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# Electricity Sector Council Aboriginal Participation Initiatives Project

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## About the Electricity Sector Council

Approximately 100,000 Canadians are involved in the generation, transmission and distribution of one of our country's essential utilities: electricity. Their work powers homes and businesses across the country, fuelling everything from light bulbs, cell phones and refrigerators to water treatment plants and road vehicle assembly lines.

The Electricity Sector Council provides support to this dedicated workforce by collaborating with industry employers and other stakeholders to research and resolve human resource and workplace development issues.

This report is also available in French and can be obtained electronically at [www.brightfutures.ca/aboriginal](http://www.brightfutures.ca/aboriginal).

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Aboriginal Human Resource Council	Elephant Thoughts
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Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario	Hydro-Québec
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# THE INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

In late 2008, the Electricity Sector Council (ESC) began a comprehensive Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative. Led and managed by the ESC, the initiative was marked by significant consultation with stakeholders including industry, Aboriginal peoples, labour unions, educational institutions, government representatives and others as appropriate.

The initiative included:

- the development of a cohesive strategy based on research, extensive industry consultation and identified best practices;
- a series of demonstration projects, including youth camps and a pre-trades orientation training program;
- creation of a customized HR guide;
- documentation of best practice case studies; and
- the adaptation of five HR tools targeted to industry needs.

The materials have been made available to anyone who is interested in applying these learnings to the benefit of the industry and Aboriginal workers.

There is a compelling business case for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers within the electricity and renewables sector. In order to make significant progress, a number of challenges must be overcome. In this regard, there is widespread recognition that investments will be required, supported by senior level commitment and accountability for action. The insights and tools produced by this initiative are valuable supports in this important endeavour.





# Harnessing the Power of Aboriginal Talent:

## A Strategy for Increasing Aboriginal Participation in Canada's Electricity Sector

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Starting in late 2008, the Electricity Sector Council undertook a comprehensive Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI). The project included the development of a cohesive strategy based on research and best practices, a series of demonstration projects, a customized HR guide, documentation of best practices and the adaptation of five HR tools targeted to industry needs. Throughout the project there was significant consultation with stakeholders including industry, Aboriginal peoples, labour unions, educational institutions, government representatives and others as appropriate.

This final report is designed to:

- Inform and educate industry stakeholders about the importance of the issues related to skill shortages and the potential of Aboriginal workers;
- Make the learnings and the related resources (tools, best practices, etc.) accessible to a wide range of potential users and stakeholders in the industry – to build the industry’s capacity to recruit and engage Aboriginal workers;
- Document the project so that stakeholders and project participants can be informed about the outcomes; and
- Support the ESC’s objectives of providing helpful information to interested parties outside of the electricity and renewables sector (e.g., other sector councils, government bodies, Aboriginal groups, educators, researchers, etc.).

There is a compelling business case for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers within the electricity and renewables sector. In order to make significant progress, a number of challenges must be overcome. It is evident that the history of relationships between electricity and renewables sector employers and Aboriginal communities has not always been positive; stakeholders emphasize the need to establish trust and long-term relationships. The skill development issue remains vitally important to both industry and Aboriginal communities; there is clearly an opportunity for success based on mutual interest in this regard. Finally, there is widespread recognition that investments will be required, supported by senior level commitment and accountability for action.

The current barriers and possible solutions leading to greater Aboriginal participation in the electricity and renewables sector were identified through a comprehensive process including a literature review, key informant interviews and industry consultation sessions.

Barriers to greater participation by First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers include:

- Challenges in attracting workers to the sector – limited knowledge and interest on the part of employers and Aboriginal workers. Levels of educational attainment and essential skills within the Aboriginal labour force that do not match the current requirements within the electricity and renewables sector.

- Difficulties in acquiring relevant job readiness skills due to geographic, financial and educational preparation constraints faced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers.
- Personal, family and community challenges in completing a successful transition to apprenticeship and/or electricity and renewables sector careers.
- Workplace practices that are not fully inclusive of Aboriginal workers and culture.

Based upon the research and consultations, we have identified ten “gates to success” that characterize best practices and successful initiatives:

1. Establish a focus.
2. Operationalize what “success” means.
3. Invest effort to build effective partnerships.
4. Tailor to the community.
5. Start early (really early).
6. Consider the full “employment life cycle”.
7. Maintain required standards.
8. Be “high touch”.
9. Invest in relationships.
10. Support the Aboriginal cultural experience.

Building on the research, subsequent project activities generated several pragmatic tools and solutions. With a solid focus on skill development within the Aboriginal labour force, the Electricity Sector Council undertook two different demonstration projects to pilot actionable initiatives: (1) a series of science camps to encourage Aboriginal youth to pursue educational and career options in science, mathematics and technology; (2) an initiative to provide pre-trades orientation and skill upgrading to qualified Aboriginal workers. Best practices were researched and documented, an HR guide developed and a series of pragmatic HR tools were created, addressing the full range of the employment cycle. These pragmatic actions will support employers in taking action to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal workers.

The learnings and insights from the project activities informed the development of a cohesive and integrated strategy for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers in the electricity and renewables industry. The strategy addresses the business case, the challenges, and recommended solutions. It provides the context for the results of the research, consultations, demonstration projects, best practices and tools, as well as outlining meaningful directions for future action. The strategy is outlined as a series of four Strategic Assertions and a series of suggested tactical initiatives for implementing the strategy.

### Strategic Assertions:

1. Maintain a focus on issues directly and closely related to the industry's workforce. In particular, the focus is on developing, attracting and retaining skilled Aboriginal workers.
2. Have a strategic intent to create concurrent improvements in all stages of the employment cycle. Take advantage of mutually reinforcing solutions to move forward on several fronts simultaneously; e.g., success in one area such as retention will build success in others, such as the industry's ability to recruit.
3. Focus on developing pragmatic initiatives and tools in the following four areas directly related to the industry's workforce:
  - A. Labour force development – Building industry-relevant skills for both near-term and long-term results
  - B. Outreach – Being proactive to inform Aboriginal communities and attract Aboriginal peoples to the sector
  - C. Hiring – Finding innovative ways to eliminate barriers to participation by skilled Aboriginal workers
  - D. Retention – Creating an industry that is welcoming and inclusive to Aboriginal workers
4. In addition to having a direct impact on the numbers, capabilities and engagement of the Aboriginal workforce within the industry, the initiatives within the strategy address three cross-cutting themes:
  - A. Collaborative Local Relationships and Partnership Models
  - B. Building Capacity among Stakeholders
  - C. Focus on Positive and Sustainable Outcomes



## 2. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Faced with a tight supply of skilled workers, Canada's electricity and renewables sector is increasingly seeing the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers as a solution to its employment needs. Capitalizing on this potential will require a cohesive and integrated sector-wide Aboriginal engagement strategy and implementation plan.

As a result, the Electricity Sector Council (ESC) undertook the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative to:

- Create a cohesive and integrated strategy for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers in the electricity and renewables industry;
- Conduct and evaluate two demonstration projects to pilot actionable initiatives;
- Develop a pragmatic implementation plan for the industry; and
- Consult with industry, Aboriginal peoples and other stakeholders in the design and development of the strategy, demonstration projects and implementation plan.

The project's timeframes extended from September 2008 to September 2011. As the initiative is brought to a conclusion, this final report is designed to:

- Inform and educate industry stakeholders about the importance of the issues related to skill shortages and the potential of Aboriginal workers;
- Make the learnings and the related resources (tools, best practices, etc.) accessible to a wide range of potential users and stakeholders in the industry – to build the industry's capacity to recruit and engage Aboriginal workers;
- Document the project so that stakeholders and project participants can be informed about the outcomes; and
- Support the ESC's objectives of providing helpful information to interested parties outside of the electricity and renewables sector (e.g., Aboriginal groups, government bodies, educators, other sector councils, researchers, etc.).

# CHAPTER 3. WHY INVEST

## Overview

Increased Aboriginal participation in the electricity and renewables sector makes good business sense. As a mechanism to help fill skill gaps due to demographics, provide a local workforce in remote locations, respond to regulatory needs for consultation and positive relations, and/or to demonstrate good corporate responsibility, the business case for increasing Aboriginal participation is a compelling one.

At the same time, barriers to effective Aboriginal participation are not insignificant. The research confirmed that there is limited knowledge and interest on both sides of the supply-demand equation – Aboriginal individuals and communities have limited awareness of the opportunities and industry employers often do not know where to start to engage them. Educational attainment and skill levels in many Aboriginal communities do not provide a solid foundation and job training programs are not an easy solution. For many Aboriginal workers, the transition from their community life to a full-time training or work position in industry brings additional challenges. Finally, the work environment is often not as welcoming as it needs to be.

The research and consultation processes uncovered ten “gates to success” that provide employers and Aboriginal agencies/organizations with directions for confronting some of these barriers.

This chapter concludes with identifying many of the stakeholders who have an interest in the outcomes of a strategic industry effort to increase the participation of Aboriginal workers in the sector. In consideration of these multiple stakeholders, the project’s Steering Committee, as well as others, generated a list of how the success of such an initiative might be measured.

### 3. WHY INVEST

The business case for investing in the attraction, development and retention of Aboriginal workers rests on a foundation of “increased Aboriginal participation makes good business sense”. Throughout the AWPI, it has been clear that only a solid business rationale will ultimately lead to sustainable approaches with meaningful impact on workers, communities and employers. The research and consultation phases revealed that there is a compelling business case for increased Aboriginal participation in Canada’s electricity and renewables sector.

- *Demographics:*  
Aboriginal workers can provide a source of labour to reduce the shortages in skilled trades and engineering/technical occupations. Some quite recent reports highlight the limited impact that Aboriginal workers can have on closing Canada’s skills gaps, citing the relatively small numbers in the population. Nonetheless, in comparison to many other industries, the electricity and renewables sector has more business reasons, and opportunities, to capitalize on this demographic.
- *Geography:*  
Many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are located near major electricity and renewables sector installations, offering the opportunity to save costs and enhance retention by using a locally-based labour force.
- *Public policy:*  
The legal requirement for meaningful consultation with Aboriginal communities affected by utility projects heightens the importance of having positive relationships with these communities. These relationships can be enhanced when local workers have an opportunity to participate in the workforce.
- *Corporate social responsibility:*  
Efforts to enhance the socioeconomic status and quality of life for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people show good corporate citizenship and yield important benefits to a company’s reputation among stakeholders.

Canada’s electricity and renewables sector is well positioned to achieve meaningful progress on its goal of engaging more Aboriginal workers in the industry. Throughout this initiative, key employers and stakeholders across the industry have demonstrated their commitment to the goal. It is evidently clear that there is no “magic solution”. What will be required is an unwavering focus on collaborative relationships and strategically targeted investments.

Collaborative relationships are characterized by a mutual understanding of, and respect for, various interests – those that are common and those that differ – among employers, Aboriginal communities (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), individual employees and other stakeholders. Strategically targeted investments – whether these are large-scale programs or individual-level actions – are characterized by a clear understanding of what opportunities can be leveraged and what barriers must be overcome.



The greatest progress will come through the combination of both relationships and investments. Success in one will breed success in the other. For example, investing in a training program that meets the particular needs of a given community will help to build a trusting relationship. Taking time to develop a solid community relationship will help an employer uncover new opportunities for truly engaging Aboriginal workers.

The strategy outlined here identifies a number of possible initiatives. Individually, but most powerfully as a collective, these initiatives will build the capacity of Canada's electrical sector to engage with Aboriginal peoples on meaningful employment-related initiatives.

### 3.1 The Barriers: Which issues are the most pressing?

A cohesive strategy requires a sharp focus on the critical issues where progress can be made and impacts felt. The research, consultation and tool development activities of the AWPI project have highlighted that the barriers to Aboriginal employment in the sector are complex, meaningful and real. To establish a focused platform for a strategy, we have distinguished five categories of important barriers to increased Aboriginal participation in the electricity sector.

- **Knowledge and interest – Attracting Aboriginal people to the sector.** Many stakeholders have highlighted the need for greater communication between Aboriginal peoples and electricity sector employers. There is limited understanding among Aboriginal people of the career opportunities within the electricity sector. In the industry, there is limited awareness of how to influence career decision-making or effectively access qualified Aboriginal candidates. While there are several good initiatives, there is not a coherent, contemporary and tailored communications and marketing strategy for attracting Aboriginals to the sector.
- **Education and essential skills – Ensuring a strong foundation.** Educational attainment levels are much lower among First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples than among the non-Aboriginal population. This significantly reduces their ability to access skilled occupations such as electrician and engineer. Difficulties in literacy and math are often cited as critical barriers to entry into occupations in the electricity sector. Support for skill development remains a priority issue for many Aboriginal communities.
- **Training and job skills – Building job readiness.** Job training and apprenticeships are challenging. They become even more difficult to complete successfully if educational grounding is not solid. Finding an opportunity with a union or employer is often the first barrier. Additionally, when Aboriginal candidates who live in a rural or on-reserve area must relocate for job training, this can create personal, social and financial demands on top of the challenges of the difficult training. Finally, limited workplace experience can make it difficult for Aboriginal candidates to successfully compete for opportunities.
- **The worker as a person – Enhancing success.** Personal and/or family challenges often arise for First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers when they are faced with balancing their culture and traditions with the demands of a structured work environment and/or an urban living environment, often at a considerable distance from their home community. Some of the more commonly mentioned challenges include:
  - Limited experience with workplace expectations such as attendance, on-time arrival, etc.
  - Loneliness when working or training away from home.

- Lack of familiarity with urban realities such as public transportation, bank accounts, etc.
  - Family and community pressures to return to the home community.
  - Few role models or mentors within the targeted occupations in the electricity industry.
- **The work environment – Welcoming Aboriginal people in.** Canadian workplaces are not always as welcoming or responsive to the culture and traditions of Aboriginal peoples as they could be. It is clear that there remains a set of inequities, whether subtle or evident, small or large, that make it difficult for First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers to thrive within many Canadian organizations. It appears that racism and discrimination still exist in some Canadian workplaces. Other systemic and subtle barriers are created when management practices and human resource policies are constructed from a perspective of the dominant Canadian culture and often do not reflect the realities of the Aboriginal culture.

### 3.2 The Way Forward: Ten Gates to Success

The challenge of increasing Aboriginal participation in the workforce is not new; many initiatives have been launched in the electricity sector as well as in others – all to varying degrees of success. The AWPI project has identified that at both strategic and tactical levels, the following ten gates to success which are more likely to characterize successful approaches. These success principles are further elaborated upon in the ten HR Practice Guidelines developed to support employers; they are presented later in the report. Examples of many of these principles in action are provided in a series of eight best practice case studies from within, and outside, the sector.

#### 1. Establish a Focus

Being explicit about the focus and which interests are being addressed creates the platform for trusting relationships among all parties involved. Interests of the community and the individuals must be explored and understood in order to find the best alignment with the company's and industry's near-term or long-term interests. The needs of various First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities vary considerably across geography, in particular.



## **2. Operationalize What “Success” Means**

It is important to specify the intended outcome, in clear language and with quantitative goals where appropriate. A number of relationships between Aboriginal communities and local employers have suffered because of a lack of clarity regarding the expected result. For example, is short-term employment on a capital project “success”, or does the initiative seek to transition workers into long-term sustainable employment? Is skill development a stand-alone goal, or is successful completion of an apprenticeship the definition of success? What do we expect managers to do differently, after having participated in an Aboriginal awareness training session?

## **3. Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships**

Employers rely on networks of contacts within Aboriginal communities to help them identify potential candidates for job opportunities. Many of these relationships are reported to be extremely successful. Some Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy holders (ASET) provide services beyond basic referral of candidates, such as pre-assessing applicants, confirming education and experience, and providing reference information or helpful background information on applicants. However, some Aboriginal communities are less experienced or otherwise have more limited capability to be valuable partners in the recruitment process. Efforts to build workable partnerships have been seen to yield a good result.

## **4. Tailor to the Community**

Aboriginal communities vary considerably from region to region; across the various First Nations, Inuit and Métis; from urban to rural to remote; from reserve to off-reserve; etc. Their needs are not the same. Successful employment practices explicitly reflect this fact and are flexible enough to be adjusted accordingly.

Tailoring the practice to the community has benefits beyond the immediately pragmatic. Companies create the conditions for a collaborative and trusting relationship with the community when they expend the effort to understand the community, to adapt their approach to the community’s needs, and to have a meaningful dialogue with the community representatives.

## **5. Start Early (Really Early)**

Skill development initiatives, in particular, are not a “quick fix”. Aboriginal educational statistics reveal that the gap in post-secondary completion is largely, if not completely, the result of low completion rates for secondary school among the Aboriginal population. Consequently, several initiatives have been designed to encourage elementary and high school students to stay in school and pursue studies that could lead to trades or technical professions. Even with adults, lead times of 2-3 years for educational upgrading are often appropriate.

## **6. Consider the Full “Employment Life Cycle”**

Most initiatives are focused almost exclusively on skill upgrading. Substantially fewer initiatives give much attention to hiring, and very few indeed extend the effort through to orientation, performance management, training and retention. A select few passionate individuals evidently work tirelessly in their organization to follow individual Aboriginal hires, provide them with support as required, and intervene as a coach to help managers and Aboriginal staff resolve issues. While this is a positive step, its success can rest entirely with the particular individual, rather than being supported or institutionalized in management practices in the company. Systemic approaches for supporting Aboriginals through the entire cycle from upgrading,

through training or apprenticeship, and subsequently through their career in the organization are seemingly in very short supply within the industry.

## 7. Maintain Required Standards

Ensure that job requirements are bona fide and that standards for entry are not unnecessarily high so as to create a systemic barrier. At the same time, organizations should not be tempted to lower requirements that are necessary for the safe and effective performance of the job. Aboriginal workers do not want an ‘easy pass’ into employment. Participants in the symposia and in the interviews have emphasized that any increase in the participation of Aboriginals in the industry will only be sustainable if those who are hired are able to do the work and succeed. Nonetheless, some question whether all existing requirements are still relevant to today’s occupations. Within the electricity industry, increasing use of automated systems and new technologies, such as smart meters, make some skill sets obsolete while creating new skill set requirements.

## 8. Be High-Touch

Many Aboriginal people confront multiple challenges in pursuing training and job opportunities in the electricity sector. First Nations, Métis or Inuit people who are required to relocate from their community to pursue training or education can face several difficulties. These challenges collectively form an important barrier in addition to the steep learning curve faced by any new hire or trainee. A number of interviewees described the great benefit of having “someone to talk to”, someone to ask questions of “without being embarrassed”. The most successful programs include elements such as access to elders, Aboriginal counsellors, mentors, social networks, job coaches, designated program or company staff, and other support systems. “The right support makes a difference.”

## 9. Invest in Relationships

Reaching out to Aboriginal workers and communities to increase their engagement in the electricity industry is most successful when there is a foundation of credible, trustworthy relationships. “Our strategy cannot just be numbers, it has to be based on relationships, which have to be mutually beneficial.”

‘Trust’ and ‘relationships’ have been mentioned over and over again as the key elements in moving forward to encourage greater Aboriginal participation in the industry.



## 10. Support the Aboriginal Cultural Experience

Successful training initiatives, in particular, have embedded Aboriginal cultural traditions in the day-to-day experience of their students. Very few employers report having adopted similar practices with their Aboriginal employees. Anecdotally, issues such as inflexible bereavement leave policies are often cited as barriers to retention of Aboriginal workers. Faced with a choice of respecting their cultural norms and community expectations or complying with an employer's arbitrary policy, many First Nations, Métis or Inuit workers will choose their culture and community.

### 3.3 Taking Action: What are the challenges and opportunities?

The stakeholders who have been involved in this project through interviews, steering committee meetings, validation reviews or symposium sessions have been passionate and committed to finding solutions. Most could easily identify a large number of possible approaches – the challenge is often in moving from good ideas to successfully implemented actions. For the industry to take action, employers must take a long-term view of the Return-On-Investment, and be willing to make the required investments of today's resources and attention.

- ***An emphasis on the importance of improving readiness, including educational outcomes and skill levels:*** Without the necessary preparation, Aboriginal individuals will not be able to access the skilled jobs that provide stable employment in the sector. Aboriginal communities, leadership, educators and employment counsellors must clearly understand expectations of employers, careers and opportunities before referring and screening potential candidates. Potential candidates need to have resilience and healthy lifestyles in place to be successful in finding careers in the electricity and renewables industry
- ***The necessity of establishing long-term, consistent, trusting relationships between industry employers and Aboriginal communities:*** In many (although not all) cases, the history between companies in the sector and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities has been difficult. The 'community' is central to most viable solutions; significant advances in Aboriginal participation will not occur without trust at the community level. "Relationships matter." [Symposium finding]. Employers must learn to work with, and respect, the norms, values and practices of the Aboriginal communities.
- ***The benefits that can be achieved through taking a fresh look, and applying creativity and innovation to longstanding challenges:*** Despite the complexity of the challenges, there are many encouraging success stories and innovative ideas. One example is the use of social networking sites to reach out and attract youth. Stakeholders who have been involved in the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative remain hopeful and passionate. With an attitude of "It can be done" [Mervin Dewasha] and with some resources and support, solutions are within reach.
- ***The need for practical solutions, workable partnerships and sustainable initiatives:*** Stakeholders are anxious to move from talk to action. Interviews, meetings, symposium discussions and employer feedback clearly showed the keen interest in learning about others' strategies, best practices, samples and tips.
- ***The reality that investments – of time, money and senior-level commitment – will be required:*** Industry stakeholders highlight that training initiatives, dedicated personnel, commitments to long-term relationships between employers and communities, etc. will require resources. "Sustainability takes ongoing attention."

