

Chapter 4

Yukon's employment and skills system

This chapter provides an overview of key actors within the Yukon's employment and skill system. The Department of Education plays a lead role in the development and delivery of employment programmes in the Yukon. Many of the department's recent activities were driven from the conclusion of a Labour Market Framework, which covers a number of important policy areas for employment and economic development.

Overview of Yukon's employment and skills system

The population of Yukon as estimated in June of 2015 was 37 343 in increase of 19.6% (6 121) over the last decade. Whitehorse the capital of the Territory and its largest city had a population of 28 872. Dawson City is the next largest community with a population of 2 067 followed by Watson Lake with 1 469 inhabitants. The remainder of the population is located in 13 smaller communities. Yukon has a large First Nations population of 7 650 as measured in 2014 (YBS, 2015a), representing 20% of Yukon's population.

Local government in Yukon

In the Yukon, municipal governments are formed in accordance with the *Municipal Act* of 2001 and provide services such as water, sewage and waste collection. More recently, municipalities have become more active in fostering local economic development and as a consequence interested in the functioning of the local labour market. Much of the social services for reasons of economy are provided at the Yukon Government level.

Department of Education

On April 1, 2003 a new *Yukon Act* came into effect, giving the Government of Yukon direct control over a greater variety of provincial type programmes, responsibilities and powers. These expanded authorities enabled Yukon to manage its economic future and the ability to respond quickly and effectively to issues as they arose. The Government of Yukon is now responsible for public lands and resource management over water, forestry and mineral resources (Council of Yukon First Nations, 2015a).

Labour Market Services

The Canada-Yukon Labour Market Development Agreement came into force in July 2009 making the government of Yukon responsible for public employment services in the Territory. The Labour Market Programmes and Services Unit (LMPS), Department of Advanced Education, works on strategies and policies to shape Yukon's workforce (Government of Yukon, 2010). The goal of LMPS is to fund Yukon-based persons, organisations and businesses in order that they may acquire the training to grow Yukon's labour force capacity.

The Department of Education has taken a collaborative approach to guide labour market activities for employers and employees through the development of Yukon's Labour Market Framework. The vision of the Labour Market Framework is: an inclusive and adaptable labour market that meets the demands of a strong and diversified economy. The Labour Market Framework has a 10 year horizon: from 2010 to 2020. Five strategies and accompanying priority action plans were developed. The strategies cover:

- Comprehensive Skills and Trades Training;
- Immigration;

- Labour Market Information;
- Recruitment; and Retention.

The Labour Market Framework strategies and action plans were developed in 2009-10 by Working Groups (now referred to as committees) made up of Yukon labour market stakeholders, including business/industry, non-governmental organisations (inclusive of Yukon College), and the federal government and First Nation organisations. While there is crossover and interdependencies between the strategies, each action plan is developed separately by their respective committee.

Each committee meets quarterly and may meet more often as labour market issues are identified. In addition, the chairs of each committee plan additional meetings to address common concerns across the Labour Market Framework's strategies. Many members sit on more than one committee. Members work on a consensus-based decision-making model. Labour Market Framework members take ownership for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies and action plans.

It is in this context that the Labour Market Information Strategy led to the creation of the Labour Market Information Stakeholder Committee which is co-chaired by Yukon government and stakeholders from the private or non-for-profit sector. This Committee meets on a quarterly basis and on additional occasions when required. The organisations involved on the LMI Stakeholder Committee are: Association Franco-Yukonnaise, Canada-Aboriginal Affairs, Can-Nor, Service Canada, Carpenter Union, Challenge, Employment Central, First Nation of Nacho Nyak-Dun, Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, Northwestel, TIA Yukon, Volunteer Yukon, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Yukon College, Yukon Federation of Labour, Yukon Education, Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Public Service Commission, Health and Social Services, Yukon Mining Training Association, and Yukon Worker's Compensation Health and Safety Board.

The LMPS unit of Advanced Education is involved in the management of training and skills development policies, both through the Labour Market Framework and through consultation with other departments and the development of Labour Market Information (LMI). This LMI includes reports compiled by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, the Government of Canada and other Provinces and Territories with regards to labour market and skills development trends.

An example of LMI influencing training and skills development policies is the 2014 Yukon Training Demand Report. It is a snapshot of in-demand occupations in Yukon for which training is required. Data used to inform the Report comes from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon WorkFutures, Statistics Canada and the National Household Survey, and from reports prepared on Yukon Market Supply and Migration. From each source, specific information was extracted to determine population demographics and forecast which occupations will be in high demand for the next three to five years. Such information helps Advanced Education determine applicable training and skills development policies as it relates to setting programme priorities for targeted funding initiatives.

Employment Services

Advanced Education funds Employment Assistance Service (EAS) agencies through the Labour Market Development Agreement. Contract agencies provide job seekers with basic services helping them identify potential job opportunities prepare applications and

résumés and prepare for interviews. They may also recommend to Advanced Education individuals who would qualify and benefit from training. Contracts may also be concluded to provide employment services to targeted groups such as disabled Yukoners. Youth are able to use the services offered by the EAS that include resume assistance, job-board postings, and individualized case management.

