHRC in the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion Program. This program helps organizations to develop policies and strategies for successfully hiring, training, mentoring and advancing Aboriginal employees.

National Aboriginal Trades Project

The AHRC is continuing a three-year Aboriginal trades initiative that brings together AHRDAs, sector councils, colleges, unions, and provincial/territorial governments. The goal is to build linkages between groups to ensure that Aboriginal people and Aboriginal issues are included in the trades agenda for Canada. The Council is working with five sector councils (Construction, Mining and Minerals, Automotive Repair and Maintenance, Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, Petroleum) on a number of initiatives to help increase Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeships.

Workforce Connex

Workforce Connex is a series of private sector engagement forums to link employers with the Aboriginal workforce. To date, nine forums have been held in various locations across Canada, with nearly 2000 participants. The forms are intended to bring together organizations and industry. Through Workforce Connex, AHRDAs are able increase their labour market contacts, learn about career profiles and labour demands while employers build relationships with AHRDAs, learn about success stories and network with other employers and organizations.

Wood Manufacturing Council and the Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board: WoodLINKS

The Whitefeather Forest covers more than 1.3 million hectares in northwestern Ontario. The Pikangikum First Nation, along with neighbouring First Nations and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, developed a land use strategy called the Whitefeather Forest Initiative, giving First Nations communities direct input into and benefit from economic opportunities provided by the forest, including development of value-added forestry products. The Pikangikum First Nation community in northwestern Ontario is partnering with the Wood Manufacturing Council to modify WoodLINKS, which is the council’s high school curriculum for teaching skills related to the wood manufacturing industry. WoodLINKS will be used as a pilot project to help the Pikangikum First Nation develop a training and education strategy within the Whitefeather Forest Initiative. This will allow their members to compete for jobs in a new milling and manufacturing facility to be built in the Red Lake area.

Other Aboriginal Human Resources Initiatives

While AHRDAs and sector councils have formed many productive partnerships and developed effective, mutually beneficial relationships, there are a number of other initiatives and projects that reflect the work being done to advance Aboriginal human resources across Canada. The following is a sample of current initiatives with various levels of Government, educational and training institutions.

ACCESS and Province of British Columbia Bladerunners Project

The Bladerunners Program is a unique partnership between the Province of British Columbia, the Aboriginal Community Careers Services Society AHRDA, employers and unions that provides a work-based training program for at-risk youth, focusing on construction and related trades. Its mission is to provide disadvantaged youth with construction trades training and to place them on paid internships on public and private sector construction projects to gain hands-on building trades experience. The program also provides life skills support and mentoring to help ensure a successful transition to full-time paid employment. <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/sustainability/casestudies/bladerunners.htm>

Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO)

Working closely with the Province of Saskatchewan, unions, Aboriginal communities, government departments, education and training and other professional associations, SAHO helped hire 2,400 Aboriginal people in the health field, supported 225 Aboriginal nurses in training, and increased First Nations employee retention to over fifty percent (50%). Dialogue and collaboration is ongoing as the partners continue to focus on solutions to ensure that Aboriginal people are represented at all levels of the health sector in Saskatchewan. http://www.capla.ca/2006_conference/pdf/e/presentations/Gubbels_Victoria.pdf

Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium, Ontario

The Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium is comprised of Aboriginal owned and controlled post-secondary education and training institutions working collectively to secure adequate resources for Aboriginal initiatives and to support and promote the member institutes.

These institutes offer degrees and diplomas ranging from aviation pilot and indigenous environmental technician to Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Public Administration. The institutes across Ontario are as follows:

Seven Generations Education Institute - <http://www.7generations.org/>

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute - <http://www.oshki.ca/>

Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute - <http://www.ktei.ca/index.php>

Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre - <http://www.osttc.com/>

Anishinabek Educational Institute -

http://www.anishinabek.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=36

Six Nations Polytechnic - <http://www.snpolytechnic.com/>

First Nations Technical Institute - <http://www.fnti.net/>

Iohahi:io Akwesasne Adult Education - PO Box 579, Cornwall, ON, K6H 5T3,

Telephone: 613-575-2754

Nunavut Arctic College

Nunavut Arctic College provides training and accreditation through campuses in the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtani regions, as well as community learning centres across Nunavut. Nunavut Arctic College works closely with the Kakivak Association in the Qikiqtani region to ensure that program curriculum meets the needs of the region's labour market. <http://nac.nu.ca/>

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)

NAIT provides technical training and applied education designed to meet the demands of Alberta's industries. Particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring that Aboriginal students feel welcome and thrive in their course work during their studies at NAIT through the Aboriginal Student Services Centre. This centre assists Aboriginal students throughout their studies with Aboriginal mentors, and helps students acquire jobs through the Aboriginal Placement Program. <http://www.nait.ca/encana/>

First nations' Wood Product Technical Support Program

The First Nations Forestry Council in British Columbia is working with FP Innovations Forintek to support First Nations in improving their wood products and/or businesses, and in their attempts to extract value from their forest-tenure allotments by providing access to industry specialists and manufacturing solutions. Through this partnership, FP Forintek is providing: on-site assistance; market research; housing; technical support, and workshops and seminars to help solve production problems, increase productivity, reduce costs and try new technologies.

http://www.fnforestrycouncil.ca/initiatives_res/wealth%20with%20wood%20brochure.pdf

Institute for Aboriginal Health (IAH) University of British Columbia

The IAH seeks to increase the enrolment of First Nations peoples in a wide range of study areas by actively recruiting and providing support services; to expand the range and depth of program and course offerings within the various faculties, schools and institutes at UBC related to needs identified by First Nations people and communities in BC; and to identify and promote research that would extend the frontiers of knowledge for the benefit of the First Nations of B.C. <http://www.health-disciplines.ubc.ca/iah/>