### 3.4 Influence and Support: Who are the stakeholders for this strategy?

As a reflection of the complex nature of the challenge of increasing Aboriginal participation in the industry, many different stakeholders have been identified. They range in roles and how directly they are involved: some of these stakeholders are funders; or employers; or potential partners; etc. Of course, specific stakeholders to be considered will depend on the nature of the particular initiative.

Stakeholders		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector employers – utilities, contractors, electrical associations, etc.</li> <li>• Aboriginal workers and youth</li> <li>• Sector employees (Aboriginal and not)</li> <li>• Unions – including union members</li> <li>• Human resource practitioners</li> <li>• Managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal associations, communities (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), tribal councils, Métis communities, Inuit Associations, Friendship Centres, Women’s locals</li> <li>• ASETS agreement holder</li> <li>• Employment counsellors</li> <li>• Training institutions, colleges, educators</li> <li>• Trades associations, Red Seal programs, accreditation programs, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal government – particularly AANDC and HRSDC</li> <li>• Provinces and territories – particularly regarding apprenticeship, employment/ training</li> <li>• Economic development agencies both federal and provincial/territorial</li> <li>• Electricity Sector Council</li> <li>• Sector councils representing other industries as well as the Aboriginal Human Resource Council</li> </ul>

The stakeholders listed above have a wide range of capabilities and perspectives. For example, while it may be convenient to list “sector employers” as one group, in reality they differ considerably in how proactive they are on this issue, what their experience has been, their understanding of the business case, the sophistication of their HR support, etc. Similarly, the needs of Aboriginal communities vary widely – by First Nation, Métis, Inuit; by urban, rural, or remote location, etc.

As outlined below, a key thrust in the proposed strategy is to focus directly on building the capacity of the various stakeholders. While there are some initiatives that can be effective on a broad-based industry level, the greatest impact will come from changes in practices “at the ground level” – that is, in individual workplaces and in specific Aboriginal communities. Building the understanding, commitment and capabilities of the various stakeholders is a critical ingredient to the success of any strategy for increasing Aboriginal participation in the sector.

### 3.5. Evaluating the Results: How might success be measured?

Clearly identified goals help to focus the strategy and guide its implementation. Ongoing evaluation creates opportunities for greater impact in several ways:

- Articulating and agreeing on evaluation criteria builds consensus, shared expectations, and commitment to the strategy’s purpose and the intended goals to be achieved.

- Clearly stated evaluation criteria help to keep stakeholders focused on critical goals and help them identify and leverage new opportunities as they arise.
- Evaluation results provide the information needed to refine the strategy.
- Evaluation processes uncover industry successes and best practices that can be communicated for broader implementation.
- Ongoing evaluation is more easily adjusted to accommodate any project/program changes and still ensure that the evaluation accurately reflects results and impact.

In consultation with the Steering Committee, the following measures of success have been identified. The appropriateness of each measure will vary depending on which initiatives are finally selected for implementation.

- Measures of involvement and uptake of the strategy. For example:
  - Number of employers who have created Aboriginal workforce strategies and established goals – compared to a benchmark in 2011.
  - Number of initiatives launched in accordance with the strategy (e.g., tailored to communities, etc.)
  - Uptake of the tools and supports provided.
  - Funding and leadership commitment evident within the industry.
- Capacity building efforts targeted to the system’s stakeholders. For example:
  - Creation, distribution and use of tools for employers, ASETS, unions, etc.
  - Training and/or consultation provided to stakeholders.
  - Demonstrated shared learning among stakeholders – about experiences, successes, new directions.
- Important employment outcomes. For example:
  - Representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers in the industry, broken down by region, urban-rural-remote, core occupational categories, etc.
  - Recruitment, hiring, retention, development and advancement statistics across the industry (similar to an industry-wide Employment Systems Review).
  - Number of long-term employment opportunities provided.
  - Success stories and case studies of initiatives that have created employment opportunities.

Consistent focus on measuring, documenting and communicating outcomes and impact will help to maintain momentum and build support for the strategy. Industry stakeholders want to make decisions based on evidence, and so tangible successes today become a critical ingredient for gaining support for future initiatives. Targeted investments in pragmatic evaluation efforts can lead to substantial benefits.

# CHAPTER 4 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

The learnings and insights from the project activities informed the development of a cohesive and integrated strategy for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers in the electricity and renewables sector. The strategy addresses the business case, the challenges, and recommended solutions. It provides the context for the results of the research, consultations, demonstration projects, best practices and tools, as well as outlining meaningful directions for future action. The strategy is outlined as a series of four Strategic Assertions and a series of suggested tactical initiatives for implementing the strategy.

### Strategic Assertions:

1. Maintain a focus on issues directly and closely related to the industry's *workforce*. In particular, the focus is on developing, attracting and retaining skilled Aboriginal workers.
2. Have a strategic intent to create concurrent improvements in all stages of the employment cycle. Take advantage of mutually reinforcing solutions to move forward on several fronts simultaneously; e.g., success in one area such as retention will build success in others, such as the industry's ability to recruit.
3. Focus on developing pragmatic initiatives and tools in the following four areas directly related to the industry's workforce:
  - A. Labour Force Development – Building industry-relevant skills for both near-term and long-term results
  - B. Outreach – Being proactive to inform Aboriginal communities and attract Aboriginal people to the sector
  - C. Hiring – Finding innovative ways to eliminate barriers to participation by skilled Aboriginal workers
  - D. Retention – Creating an industry that is welcoming and inclusive to Aboriginal workers





## 4. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategy is outlined as a series of four Strategic Assertions that successively develop the framework for the strategy, and a series of recommendations that provide suggested tactical initiatives for implementing the strategy.

### 4.1 Four Strategic Assertions

**Strategic Assertion 1:** Maintain a focus on issues directly and closely related to the industry's workforce. In particular, the focus is on developing, attracting and retaining skilled Aboriginal workers.

Although electricity sector firms might see important value in supporting community development, health programs, or other positive initiatives with Aboriginal groups and communities, these would fall outside of the scope of this particular AWPI strategy. This strategy is not meant to discourage other positive initiatives within the scope of a company's Aboriginal relations or corporate social responsibility endeavours. Investments in culture, health, community development, education, etc. can forge positive relations and help to build community capacity, which also provides indirect support to workforce initiatives.

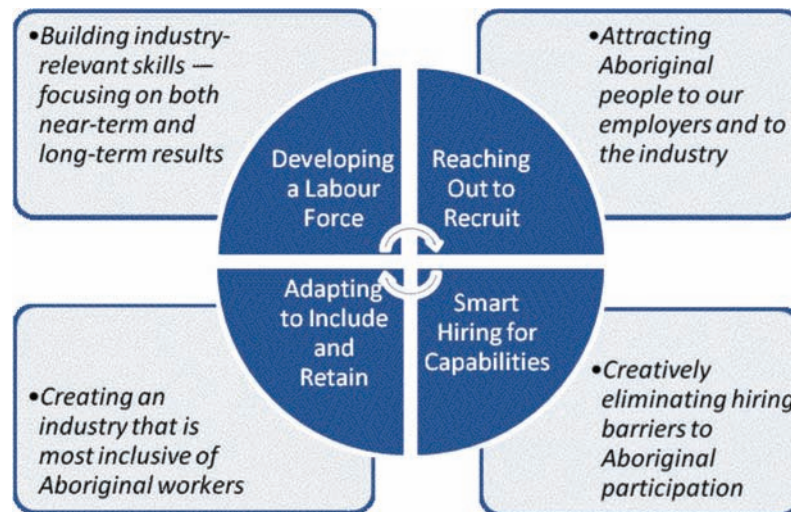
**Strategic Assertion 2:** Have a strategic intent to create concurrent improvements in all stages of the employment cycle. Take advantage of mutually reinforcing solutions to move forward on several fronts simultaneously; e.g., success in one area such as retention will build success in others, such as the industry's ability to recruit.

With issues that pose multi-dimensional and complex challenges, we often hear that it is difficult to know "where to break the cycle". The proposed strategy for increasing Aboriginal participation in the electricity industry seeks to create a 'multiplier effect' where improvements in one area will lead to increased success in another. There could be significant risk in the contrasting approach of focusing first on one area such as skill development or recruitment and then subsequently on another area such as creating inclusive work environments. The risk is that recruitment efforts would be hampered in the long term if community relationships and industry brand were damaged as a result of unmet expectations.



**Strategic Assertion 3:** Focus on developing pragmatic initiatives and tools in the following four areas directly related to the industry's workforce:

- A. Labour force development – Building industry-relevant skills for both near-term and long-term results
- B. Outreach – Being proactive to inform Aboriginal communities and attract Aboriginal people to the sector
- C. Hiring – Finding innovative ways to eliminate barriers to participation by skilled Aboriginal workers
- D. Retention – Creating an industry that is welcoming and inclusive to Aboriginal workers

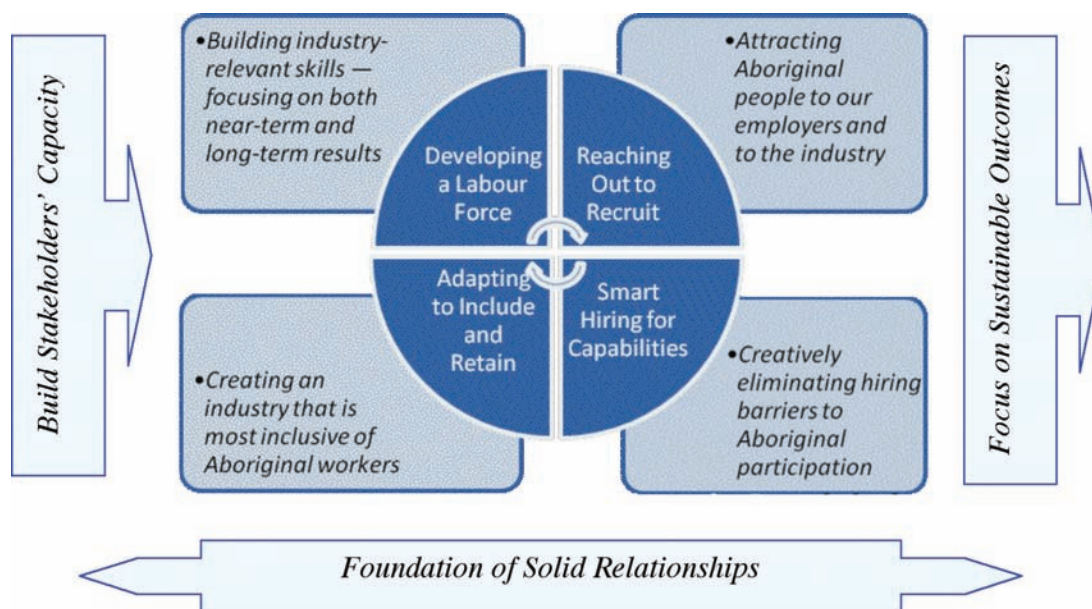


**Strategic Assertion 4:** In addition to having a direct impact on the numbers, capabilities and engagement of the Aboriginal workforce within the industry, the initiatives within this strategy will address three cross-cutting themes:

- A. Collaborative Local Relationships and Partnership Models – As outlined above, progress on increasing Aboriginal participation will come from changes in practices “at the ground level” that is, in particular workplaces and in specific Aboriginal communities.
  - Solid relationships between industry and Aboriginal groups, built and sustained at the local level
  - Innovative agreements among employers to leverage opportunities and local talent pool
  - Engaging all stakeholders in the broader system, including unions, training institutions, etc.
- B. Building Capacity among Stakeholders – The key actors and stakeholders must be equipped with knowledge, skills and capacity to be successful partners and collaborators.
- C. Focus on Positive and Sustainable Outcomes – Initiatives that will make a difference to Aboriginal participation are those with “staying power”. Efforts on the part of all stakeholders will be sustained only if tangible results can be demonstrated.
  - Leveraging existing opportunities to make a sustainable difference
  - Measurement against important goals
  - Learning from successes; recognition to employers; broad-based communication

## ABORIGINAL WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE - STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK -

Building upon the four strategic assertions above, the framework can be depicted as follows:



## 4.2 Recommended Initiatives

There is a series of recommended directions or initiatives within each of the quadrants of activity (developing a labour force, reaching out to recruit, smart hiring for capabilities, and adapting to include and retain). The recommended initiatives on the following pages are not exhaustive; they have been selected to consider:

- Near- and long-term actions leading to a sustainable increase in the engagement of Aboriginal workers in the sector: for example, hiring and retention practices for current workers and also skill development and training programs for youth.
- Initiatives that can be carried out at a national, provincial and/or local level: for example, a national set of standards and tools for recognizing prior learning, and also local training-to-employment initiatives involving partnerships among local employers and communities.
- Investments and solutions that do not already appear to be fully in place: for example, we have recommended a focus on elementary and secondary school students rather than post-secondary. This reflects the fact that there is already a recommendation from the ESC's 2008 LMI study to fund additional seats in post-secondary training; recent statistics show that Aboriginal people are making good gains in post-secondary education; and many observers (e.g., Rt.Hon. Paul Martin) highlight that the most critical gaps for Aboriginal educational attainment arise in elementary/secondary levels.
- Initiatives that can be combined to serve multiple purposes: for example, demonstration projects for local collaboration that develops workforce skills and also tests innovative partnership models.



## - RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC INITIATIVES -

Developing a Labour Force — Building industry-relevant skills; focusing on both near-term and long-term results		
Recommended Strategic Focus and Objectives	Tactical Initiatives and Implementation Considerations	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>1. Youth engagement in relevant science, trades and technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage young Aboriginal peoples to pursue training and career options relevant to the electricity sector</li> </ul>	<p>A) <u>Youth camps</u> have been successfully piloted by ESC; recommended next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move toward long-term sustainability</li> <li>Conduct follow-up evaluation with 2010 and 2011 participants/communities and communicate results</li> </ul> <p>B) Mechanisms to <u>build pre-teen awareness</u> of educational requirements and various pathways to a career in the sector (see recommendation in the “Reaching Out to Recruit” section below regarding older youth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage the tools that exist</li> <li>Direct to youth through camps, career fairs, science fairs, websites, social media and other</li> <li>Approach the advisors and influencers (educators, career counsellors, parents and family, community leaders, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>C) <u>Educational programming supports</u> could be developed, leveraging the learnings and products from the Youth Camps, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culturally-adapted approaches to teaching math and science, with associated materials selected from those developed for the camps</li> <li>Youth-oriented demonstrations and teaching methods for electricity concepts – toolkits, educational materials and/or professional development offered to teachers in Aboriginal communities</li> <li>A network or roster of mentors and role models supported with tips and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead the transition of the Youth Camps into a sustainable program, including long-term follow-up</li> <li>ESC to initiate and facilitate</li> <li>Electricity sector employers to take the lead role in their locations</li> <li>Aboriginal communities are key stakeholders; other industries are also stakeholders – potential competitors and also potential partners to encourage skill development among youth</li> <li>School boards, Aboriginal communities and educators to adopt the materials</li> <li>Electricity sector employers and employees (mentors) to support the network of mentors</li> <li>Funders to partners, Aboriginal communities/groups, etc. could include AANDC, Education Ministries (provincial or territorial) and industry employers</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Work-learn job readiness programs for entrance into the industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To fill skill gaps and facilitate the transition to meaningful employment in the sector</li> <li>• To create relationships that will attract Aboriginal workers to the electricity sector</li> </ul>	<p>A) <u>Enhanced apprenticeship and co-op programs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, the High School Apprenticeship Program model ( HSAP) in use in Manitoba could be explored for applicability to remote and rural Aboriginal communities in other provinces</li> </ul> <p>B) <u>Local work-learn programs</u> that can be piloted; then processes and tools developed and disseminated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify regional opportunities well in advance and partner with the community and other employers; develop career paths that cross industries where appropriate</li> <li>• Build on the ESC’s current Bright Futures – Powerful Opportunities adult initiative demonstration project</li> <li>• Leverage the AANDC list of communities and capacity assessments/ constraints; explore adapting it as needed to include an industry-relevant skills inventory of the community</li> </ul> <p>C) Explore options for <u>industry-specific distance learning supports</u> for workers in rural and remote communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These might include, for example, mobile classrooms, online learning, mentor/coach telephone network, learner networks/communities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeship boards, school boards, educational institutions</li> <li>• ESC as lead</li> <li>• ESC has a current demonstration project</li> <li>• Employers in the electricity sector and other industries; Aboriginal communities; regional economic development agencies would be possible partners</li> <li>• HRSDC Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF) could be a funding source – “Skills Development” or “Training-to-Employment” priority</li> <li>• Leverage the AANDC community capacity assessment model</li> <li>• ESC to facilitate</li> <li>• HRSDC and/or Education Ministries for funding and/or certification of training</li> <li>• Employers, unions, apprenticeship boards, training institutions for delivery</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Prior Learning Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate entrance of skilled workers into the electricity workforce</li> <li>• To encourage skill development in the labour force</li> <li>• To focus skill upgrading efforts for new industry entrants</li> </ul>	<p>A) National industry approach to <u>Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop recommended standards and widely applicable tools for critical jobs and skills; build on what already exists</li> <li>• This initiative would also be applicable to non-Aboriginal workers, increasing the potential impact for reducing industry skill shortages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESC to lead</li> <li>• Employers, unions, training institutions, apprenticeship boards are critical stakeholders with possible concerns about maintaining standards, assuring safety and competence</li> <li>• Federal funding sources as well as industry funding could be explored</li> </ul>

REACHING OUT TO RECRUIT – Attracting Aboriginal people to our employers and to the industry		
Recommended Strategic Focus and Objectives	Tactical Initiatives and Implementation Considerations	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>1. Industry outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide career information to potential Aboriginal entrants to the industry – youth and adult</li> <li>To increase the level of knowledge of job requirements, training options and career paths among First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth and workers</li> <li>To develop relationships with Aboriginal peoples that would encourage greater employment participation in the industry</li> </ul>	<p>A) Develop and <u>implement industry-wide outreach vehicles to job seekers</u> such as targeted career information, job fairs, websites and social networking, general media campaigns, etc. (building on a recommendation in the 2008 LMI Study)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build upon the communication strategy for the ESC AWPI project</li> <li>Leverage existing career information vehicles such as the Aboriginal Human Resources Council (AHRC) websites</li> </ul> <p>B) Develop and distribute <u>targeted information for career decision influencers</u> such as parents, teachers and employment counsellors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For outreach to youth, this initiative should be aligned with the recommended initiative to build awareness among pre-teens and provide Educational Programming Supports (see above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC and industry associations to design and implement selected approaches (websites, media campaigns, etc.), as well as develop supporting tools for employers</li> <li>Employers to implement approaches such as job fairs, etc.</li> <li>Leverage existing groups such as the Canadian Electricity Association Aboriginal Working Group, the Utilities Aboriginal Employment Educator's network, etc.</li> <li>First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, associations and businesses involved in renewable energy could be potential partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Referral system capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To strengthen the capacity of 'referral partners' to seek out, attract, assess and refer qualified applicants</li> <li>To improve the quality of referred applicants</li> </ul>	<p>A) Develop and disseminate <u>referral support materials</u> that outline employers' needs and hiring processes, as well as best practices for identifying and referring talent for the industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target audience would include employment counsellors, ASETS holders, training institutions, unions and other referral partners.</li> <li>Vehicles could include ESC Toolkit, online learning modules, website, regional workshops, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead</li> <li>Employers and unions to participate in development and implementation; they are also potential users of the materials in collaboration with referral partners</li> <li>ASETS holders, Friendship Centres and other Aboriginal agencies are a target audience</li> <li>Training institutions and employment counsellors are a target audience</li> </ul>