Targeted services to Youth

Advanced Education also funds the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre (Youth Employment Centre) out of the employment services and supports stream of the Canada Job Fund (Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, not dated). Activities included under this agreement include:

- Job Search – which assists youth (local and in the communities) with job search skills and the job search process. One-on-one services include resume writing, job search strategies, interview preparation and networking. Also funded is the provision of transportation to drop-off resumes and applications and assisting, encouraging and coaching clients to follow-up with employers with regards to their open job postings.
- Wage Subsidy – the provision of a wage subsidy (local and in the communities) to employers to supplement wages, and to encourage the hiring of youth who lack employment experience and may have various employment barriers.
- Job Specific Training – covering the costs for youth to receive short-term job specific pre-employment certification such as first aid, food safe, and WHMIS.

Indigenous Peoples

Yukon had at the time of the 2011 NHS 7 700 persons who self-identified as indigenous. This represents 23% of the population of the territory (YBS, 2015b). Yukon has the largest number of self-governing First Nations in Canada (11 of the 17 First Nations in Yukon) and has considerable experience in working on a government to government basis with First Nation communities (Council of Yukon First Nations, 2015b).

The modern-day treaty process began in the Yukon on February 14, 1973, when the Yukon Native Brotherhood, representing 12 Yukon Indian Bands under the leadership of Chief Elijah Smith, presented “Together Today for our Children Tomorrow” to Canada’s then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Forty years later, Yukon First Nation self-government is unique in Canada and internationally. The accomplishments of Yukon First Nations are a model for the rest of Canada.

In 2013-2014, the Land Claims and Implementation Secretariat and First Nations Relations amalgamated with the Governance Liaison and Capacity Development Branch into the new Aboriginal Relations Division. This amalgamation provides an enhanced collaborative approach for negotiating and implementing final self-government agreements and other reconciliation arrangements with all Yukon First Nations.

One of the most important functions of the division is organising meetings between Yukon government officials and Yukon First Nation officials and between the Premier and First Nation chiefs. This notion of government-to-government relations is central to how Yukon has structured its interactions with First Nations. Individual departments each have responsibility for dealings with First Nations. As an example First Nation representatives participate on the four working committees of the Labour Market Framework.

Over half of First Nations in the Yukon live in the urban setting of Whitehorse and can access Yukon government services directly. Additionally, First Nations have a Self Government Secretariat (SGS) that was established in 2001 by Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) leadership resolution. The purpose of the SGS is to support Self Governing Yukon First Nations (SGYFN) in areas of common concern relating to self-government agreements and includes Yukon First Nations that are not members of the CYFN.

Until 2008, the SGS was overseen by a Chiefs Committee but it now functions as a Self Government Secretariat to the Council of Yukon First Nations. The SGS currently provides support for SGYFN review, renewals and other policy and legislative efforts of common priority to all Yukon Self Governing First Nations. The SGS will continue to assist the Yukon Self Governing First Nations according to the following common objectives:

- Developing governance models, methods and tools to support nation-building;
- Facilitating preparedness of First Nations to negotiate;
- Supporting exploratory and research work as directed by the Self Governing Yukon First Nations, prior to formal negotiations;
- Providing communication and consultation requirements; and
- Supporting development of constitutions, laws and governance structures.

Targeted services to persons with disabilities

Employment needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in the LMF, specifically the CSTTS Action Plan, the first goal of which is “to ensure training opportunities are available for all Yukon people.” The following action steps fall within this scope and target persons with disabilities:

- Barriers of participants are identified to improve training delivery methods (1.2.2); and
- Training content is designed to accommodate persons with learning needs (1.2.3).

Funds are managed out of LMPS and all applications are assessed on current programme guidelines, eligible budget categories, available funds and labour market information (Government of Yukon, 2013). Yukon Education and Canada (ESDC) signed the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) on February 19, 2014. The programme went live in August 2014. Under this agreement, Canada will provide CAD 1.25 million annually to Yukon for the next four years, beginning April 1, 2014. Both Yukon Education and the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) are participating in the administration of the LMAPD. The key principles of the LMAPD in Yukon are the following:

- Provide labour market services to persons with disabilities.
- Eligible participants engaged under this programme must provide informed consent to address an identified or suspected disability.
- The programme is centred on employment-related services provided to participants with a strong focus on case management and participant follow-up.

Yukon Education, in consultation with community stakeholders, developed three streams of programming for persons with disabilities to access labour-market supports. These are:

Capability Assessment & Accommodation Program

This programme supports the activities necessary to assess an individual's workplace capabilities and challenges in order to determine the accommodations necessary for successful engagement with an employer. This requires a broad list of eligible activities to cover the range of assessment tools and strategies, including the creation of individualised assessment strategies, such as a trial work-experience placement with the direct involvement of an occupational therapist. Case management service providers apply for funding to meet the needs of their participants.