<p><b>3. Industry branding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster a positive image of the industry (as an employer) among Aboriginal people and communities</li> <li>Positive image will be fostered by good outreach and relationships built around employment opportunities (Recom. #1, above) and by a strong talent scouting and referral system (Recom. #2, above)</li> </ul>	<p>A) The recommended focus is on leveraging the other two related objectives (active outreach and stronger referral systems) for <u>establishing trusting, collaborative relationships</u> with local communities, because in many First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, the worker's community has a strong influence on career decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry events such as the 2010 National Aboriginal Symposium should be repeated; similar regional events could be explored as vehicles for networking and building relationships</li> <li>Employers who are investing in local communities (through sponsorship and other Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives) should leverage these opportunities to enhance their employer brand</li> <li>The ESC toolkit should include tips for employers to establish collaborative relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers to take the lead</li> <li>Aboriginal communities</li> <li>ESC to support and facilitate</li> <li>Educational institutions in communities from elementary to post secondary will be stakeholders in translating a positive brand into specific guidance toward Aboriginal youth</li> </ul>
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SMART HIRING FOR CAPABILITIES – Creatively eliminating hiring barriers to Aboriginal participation		
Recommended Strategic Focus and Objectives	Tactical Initiatives and Implementation Considerations	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>1. Local partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster the development of local agreements that create sustainable relationships</li> <li>To encourage partnership models that make best use of local talent</li> </ul>	<p>A) Develop <u>mechanisms for stronger partnerships</u> between Aboriginal groups (ASETS holders, friendship centres, etc.) and industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop and distribute supports for stakeholders to create successful partnerships, including ESC Toolkit, case studies</li> <li>Explore other options for building the capacity for partnerships, such as workshops at industry events, ready access to consultation and advice, community of practice networks, etc.</li> </ul> <p>B) Conduct <u>local collaboration demonstration projects</u> to make best use of local talent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct pilot projects that explore alternative models to straight hiring of Aboriginal individuals.</li> <li>Alternative models could include partnering with other employers to sequence projects and/or to create career paths that cross industries.</li> <li>An approach to explore could also include innovative outsourcing models to local Aboriginal companies. These would foster hiring and training of Aboriginal workers in the sector and/or in local communities.</li> <li>Demonstration projects would explore community capacity assessment, partnership models, evaluation methods and labour force development initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to create the supports for industry and communities, including conducting a range of demonstration, or pilot, projects</li> <li>Employers and communities/agencies to develop partnerships and share experiences/learnings with others</li> <li>Funders such as HRSDC's Skills and Partnership Fund</li> <li>AANDC might be a source of funding to the First Nations or Inuit communities</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Inclusive hiring practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage employers, unions, training institutions and referral partners to adopt best practices for assessing qualifications of Aboriginal applicants</li> </ul>	<p>A) Build the capacity of all actors involved in the industry's end-to-end "hiring chain" to <u>minimize systemic biases in assessing qualifications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop and distribute tools and best practices for bias-free assessment (ESC Toolkit)</li> <li>Explore options for encouraging uptake of tools throughout the entire "hiring chain", including unions, training institutions and referral partners</li> <li>Explore other options for building and sustaining capacity, such as workshops, online training modules, practitioner networks, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead</li> <li>Unions to participate and support</li> <li>Employers to participate and support</li> <li>ASETS holders, referral partners, employment counsellors</li> <li>Training institutions</li> <li>Potential funders such as HRSDC's Skills and Partnership Fund – "Service Delivery Improvement" priority area</li> <li>Provincial/territorial employment and training initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Requirements review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage employers to adopt practices that minimize or eliminate barriers to Aboriginal employment</li> <li>To identify effective initiatives for addressing and resolving common barriers</li> </ul>	<p>A) Conduct an <u>industry-wide review of systemic barriers inherent in common job requirements</u> (e.g., driver's license, educational requirements that might be outdated), seeking innovative solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be carefully managed to avoid any perception of lowering standards</li> <li>Would generate information and guidance for job seekers, referral partners and employers</li> <li>Could facilitate the design and development of targeted labour force development programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers, unions, training institutions, apprenticeship boards are critical stakeholders with possible concerns about maintaining standards, assuring safety and competence</li> <li>Referral partners (ASETS holders, employment counsellors, etc.) should be active participants</li> <li>Potential funders such as HRSDC</li> </ul>

## ADAPTING TO INCLUDE AND RETAIN – Creating an industry that is most inclusive of Aboriginal workers

Recommended Strategic Focus and Objectives	Tactical Initiatives and Implementation Considerations	Key Stakeholders
<p><b>1. Bridging the cultures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase knowledge, understanding and appreciation of cultural norms – Aboriginal and workplace</li> <li>To create a positive context for retention of Aboriginal workers</li> </ul>	<p>A) Develop <u>thorough approaches that can be tailored to the local situation, to build understanding and educate:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal workers about workplace cultures and expectations; and</li> <li>industry employers and unions about Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) cultural realities</li> <li>Good models are available – to be leveraged, adapted and disseminated (such as <i>Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion</i> tool kit that was developed with input from the electricity industry).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead the development; focused on strong business case, HR practices and employment context</li> <li>Employers and unions to participate, support and ultimately use</li> <li>Referral partners to participate, support and ultimately use with their clients</li> <li>AHRC could play a role</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Advisors/guides network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To retain Aboriginal workers in the industry by providing wide-ranging culturally sensitive employment support</li> </ul>	<p>A) Develop an <u>industry network of mentors, elders, counsellors, role models, peers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With limited role models in the industry, a regional or national network of mentors and other advisors could be an important support to Aboriginal workers.</li> <li>Components of this initiative would include training for advisors, establishment of a network/roster, an advisors’ network, tools and documented best practices, and occasional professional development.</li> <li>An appropriate starting point would be a regional network as a demonstration project, with subsequent expansion if successful based on assessed impact and compelling business case.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead, develop and sustain</li> <li>Employers to provide support and encourage participation of their employees as both mentors and learners</li> <li>Employers and unions to support development of Aboriginal employee networks where appropriate</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Inclusive practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To influence employers and unions to adopt inclusive management practices</li> </ul>	<p>A) Conduct <u>demonstration projects for innovative inclusion of Aboriginal cultural norms in the workplace</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of culturally inclusive practices are: adapted bereavement leave policies, quiet rooms, culturally sensitive Employee Assistance Program providers, etc.</li> <li>Some culturally inclusive practices have been documented by ESC and others (Toolkits, best practices, etc.). Demonstration projects can identify successful implementation features.</li> <li>Additional methods for disseminating the best practices could be explored, including workshops, webinars, practitioner networks, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESC to lead the development; focused on strong business case with long-term benefits to industry and communities</li> <li>Employers and unions to participate in the development of materials and/or demonstration projects, ultimately adopting more inclusive practices, monitoring the impact and participating in dissemination of best practices across the industry</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 5

## ACHIEVING SUCCESS: HR TOOLS

### Overview

The research and consultations provided important insights and good practices for employers and Aboriginal organizations that want to move forward with the strategic directions and initiatives outlined above. In particular, the initiative has generated ten practice guidelines and five HR tools tailored to the needs of industry employees.

HR Practice Guidelines for the 10 Gates to Success:

1. Establish a Focus
2. Operationalize What “Success” Means
3. Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships
4. Tailor to the Community
5. Start Early (Really Early)
6. Consider the Full “Employment Life Cycle”
7. Maintain Required Standards
8. Be High-Touch
9. Invest in Relationships
10. Support the Aboriginal Cultural Experience



## 5. ACHIEVING SUCCESS: HR TOOLS

The research and consultations provided important insights and good practices for employers and Aboriginal organizations that want to move forward with the strategic directions and initiatives outlined above.

### 5.1. HR Practice Guidelines for the Ten Gates to Success

The series of ten HR Practice Guidelines build on the ten “gates to success” and outline in greater detail the implications for the HR practitioner, manager, or agency representative.

#### 1. Establish a Focus

While this might seem self-evident at first, an important first step for initiatives to increase Aboriginal participation has to be a clear definition of the purpose. Employers and training organizations must be explicit about what the initiative’s purpose is and how various stakeholders’ interests are to be met. Being explicit about the focus and which interests are being addressed creates the platform for trusting relationships among all parties involved.

Communities play a vital role in any effort to more fully engage the Aboriginal workforce in the electricity sector. The needs of various First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities vary considerably; geography makes a difference. Interests of the community and the individuals must be explored and understood in order to find the best alignment with the company’s near-term or long-term interests.

- Articulate as clearly as possible what your organization hopes to achieve through an Aboriginal initiative.
- Meet with representatives of local First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities to understand their current situation and interests, the potential labour force, strengths and skill gaps.
- Align your organization’s unique objectives with the interests and current context of the particular community. For example, corporate goals for a program with a Corporate Social Responsibility focus might align best with building literacy and job skills in the local community; with a Human Resource focus the goals might emphasize providing employment opportunities by recruiting skilled workers to fill anticipated vacancies within the company.

One of the tools created to help employers will guide them in identifying and implementing selected metrics when establishing a focus: Tips for Improving Self-Identification of Aboriginal Candidates.

Best practice case studies document how BC Hydro, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Hydro Québec, and the Manitoba Floodway Authority are putting this guideline into practice.

## 2. Operationalize What “Success” Means

Beyond an explicit purpose and focus, it is important to specify the intended outcome, in clear language and with quantitative goals where appropriate. A number of relationships between Aboriginal communities and local employers have suffered because of a lack of clarity regarding the expected result.

- Work with stakeholders to achieve consensus on a clear definition of success for each new step in your Aboriginal workforce initiative.
- Consider all aspects of the employment life cycle to determine which one(s) might reflect a desired outcome: skill development, attraction and recruitment, hiring, retention, development and advancement.
- Drill down to a level of detail that operationalizes the definition, including outcome measures and targets. For example, is short-term employment on a capital project “success”, or does the initiative seek to transition workers into long-term sustainable employment? Is skill development a stand-alone goal, or is successful completion of an apprenticeship the definition of success? What do we expect managers to do differently, after having participated in an Aboriginal awareness training session?

The tool that provides Tips for Improving Self-Identification of Aboriginal Candidates helps employers to effectively track representation of Aboriginal peoples at each point in the employment life cycle. Best practice case studies document how BC Hydro, the University of Manitoba, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Hydro Québec, and the Manitoba Floodway Authority are putting this guideline into practice.

## 3. Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships

Employers rely on networks of contacts within Aboriginal communities to help them identify potential candidates for job opportunities. Many of these relationships are reported to be extremely successful. Beyond basic referral, some community contacts or agencies pre-assess candidates, confirm education and experience or helpful background information.

However, some Aboriginal communities are less experienced or otherwise have more limited capability to be valuable partners in the recruitment process. Many employers have found success by investing some up-front effort to support their “community partner” in building their capacity.

- Consult with local community contacts, agencies, or schools with Aboriginal populations to explore how they might be helpful in the recruitment and hiring process.
- Determine their current capacity to be partners in the recruitment/hiring process – what are their current strengths and where are the gaps?
- Establish specific commitments regarding the support your organization will provide, then follow through. For example, you could provide a checklist of screening criteria for pre-assessment of candidates. Regularly make presentations to local employment counsellors to help them better understand the company’s occupations, vacancies, required qualifications and hiring procedures. Your organization could provide materials, resources and help in conducting job fairs.



The tool titled, **Communicating Your Career Opportunities – Some Resources for Connecting** was created to support employers and Aboriginal organizations in building effective connections.

Best practice case studies document how BC Hydro, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, the University of Manitoba, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, and Hydro Québec are putting this guideline into practice.

To help you with this gate, see *Communicating Your Career Opportunities – Some Resources for Connecting*, in order to begin building effective connections.

#### **4. Tailor to the Community**

Aboriginal communities vary considerably from region to region: across the various First Nations, Inuit and Métis; from urban to rural to remote; from reserve to off-reserve; etc. Their needs are not the same. Successful employment practices explicitly reflect this fact and are flexible enough to be adjusted accordingly.

Tailoring the practice to the community has benefits beyond the immediately pragmatic. When companies expend the effort to understand the community, to adapt their approach to the community's needs, and to have a meaningful dialogue with the community representatives, they create the conditions for a collaborative and trusting relationship.

- Identify the appropriate stakeholders and knowledgeable contacts within the community. Starting points would be the Chief and Council, local friendship centres, employment counsellors, local training institutions and schools with Aboriginal populations. Create a “network map” of these and other local community contacts.
- Listen openly to their perspectives. Ask about their interests and goals, strengths of the community, interests and skills of the local labour force, resources that are available, other community initiatives that could be built upon, future opportunities that could be planned for, etc.
- Be creative in generating solutions. Be willing to adapt policies and adjust current programs and integrate ideas received from communities.

The tool titled *Communicating Your Career Opportunities – Some Resources for Connecting* will help employers to identify the appropriate stakeholders and contacts within their community.

A best practice case study outlines how SaskPower is putting this guideline into practice.

#### **5. Start Early (Really Early)**

Skill development initiatives, in particular, are not a “quick fix”. Lead times of 2-3 years for adult workers’ educational upgrading are not uncommon. Several initiatives have been implemented with an even longer timeframe – they reach back to high school and elementary school populations, seeking to encourage them to stay in school and pursue studies that could lead to trades or technical professions. With the long lifespan of electricity sector operations, these forward-looking initiatives can make good business sense. As one example, the *Bright Futures Youth Camp* is a successful demonstration project of the Electricity Sector Council that is designed to build science, math and technology skills among Aboriginal youth and inspire them to pursue educational and career opportunities in the electricity and renewables sector.

- Engage your organization’s strategic planners and senior line executives in creating a long-term workforce plan for the region. Project the company’s future skill requirements for timeframes of 3, 5 and 10 years (and perhaps beyond). Explore the impact that skill shortages would have on the company’s operational plans and capture the highlights in a brief business case.
- Invest in initiatives that not only attract candidates for the organization’s current needs but can also build community capacity and a talent pool from which to draw on well into the future.
- Review information on the local labour market – demographics, educational attainment levels, skill shortages, changes in the competition for talent, etc. for the timeframes in the workforce planning projections.
- Describe any projected skill gaps or labour shortages, as well as potential solutions.
- Consult with the local community(ies) and stakeholders to design and implement solutions.
- Monitor results on an ongoing basis and adjust as needed.

Best practice case studies describe how the University of Manitoba and Hydro Québec are putting this guideline into practice.

## 6. Consider the Full “Employment Life Cycle”

Each workable initiative is likely to be tightly focused on a single approach to increasing Aboriginal participation, such as increasing referrals, helping job candidates understand the hiring process, providing mentoring, etc. Nonetheless, long-term benefits will only be achieved if the full “employment life cycle” is considered in the design and implementation of the initiative. For example, increased hiring of Aboriginal workers will only lead to greater participation if the organization’s retention practices are solid.

- Review the definition of success for the initiative.
- Identify what supporting human resource management practices and organizational characteristics must be in place in order to achieve positive long-term impact.
- Create monitoring practices and measurements that will help to identify if other features of the “employment life cycle” need to be adjusted in order for your current initiative to be fully successful.

The tools address various phases of the HR cycle. For example, Effective Orientation and On-Boarding for New Aboriginal Hires helps employers to fine-tune their practices for the beginning of an employee’s HR Cycle, and **Tips for Creating an Effective Aboriginal Focused Mentoring Program** provide some considerations for the retention phase of the HR Cycle.

A best practice case study describes how BC Hydro is putting this guideline into practice.

## 7. Maintain Required Standards

Ensure that job requirements are bona fide and that standards for entry are not unnecessarily high so as to create a systemic barrier. At the same time, organizations should not be tempted to lower requirements that are necessary for the safe and effective performance of the job. Aboriginal workers do not want an 'easy pass' into employment. The consultations throughout the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative highlighted that any increase in the participation of Aboriginals in the industry will only be sustainable if those who are hired are able to do the work and succeed.

- Review existing employment requirements to ensure they are still relevant to today's occupations. Within the electricity industry, increasing use of automated systems and new technologies make some skill-sets obsolete while creating new skill-set requirements.
- Conduct a 3, 6 and 12-month follow-up with hiring managers to validate the hiring requirements and processes that were used. This follow-up should compare the original selection process results to current information about the new hires' track record on the important aspects of the job (including learning rate, job performance, skill levels, teamwork, safety orientation, etc.). For example, candidates who far exceeded the hiring standard would be expected to also outperform on the job. Adjust hiring practices as required based on the data.

Three best practice case studies describe how BC Hydro, the Manitoba Floodway Authority, and Manitoba Hydro are putting this guideline into practice.

## 8. Be High-Touch

Many Aboriginal people confront multiple challenges in pursuing training and job opportunities in the electricity sector. For example, First Nations, Métis or Inuit people who are required to relocate from their community to pursue job training or education can face difficulties such as: loneliness, continuing "pull" back to support family and community, lack of familiarity with urban realities such as bank accounts and public transportation, reduced income, additional living expenses, training challenges due to limited literacy or educational background, etc. in addition to the steep learning curve faced by any new hire or trainee.

- Provide Aboriginal workers (and other new hires!) with "go to" resources so they can ask questions, seek advice and build supportive relationships.
- Consider providing access to elders, Aboriginal counsellors, mentors, social networks, job coaches, designated program or company staff and other support systems. Build relationships with new Aboriginal hires and listen openly to understand their reality – successes and challenges – and what supports might be useful.

The tool **Effective Orientation and On-Boarding for New Aboriginal Hires** provides tips to employers to become 'high touch' from day one, and **Tips for Creating an Effective Aboriginal Focused Mentoring Program** provides guidance on establishing a mentoring program as an additional method for being available and 'high touch'.

Best practice case studies on BC Hydro, Saskpower, the University of Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba Floodway Authority help employers see how others are putting this guideline into practice.

## 9. Invest in Relationships

Reaching out to Aboriginal workers and communities to increase their engagement in the electricity industry is most successful when there is a foundation of credible, trustworthy relationships.

- Encourage relationship-building by putting the name of a particular individual, not a job title or group e-mail address, as the company contact person for Aboriginal recruitment.
- Identify an individual within the company who will be the long-term contact. Ensure they have the skills, time and accountability to develop long-term sustainable relationships.
- Be seen and get involved in the community. Attend community events; sponsor community initiatives; support local schools that serve Aboriginal populations; demonstrate that the company is committed to the region and its people.
- Make intentional efforts to build trust.

The employer tool called **Tips for Supporting Aboriginal Candidates through the Hiring Process** helps employers to ensure that they are investing in the importance of relationships with all Aboriginal people right from the first interaction, which may be at the recruitment phase.

Best practice case studies demonstrate the different ways in which employers such as Saskpower, the University of Manitoba, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, and the Manitoba Floodway Authority are putting this guideline into practice.



## 10. Support the Aboriginal Cultural Experience

Many Canadian workplaces do not yet provide a welcoming or culturally responsive environment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers. For example, many employers' HR policies and practices (e.g., inflexible leave policies) do not reflect cultural norms and community expectations. These are often cited as barriers to retention of Aboriginal workers.

- Develop flexible policies that can reflect the various needs of today's diverse workforce. In particular, consult with Aboriginal workers and/or community representatives and engage them in the review of current policies and practices.
- Offer culturally appropriate traditions and supports such as access to elders, culturally-aware EAP providers, mentors, etc.
- Introduce occasional community potluck dinners with local Aboriginal groups; when appropriate include smudging, prayer and other ceremonies within organizational events.
- Integrate Aboriginal art and images into the work environment.
- Provide training to managers and employees to increase their familiarity and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories and cultures.

Three of the tools help employers to implement this guideline: **Tips for Supporting Aboriginal Candidates through the Hiring Process, Effective Orientation and On-Boarding for New Aboriginal Hires**, and **Tips for Creating an Effective Aboriginal Focused Mentoring Program**. These tools help employers to understand and adapt to any cultural realities that may arise from the hiring phase through onboarding to mentoring as a retention tool.

The BC Hydro and University of Manitoba best practice case studies provide ideas for putting this guideline into practice.

## 5.2 HR Tools

The following five **HR tools** are designed to provide pragmatic templates, samples, tips, checklists, etc. to support employers in designing and operationalizing new processes and practices that are more effective for Aboriginal employment within the sector.

### Tool 1 - Communicating Your Career Opportunities – Some Resources for Connecting

In order to reach out to First Nations, Métis and Inuit candidates and attract them to your organization, you will need specific and appropriate communication vehicles, messages and partnerships. In addition, you will need to develop long term, trusting relationships with various community organizations. The following information gives a helpful starting point for increasing the capability of your organization to source Aboriginal candidates.

<b>Tips for Building Effective Connections</b>	<b>Pitfalls to Avoid</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Don't underestimate the importance of first impressions.</i> Invest time in preparation to ensure that your first contact is effective.</li><li>• <i>Start by seeking guidance from your current Aboriginal employees or Aboriginal community members</i> with whom you already have a relationship before reaching out to any Aboriginal communities or organizations directly.</li><li>• <i>The way you approach an Aboriginal contact will dictate its effectiveness.</i> Consider cultural norms before assuming your preferred method will work. For example, cold calling and leaving messages will likely not get a prompt response.</li><li>• <i>Start with your network to form a new network.</i> Approach people you know first and ask for introductions to others who can provide support to your recruitment efforts for Aboriginal candidates.</li><li>• <i>Commitment to building a long-term relationship is essential.</i> It takes time to build trust of the community and its members. "Rome was not built in a day".</li><li>• <i>Be prepared to invest your time.</i> You may have to attend meetings, career fairs, and community events many times before you can establish trust and meaningful relationships leading to results.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Making empty promises.</i> When connecting with communities and organizations make sure you follow through on commitments or discussions.</li><li>• <i>Assuming the internet is the best way to find and recruit candidates.</i> Personal contact is the number one method to establishing effective partnerships.</li><li>• <i>Relying on one person to represent an entire community or group of people.</i> Do not assume that one contact point will reach the full community. Take a comprehensive approach and contact all relevant groups in your area, such as Friendship Centres, First Nation communities, Métis organizations, Aboriginal women's locals, Inuit groups. Don't forget that there are also Aboriginal businesses specializing in recruitment and personnel services.</li></ul>

## Some Resources for Connecting

<b>Print Media:</b>	<p><b>National</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Windspeaker</b> <a href="http://www.Ammsa.com">www.Ammsa.com</a> Largest circulation national Aboriginal newspaper, published monthly by the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA).</li><li>• <b>Native Journal</b> <a href="http://www.Nativejournal.ca">www.Nativejournal.ca</a> Native Journal has been publishing monthly for over 19 years. They boast a readership of over 70,000 every month, circulating to Aboriginal businesses, First Nations, Friendship Centres, government agencies, schools, colleges, universities, correctional facilities, private institutions and families across Canada, including the territories and select points in the United States.</li><li>• <b>First Perspective</b> <a href="http://www.Firstperspective.ca">www.Firstperspective.ca</a> National Aboriginal magazine including classified job listings.</li><li>• <b>Say Magazine</b> <a href="http://www.saymag.com">www.saymag.com</a> The largest national magazine for and about Aboriginal youth - the largest growing demographic in North America. This monthly magazine is in its sixth year of publication.</li></ul> <p><b>Local</b></p> <p>Contacting or advertising in a local paper is an effective way to target specific areas, especially in rural or remote regions. Contact your local band office to see how they disseminate information, most have a community newsletter where job advertisements or other information can be posted.</p>
<b>Web, Radio and Television:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Aboriginal Voices Radio</b> <a href="http://www.Aboriginalvoices.com">www.Aboriginalvoices.com</a> AVR's mission is to provide a distinctly Aboriginal service in large urban centres where the majority of Aboriginal people now live.</li><li>• <b>Aboriginal Peoples TV Network (APTN)</b> <a href="http://www.aptn.ca">www.aptn.ca</a> Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is the first and only national Aboriginal broadcaster in the world, with programming by, for and about Aboriginal Peoples, to share with all Canadians as well as viewers around the world.</li><li>• <b>CBC</b> <a href="http://www.cbc.ca/north/">http://www.cbc.ca/north/</a> <a href="http://www.cbc.ca/aboriginal/">http://www.cbc.ca/aboriginal/</a> CBC has a wide reach across the country, including rural and remote communities.</li><li>• <b>Taqramiut Nipingat Inc.</b> <a href="http://www.taqramiut.qc.ca">www.taqramiut.qc.ca</a> The TV &amp; Radio network of Nunavik, or Arctic Quebec. TNI's 15 hours of weekly radio programs are broadcast via the Northern Service of the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC). Their half-hour of weekly television program is broadcast on Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).</li><li>• Local community radio stations - many communities maintain their own local stations which are often used as the main source of information for the community.</li></ul>

<p><b>Online Jobsites:</b></p>	<p>Mainstream sites can also be useful to reach some candidates primarily in urban centres and to supplement more targeted approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.eluta.ca">www.eluta.ca</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.monster.ca">www.monster.ca</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.workopolis.ca">www.workopolis.ca</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.working.com">www.working.com</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.career.com">www.career.com</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Canada's Aboriginal Sites:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aboriginal Canada Portal</b>  <a href="http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en/index.html">http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en/index.html</a>  The Aboriginal Canada Portal (ACP) is your single window to First Nations, Inuit and Métis on-line resources, contacts, information, and government programs and services in Canada. The goal of the site is to continue to evolve into a virtual forum and act as a central gateway to increase the awareness of Aboriginal Peoples' history, heritage, traditions and Aboriginal community successes among Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians</li> <li>• <b>Inclusion Network</b>  <a href="http://www.inclusionnetwork.ca/CareerSite/AIN/index.html">http://www.inclusionnetwork.ca/CareerSite/AIN/index.html</a>  The Inclusion Network job site connects employers and educators directly to the Aboriginal talent pool and to over 400 Aboriginal employment centres. The site has hundreds of registered employers and over 3,000 Aboriginal job seekers. This job site is designed with state-of-the-art functionality that helps employers and Aboriginal job seekers make better career connections.</li> <li>• <b>Nationtalk</b> <a href="http://www.nationtalk.ca">www.nationtalk.ca</a>  A national Aboriginal newswire and employment service, updated daily.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job Fairs:</b></p>	<p>Aboriginal job fairs are frequently held in large Canadian cities. Consult local Aboriginal organizations such as Friendship Centres and the ASET holders to learn of job fairs taking place in your area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact your local <b>Chamber of Commerce</b>.  <a href="http://www.chamber.ca/index.php/en/links/C57/">http://www.chamber.ca/index.php/en/links/C57/</a></li> <li>• <b>Blueprint for the Future</b> <a href="http://naaf.ca/node/1">http://naaf.ca/node/1</a>  BFF is a series of national career fairs designed to attract First Nation, Métis and Inuit high school students to the wide array of potential careers available in all employment sectors.</li> <li>• The <b>Friendship Centre</b> in your community.  A list of Friendship Centres across Canada is available at the National Association of Friendship Centres' website at <a href="http://www.nafc.ca/friendship.htm">http://www.nafc.ca/friendship.htm</a></li> <li>• <b>Inclusion Works</b> <a href="http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/inclusion10">http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/inclusion10</a>  Canada's largest Aboriginal HR and Employment Event, hosted by the Aboriginal Human Resources Council.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Partner Organizations:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First Nation Information Project</b> <a href="http://www.johnco.com/firstnat/">http://www.johnco.com/firstnat/</a> This website features a comprehensive Canadian resource listing of First Nations, Aboriginal businesses, directory of friendship and other cultural centres, Aboriginal news media and tribal councils. An excellent source if you are looking to establish connections with First Nations in your area as all information is conveniently organized by provinces and territory.</li> <li>• <b>Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)</b> <a href="http://www8.hrsdc.gc.ca/general/public/accueil-home-eng.asp">http://www8.hrsdc.gc.ca/general/public/accueil-home-eng.asp</a> Through agreements with Aboriginal organizations, provides funding for employment programs and services that help Aboriginal people prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.</li> <li>• <b>Friendship Centers</b> <a href="http://www.nafc.ca/friendship.htm">http://www.nafc.ca/friendship.htm</a> The 50+ year history of the Friendship Centre Movement and Friendship Centres is unique to Canada. Friendship Centres are agencies funded primarily by the Department of Canadian Heritage, but autonomous in running their own affairs. These voluntary associations sponsor activities such as cultural events, classes, dances, sports and recreation, job-training and educational services, program economic cooperatives, child care facilities, housing/shelters, and are often located in urban areas.</li> <li>• <b>Student Support Services</b> Most colleges and universities have Aboriginal Student Support Services or a career office. Call your local post-secondary educational institution and ask to be connected to the person who liaises with Aboriginal Students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Networks:</b></p>	<p>Over time, make efforts to expand your network of contacts. Get to know the influential and well-connected Aboriginal people in your location.</p> <p>Ask your current or previous Aboriginal employees for referrals. If their experience with your organization is positive, they will not hesitate to recommend your workplace to their friends and relatives.</p> <p>Other contacts can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal personnel firms across Canada.</li> <li>- Aboriginal suppliers</li> <li>- Elders or service agencies who support your employees</li> <li>- Other referral sources such as training institutions, personnel firms and unions</li> <li>- do not hesitate to make it known that you are interested in hiring qualified Aboriginal workers</li> </ul>

## Tool 2 - Tips for Supporting Aboriginal Candidates through the Hiring Process

Research has shown that being knowledgeable about an employer's selection process ahead of time can be very beneficial for Aboriginal candidates. When candidates are not aware of an employer's hiring processes and what is expected of them in an interview, it can be difficult for qualified Aboriginal candidates to fully demonstrate their suitability for positions.

These tips can help Aboriginal candidates, and others, prepare for the hiring process. Well-prepared candidates are a key ingredient in a selection process that obtains the most accurate information possible about applicants' skills and abilities.

To make best use of this tool, adapt it to your own organization's hiring practices. Speak with local representatives of Aboriginal communities, referral agencies, schools and training institutions to adapt it to their populations and ask them to work actively with the Aboriginal candidates they refer to your organization.

### Preparing the Interviewers: Cultural Differences That May Impact Candidates' Successful Selection

For human resource professionals, managers and supervisors this summary of some Aboriginal cultural behaviours and practices can provide a *general* level of understanding pertinent to the hiring process. Given the complexities and changing dynamics of cultural practices, it is impractical to attempt to fully document the cultures of Canada's many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. It is important to note that each individual group has a unique cultural and belief system, demonstrated through a variety of behaviours which may surface in the hiring process.

- In Aboriginal cultures, the emphasis is often on listening rather than talking, with an appreciation for silence. The candidate may have long pauses after being asked a question, which could be incorrectly interpreted by the interviewer as a lack of understanding or an inability to respond.
- Candidates whose first language is not English might find an English interview more challenging or stressful, simply due to language. Acronyms, jargon and negatively phrased sentences add unnecessary complexities and difficulties. Remember that people who speak English or French as their first language tend to speak very quickly; when communicating with a second language speaker, slow the conversation down. This gives the candidate more time to understand, interpret and prepare a response



- Many Aboriginal people have a strong preference for avoiding embarrassing others. For example, they might not confront somebody directly with their error; rather let them discover the error themselves. In an interview, the candidate may not necessarily correct an incorrect statement of skills or education by the interviewer.
- Stories are an important communication mechanism. Most of the time stories involve other people, time and places. The storyteller will try to draw attention away from him/her-self to avoid appearing to be presenting superior knowledge.
- Many Aboriginal cultures communicate in a circular or indirect manner, with emphasis on certain facts through repetition to make a point.
- Demonstrating respect for the interviewer can include not looking a person directly in the eyes for a prolonged period.
- Verbal expressions of praise may be considered embarrassing and impolite, especially in the presence of others. In an interview the candidate may downplay his or her accomplishments.
- Long, uncut hair is common for both men and women and is considered sacred by some First Nations. Interviewers should understand that this does not reflect the candidate's ability to perform the job duties or succeed in the organization.
- The idea of individual success might carry less importance than in the dominant North American culture, which emphasizes individualism and independence. The success of the enterprise-project-group is most important. In an interview the candidate may speak to the overall accomplishments, or defer to the activities of the team, as opposed to their specific contribution to the achievement of a goal.
- It is helpful for interviewers to understand certain roles and occupations that are common in Aboriginal communities (e.g., trapper, hunter, band manager). Having an understanding of the responsibilities and challenges of these occupations, as well as the skills that are involved, can provide a helpful frame of reference for discussing a candidate's experience and capabilities during an interview.
- Consider all possible experience, not just experience gained during paid employment (e.g. an individual may not have worked as a mechanic, but has hands-on knowledge with boats and motors).

### **Organizational Strategies to Support Aboriginal Candidates in the Selection Process**

Here are some steps based on cultural differences that you can use to remove barriers and to make the recruitment and hiring process more comfortable and more effective for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit candidates. They can help you provide a balanced approach that allows First Nations, Métis, and Inuit candidates to have an equal chance in the selection process. The experience of leading organizations is that persistence is required; it takes some time for these approaches to be embedded in the culture of the organization.

#	Steps	✓
1	Have one person responsible for processing First Nations, Métis and Inuit candidates' applications.	
2	Ensure that all recruitment information contains the name of the person that is responsible for liaising with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit applicants. This will help ensure candidates know whom to contact to ask questions and discuss their concerns, and are encouraged to apply.	
3	Ensure that the organization, through one individual, creates trusting relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and potential applicants.	
4	Through personal or group sessions, career fairs, etc. provide standard résumé and interview guidelines and expectations to First Nations, Métis and Inuit candidates prior to entering them into the recruitment process. The attached tips can be used as a starting point.	
5	Explain the entire recruitment process to Aboriginal candidates at the beginning of the process, so that they know what to expect and prepare for. Tailor the attached tips to describe the specific process used by your organization.	
6	Be aware of the impact of the cultural differences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit candidates during the interview process. This may cause them to rate poorly in standardized behavioural and competency based interviews.	
7	Prepare First Nations, Métis, and Inuit candidates in advance for the hiring and interview process. Explain to them the type of interview questions that can be expected, such as behavioural- or competency-based questions, and what is typically expected of the successful candidates. List the key words that you are looking for in pre-screening résumés and what type of experience or education is most important. Identify which skills you are looking for and how the candidate might be able to provide evidence of their capabilities (e.g., for mechanical aptitude, tell stories about tinkering, small engine repair, etc.).	
8	Provide Aboriginal cultural sensitivity and bias-awareness training for those involved in the recruitment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit candidates.	
9	Provide a safe and comfortable environment where the Aboriginal candidates can talk about their skills, past accomplishments and work experience as well as career aspirations.	
10	Include an Aboriginal Manager, or someone who has worked closely and effectively with Aboriginal employees, in the interview process.	
11	Ensure that the eligibility criteria are those that are actually required for the job. Certain qualifications, such as having a driver's licence or a particular training certification, can pose a barrier to Aboriginal candidates in remote locations, and there may be a simple way to remove this barrier.	

<b>12</b>	Have a Prior Learning Assessment Recognition process in place. In recent years acceptance of skills grown out of experience has gained recognition among HR professionals. Without lowering standards for needed qualifications, carefully check the requirements for particular levels of education or specific types of experience; consider alternatives that demonstrate equivalent qualifications.	
<b>13</b>	Collect information on the success of applicants at various points in the process, to allow the organization and/or the referral partner to intervene as appropriate. For example, if many Aboriginal candidates are screened out during a preliminary telephone interview, explore why (Lack of demonstrated enthusiasm? Difficulty in reaching the candidate? etc.) and develop solutions.	

### Preparation Tips for Aboriginal Candidates<sup>1</sup>

#### Do Your Homework:

- The organization likely has many different opportunities. Make sure you find out about the jobs by looking at the website, talking to people who work there, and asking questions of your employment counsellor.
- The skills needed will vary with the specific job. Look at the job descriptions available to see what skills are needed for the job that interests you. Are your skills a good fit? Make sure you can describe how they fit – think of examples from your work experience, community involvement, education and hobbies.
- Know what the company does, and the services and products it provides. Be sure you can explain this to another person, so you can do it for an interviewer.

#### Applying for the Job:

- Take time to prepare a good résumé and cover letter. The company wants to know why you want to work for them and how your skills will fit the organization's needs. Ask someone to help you edit and proofread your letter and résumé.
- If the company uses a standardized application form or an online process, complete it carefully. The information you provide here will help them to decide who will be called for interviews.
- Find out what skills, education and experience the company is looking for. Ask what key words help to show that you have what they are looking for. Be sure to highlight the relevant skills in the application form, your résumé and your cover letter to increase your chances of being called for an interview.

#### Preparing For the Interview

- Bring at least two copies of your résumé with you to the interview, one for you and one for the interviewer.
- Bring with you the name and contact information of three references with you. Make sure you ask your references if you can provide their information to an interviewer and that they will provide positive information before the interview.

<sup>1</sup> To make the most of these tips, adapt them to your organization by listing key words, skills, experience and qualifications that you look for. Explain the steps and timing of the hiring process.

- If you have samples of your work, bring them to the interview as well.
- Bring paper and pen with you to make any notes.
- If you are called to schedule an interview, ask the recruiter to tell you what skills and characteristics are important for the job. Think about how you can explain that you have these skills – where did you learn them, how have you used them in your past experience, and what successes have you had?
- “Tell-me-about-yourself” means, “Tell me about your qualifications.” Prepare a one to two minute discussion of your qualifications that relate directly to the job.
- Interviewers usually ask candidates to give examples of situations where they have shown characteristics such as good decision making, initiative, safe work practices, or teamwork. Think about situations you can describe during the interview. You might not be used to bragging about your accomplishments, but remember that interviewers want to know specifically what YOU did and what YOU achieved.
- Make sure you know where the interview is and how to get there. Just in case, bring the interviewer’s phone number so you can call if you are delayed.
- Be well rested.
- Arrive early so you do not feel rushed.

### **Appearance at the Interview**

- Make sure you look to be clean and well groomed. Fingernails, hair, clothing and shoes should all look well cared for.
- Choose your best clothing that seems appropriate for the job you are applying for. Office workers would typically dress more formally than power line technicians.
- Do not take cell phones into an interview.

### **During the Interview**

- Arrive no earlier than fifteen minutes before the interview (but no later than five minutes prior to the interview).
- Review your notes and go in with confidence.
- When answering questions, include short stories involving problems or challenges and how you were able to solve or overcome them. Describe the results you achieved.
- The interview should be a two-way conversation. Ask questions of the interviewers. This shows your interest in the organization and the position, and enables you to gather information to make a decision afterwards. You might want to ask about work hours, training that is provided, who you would be working with, any costs that are covered such as safety gear, etc.
- Be yourself.

## After the Interview

- Send a very brief “thank you” message to the hiring contact, for the interview. Mention that you appreciate the opportunity of being interviewed and finding out more about the organization. A quick telephone message or brief email is appropriate.
- If unsuccessful, ask for feedback on why you were not selected. Focus on finding out about skills that you might be able to improve for the next opportunity.

## Tool 3 - Tips for Improving Self-Identification of Aboriginal Candidates

Self-Identification is a critical first step in collecting and managing information for the purposes of measuring against goals and fostering accountability for progress. Self-identification also enables the organization to support and integrate Aboriginal candidates and new hires, and enable their success in the organization. As a leading practitioner says, “If you don’t know who you are trying to support, you’re not supporting anyone”.

Research has shown that employers who are successful at attracting and retaining diverse talent, including Aboriginal employees, gather accurate, up to date information and metrics about their applicants and their workforce. This allows employers to measure the success (or not) of their recruiting and retention programs and initiatives. Accurately tracking how many Aboriginal candidates apply for jobs in your organization, how many of these candidates are successful at obtaining a position, how long they stay with your organization, how many are leaving your organization (etc) can help you identify successes and opportunities in your recruitment and retention processes.

It is important to note that Aboriginal identification and self-identification are complicated and have a complex history in Canada, so must be approached with skill and tact. Additionally, any Aboriginal self-identification process must be aligned with your organization’s broader diversity strategy, by including other groups such as women, racialized workers, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT), persons with disabilities, youth, foreign-trained workers, etc. in addition to Aboriginal people.

### How to Encourage Self-Identification

There are many myths about self-identification, how the data is used and the backlash this can cause throughout an organization. But if done correctly, the information gained through self identification is invaluable in making continuous improvements to your Aboriginal recruitment and retention strategies. Here are some vital steps to take to ensure the success of your efforts.

- Communicate and educate widely both internally and externally to encourage people to self identify.
- Get to the influencers – i.e., the community representatives, employment counsellors, training institutions, unions and other referral partners.
  - Explain how the process works, why it is important to know who is applying, how it will help their referred candidates.

- Engage them in encouraging Aboriginal candidates to self-identify.
- Educate them on how to do it
- Be “high-touch” and personal in your communications
- Determine how formalized your identification process will be – it can vary from asking Aboriginal candidates to send a copy of their application to one designated contact person, to a more formal and structured self-identification survey. Bear in mind that permission must be obtained from the individual before this self-identification can be used.
- Provide definition of the categories on the survey i.e. a definition of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, or whatever group you are trying to measure.
- Provide reasons as to why the information is being collected and explain how it will be used.
- Highlight and fully explain how the information will be kept confidential, within the bounds set out by legal requirements for the collection and use of this information.
- Explain the benefits of providing self-identification information.
- Ensure that candidates understand that self-identification is voluntary but that the questionnaire must be returned with the application, whether completed or not.
- Use your internal/external website to explain the benefits and reasons for asking applicants and employees to self-identify.

### **How to Successfully Implement Self-Identification as a Practice in Your Organization**

- Integrate self-identification within your overall Diversity strategy.
- Solicit and solidify top executive support and sponsorship for self-identification.
- Gain early access to the information so that you can effectively intervene to support candidates during the hiring process, if appropriate, while it is still under way.
- Use the results to give feedback to the referral partners – how many people applied, why people are getting screened out, what makes people successful in the hiring process, etc. Referral partners will encourage candidates to self-identify if they see that the process is transparent and positive and that the information collected is helpful to their candidates.
- What gets measured gets managed. Accountability for progress in specific departments, as well as organization-wide, is heightened when measurements are available.
- Include a self-identification questionnaire as part of internal employee satisfaction or engagement surveys to update your metrics with existing employees.

### **Definitions to Consider**

- When discussing Aboriginal people, it is important to understand that the word Aboriginal denotes an inclusive term for various groups of people, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Generally, the term First Nation refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Separate from this broad-based term are the Métis and Inuit peoples who define themselves outside the scope of the term First Nations.