Individual Training and Supports Program

This programme is for individuals who need training supports, or individual accommodation supports to gain, maintain or return to employment (such as adaptive technologies or professional supports such as tutoring or counselling).

Workplace Supports Program

This programme allows for a wide range of employment supports including equipment purchase, physical workplace adaptation, tailored job descriptions, job coaching and mentoring, mediation, disability management professionals and wage and earnings subsidies. As with the other programme streams, case management is a key ingredient of the programme. The participant and employer are directly involved in designing the accommodation necessary to achieve the desired result.

The Employment Services and Supports (ESS) stream of the Canada Job Fund supports the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon (LDAY) which provides services to organisations and professionals who require information and support that will assist them in meeting the needs of adults with learning disabilities. Currently, PSC (Diversity Services) and local NGOs are in the process of creating a Representative Public Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) programme helps unemployed workers typically aged 55 to 64, return to work. The initiative is cost-shared with the Canadian provinces and territories. It provides employment assistance services, such as resume writing and counselling, and improves participants' employability through activities such as skills upgrading and work experience.

Through a TIOW funding agreement between Yukon government and Employment and Social Development Canada, Yukon Education administers funding to Yukon College to deliver the Yukon TIOW programme. The programme is delivered at Yukon College's Whitehorse campus.

Over the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017, Yukon College will deliver the TIOW programme to approximately 72 older workers through a 15-week course that includes a four-week job placement offered in Fall and Spring. This funding has been in place since 2006 and it has continually gained in popularity over the years for Yukon's older workers. Participants while enrolled in the programme are eligible to receive an hourly stipend equal to Yukon's minimum wage which does not contravene their Employment Insurance benefits. Reports indicate positive employment outcomes with over 75% of participants gaining employment at course completion.

Policies and programmes for immigrants

The Education Department is responsible for immigration the Yukon as immigration is seen in a broader labour market context. The single goal of the immigration strategy is to support a responsive and sustainable approach to Yukon immigration (Government of Yukon, 2010b). This goal is supported by the following six objectives:

- Be responsive to industry and business labour force needs through the improvement and monitoring of the Yukon nominee programme;
- Assist more immigrants to engage in Yukon's labour market opportunities by providing better information and services;
- Ensure the provision of settlement services is inclusive for all newcomers, including temporary foreign workers and Yukon nominee program participants;
- Provide immigrants with the resources and training they need to seek further education to work in their chosen field or to access better employment opportunities;
- Support immigrant communities within Yukon by helping them to increase their capacity, their profile and the services they offer their membership; and
- Increase immigrant retention rates by promoting the benefits of immigration and celebrating multiculturalism.

The Yukon Nominee Program is part of the Yukon Immigration Strategy. The Yukon Nominee Program (YNP) is run by the Yukon Government in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the "Agreement for Canada-Yukon Cooperation on Immigration". This partnership allows Yukon to nominate applicants who qualify to the federal government for permanent residency.

The YNP streams for Skilled Workers and Critical Impact Workers is locally driven and based on the needs of Yukon employers. When eligible Yukon employers cannot find Canadian citizens or permanent residents to fill permanent full-time jobs, they can find workers from outside of Canada. The YNP also includes Express Entry and Yukon Business Nominee streams.

A strategic approach to immigration helps the Yukon government respond to labour market needs in a way that can be sustained through fluctuating economies while ensuring that job opportunities are safeguarded for Yukoners and Canadians.

Economic Development

The Department of Economic Development is involved in the management of economic development policies. The mandate of this department is to develop a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy to enrich the quality of life of all Yukoners; to pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnerships and innovation; and to forge partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of the territory (Government of Yukon, 2012). The primary responsibilities of the Department of Economic Development are to:

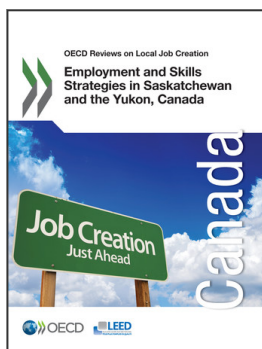
- Develop and maintain a sustainable and competitive Yukon economy to enrich the quality of life of all Yukoners;
- Pursue economic initiatives with a shared vision of prosperity, partnership and innovation;
- Forge, maintain and expand partnerships with First Nations in the economic development of Yukon;

- Work in partnership with First Nations and others initiating or implementing regional economic plans;
- Proactively administer the Community Development Fund.

Activities of the Department are informed by “Pathways to Prosperity” that sets the economic vision for Yukon through 2025. The broad vision in Pathways is “Strategically situated, with shipping access to Asian markets and providing a land link between Alaska and the rest of North America, Yukon is positioned to leverage its advantages of world class mineral and oil and gas deposits, breathtaking scenery, and skilled and adaptable people.” The strategy looks at three components: wealth generators including mines, tourism, the film industry and exports from value-added activities; support industries such as transportation, retail and professional services will expand to service the wealth generators and support the needs of a growing population; and, enabling factors such as research and innovation, policy and regulations, infrastructure, capacity development and business promotion and facilitation.

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