- The Métis are described as a “people of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their own language (Michif) and diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.”
- Inuit refers to “an Aboriginal people in Northern Canada, who live in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador.”  
(Source [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/tln\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/info/tln_e.html))

### Metrics You Should be Collecting

What to Measure	What it Indicates
Number of Aboriginal Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase over time will indicate effectiveness of recruitment and outreach strategy.</li> </ul>
Source of Hire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will indicate which outreach and recruitment strategies yield results.</li> </ul>
Number of Aboriginal candidates going through 1st interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ratio between the number of applicants received vs. the number of 1st interviews will show potential gaps in qualifications of candidates or biases in screening process.</li> </ul>
Number of Aboriginal candidates going to 2nd interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ratio between first and second interview stage will show potential gaps in qualifications of candidates or biases in interviewing process.</li> </ul>
Number of Aboriginal candidates hired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ratio between the number of applicants, and number of hires shows potential gaps between candidates’ qualifications and job requirements AND/OR embedded biases in the recruitment and selection processes.</li> </ul>
Number of Aboriginal employees at various levels within the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ratio between number of Aboriginal employees vs. general employees at various levels of organization will show retention and promotion issues.</li> </ul>
Number of Aboriginal employees leaving the organization; voluntary and non-voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing this data with the general employee population data will show effectiveness of retention practices and performance management issues related to Aboriginal employees.</li> <li>• Conducting exit interviews with departing employees as well as discussing the situation with the manager will help to understand the reasons for departure; compare this data to similar data collected from the general employee population.</li> </ul>

## Tool 4 - Effective Orientation and On-Boarding for New Aboriginal Hires

Many Aboriginal people confront multiple challenges in pursuing training and job opportunities in the electricity sector. In particular, those First Nations, Métis or Inuit people who are required to relocate from their community to pursue job training or education can face difficulties such as: loneliness, continuing “pull” back to support family and community, lack of familiarity with urban realities such as bank accounts and public transportation, reduced income, additional living expenses, training challenges due to limited literacy or educational background, etc. in addition to the steep learning curve faced by any new hire or trainee.

A well thought-out orientation program that gives new employees the tools and knowledge they need to succeed in their roles not only helps new employees feel at home right away but also makes it possible for them to get started on the right foot and quickly become productive. A positive and welcoming introduction to the organization is important for all new employees, and this is no less true for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. A poorly planned or executed orientation program can turn an enthusiastic and carefully recruited employee into a turnover statistic.

Onboarding allows employees to:

- Understand the organization and procedures
- Build effective working relationships between new Aboriginal hires and existing employees
- Meet performance expectations

Whatever specific onboarding program you decide to provide to new employees, let them know upfront what you have planned for the coming weeks and ensure that the values of diversity and inclusiveness are built in. It is important to ensure that your onboarding programs are culturally inclusive.

### Features of Best Practice Aboriginal Orientation Programs

**Presentation of Information:** In many organizations, orientations have been designed to deliver the most information in the shortest amount of time. Onboarding programs still use this initial information dump, but it should be only one stage of the process. Provide initial information using a variety of media using audio, video and written materials in order to accommodate different learning preferences. As well, try to avoid presenting everything on the first day. New employees are trying to absorb so much information in the first days that it is more effective to break it down into more digestible chunks. Some skilled Aboriginal workers will find it difficult to quickly read a lot of information, particularly if their educational preparation is not strong or English is not their first language.

**Meeting the Co-workers:** Introductions to colleagues in surrounding offices can potentially feel awkward and be seen as an interruption of precious work time. Due to the importance of relationships in Aboriginal culture, this is a vital step for retention. If time and work schedules permit it is considered very effective to organize an informal gathering over breakfast or lunch where the new hire can make first connections with co-workers in a relaxed setting.

**Assign a Peer Mentor:** A good practice is to assign a peer mentor or “buddy” to a new employee. Mentors should be carefully chosen for their experience, sensitivity, cultural curiosity and competence, openness and leadership qualities. It is important that the peer mentor is

relieved of some work-related responsibilities as they take on the new role of mentoring the new employee. In that way there is no resentment of the additional work involved and time can be specifically allocated for this important task.

### **Clearly Communicate Performance**

**Expectations:** New employees who have not worked in a similar position or work setting, have a tremendous learning curve in those first weeks and months. For these and other reasons it is important to clarify performance expectations, roles, responsibilities, expected interaction with co-workers, suppliers, clients, the standards for performance evaluation, and to provide frequent feedback. Unclear expectations present a real barrier that impacts on the integration of all. Ensure that you are available to discuss questions around performance as they arise.

### **Introduction to the Workplace Culture,**

**Processes and Procedures:** Include sessions on accepted norms and behaviours in your workplace, as well as company processes and procedures. Information on dress code, business hours, internal codes of conduct, decision-making processes, use of e-mail, phone or face-to-face communication, required punctuality, business or client etiquette, health and safety, and internal policies and procedures, is of assistance to new employees who may be reluctant or shy to ask questions. Explore the job readiness skills and workplace experience of the new Aboriginal employee and tailor your information accordingly.

### **Provide a Glossary of Acronyms and Useful**

**Business Terms:** Most new employees grapple with organization and industry specific acronyms. Providing a glossary of terms and acronyms will assist all new employees. It will provide them with a useful resource tool to look up specific terms used by their co-workers or managers.

## **Checklist of Essential Documentation for New Hires**

Provide your Aboriginal employee with the follow documents to ensure they have the information to successfully navigate the organization.

- Human Resources Policies and procedures, especially those which relate to the protection of human rights (Anti-Harassment Policy, Accommodation Policy, etc.) \*Ensure there is clarity between the term 'accommodation' and 'housing'.
- Performance management and appraisal procedures
- Introduction to Canadian workplace culture
- Workplace Safety Insurance Board Forms
- Safety Clothes
- Probationary period
- Union memberships, contracts and initiation
- News bulletin boards
- Job posting locations
- Holidays & vacations
- Safety – First aid
- Attendance and proper reporting (i.e.: absence policies, sick leave, compassionate leave, opportunities to celebrate cultural traditions)
- Important telephone numbers (internal and external)
- Glossary of organizational acronyms
- Cafeteria & dining facilities and expected conduct
- Parking facilities
- Service awards and scholarship programs
- Employee purchases and ordering
- Working hours (work schedules and on-time arrival etc.)
- Pay procedures
- Other workplace rules (e.g. drug and alcohol use)

**Assess Training Needs:** Aboriginal employees are from a traditionally under-utilized and discriminated labour force group and may lack specific skills that can quickly be learned on the job. You may have already identified some training needs during the selection stage. Review performance expectations with the new employee and discuss any training that may be required. This will support the new employee in becoming productive as quickly as possible.

**Consider Providing Language Training:** It may be helpful for some new employees whose mother tongue is not English or French to attend language training to improve their skills with oral or written communication.

**Provide Reasonable Accommodation:** While the Aboriginal person has an important role to play in identifying accommodation needs, they may be reluctant to announce any accommodation they may need upon arrival in the organization. The sharing of information and requirements between the employee and the manager with respect to accommodation is important. Provide an opportunity early in the onboarding process to discuss when and whether they require accommodation for religious, personal, health or other reasons.

**Include the Family throughout the Process:** Research shows that one of the best practices for engaging and retaining Aboriginal employees is to build connections between their families and the workplace as much as possible, and it is vital to begin this during the orientation and onboarding process. Consider inviting family members early to show them the workplace and welcome them. Ask for permission to contact the spouse of the new hire to offer support, including one-on-one discussions of any issues or concerns the spouse might have. When providing initial documentation, consider what you can provide to support the entire family's transition, such as housing, childcare services, provincial requirements for a driver's license and health card and list of Aboriginal organizations in the area. Work with the community to know what supports of this nature they can provide.

Remember that the needs/interests of Aboriginal workers will vary – depending on whether they are First Nations, Métis or Inuit; urban, rural or remote; formally educated or not; etc. It's critical to take an individual approach – built on a solid and trusting relationship.

### Summary Checklist:

- Does our organization proactively develop relationships with new employees from Day One?
- Who is responsible for introducing the new hire to the organization? What exactly is being done now?
- Does our onboarding program include orientation sessions with respect to the benefits of cultural diversity? Inclusiveness? Aboriginal cultural awareness?
- Are we providing the new hire access to a colleague who will give support in deciphering the unwritten rules and protocols in our organization?
- Are managers able and comfortable to introduce new First Nations, Métis or Inuit employees to the team?
- Are accommodation requirements communicated and discussed in a respectful and timely manner?
- Do we approach accommodation requests as an opportunity to review practices and procedures strategically for the benefit of all employees?
- Do we provide on-going feedback to the new hire during the first months?
- How are the orientation activities linked to the new hire's learning plan? How are skill or knowledge gaps identified and addressed?



## **Tool 5 - Tips for Creating an Effective Aboriginal Focused Mentoring Program**

From an Aboriginal perspective, informal mentoring has a long history, derived from the cultural value of teaching and learning from the whole community. Family and relationships are central to social organization, and entire families may mentor one another's children. In the workplace, research has shown that engagement and retention of new employees are enhanced by effective mentoring practices. For First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers in particular, a mentor can provide important support for addressing the additional challenges of balancing their culture and traditions with the demands of a structured work environment and/or an urban living environment, often at a considerable distance from their home community.

Mentoring, especially for Aboriginal employees, is an important element of achieving and sustaining organizational goals around diversity and inclusion. Specifically, mentoring Aboriginal employees provides the opportunity to:

1. Increase the retention of existing Aboriginal employees, support and encourage more Aboriginal staff to take up senior positions, and increase the ability to recruit and hire new Aboriginal employees through being an inclusive and best practice employer.
2. Increase the organizational ability to adapt to change and respond to a variety of experiences by creating a culture of trust and openness among all employees.
3. Create an organizational culture of inclusion whereby employees enjoy and exploit the opportunities created by a highly diverse and motivated workforce.

### **Benefits of being a mentor include:**

1. Access to learning about Aboriginal cultures in an open environment;
2. Gaining greater understanding of how diversity impacts the individual in the workplace;
3. Broadening your skill set in managing a diverse group of employees; and
4. Developing inclusive communication skills.

### **Benefits of being a mentee include:**

1. Increasing access to networks;
2. Gaining greater understanding of organizational culture, which can be of great value to Aboriginal employees who might have less substantial workplace experience;
3. Developing inclusive communication skills; and
4. Access to a safe place to turn for clarification, questions or concerns.

## Designing the Program

Organizational support for mentoring can range from finding one mentor for one employee to establishing a sustainable mentoring program with many participants. In the design, the organization must consider that people from rural and remote Aboriginal communities will tend to learn and teach in different ways – this is especially important when matching Aboriginal mentees with Non-Aboriginal mentors. The program should emphasize beliefs and values that are aligned with the Aboriginal world view – for example, training mentors to integrate storytelling as a way to impart learnings and messages. In order to ensure that your program is culturally appropriate, include an elder or members of the local community in the design, and consider making this resource available to mentors for advice and support through the program. Remember that while mentoring itself is a traditional feature of Aboriginal culture, the term mentor may not be; consider using similar terms like guidance or partnering.

Your organization may not currently have enough senior Aboriginal employees to create one-on-one pairs. Thus, it is important to provide cultural sensitivity training to the Non-Aboriginal mentors, and consider mentors who have shown an ability to behave in culturally appropriate ways with employees from any background that is different from their own. Another culturally appropriate way to address the potential lack of mentors is to create a program around the concept of group mentoring. Traditional practices such as the sharing circle are one way to effectively meet the objectives of a mentoring program with few mentors.

## Phases of a Mentoring Program

Once you have designed a program, there are five distinct phases that your organization should prepare for, ensuring a successful mentoring program.



Phase	Tasks	Tips for Success	Key Questions to Consider
<p><b>1. Establishing a Mentoring Pair</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a pool of interested mentors and mentees.</li> <li>• Match individuals to create a successful pair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentors do not need to be from Aboriginal background but Aboriginal mentors might have the most success. Mentors should have a track record of effective working relationships, especially with Aboriginal employees.</li> <li>• Provide Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training for Mentors such as an understanding of local history with Aboriginal peoples, any Treaties or other self-government agreements, tribes and nations in the area, current realities of Aboriginal communities in the area, common differences in communication style, etc.</li> <li>• In the matching process be very clear with all participants that while every effort will be made to reflect their expressed interests in creating a match, not all preferences can be accommodated. Reassure them that the program has been structured to provide the pairings with the support to ensure a positive and valuable experience.</li> <li>• Provide orientation training to the pairs once created to understand the goals of the mentoring program and the supports available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the mentoring program contribute to the increase of Aboriginal participation in the organization?</li> <li>• How will the mentors benefit?</li> <li>• How will the mentees benefit?</li> <li>• How will mentors be selected?</li> <li>• Who will pair mentors with mentees?</li> <li>• What criteria should be considered for matching mentors with mentees?</li> <li>• How would the program be rolled out?</li> <li>• How would the requirements of the program be communicated to potential mentors?</li> </ul>



Phase	Tasks	Tips for Success	Key Questions to Consider
2. Initiate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate to get to know each other.</li> <li>• Establish expectations for the relationship.</li> <li>• Build trust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the mentoring pairs agree on ground rules.</li> <li>• When the pairs communicate they should seek to find common ground early on.</li> <li>• Establish the preferred method of communication outside of scheduled mentoring meetings, e.g. telephone, face-to-face, email.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will provide on-going support to both mentors and mentees?</li> <li>• What are some of the resources needed for rolling out this program? (e.g. money, people, time)</li> <li>• What support is needed for the program?</li> <li>• How would the program be communicated to the organization?</li> </ul>
3. Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline mentoring goals and objectives.</li> <li>• Create Individual Development Plan.</li> <li>• Develop mentoring agreement incorporating mutual expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify goals for the mentoring relationship that are:</li> </ul> <p><b>S – Specific:</b> Is it clear and identifiable?</p> <p><b>M – Measurable:</b> Can results be determined?</p> <p><b>A – Attainable:</b> Is it possible?</p> <p><b>R – Realistic:</b> Is it probable?</p> <p><b>T – Time:</b> Have you identified when will it conclude?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there is a focus for each meeting of the mentoring pair.</li> <li>• Create a partnership agreement that includes the benefits, expected outcomes and personal boundaries of eth relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is the executive that can best sponsor the program?</li> </ul>

Phase	Tasks	Tips for Success	Key Questions to Consider
<p><b>4. Sustain</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement mentoring agreement.</li> <li>• Provide mutual feedback on previously agreed upon areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the mentoring pairs review their mentoring agreement periodically to ensure it is still relevant.</li> <li>• Periodically check in with Mentees and Mentors to ensure that they are meeting their objectives and are feeling comfortable with the process.</li> <li>• Ensure that feedback is both sought and given in a two-way manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of reporting structure, if any, is needed?</li> <li>• What type of ongoing support should be provided for mentors and mentees?</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Transition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate mentoring experience.</li> <li>• Terminate, redefine, extend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request mentors and mentees to report their and their mentoring partners' participation in the program at an early point (four weeks after the launch of the partnerships), a midpoint (ten weeks), and at the end of the program.</li> <li>• Always summarize the evaluation findings and report them back to the participants.</li> <li>• Ensure that a conversation occurs as to the possibility of future interactions and how this should be handled.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would be the measure of success for the mentoring relationship?</li> <li>• What would be the measure of success for this program?</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 6

## SEEING SUCCESS IN ACTION: BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

### Overview

Several organizations within the electricity and renewables sector, and outside of it, have had notable success in engaging First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit workers, individuals and communities. Eight of their best practices are described here to inspire electricity and renewables sector employers to reflect on these practices, adapt them as required and implement them successfully.

The best practices demonstrate successful approaches to addressing the barriers identified through the research. These organizations have implemented one or more of the ten “gates to success” that make a positive difference in the participation of Aboriginal workers in the sector.

The eight organizations that have shared their experiences are:

- BC Hydro
- University of Manitoba
- Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario
- SaskPower
- Manitoba Floodway Authority
- Hydro-Québec
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance
- Manitoba Hydro

## 6. BEST PRACTICES IN ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Several organizations within the electricity sector, and outside of it, have had notable success in engaging First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit workers, individuals and communities. Eight of their best practices are described here to inspire electricity sector employers to reflect on these practices, adapt them as required and implement them successfully.

**What Makes A Best Practice?** There are many good practices for Aboriginal engagement. The five that were selected to be described here present a variety of approaches and meet a set of defined criteria. For an initiative to be a best practice it must meet certain criteria, including that the initiative is:

1. Successful over a period of time;
2. Able to produce quantitative and/or qualitative results;
3. Developing recognized or recognizable positive outcomes;
4. Innovative;
5. Replicable, portable and/or transferable to other organizations with modifications. The best practice should also add value; and be
6. Meaningful to electricity sector employers.

The best practices demonstrate successful approaches to addressing the barriers identified through the research. These organizations have implemented one or more of the ten “gates to success” that make a positive difference in the participation of Aboriginal workers in the sector.

## 6.1 B.C. Hydro

### Practitioner Name

As the third largest electric utility in Canada, B.C. Hydro serves customers in an area home to over 94% of British Columbia residents. B.C. Hydro's primary business activities are the generation and distribution of electricity. The company operates 30 hydroelectric facilities and three natural gas-fueled thermal power plants. About 80% of the province's electricity is produced by major hydroelectric generating stations on the Columbia and Peace rivers.

B.C. Hydro's many power generation facilities are located on First Nations' traditional territories. They also have more than 2,000km of transmission and distribution lines located on roughly 500 reserves belonging to 169 of the 197 First Nations in the province.

### The Challenge

Initially BC Hydro had no long-term goals and no strategies to achieve their objective of increasing the Aboriginal participation in its workforce. In 2000, B.C. Hydro hired one dedicated human resources staff member to recruit Aboriginal people. Although there was a subsequent increase in the hiring of Aboriginal people, it was evident that due to a lack of an overall strategy, the impact of the one staff member was reduced. Without a strategy there were no identified goals, resources or tools in place to support the recruitment of Aboriginal people.



## The Solution

### 1. Establish a Focus

One of BC Hydro's Long Term Goals established in 2004 is with regards to First Nations and simply put is to "Improve Relationships built on Mutual Respect and that appropriately reflect the interests of First Nations." In order to strive towards this Long Term Goal, BC Hydro is involved in many initiatives, strategies and programs.

In 2005, B.C. Hydro hired a Senior Aboriginal Relations Coordinator to develop an Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy (AEES).

In August 2006, BC Hydro Board of Directors approved a 10 year Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy. AEES acknowledged the need to support educational and training programs more extensively, in order to develop the capacity of the Aboriginal talent pool for B.C. Hydro career opportunities.

The goal of the strategy is to create a representative workforce and a welcoming inclusive workplace at BC Hydro. There are three key components of the AEES:

1. Recruitment
2. Capacity Development
3. Aboriginal Awareness

AEES received additional resources in 2008 and hired a team to focus on specific recruitment goals. It is guided by the principle that includes cooperating with aboriginal peoples and educational institutions in the development of initiatives to support the attainment of knowledge and skills that will prepare aboriginal people for employment with BC Hydro and its subsidiaries.

AEES is multi-faceted and purposefully aligned to the organisation's long-term goal as well as the Aboriginal Relations and Negotiations department's Statement of Principles, and supports BC Hydro's Diversity goals.

### 2. Operationalize What "Success" Means

B.C. Hydro's overall commitment is to develop a diverse workforce that represents the communities it serves within B.C. and to strengthen its inclusive workplace. B.C. Hydro articulated what its commitment under the strategy really means.

1. To build a workforce representative of the communities we serve with an Aboriginal employee population of 4.4% equal to British Columbia's Aboriginal population.
2. To become an employer of choice within the Aboriginal Communities across British Columbia.

To ensure successful implementation of this strategy, both financial and human resources were established. From the beginning, measures of success were identified and metrics were put in place to monitor the progress and the impact of the strategy.

### 3. Consider the Full “Employment Life Cycle”

In developing and implementing a comprehensive and robust Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy, B.C. Hydro focused on three areas of action. Each aspect addresses the gates to success for engaging Aboriginal workers, and when taken together they comprise the complete employment cycle.

The entry point in the employment cycle is a focus on recruiting more Aboriginal Peoples to B.C. Hydro’s workforce. To do this, B.C. Hydro has implemented the following components:

- Building strong relationships with the communities and community organizations. This has opened lines of communication so that job postings can be sent to the “right people” in the communities, who then refer the postings to the best candidates in their communities. Consequently, B.C. Hydro’s progress reflects upon the implementation of the gate to success for “**Investing Effort to Build Effective Partnerships**”.
- Making B.C. Hydro an even more attractive employer for Aboriginal job seekers is the development of an applicant “user guide”. This user guide simplified the recruitment process and presented the relevant information in an easy-to-access format by explaining various job opportunities and how to apply online.
- Establishing a “personal touch” in the recruitment process, due to the importance of relationships in engaging with Aboriginal peoples and their communities. All materials have the name of a staff member on it so candidates know there is a real person at the other end with whom they can communicate and build relationships. This approach also helps in educating and guiding candidates through the hiring process. This is a prime example of the gate to success of “**Be High-Touch**”.
- To track and measure successes in these and other recruitment efforts, B.C. Hydro has developed a system for self-identification of Aboriginal applicants. This system, implemented in 2007, allows the Aboriginal recruitment team to have access to Job Posting progress reports, thus rendering it capable of monitoring its success in hiring against goals.

The next aspect of the employment cycle that B.C. Hydro is focusing on is Capacity Building, a long-term element of the strategy which ensures B.C. Hydro is able to fill the talent pipeline. The current capacity development initiatives focus on providing educational support and training to Aboriginal people in order to overcome barriers that they may face in meeting job requirements. One example of this capacity building is the current Trades Trainee bursary that provides financial support potential applicants to upgrade their physics and math skills to meet the B.C. Hydro apprenticeship requirements.

Another operational program that addresses long-term capacity building is the development and delivery of “Utility Boot Camps”. These camps are designed to provide familiarity to potential Aboriginal employees’ and exposure to BC Hydro and other utility companies. AEES and other B.C. Hydro staff participate in the boot camps to develop individual relationships (“**Be High Touch**”) with the participants, and increase awareness of the AEES team and the career opportunities at B.C. Hydro.

The last part in the employment cycle that B.C. Hydro addresses through their AEES is retention. They work across business groups to develop a higher level of Aboriginal Awareness throughout the organization in order to create an environment that can become more inclusive through greater understanding. They specifically work to increase awareness of the treaty processes and the impact that a position at B.C. Hydro can have when employees return to their home communities. For example, one Aboriginal employee resigned and accepted a C.E.O. position with her First Nation. When that opportunity didn't work out as planned the Aboriginal employee was rehired. There is a determined effort to educate everyone throughout B.C. Hydro that being inclusive of Aboriginal employees makes them a more attractive employer. This effort is aligned with the gate to success of **"Supporting the Aboriginal Cultural Experience."**

## Success

The AEES has enabled B.C. Hydro to hire Aboriginal peoples in a wide array of jobs at all levels. This success has been realized without changing the requisite job requirements, which is another gate to success, **"Maintain Required Standards."**

The success of B.C. Hydro's AEES can be seen in the resulting numbers:

Year	Hiring Goal	Actual	% Exceeding Goal
Year 1	10	17	70%
Year 2	10	27	170%
Year 3	20	26 (+ 10 youth)	30%

B.C. Hydro cites numbers as the primary indicator of their success, yet the drivers can be subsequently distilled into the following list of elements to have:

- A strong business case
- A passionate advocate
- Support and buy-in from Board of Directors and Executive team
- A comprehensive, strategic approach supported by tracking data and reporting regularly against numerical and qualitative goals
- Personal touch and strong focus on relationships
- Pragmatic support for individuals



## What's Next

In 2008, BC Hydro joined the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Businesses (CCAB) Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) benchmarking program and became the first utility company in Canada to participate in the program. PAR is a framework that enables a company to set its own goals and systematically measure its progress on developing progressive Aboriginal relations. The PAR program measures a company against four benchmarks - Aboriginal employment, supplier/business development, employee capacity development, and community relations. The company sets the goals and strategies and works towards them. BC Hydro's PAR self-assessment and external review by the Quality Institute commitment earned BC Hydro a PAR silver designation from the CCAB.

BC Hydro is now aiming for PAR Gold in 2012. As part of the "Going for Gold" strategy, the AEES team will be conducting research on the retention levels of BC Hydro's Aboriginal employees and will be undertaking focus groups and interviews to obtain feedback on attraction, retention and career development. The goal will be to adjust or design new programs to promote enhanced retention and advancement of Aboriginal employees, such as mentoring and coaching.

BC Hydro is working towards the long term goal of Improving Relations with First Nations and believes that PAR activities will be an effective tool to better understand BC Hydro's Aboriginal Relations strategies strengths and weaknesses.

## Testimonial from Participant

### Working with AEES was a positive experience

*A new Aboriginal employee said she appreciated having someone to connect with right from the start of her career search at BC Hydro.*

*Before even applying to BC Hydro she had done some initial research on the company and after connecting in person with the AEES Manager at an Urban Vancouver Career Fair, she decided to make BC Hydro her "Employer of Choice"*

*The insight she received on a variety of career opportunities helped her in determining her career focus. She stated that further discussions on Career Opportunities included job descriptions and what the specifics were for each position. Additional follow up conversations with AEES staff gave her insight into how to present her past work experience on her resume. She reworked her resume and then applied online. She also included supporting documents as attachments to her application to further highlight her experience.*

*The updates provided by AEES on the status of her online application was a new experience. She was directed to the BC Hydro website to do additional research on the company and insight into what skills and experience the Hiring Manager was looking for in preparation for an interview. She was selected for two face to face interviews and received some constructive feedback from the interview panel that helped her in applying for her current position. She acknowledges that the extra effort that BC Hydro; AEES, interviewing staff and the referral to another Hiring Manager resulted in her new role as an Aboriginal Relations Coordinator.*

## 6.2 University of Manitoba

This initiative explores how the University of Manitoba has provided support for Aboriginal students to increase the number of graduates from the engineering program who have Aboriginal heritage.

### Practitioner Name

The University of Manitoba Engineering Access Program (ENGAP)'s mandate is to increase the number of Aboriginal graduates from the University of Manitoba Engineering program. It achieves this through providing opportunities for students of Aboriginal ancestry, who may not have had access to the resources to obtain the normal prerequisites required to get into, prepare for, and succeed in engineering. It is not a special degree; there is no difference in the engineering degree of an ENGAP student. The program involves a number of custom support mechanisms to help Aboriginal students:

- Academic Support - the Undergraduate Coordinator provides assistance with choosing and registering for courses and free tutoring.
- Personal Support - the counselor provides assistance with personal and family counseling, resume and job search advice, daycare and accommodations.
- Financial Support - the Program Coordinator provides assistance obtaining financial support through bursaries and scholarships, Canada Student Loans (ACCESS Bursary) and the ENGAP Entrance, Bursary and Scholarship.
- Social activities help students derive a sense of community within the Faculty of Engineering.



## The Challenge

ENGAP began in the 1980's in response to Northern Development interest. Manitoba Hydro had projects in the Northern communities and was looking for Aboriginal engineers. Due to difficulty identifying Aboriginal engineers, it was evident that there are systemic barriers to Aboriginal peoples entering and successfully completing engineering programs. Aboriginal peoples face the following challenges and barriers in entering University level engineering programs:

### 1) Lack of Academic Readiness:

One of the requirements of the program is to have 85% in high school pre-calculus, Math, Chemistry and Physics. The challenge is twofold; Math, Chemistry and Physics are not always available in rural/northern communities or are not always taught at the same level as urban schools. When students have achieved the required marks, the level may not be adequate for college/university. It is common for subjects to be taught at a grade 10 level even though the course is called grade 12. Therefore students come to Winnipeg and fail at their initial university courses.

### 2) Poor Retention of Aboriginal People:

The typical student is a mature adult who has completed high school some time ago, and has now decided to enter university, and often has family responsibilities. This can limit the flexibility of scheduling and requires faculty to become more aware of the challenges faced by Aboriginal students. For example, a single mother may not easily attend a test at 6pm, and would not always know how to discuss this with the professor. The typical engineering students are primarily single young men living at home, with a strong support system. This is very different from the experience of Aboriginal engineering students who are mostly adults returning to university having to manage their own family responsibilities. So there is a unique need to support the students and raise awareness amongst the faculty of these realities.

### 3) Financial Constraints:

Most Aboriginal students are not from middle-income families and rely on Canada student loans, which are insufficient. In one case, the mother of an Aboriginal student had moved in with her son and needed to be supported, yet the Canada student loan was going to reduce funding based on the assumption that the mother would help provide for the student.

### 4) Family Responsibilities and Relationships:

Relationships can be strained due to pressure on the students as they require long hours of study and focus on their academic needs. This affects the relationships between the students, their spouses and children. Relationships are at the core of Aboriginal Peoples' cultures.

## The Solution

### 1) Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships

To remove systemic barriers and ultimately increase the number of Aboriginal engineers, a partnership was formed between the Federal and Provincial Governments and the University of Manitoba to fund an access program for Aboriginal Engineering students, which became ENGAP. From 1985 to 1993 all costs for students in the ENGAP program were covered. Aboriginal students were reimbursed for accommodation, tuition, books, and living costs. In the early 1990s the federal government removed its funding, but the provincial government has continued their financial support. ENGAP now assists students in navigating the Canada Student Loans process and helps them successfully apply for student loans. There are also some private sector contributions in the form of scholarship, bursaries and donations.

### 2) Operationalize What “Success” Means

Aboriginal students are intelligent but not prepared. ENGAP addresses this by offering Education/Academic preparedness programs. Potential students for ENGAP are not selected on the basis of academic achievements. Instead, the suitability of the student is determined through the initial screening process of a 1 hour interview. This assessment considers their individual background, their career goals, and their reasons for entering the program rather than just their academic achievements. Once accepted, the students attend a 2 week orientation program held annually in August, followed by a semester of academic upgrading, so the students are able to meet the first year academic requirements in Math, Chemistry and Physics. In addition, “how to” courses are offered, e.g. how to take notes, how to take tests etc, and generally provide them with the skills to become an effective and successful student. Ongoing support includes 3 hours per week per student of tutor time free of charge during the engineering program.

### 3) Be “High Touch” & Support the Aboriginal Cultural Experience

ENGAP provides a full time social worker/counselor assigned to the Aboriginal students to assist with most issues and challenges as they arise. ENGAP has an open door policy, welcoming students to share their issues. To make the adjustment to university life easier, the staff run programs to interact and build relationships with each student. These programs include resume and cover letter writing, mock interviews etc. Through these interactions the counselor develops a better understanding of the challenges students face. She is viewed as an ally who is going to help them succeed in the program. One specific program is University Skills, which teaches the ENGAP students how to use the library, footnotes, bibliography, etc. There are also outings and holiday celebrations which aim to include the spouses and children of students. This provides opportunities for the staff to meet the family members in a non-threatening way. There is also a lounge space available to students to provide a safe environment where they can make friends, meet peers and mentors.

#### 4) Invest in Relationships and Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships

ENGAP knows that for success when working with Aboriginal communities they have to give something back. The Director of ENGAP networks and establishes relationships with this goal in mind. One such example of a relationship is with Manitoba Hydro, and is based on the mutual goal of developing more Aboriginal engineers. Manitoba Hydro aims to hire 10 to 12 summer students from ENGAP and at least 1 graduate *every year*. These summer jobs enable students to better understand Manitoba Hydro's work environment, gain practical experience on the job, and develop networks in the industry. Prior to the director's efforts in building relationships which began seven years ago there were 0 hires. To date, 11 graduates from the ENGAP program have been hired by Manitoba Hydro. ENGAP also hosts an open house for the participants.

#### Success

Since the inception of ENGAP in the 1980's, there have been over 70 graduates. 13 of those graduates were hired into the electricity sector, the majority with Manitoba Hydro. Today the program has 10 to 15 students join ENGAP each year and results in 4 to 5 graduates annually.

Manitoba Hydro is the biggest employer of summer students from ENGAP. The benefit is felt by the sector and by the students; the sector requires most engineering disciplines, and students are grateful for the experience working in the industry. They get a good feeling for the company and how it operates.

Some of the contributing factors for the success of the ENGAP program include:

- 1) The support of the Dean of Engineering.
- 2) A stable source of funding; An ENGAP student costs the University of Manitoba more than a regular student intake because of the supports provided. ENGAP requires stable, dedicated funding.
- 3) The student lounge – the great importance of a safe environment for students to hang out, feel comfortable and meet others.

#### What's Next

##### Start Early (Really Early) & Support the Aboriginal Cultural Experience

ENGAP still experiences difficulty ensuring high student intake. By the time ENGAP reaches out to Aboriginal high school students, 40-50% have already dropped out of school. ENGAP wants to get the word out to those who have dropped out but they face the challenge of a lack of in-roads into high school adult programs. ENGAP partners with elementary schools and work with teachers to help them teach K-5th grade Math and Sciences from the perspective of Aboriginal people. For example, if there is a need to teach about structures then, instead of profiling a high rise, they are encouraged to use a teepee or a long house. The Math booklets are similarly designed using legends and geometry based on Aboriginal cultural references.

The program also hopes to attract more women, as with any engineering program in Canada. ENGAP has 15-21% women in its program. This rate would ideally be closer to 50%. There is a need to specifically target Aboriginal women.

ENGAP has identified a need to provide child care to students, as many of the students are mature students with families. Currently the legal aspects of child care is a barrier but ENGAP does provide a list of available daycares.

### Testimonial from Organization

*“With its successes, ENGAP provides the Faculty of Engineering, and the University of Manitoba with positive recognition in the Aboriginal, business, and engineering communities. ENGAP also helps to ensure that Aboriginal Manitobans are represented in the Faculty of Engineering. Without ENGAP I am certain that we would have much less than 50 undergraduate students and 70 engineering graduates who are of Aboriginal descent. On the other hand, the presence of ENGAP provides our student body with a unique opportunity to experience Aboriginal culture and history, an opportunity not available in any other engineering faculty in Canada. This has allowed our students to recognize first hand that many of the stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples are simply false. Furthermore, as the First Nations of our country transition to self government, the ENGAP experience will place all of our graduates in a better position to contribute their services to Aboriginal communities.”*

**Douglas Ruth, P.Eng, Ph.D,**

Dean of the Faculty of Engineering  
University of Manitoba

### Testimonial from Participant

*“The Engineering Access Program (ENGAP) has introduced me to people that face the same cultural challenges I encounter as a Cree from the rural reserve of Moose Factory. ENGAP has provided a home for me learn in, and has shown me that it is possible for people in my situation to be successful when genuine support is provided in dealing with the cultural and academic challenges of post secondary education.*

*The student support model of ENGAP has proven to be successful and should be adopted by any academic institution that truly believes in the advancement of its students and expanding diversity. In the end the staff and students of ENGAP became more than an academic support to me, they became the family I needed in the competitive atmosphere that comes with an engineering education.*

*For this I thank them.*

*Meegwetch.”*

**Daniel Cheechoo**

EIT and Illilowuk of James Bay  
Engineering Graduate supported by ENGAP

## 6.3 Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario

### Practitioner Name

The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario is a partnership composed of a core group of committed and engaged stakeholders including industry employers in construction, Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASET, formerly AHRDA) agreement holders and unions, who all share the objective of achieving the Ontario Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy.

### The Challenge

In Ontario, 135,000 additional workers will be required to meet construction demands between now and 2017. Construction investment in Ontario will increase by an average of about 2% each year for the next eight years. To meet this demand, industry employers need to understand the landscape of Aboriginal employment services. The challenge lies in identifying who, where, and when to call to source Aboriginal candidates who are located across remote, rural and urban areas of the province. There are 16 ASETS in Ontario, several Aboriginal training institutions and Aboriginal employment placement workers throughout the province. Employers and unions need assistance on ways to engage Aboriginal people and recruit, hire, and retain candidates for apprenticeship opportunities and subsequent job placement.

### The Solution

Based on the goal of increasing the representation of Aboriginal people in apprenticeship and ultimately the construction industry, as well as to improve the socio-economic well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people of Ontario through successful inclusion in the skilled trades, the AABO taken the following steps:

#### 1) Invest in Building Effective Partnerships

In 2004, construction industry stakeholders, Aboriginal institutions and ASETs came together to determine a focus and way to build a sustainable and appropriate partnership. The goal of the partnership was to create successful relationships to respond to the construction skills shortage, and match these opportunities with Aboriginal candidates. Building a network and committee(s) helped to ensure a cross-fertilization of information, education and opportunities for all stakeholders involved. This has helped to build trust and determine collaboration strategies that will achieve results for all players. They have formalized a process that works in the areas of recruitment, hiring and retention as well as ensuring that apprenticeship opportunities in the construction industry are readily available to Aboriginal people.

Examples of some of the effective partnerships that have been facilitated by the AABO include:

*The CAAR (Centre for Aboriginal Apprenticeship Research)* – the Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board are examining if apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training delivered by distance can be tailored to support and assist remote First Nation workers. This training is geared to advance potential Aboriginal apprentices towards a specific apprenticeship goal or certification in order to increase opportunities for employment in the trades.

*The ASTSIF (Aboriginal Apprenticeship Resource Centre)* – Anishinabek Nation and Gezhtoojib Employment and Training have partnered to support the

development and strengthening of opportunities around the delivery of targeted training leading to employment outcomes in the Sudbury area. They focus on supporting Aboriginal people who are especially vulnerable to the impacts of the economic downturn, by helping with the acquisition of skills to adapt to the changing labour market environment and secure long term jobs.

*The Breaking Ground into the Construction Trades* - Grand River Employment and Training, the Construction Sector Council and the AABO work to increase awareness, improve access, and create employment action for Aboriginal people in the construction industry. They aim to achieve this by implementing actions to build strong relationships, which lead to engagement, employment and the sustainability of the Aboriginal workforce in the construction sector.

*The Labour Market Solutions* – Connecting Employers with Aboriginal Workers has partnered with the Grand River Employment and Training and Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario. Their goal is to connect skilled Aboriginal tradespeople with employers in the construction industry.

*The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Centre* - the Métis Nation of Ontario and Sault College partnership is aimed at recruiting and engaging 40 new apprenticeship participants annually. They work to accomplish this by establishing links with the local Algoma District and Aboriginal community. They have also developed a sustainability plan.

## 2) Establish a Focus

The AABO has created an effective model for building a holistic approach and strategy in engaging Aboriginal workers. Within their strategy there are seven components.

**Outreach** – Increased awareness and promotion of the trades as a positive career opportunity.

**Marketing and Promotion** – A sustained, well-funded and ongoing effort to increase public knowledge of available programs and services in the trades with development of targeted Aboriginal-specific trades promotional materials.

**Education** – Advocacy for new standards in Ontario curriculum to increase awareness and understanding of skilled labour requirements. Recognition of the needs and realities of Aboriginal people in the areas of experience and formal education.

**Partnership** - Collaborative intervention of all major stakeholders of the strategy to develop an Ontario-based solution to increasing Aboriginal participation in apprenticeships and the skilled trades.

**Research and Development** – A program of ongoing research to ensure that Ontario Apprenticeship Initiatives are appropriate, inclusive and comprehensive. This approach is coupled with an evaluation plan that measures the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals, targets and objectives.



The delivery model for this holistic strategy has provincial, regional and local components. The AABO (provincial) solicits the appointments of representatives to the Partnership Advisory Committee representing the Ontario-based Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy. They secure funding, develop strategies and priorities, review and update plans. They also act as advocates, informing policy makers, public opinion leaders and stakeholders at the provincial and federal levels. Lastly they evaluate the implementation plan and report annually on activities and progress. The regional component is the Aboriginal Construction Employment Referral Services (ACERS) that registers Aboriginal people for apprenticeship opportunities in the construction trades. They develop employer services to match qualified Aboriginal clients to construction jobs and provide ongoing support for those clients advancing to journey-person status. ACERS works in collaboration with communities forming partnerships that collectively share a vision to promote construction certification to Aboriginal people of all ages. They actively promote the various opportunities available in the construction trades.

The ASETS' recruit, select and refer apprentices as well as coaches and mentoring of apprentices. They provide local level employer services and liaise with the regional MTCU, training institutions and other partners. They are the hub for outreach at the local level as well as monitoring programs and collecting data.

## Success

Since the creation of the AABO there have been initiatives and forums bringing together stakeholders to plan, implement and review outcomes. Some of these include meetings between ASETS' (provincially) and the Construction Industry, a third forum Frontline Worker Apprenticeship Forum with First Nations and Métis, and Report Card reporting on activities.

These efforts have resulted in the following:

- Hiring of power line technicians in Caledonia, Ontario
- Aboriginal apprentices have been hired through the efforts of the Six Nations Apprenticeship Coordinator
- Apprenticeship Coordinators have helped prepare, support and advise Aboriginal candidates and employers create effective apprenticing partnerships and placements
- Hydro One has hired six Aboriginal peoples who have successfully progressed to journey person status
- The Moose Cree has established a dispatch arrangement to supply the industry with apprentices

## What's Next

The AABO will continue to facilitate and intervene to support the recruitment, hiring and retention of Aboriginal people in the construction industry. They will continue to educate Aboriginal people about the opportunities in the construction industry, and share with employer's ways to attract Aboriginal candidates. Specifically, their goal is to build strong Aboriginal representation in the construction and trades skills industry.

## Testimonial from Organization

*"Building implementation plans with Aboriginal communities builds a solid foundation for access and opportunity for both the employer and job seeker."*

**John Wabb AABO Co-Chair**

## 6.4 SaskPower

### Practitioner Name

SaskPower is the principal supplier of electricity in Saskatchewan, serving more than 465,000 customers with a team of over 2,600 permanent full-time employees located in 71 communities.

### The Challenge

SaskPower believes that a successful future is directly linked to the make-up of its current and future workforce. The company has set the goal of striving to ensure its team of employees is representative of the communities SaskPower serves. With well over 100 Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan, an important element of being representative is reflecting these First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals. With this goal in mind, SaskPower realized the company was not as successful as it could be in attracting Aboriginal candidates, as indicated by a lower-than-desired number of employment applications. In addition, many Aboriginal communities viewed the organization as a utility provider who was there to provide electricity, not career opportunities, so SaskPower needed to position the company as an employer of choice for the province's Aboriginal population.

### The Solution

Based on the goal of having a representative workforce, SaskPower began work to source more Aboriginal candidates, and to ensure their HR processes were bias-aware.

#### 1) Invest in Relationships

In 2006, SaskPower took action and established a new Aboriginal sourcing consultant role dedicated to increasing the number of Aboriginal applicants. The consultant raises awareness of the organization's staffing needs and builds long-term, trust-based relationships with Aboriginal communities. In addition, the consultant is responsible for examining the systemic barriers in the recruitment process, and devising effective recruitment strategies.

#### 2) Be "High Touch"

Since the creation of this role, SaskPower has gained insights into what is needed to increase the effectiveness of the company's recruitment strategies. For example, early on the company learned that one-time visits or contacts with communities are not sufficient to draw more Aboriginal applicants. There is a need to gain the trust of the communities and invest time in developing deep relationships with potential applicants. Another learning has been that not everyone in the Aboriginal communities has access to internet; therefore, strategies such as applying on-line may not be the best way to attract Aboriginal applicants. Based on this insight, the sourcing consultant developed paper applications that are taken into the communities and, after discussing positions in-person, potential candidates are encouraged to complete the paper applications.

#### 3) Tailor to the Community

Another effective strategy has been attending Aboriginal-focused events beyond career fairs, including Powwows, sports events and community gatherings. The goal is to not only increase potential applicants' awareness of possible SaskPower job opportunities, but also to network in the community. The company has role models attend the events so Aboriginal applicants can become more aware of the many career paths offered by SaskPower.

## Success

Since creating the Aboriginal sourcing consultant role, SaskPower has seen an increase each year in self-declared Aboriginal applicants. In 2008, 834 Aboriginal applicants self-declared, whereas in 2009, there were 1398 Aboriginal applicants – an increase of 67%!

The increase in the number of applicants has meant an increase in the number of Aboriginal permanent hires. At the end of 2004, 96 permanent Aboriginal employees were employed at SaskPower. At the end of 2008, this number increased to 165 permanent self-declared Aboriginal employees.

## What's Next

Encouraged by the results achieved thus far, SaskPower is now looking at expanding its reach. The company is exploring the possibilities of partnering with other institutions, such as the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, to provide pre-employment training for potential candidates. SaskPower has also started working with other post secondary educational institutions to reach more Aboriginal candidates. Knowing that many companies have “come once and have not spent the time” to build trust and long-term relationships, SaskPower is planning to work with various institutions and community resources ongoing to develop barrier-free recruitment processes which will result in more effective recruitment of Aboriginal peoples.

## Testimonial from Organization

*“The shortage of skilled trades labour made us realize that taking advantage of the local workforce was becoming a fact of life. This meant that we needed to go out to our local Aboriginal reserves to source temporary labour. When we started sourcing temporary employees from the Aboriginal labour pool, we ended up with great full-time employees. These individuals have had a tremendous positive impact on us here at Saskpower, and have become an important part of our little family.”*

### Mike Zeleny

Manager  
Boundary Dam Power Station

# 6.5 Manitoba Floodway Authority

## Practitioner Name

The Red River Floodway Expansion Project is a multi-million dollar floodway expansion of the existing floodway protection system for the City of Winnipeg. It includes the excavation of 21 million cubic metres of earth from the floodway channel, the replacement and upgrading of eight highway and railway bridge crossings, improvements to the inlet and outlet control structures and modifications to utilities and services and expansion of the West Dike. To manage this project, the Province created the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA); a separate, independent, publicly accountable, provincial agency that manages the expansion and maintenance of the Red River Floodway on behalf of Manitobans. As the government’s agent, the MFA manages the design, construction and maintenance of the expansion and develops the economic possibilities that result from the project. The project itself was started in 2005 and achieved its overall objective of providing 1-in-700 year flood protection in the spring of 2009.

## The Challenge

From the beginning, the project has been committed to equity hiring, targeting 20% of jobs to be accessed by equity groups including the Aboriginal people of Manitoba. To meet these commitments, MFA had to find ways to engage effectively with the local Aboriginal communities. MFA needed to support enterprise development, employment and training in the floodway construction in a way that specifically engaged Aboriginal peoples.

## The Solution

### 1) Establish a Focus

While including a 20% employment equity requirement for all construction tenders, the MFA also created an Aboriginal Set-Aside program, which is an initiative that is “set aside” for members of the Aboriginal community in order to create employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses. To be eligible to bid on the set-aside an Aboriginal contractor had to be:

- 50% Aboriginal Owned; and
- 1/3 of the workers must be Aboriginal

The objectives of the Aboriginal Set-Aside on the floodway expansion project are:

- To create employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people on the floodway project;
- To create opportunities for Aboriginal contractors to gain experience and to build capacity in the industry and;
- To enhance spin-off economic opportunities for the Aboriginal community from the floodway project.

The Aboriginal Set-Aside is more than an employment initiative. It contributes to the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal communities, their enterprise development and sustainability in remote, rural and urban areas. Currently 10% of all floodway tenders are targeted to the Aboriginal Set-Aside. To date, 33 tenders estimated at \$54 million have been invested in the initiative.

Some elements of the project include:

- Tenders are bundled into smaller packages which provides an opportunity for smaller Aboriginal firms to bid on contracts;
- Joint ventures are supported between larger mainstream contractors and Aboriginal firms;
- Aboriginal firms are not required to be bonded for contracts under \$2M. This directly assists firms in increasing the number of Aboriginal hires on the construction sites;
- Manitoba Floodway Authority assume greater oversight role to ensure public accountability for firms whose bonding has been waived. A job referral service is used to support the Aboriginal hiring process.

### **2) Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships**

The Aboriginal Set-Aside Initiative was established by working and partnering with key stakeholders including: The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs; Manitoba Métis Federation; Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce in Winnipeg; First Nations and Métis businesses in the construction industry; Manitoba Contractors and Unions located in Selkirk, Thompson, Brandon, Winnipeg; and Aboriginal contracting firms from the communities themselves.

### **3) Invest in Relationships**

Communications have been an important focus to implementing the program targets. The MFA prioritized the communication to Aboriginal stakeholders and others to ensure that there was a network of information formed. To engage Aboriginal and mainstream contractors, the MFA principals hosted information networking events to share information, help to bridge understanding and promote partnerships.

### **4) Be “High Touch” & Maintain Required Standards**

Aboriginal Contractors who were less experienced on bidding procedures and tendering were given additional time to prepare proposals. They were also provided with mentorship and guided through the process by MFA personnel to help in submitting bids. These efforts were all undertaken in a way that ensured fairness and equal opportunity for all potential contractors, and met the government’s fairness and transparency requirements, practices and procedures. The bidding/mentoring aspect has since expanded to include business development support. This includes helping Aboriginal contractors with business and financial planning and work plans for long term success.

## Success

The MFA has not only been successful in hiring and training an Aboriginal labour force, it has created economic capacity and sustainability for many remote and isolated First Nation communities. The MFA's efforts were effective because they took the attitude that policies and processes needed to be flexible. They implemented a process and if issues arose the MFA was able to make immediate changes to respond to the challenges.

## What's Next

The Manitoba Floodway has now expanded its work and mandate to include building an all-season road network linking 13 remote and isolated First Nation communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. This initiative, and the employees required to complete it, will directly involve Aboriginal contractors, First Nations and Métis.

## Testimonial from Organization

*"Build Community Benefit Agreements to help support community training, pre-construction work – communicate, sit down and learn, address the challenges and think outside the box!"*

### **Ronuk Modha**

Communications Manager  
Manitoba Floodway Authority



## 6.6 Hydro-Québec

### Practitioner Name

Hydro-Québec generates, transmits and distributes electricity. Hydro-Québec's primary mission is to ensure the long-term supply of electric power in Québec. To do so, the corporation uses mainly renewable generating options, in particular hydropower, and supports the development of wind energy through purchases from independent power producers. They also conduct research & development in energy-related fields, including energy efficiency.

In 2002, Hydro-Québec and the Grand Council of the Crees of Québec (Eeyou Istchee) agreed to implement employment initiatives to provide Crees with permanent employment at Hydro-Québec's installations within the James Bay region (northern Québec). La Grande Complex is responsible for almost 50% of the production of electricity of the province of Québec.

### The Challenges

This initiative's main objective is to have 150 Crees holding permanent employment by the year 2017. This represents about 20% of Hydro-Québec's workforce within James Bay.

To implement such an initiative, Hydro-Québec is faced with many challenges, including:

- The differences between Cree culture and Hydro-Québec corporate culture can cause misunderstandings.
- Cree from James Bay communities mostly do not speak French often preventing them from working with Hydro-Québec
- Hydro-Québec's work schedule (8 days on-site, 6 days off-site, and 10 hr days) is challenging, and means that employees are not able to be available for their families during this time.
- Most worksites are remote and far from Cree communities, meaning that everyone must travel and be away from families, and live in work camps.
- Training is not possible in the Cree communities, so students must relocate outside of their community for a few years to attain the required qualifications. This means students must be prepared to leave their family and lifestyle, and potentially face difficulties associated with living in an urban area while studying.
- Historical and political relations, which have not always been favourable, impacts the perceptions and interest of potential candidates in some Cree communities.
- Challenges with both Cree and Non-Cree employees adapting to one another's differing cultures and values around the workplace.
- New and young workforce will represent 20% of the total workforce of strategic installations. This is a unique corporate challenge for management, especially regarding safety and coaching.

## The Solution

### 1) Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships

Eeyou Apatisiwin Niskamon: Hydro-Québec, Société d'énergie de la Baie James, the Grand Council of the Crees of Québec (Eeyou Istchee), Cree Regional Authority and the 9 Cree communities of the province of Québec signed the Eeyou Apatisiwin Niskamoon Agreement (Cree Employment Agreement) in 2002. Under this agreement, Hydro-Québec reiterates its commitment related to employment, and the Cree parties acknowledge their leadership and responsibility in providing Cree candidates who meet the corporation's hiring requirements. Especially important to this Agreement was the leadership taken by the Cree in the training elements.

### 2) Establish a Focus

The implementation process of this Agreement is entirely focused on engaging all the partners to ensure they are able to meet each of the parties' interests. This partnership approach involved Niskamoon Corporation (a not-for-profit organization whose members include the Cree Regional Authority and the Grand Council of the Crees), Hydro-Québec, Cree School Board and training institutions. Specifically, implementation of the Agreement and management of associated funding falls under responsibility of Niskamoon Corporation. Yet, the monitoring of implementation is done jointly by Niskamoon Corporation and Hydro-Québec.

### 3) Operationalize What "Success" Means

The partners in the Agreement set a clear objective of creating 150 permanent jobs for Cree employees by 2017, in 4 employment categories (Apparatus Mechanic, Apparatus Electrician, Automation Technician, and Telecommunications Technician). To achieve this success Hydro-Québec is providing almost \$100M for the duration of this 15 year Agreement.

This funding helped operationalize success as Niskamoon Corporation implemented its training initiatives, and Hydro-Québec implemented its Welcoming Program which includes an important coaching component and cultural training of its existing work force and management.

### 4) Start Early (Really Early)

Niskamoon Corporation has created a video to educate youth about the opportunities in the electricity sector in their region. The video, 'We have Class', is targeted to students in the Cree schools, and highlights the career opportunities available at Hydro-Québec.



## Success

The success of Eeyou Apatisiwin Niskamon Agreement is tangible and continues to grow. As of December 2010, a total of 45 Cree employees are holding immediate permanent employee status within La Grande Complex. As well, Cree individuals have begun to climb the ranks, with Cree employees now holding positions as a coach, union representative and team coordinator. The number of Cree candidates in training has increased significantly during the last years, and forecasts are quite encouraging. They reasonably expect the number of Cree employees to double during the next 5 years.

The relationships are also successful: Hydro-Québec is invited to participate in the recruitment campaigns of Niskamoon Corporation and the Cree School Board held yearly in every Cree community.

## What's Next

Hydro-Québec and its Cree partners will continue to work together to meet, and hopefully exceed, the current employment objectives.

During the first years efforts were mostly concentrated on providing training and support to Cree students in dealing with issues resulting from training challenges and temporary relocation from their community and family. Now, issues which are work-related are becoming important as the number of Cree employees increases within the work teams. Some teams already have 50% of Cree employees, which represent not only personal challenges to these employees, but also team and management related challenges. As well, isolation, language, cultural and family issues are also of concern to Cree employees as their duration of work and career development are having a long term impact on their personal lives and families. During the next years, Hydro-Québec will continue to focus on the deployment of additional and effective support measures for its Cree employees.

## Testimonial from Organization

*“Working with our Cree partners in providing permanent employment has been a challenging but very positive experience for Hydro-Québec and its employees. Providing the Québec population with reliable power supply requires the construction of important generating stations, reservoirs and other infrastructures which have impacts on local communities and users of the land where these are built. This particular employment commitment is important to us, but it's the positive impacts on individuals and their families that result from employment that are most rewarding.*

*This initiative has also enabled us to understand better the challenges that arise from cultural and language differences in a closed work environment, but it is the sense of accomplishment and pride of graduates who join our existing workforce that makes all of the efforts worthwhile.”*

**Mr. Luc Lévesque**

Coordinator  
Hydro-Québec

## 6.7 Saskatchewan Government Insurance

### Practitioner Name

The Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) is a provincial service provider. SGI Canada is fully competitive, selling property and casualty insurance products such as home, farm, business and extension auto. SGI Canada currently operates in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

SGI employs over 1,800 people and works with a network of almost 300 independent insurance brokers and about 420 motor license issuing outlets in Saskatchewan, as well as numerous brokers outside the province.

### The Challenge

It is important to the organization that SGI reflects the diverse make-up of the public it serves, and is in compliance with the representation goals of Employment Equity legislation. As such, SGI is committed to a comprehensive Employment Equity program that includes strong backing from senior and middle management to employees entering the company.

### The Solution

SGI's commitment to Employment Equity is demonstrated by the creation and implementation of a comprehensive strategy. The strategy includes the vision *"Our People – Right People in the Right Jobs – recruit, develop, retain"*. The strategy is managed through a corporate balanced scorecard complete with equity member targets which are aligned with divisional and individual performance goals. This ensures that performance management systems implement corporate objectives that cascade down to the divisional and departmental levels.

#### 1) Establish a Focus

SGI reformed their Employment Equity Program in 2009 to include a corporate diversity strategy. This new strategy responded to the cultural make-up of its communities, by drawing out key pillars focused on Aboriginal Strategy and Recruitment Strategy. This provides strategic direction and focus for Aboriginal recruitment, employment and retention between 2010 and 2013.

The Aboriginal facet of Employment Equity enabled SGI to manage the already successful Internship/Apprenticeship Program to further help in the preparation, recruitment and eventual hiring of individuals in underrepresented areas. It offers training opportunities in various SGI divisions for period of up to one year. The corporation has created 16 opportunities in 2009 with 14 individuals declaring Aboriginal decent. To date, five of those individuals have accepted permanent positions with SGI.

#### 2) Invest Effort to Build Effective Partnerships and Relationships

SGI maintains high visibility in Aboriginal communities through various programming, sponsorship and donations. This includes an economic development On-reserve Broker Program (established in 2008); Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program sessions provided by CIC for Crown employees through First Nations University of Canada; and sponsorship/donations to 381 organizations across the province.

SGI understands to be successful in their recruitment efforts community relationship building and partnerships are important. The corporation has participated in over 60 employment related events in 2009.

### 3) Operationalize What Success Means

SGI is strongly committed to their diversity vision beginning with the Board of Directors, and continues down through senior management in all the corporate divisions. The corporation uses a balanced scorecard that identifies the measures that SGI uses to track progress on achieving strategies. In 2009, the balanced score card directly aligned to provide measures for each corporate strategy. For example:

- A goal of 25% of new hires are from equity groups, and this was surpassed in 2009 with 26.4% of new hires coming from equity groups
- The corporation strives to be the employer of choice with a positive environment of balance and inclusiveness which is free of barriers, racism and discrimination and
- Create and build relationships, promoting high performance culture, balancing business needs while contributing socially with the local economic communities with which we have operations.

### Success

SGI can demonstrate its success in the numbers.

2009 Aboriginal hiring results:

- Overall staff complement – Aboriginal people totalled 216 representing 11.3% of the staff
- Corporate Summer Student Program (66 summer students were hired) 18, or 27.3%, were Aboriginal
- Of the 201 external hires, both non-permanent and permanent, there were 30 Aboriginal people hired representing 14.9%
- Aboriginal applications totalled 931, representing 11.2% of all applications for external candidates

### What's Next

SGI will remain committed, and will continue its strategic planning through 2011-2015 with an emphasis on people and diversity.

## 6.8 Manitoba Hydro

**Practitioner's Name** Manitoba Hydro is a Crown Corporation and is the major utility in the province. The utility exports electricity to over 30 electric utilities and serves just over 500,000 electric customers and over a quarter of a million gas customers throughout Manitoba. Nearly all the electricity is generated from self-renewing water power by 14 hydroelectric generating stations.

**The Challenge** Manitoba Hydro identified the low numbers of Aboriginal applicants to trades careers as an issue for them. It was determined that special efforts were required to both promote these careers among Aboriginal job seekers and to address the education gaps.

**The Solution** To meet the demand for additional Aboriginal employees Manitoba Hydro launched the first of three Aboriginal Pre-placement Training Programs in 1998. These programs are designed to provide academic requirements and on-the-job training to facilitate entry into the electrical trades. They are intended to encourage, prepare and support the recruitment and hiring of Aboriginal candidates within Manitoba Hydro.

The Northern/Southern Aboriginal Pre-Placement programs are designed to provide opportunities for Aboriginal candidates to gain on-the-job training in order to prepare for entry into Operating Technician both Electrical/Mechanical; in the southern program candidates are also prepared for Electrical Technician jobs. The Power Line Technician Pre-Placement Program prepares candidates to compete for entry into the Powerline Technician trade.

### 1) Maintain Required Standards

The trades training programs at Manitoba Hydro have specific educational requirements that must be met for entry into the training. This includes Grade 12 Physics, Applied or pre-calculus Math and English. Aboriginal Pre-Placement Program trainees are provided with the opportunity to upgrade to minimum academic requirements. Candidates are also provided with a salary while in the training programs. Upon graduation from these training programs candidates are prepared to enter into the standard trades training programs offered by Manitoba Hydro.

A number of challenges have been experienced:

- Aboriginal people, especially those coming from northern communities, may not have had access to the higher level of math and physics courses to support their application to Manitoba Hydro's trades careers
- Lack of understanding of the opportunities that exist with Manitoba Hydro
- Lack of understanding of what technical trades careers involve
- Coping when Aboriginal candidates must relocate from their homes for training and/or employment

### 2) Be "High Touch"

To address and deal with some of the above challenges, Manitoba Hydro implemented specific efforts to integrate supports and programming to off-set the challenges. These steps include the following:

- For recruitment and information sharing, working with Aboriginal communities by providing hands-on demonstrations of equipment in schools and career fairs
- Showing job seekers what the jobs entail
- During the training programs, orientation is provided for the entire group of trainees to help build peer-support networks and mentoring
- Providing life skills training
- Using Aboriginal people to support the trainer when delivering training sessions
- Creating on-the-job mentors
- Hiring of Aboriginal Employee Assistant Program Counsellor to support trainees and employees
- Hiring of Aboriginal Employment Specialists.

Pre-placement training has been a significant contributor in the growth of the Aboriginal workforce at Hydro. Training programs are scheduled to graduate candidates just prior to set recruitment times every year. In some programs this means two intakes and in others, one intake a year.

### Success

The Aboriginal Pre-Placement Program has successfully promoted careers within the trades for Aboriginal people. In the Northern locations Manitoba Hydro originally targeted 25% of the jobs to be staffed with Aboriginal employees, with a long term view that the workforce would reflect the demographics of Northern Manitoba. Today, the Aboriginal workforce constitutes 42% of the overall northern workforce.

Additionally:

- 75% of Aboriginal Pre-Placement trainees move into skilled trades careers with Manitoba Hydro
- 15% of Hydro's 6000 person workforce has self-declared as Aboriginal

### What's Next

Manitoba Hydro will continue to offer the Aboriginal Pre-Placement Programs as required. These programs are regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that if intervention or revisions are required for further success this can be accomplished.

Manitoba Hydro has a tradition of promoting from within. The Aboriginal Pre-Placement Programs and the eventual hiring and retention of Aboriginal employees will see these employees as successful journeymen in the future. These individuals will be the successful managers and supervisors taking on middle and senior management jobs in the future.

### Testimonial from Organization

*"As an Aboriginal person working for Manitoba Hydro I feel I can confidently go out and promote our training and employment initiatives among Aboriginal job seekers. I know that I am inviting them to join a company that respects and promotes diversity and recognizes the value that Aboriginal employees bring to the workforce."*

**Andrea Canada**

Aboriginal Employment Advisor  
Manitoba Hydro

# CHAPTER 7 BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE: INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

## Overview

As described in other chapters of this report, the consultation and research findings highlighted that skill building initiatives present very positive opportunities for future-oriented collaboration among many stakeholders.

Consequently, the Electricity Sector Council undertook two different demonstration projects to pilot actionable initiatives:

1. A series of science camps to encourage Aboriginal youth to pursue educational and career options in science, mathematics
2. An initiative to provide pre-trades orientation and skill upgrading to qualified Aboriginal workers

This section of the report summarizes these initiatives. “Lessons learned” about the key success factors are described to support the successful replication and/or adaptation of these pilot projects.

## 7. BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE: INITIATIVES TO DEVELOP TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

It has been evident throughout this initiative that there is a compelling business case for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers within the electricity and renewables sector. Equally evident is the reality that in order to make significant progress, a number of challenges must be overcome.

Stakeholders have remarked that the history of relationships between electricity and renewables sector employers and Aboriginal communities has not always been positive; stakeholders emphasize the need to establish trust and long-term relationships. The skill development issue remains vitally important to both industry and Aboriginal communities; there is clearly an opportunity for success based on mutual interest in this regard.

Consequently, the Electricity Sector Council undertook two different demonstration projects to pilot actionable initiatives:

1. A series of science camps to encourage Aboriginal youth to pursue educational and career options in science, mathematics and technology
2. An initiative to provide pre-trades orientation and skill upgrading to qualified Aboriginal workers

### 7.1. The “Bright Futures” Youth Camps

The youth camp initiative was developed to address one of the key barriers to increasing Aboriginal involvement in the electricity and renewables sector: limited educational background in the mathematical and science knowledge required for employment in the sector. In keeping with the research findings and gates to success such as “start early”, the camp is oriented to pre-teen youth (approximate ages 10-13) to build relevant interest, knowledge and confidence in advance of making educational and career choices. It was also inspired by the “girls only” camp offered by Manitoba Hydro and identified as a best practice in the Canadian Electricity Association 2004 study, Keeping the Future Bright.

#### Objectives and Curriculum

The primary objectives for the Bright Futures Camp were to:

- Inspire interest in and build math, science, engineering and technology literacy among Aboriginal youth participants while providing them with a basic understanding of what electricity is and the role electric power plays in our lives.
- Engage Aboriginal youth in fun, hands-on activities that help them understand how electricity is generated, transmitted and distributed while building self-confidence, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

- Inspire and educate Aboriginal youth about electricity and renewables sector-related career and education opportunities that exist.

Specialized and highly experienced providers of educational camps were contracted by the Electricity Sector Council (ESC) to design and deliver a customized week of camp activities that would:

- Introduce participants to the basic theory of electricity.
- Familiarize participants with the ways in which electricity is generated (wind, solar, water, geothermal, nuclear, etc.).
- Familiarize participants with how electricity is distributed and what some of the challenges are with respect to our distribution system.
- Familiarize participants with how electricity is used (elements of circuitry) and some of the tools of the trade.

The camp curriculum included a mix of hands-on activities, facilitated discussions, demonstrations and games as well as opportunities to interact directly with industry representatives. The camp schedule and the activities are fully outlined in final reports from the camp providers.

It is important to note that elements of Aboriginal culture were embedded within the week's activities. A local Elder participated at appropriate points such as at the opening and/or closing of the camp, with a prayer and/or a smudge ceremony. Guiding Circles activities<sup>2</sup> were used as a method of exploring participant perspectives on careers, personal strengths, and learnings from the camp.

### **Operation of the Five Camps**

The Bright Futures Camp operated six times in six different communities during the period of August 2009 to August 2011. To date, the camps have had a total of 127 participants:

- August 2009 day camp in Thunder Bay ON (n=21)
- July 2010 residential camp in Rouyn-Noranda QC (n=22)
- July 2010 day camp in Prince George BC (n=15)
- March Break 2011 day camp in Saugeen ON (n=15)
- May-June 2011 10 days of in-school programming in Croker/Nawash ON (n=27)
- August 2011 day camp in Lac Seul ON (n=27)

The four camps differed in important ways such as summer vs. March break, residential vs. daytime only, in-school vs. Out-of-school, and location.

Success of the camps is due in large part to the active support of several sponsors and stakeholders. For example, the local communities typically supported the camp by helping to recruit and register the participants, facilitating the involvement of an elder in certain camp activities, hosting the camp, providing logistics support and occasionally having community members speak on certain topics (traditional environmental practices, etc.). Additionally, the 2010 and 2011 camps used two to five older youth "mentors" drawn from the community as assistant instructors; this was seen to be very positive. Major employers or professional organizations in the electricity and renewables sector participated through financial sponsorship

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<sup>2</sup> Guiding Circles is a career development program created by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council. For more information go to [www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/programs/guidingcircles](http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/programs/guidingcircles)



and/or direct participation as mentors/speakers during the camp session. The Electricity Sector Council developed the general specifications for the program and contracted specialized service delivery providers to design and deliver the customized camp.

### Outcomes and Evaluation

The five camps offered prior to May 2011 were formally evaluated with input from the educators, ESC staff, parents and the children themselves.

Overall, the camp experience was a positive one for the participating youth. There is strong evidence that they learned a considerable amount about the fundamentals of electricity and the underlying science and technology. They enjoyed the hands-on activities and the various electricity-related projects. The camp strengthened the participants' interest and self-confidence in science and technology activities. Mentors provided by sponsoring electricity employers provided a pragmatic orientation to the sector that was also appreciated by the participants. The children enjoyed meeting the representatives from industry and they particularly liked the hands-on demonstrations. In one camp, for example, the participants met an "Area Distribution Engineering Technician" and this was clearly a favourite activity in the day.

End-of-camp surveys were received from a number of parents. All parents who completed the questionnaire indicated that they would like to have their child attend another Bright Futures Camp. The reasons provided generally reflected that the child learned a lot and enjoyed the experience.

Completed end-of-camp surveys were received from instructors. All of them rated the overall program a "4" or "very good" on a 5-point scale. The instructors were unanimous in rating the camp as having a significant positive impact on the children's understanding of electricity fundamentals.

During the camp sessions, the instructors made a number of adjustments to the schedule and planned activities during the week to better meet the needs of the participants. For example, certain activities were held outdoors; times for activities were shortened or lengthened to suit the children's interest level and/or to provide more time for physical activity; learning activities were modified or substituted to suit the children's interests, age differences

*"This camp should have been 3 weeks long. I want to learn more about electricity".*

*"We met a Line Worker."*

*"Trying on his tools was fun and heavy."*

*"He works with electricity poles, wires, and how to safely send power to our homes."*

*"You need Grade 12, English and Math."*

*"They make \$38 an hour."*

**- Camp participants**

*"They learned new facts in an interesting manner."*

*"It was important to me that urban Aboriginal children had an opportunity to interact with children from on reserve, and vice versa."*

**- Parents**

and/or skill levels. These changes reflect important learnings and improvements that were implemented in the subsequent camps. They have been well documented in the service providers' final reports.

A group of Aboriginal youth can include children for whom English is a second language, children with communication styles more typical of the Aboriginal culture, children from urban/remote/rural communities, as well as some children facing challenges or discomfort with math and science. The camp program intentionally includes activities that can build participants' comfort early in the week's program. These seemed to be helpful, as the camp provider's summary report indicates that although the students came from different schools and/or several different communities, they "quickly formed relationships".

It is well known that parents have a strong influence on the career decisions of youth. The Bright Futures Camp provides an opportunity to engage parents in their children's exploration of new knowledge and opportunities related to the electricity and renewables sector, and for children in the target age range (10-13 years old), it is appropriate to involve the parents at some level in their child's camp activities. The participants particularly liked the projects that they could take home and one would hope that they showed them to their parents. Some parents were able to attend the Day 5 open house and they had very positive feedback, such as "he hasn't stopped talking about it all week". Others asked for photos of their child getting his/her certificate. Both of these mechanisms (take-home projects and the open house) could be built upon in future camps.

*"The campers learned where their power comes from, which was a big deal. On the first day when we asked how power got to their school one of the only answers was 'satellites' and by the end of the week they could pretty much say the entire process."*

*"It was great to observe them working individually or as a team and helping each other fix the circuit or game when it was not working and looking at them being able to build so many different models of solar car without any plans to follow."*

**- Instructors**

### **Learnings about Success Features:**

- The community partner should be consulted on the best ways to promote the camp locally. Leveraging the schools, local media and events such as science fairs is important.
- Efforts should be made to encourage consistent attendance. Various options can be explored with the host community.
- Energy conservation, renewable energy sources and traditional environmental practices can be explicitly linked to the curriculum and woven throughout appropriate content modules in the camp program.
- Camp providers should have access to a range of culturally appropriate exercises for rapidly building children's comfort with the camp experience.
- Instructors should be sensitized to Aboriginal communication styles so that they can adapt their approach and the activities as required.

- Consult with sponsoring organizations to ensure that industry demonstrations are optimally designed for the audience of 10-13 year old children.
- Explore opportunities for field trips to local electricity and renewables sector installations and workplaces to provide greater career orientation.
- Using older youth “mentors” drawn from the community as assistant instructors is a very positive vehicle for providing role models, engaging the community more broadly and extending the influence of the camp experience.
- Consult with sponsoring organizations and industry representatives to identify appropriate mentors who are Aboriginals and/or women working in science, engineering and technology related careers in the industry.
- Explicit attention should be paid to encouraging parent involvement in their children’s camp experience and learning, in order to build a positive foundation for future career choices.
- Solid management practices are required to support an ongoing delivery cycle that involves multiple partners and stakeholders. Timeframes for approvals, coordination of project activities, and involvement of multiple stakeholders can be lengthy and must be tightly managed. Clarity of roles and responsibilities led to greater efficiencies and also to stronger relationships with the communities, sponsors, employers and other stakeholders.

*“The program introduced the young ones to a way of thinking and being, in a sense, of their possible future in science and/or math.”*

**- Parent**

### Acknowledgments

The commitment and support of many stakeholders have made the *Bright Futures Youth Camps* a success. The ESC expresses its appreciation to:

Aboriginal Human Resource Council	Lac Seul First Nation
BC Hydro	Workers Local 258
Canadian Union of Public Employees	Niskamoon Corporation
Canadian Union of Skilled Workers	Northern Health Authority
Carrier Sekani Tribal Council	Northern Native Public Legal Education
Cree Human Resources Development	Ontario Power Authority
Cree School Board	Ontario Power Generation
Elephant Thoughts	Positive Living North
Engineers Canada	Power Workers’ Union
Hydro One	Saugeen First Nation
Hydro-Québec	The Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation
International Brotherhood of Electrical	Thunder Bay Aboriginal Head Start
Justice Education Society	

## 7.2. The Electrical Trades Orientation Program

The Electrical Trades Orientation training initiative was created to develop and pilot a program that would provide pre-trades orientation to Aboriginal adults. The research and consultation efforts throughout the AWPI have highlighted that barriers to increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers in the sector include issues such as:

- The Aboriginal population often has a limited knowledge of occupations in the electricity and renewables energy sector.
- Levels of educational attainment and essential skills within the Aboriginal labour force often do not match the current requirements within the electricity and renewables sector.
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit workers face difficulties in acquiring relevant job readiness skills due to geographic, financial and educational preparation constraints.
- Personal, family and community challenges create risks to a successful transition to apprenticeship and/or electricity and renewables sector careers.

Conducting a pilot program provided an opportunity for the ESC and other stakeholders of the AWPI strategy to develop and test the key elements for a transferable and scale-able initiative that would address some of these significant barriers.

Specifically, the pilot allowed for:

- The design and test of a program curriculum. The program duration was set at 14 weeks (subsequently extended to a 15th week). The curriculum included a blend of “academic” classroom training, “hands-on” shop training, career orientation and workplace exposure.
- The development and test of an operational framework. Conducting a training program for adult workers requires several partnerships among stakeholders, sufficient funding, and of course the recruitment/engagement of qualified participants as students.

The 2011 pilot program to provide pre-trades orientation to Aboriginal adults was conducted as a 15-week program from January to April, in Happy Valley – Goose Bay NL.

### Objectives and Curriculum

The primary objectives for the ETO Program were:

- Provide up to 15 Aboriginal adults in Labrador with an initial orientation to four occupations within the electricity and renewables sector. The intent was that the orientation would permit the program participants to make informed decisions regarding career choices, educational programs, etc.
- Provide the participants with the opportunity to gain certificates in generalizable skills such as safety, workplace communication, etc.

The curriculum provided the learners with exposure to four trades (Power Line Technician, Industrial Electrician, Industrial Mechanic/Millwright, and Power Systems Operator) in two-week blocks. Each of these segments gave an overview of the educational requirements and some hands-on experience. The learners were also offered numerous safety courses and professional development workshops throughout the program, with formal recognition of achievement provided through designated certificates. Two credit courses were also delivered during the program.

## Program Operation

- The overall design and conceptualization of the program was initiated by the Electricity Sector Council (ESC). The framework for the program was first established through active consultation with industry representatives and other stakeholders during a 1.5-day national symposium as part of the AWPI and through the active involvement of the AWPI Steering Committee.
- The design of the ETO program curriculum, the delivery of the 2011 program, and the learner expenses were funded through the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership (LATP). Key stakeholders in this partnership are Nalcor Energy and three Aboriginal groups in Labrador.
- The program was designed and delivered by the College of the North Atlantic in Happy Valley – Goose Bay NL.
- The nine learners in the 2011 program were members of two of the three signatory Aboriginal groups.

*“This program was great. It really opened my eyes to the Electrical trade. Very very interesting!”*

*“This program was very helpful/ educational in helping me decide what trade to enter into this fall. The overall program was excellent along with excellent instructors and admin staff. I would recommend other Aboriginal individuals to participate in a program such as this one. I am truly grateful to have had this opportunity to have had this experience. Thank you!”*

### - Participants

## Outcomes and Evaluation

- Nine individuals participated in the program. All of them completed the originally planned 14 weeks of instruction and several also completed a week of “job shadowing” in the 15th week.
- Most participants were able to make a clear choice to enter an electricity and renewables sector occupation (5 of the 9) or to pursue another career path. There were 1 or 2 who apparently remained undecided at the end of the program.
- Most, though not all, participants completed the requirements to gain several certificates.
- Failure to achieve certification was most often due to poor attendance. Student on-time arrival and consistent attendance was a challenge throughout the program, confirming the findings of the research conducted earlier in this AWPI project.
- Of eight students who took for-credit courses, four achieved a credit in Workplace Communication and five achieved a credit in Workplace Skills. These credits will give them advanced standing in future trades training.
- Many of the students found some of the academic work to be difficult and challenging. Most, if not all, of the students preferred the shop training to the classroom.

- The workplace exposure, including a field trip to Churchill Falls Hydro Station and a final week of job shadowing, was very well received by the students.
- Overall, it appears that the participants were satisfied with the content and design of the program.

### **Learnings about Success Features:**

- Many learners face personal or family challenges that impact their attendance. Specific attention to attendance issues is needed in order to create the appropriate learning environment, and also in order to support the learners in developing the life skills that will enable a successful transition to apprenticeship or work environments.
 

*“Having good local working relationships that were already established – this made success possible.”*

**- Program stakeholder**
- Timing of a program has a number of impacts on program operation, including the ability to recruit participants, the logistics of travel and/or program participation in remote locations at certain times of the year, and the availability of program resources such as instructors and shop space.
- The selection process for program participants should ensure that the learners have the required entry-level skills to complete the pre-trades orientation program, and to have a reasonable expectation of being able to acquire the needed pre-requisites for any subsequent trades training and apprenticeship they might undertake.
- Workplace exposure – whether through field trips, job shadowing, employer demonstrations, or other means – is critically important and highly valued by the learners.
 

*“We were anxious to get going right away. Next time, I would spend more time getting to know everyone and letting them know what we’re going to do and how we’re going to manage. Spend more time up front building the group.”*

**- Instructor**
- The program stakeholders must have a consistent definition of “success”; that is, the desired outcomes must be clearly understood and supported. Clarity of roles and responsibilities, at a very detailed operational level, is critical to smooth and efficient functioning of a program involving multiple stakeholders.
- Positive relationships among stakeholders, and personal networks within a location, are a considerable help in “making things happen”. Particularly in remote locations, informal agreements are the norm; it is important to spend the time and energy to establish the trusting relationships that will allow these agreements to work.
 

*“Recruitment and retention is a big challenge in our location. Our line managers were happy to get folks from the region interested in careers with us.”*

**- Employer representative**

- The training program cannot be viewed or operated in isolation. The design, timing and operation of the program should consider important aspects of the context such as:
  - the funding for the program itself – and the expectations and requirements of the funders;
  - the options for further training and/or employment – as well as the funding and timeframes for accessing these options;
  - the link between the program and employment opportunities, whether temporary or permanent, and in what timeframe;
  - the relationships between and among the various stakeholders.

*“We almost need a 2- or 3-year plan drawn up for each individual – sort out their family plans, work opportunities, training paths, etc. – at the start of the program.”*

*- Program stakeholder*

### **Acknowledgments**

The commitment and support of many stakeholders have made the Electrical Trades Orientation program a success. The ESC expresses its appreciation to:

Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership

Nalcor Energy-Lower Churchill Project

Innu Nation

Nunatsiavut Government

NunatuKavut

## 8. WHAT'S NEXT

The Electricity Sector Council's Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative's (AWPI) three-year efforts have produced some impressive outcomes, and made tractionable gains. This work is based on the creation and understanding of a unique sector-specific business case for the participation of Aboriginal workers.

Solid research and community and industry consultations drove the development of pragmatic HR tools and hands-on initiatives for Youth and Adults, and resulted in a cohesive strategy to engage Aboriginal peoples throughout the human resources cycle.

Although this project has come to its conclusion, the electricity and renewables sector must build on the momentum gained and sustain the efforts to engage Aboriginal workers and communities. The conversations and activities, some of which are outlined in the industry-wide strategy developed by this project, must continue to be adopted within and between all of the stakeholders to effect long-term changes. The lessons learned by the ESC during each distinct step of the AWPI have been captured in this report, and will be embraced and used as a source of growth for all future activities. At the same time, there are many great resources available to employers and communities that provide additional support. The ESC will continue to, and welcomes the opportunity to, engage with Aboriginal peoples, their communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to support the strategic integration, engagement and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in the electricity and renewables sector workforce.





# APPENDIX

## 9. METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The full ESC Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative comprised a number of interrelated activities. Each of them served to better understand the barriers and successful approaches for increasing the participation of Aboriginal workers in the electricity and renewables sector. Importantly, each of them also served to inform the development of pragmatic tools and frameworks for actionable initiatives that can be undertaken by a wide range of stakeholders.

The activities included:

- **Preliminary research** to capture primary and secondary source learnings that articulate the business case, barriers and best practice elements for success in engaging Aboriginal workers in the electricity and renewables sector.
- **Interviews** with 24 key informants to identify and validate background research and best practices.
- **Consultation session** with 27 participants following the May 2009 Bright Futures conference, which provided a forum for open discussion and the exchange of knowledge around: industry needs and gaps in Aboriginal workforce participation, needs for electricity specific HR tools, and directions for increasing Aboriginal participation.
- **Bright Futures Youth Camp**, a series of one-week youth camps for Aboriginal boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 13. The camp successfully: inspired interest in and built math, science, engineering and technology literacy among Aboriginal youth participants and inspired and educated them about electricity and renewables sector-related career and education opportunities.
- A comprehensive **National Aboriginal Symposium** consultation session with approximately 50 stakeholders held for 1.5 days in November 2009. The symposium was very positively received by the participants. Specific outcomes included strong support for future demonstration projects; ideas for pragmatic HR tools that can be adapted from existing successful resources; positive networking among a wide range of stakeholders; and increased knowledge about best practices for increasing Aboriginal participation in the industry.
- **Description of ten HR Practice Guidelines** drawn directly from the “gates to success” that characterize successful initiatives for addressing the key barriers to Aboriginal participation in the sector.
- **Development and validation of five pragmatic HR tools** for use by human resource practitioners. Each tool addresses a different need identified by the stakeholders in engaging Aboriginal workers throughout the HR cycle.

- **Documentation of eight best practices** to help HR practitioners understand and replicate best practices in engaging Aboriginal workers in the sector.
- A 15-week **Electrical Trades Orientation Program** designed to provide career orientation and skill upgrading to qualified Aboriginal workers. The program operated from January to April in 2011, in Happy Valley – Goose Bay NL.
- Development of a cohesive and integrated sector wide **Aboriginal Recruitment, Retention and Engagement Strategy** including tactical initiatives and actionable recommendations.
- **Presentation at Bright Futures Sector Conference 2011** detailing project outcomes, lessons applicable to the sector and discussion of the demonstration projects.
- **Final report** on all project activities, summarizing the outcomes and lessons learned.

## 10. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Aboriginal Engagement in the Mining and Energy Sectors – Case Studies and Lessons Learned* (Natural Resources Canada, 2008)
- Aboriginal Human Resource Council. 2007. *A Unique Partnership Addresses Driller Shortages*. In the National Report on Aboriginal Inclusion
- Aboriginal Human Resource Council. 2007. *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion*
- Caverley, N. “What Works: Effective Policies and Programs for Aboriginal Peoples of Canada”. Strategic Policy Research Directorate, 2007.
- *Connecting the Dots: A Study of Perceptions, Expectations and Career Choices of Aboriginal Youth* (AHRC, 2001)
- First Nations Energy Alliance. “First Nation Opportunities: Powering Our Future”. First Nations Energy Forum, 2007.
- *First Work Program Survey – Sectoral Youth Career Focus* (Electricity Sector Council, 2007)
- *Keeping the Future Bright* (Canadian Electricity Association 2004 Sector Study)
- *Labour Market Demand and Transitions in the Electricity Industry* (Electricity Sector Council, 2007)
- *Powering Up the Future: 2008 Labour Market Information Study* (Electricity Sector Council)
- Statistics Canada, 2006 Census. *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census*. Accessed at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/children.cfm>