Manitoba Consultations on Labour Market Training

What We Heard Summary Report

BACKGROUND

In July and August of 2016, the Government of Manitoba hosted stakeholder consultations on labour market training. The purpose was to gather information from a broad range of stakeholders to ensure Manitoba's employment and training programs continue to be relevant and responsive to current and future labour market needs and priorities.

Manitobans were invited to share their views through written and online submissions as well as a series of roundtable sessions, hosted by the Minister of Education and Training, the Honourable Ian Wishart, with support from local Chambers of Commerce chapters.

Four roundtables were held in Winnipeg, Thompson, Portage la Prairie, and Brandon with a broad cross section of labour market stakeholders. Approximately 175 participants took part in the roundtables and 22 submissions were received online.

This consultation contributed to a national engagement process organized by federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers responsible for advancing shared labour market priorities through the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM). The consultation was guided by a national discussion paper with nine questions in three key areas: Impact (what do we need to do now), Innovate (future needs), and Inform (what do we know).

This report provides a summary of what was heard during the consultation process. The perspectives will be used to identify ways to improve labour market programming in Manitoba and Canada and inform future investments. The views of Manitoba stakeholders are also contained in a pan-Canadian report commissioned by the FLMM, released in October 2016.

Manitoba Roundtable Sessions:	
Winnipeg	*July 25, 2016*
Thompson	*August 8, 2016*
Portage la Prairie	*August 11, 2016*
Brandon	*August 15, 2016*

WHAT WE HEARD

1. Flexibility to Respond to Unique and Changing Needs

Many participants identified the importance of flexibility to provide skills training appropriate to changing and anticipated employer needs. It was expressed that programs should anticipate emerging and longer term needs and allow for tailoring to the needs of employers and particular populations, including those more distant from the labour market. One example was that northern Manitoba has lower high school graduation rates and programs designed for that region would differ from those delivered in an urban centre. Flexibility in training options was a key issue for many businesses, including in house training, particularly for those with the expertise, technology, and proprietary knowledge, and support to enable small organizations to develop this capacity.

Stakeholders identified the need for flexibility in program eligibility to respond to the needs of individuals and employers. Some stakeholders identified eligibility, stemming from current federal-provincial agreements, as restrictive resulting in individuals not being able to access support despite having a need, including unemployed not eligible for Employment Insurance, existing employees, and employers. Stakeholders also discussed flexibility in funding to provide training for existing workers to improve their skills in addition to the unemployed. Regional factors strongly contributed to this theme being repeated during consultations.

Participants spoke of flexibility in accessibility, both from a logistical and a funding perspective. This includes the availability of scholarships and bursaries to train for jobs beyond traditional institutions. Others expressed the need for more flexible options to access services, such as online options and expanded hours of operations while others indicated they should be available "in community" to accommodate Indigenous people and diverse cultures.

2. Unique Needs of Diverse Populations

Stakeholders identified unique needs facing diverse groups in Manitoba's workforce and challenges to address successful labour market integration. The need for programs to be responsive to the work environments of women and caregivers were also identified. In terms of program design, more consideration needs to be given to issues relating to maternity/parental leave and child care.

Participants noted a need for increased programming options for older workers and those who want to remain in or return to the labour market. In terms of programming for youth, stakeholders highlighted the need for earlier intervention for career development and employability skills.

Some pointed to the fact that persons with disabilities often require accommodations in training and the workplace, including ongoing supports. It was suggested that more awareness is needed among employers, as well as education in workplace to support the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities. Finally, participants spoke to the need to recognize qualifications of newcomers to enable them to apply their skills. Without Canadian work experience, this can be challenging. It was suggested that bridging programs need to be fast tracked and updated as per labour market needs and more training on workplace culture and language is needed.

3.   Indigenous Peoples and Northern Communities

Stakeholders recognized Manitoba's fast growing and young Indigenous population. They expressed the need to prioritize investments in essential skills training and overall supports to assist with transitions to the workforce. Stakeholders spoke of the limited access to full time or seasonal employment opportunities as a challenge for Indigenous youth. Many discussed the difficult decision faced by residents who leave their communities to attend training. This decision was viewed as having a high cost (financial and personal) with limited transitional supports (e.g. mentorship, housing).

Participants expressed the importance of having access to information and training opportunities "in community". Community based training was identified as a promising example. Technology was also identified as a means to increase access to information and training and develop work readiness; however stakeholders cited limitations with IT infrastructure, including broadband communications, in northern and remote communities. Many spoke to the need for innovative approaches to training and partnerships and suggested innovative local solutions including increased entrepreneurship, a focus on northern hiring preferences, more project based programs, and training employers on cultural awareness.

> **Stakeholder-identified Benefits of Community Based Training:**
>
> - *Helps reduce economic costs and related stressors with travelling to another centre.*
> - *Supports workforce retention in rural and northern communities. Communities can lose out on skilled workers if jobs are available where the training was conducted.*
> - *Aligns with the needs of business as training can be tailored to local opportunities.*

4.   *Wrap Around Approach to Programs and Services*

Stakeholders expressed that occupational skill training alone is not sufficient to ensure successful outcomes, particularly for those who are more distant from the labour market or face challenges to full labour market integration. Many supported a wrap around approach to programs and services based on client needs for long term success and spoke of a continuum of services.

Issues with supporting workplace readiness were identified across sessions. A number of stakeholders acknowledged the linkage with adult education/learning centres and the need for more one on one training for youth in these settings as well as opportunities to provide pre-employment training for those with multiple barriers.

Work readiness, which includes essential and employability skills for new hires and existing employees, is viewed as an important service. This programming addresses communication and language training, particularly for skilled immigrants in professional/technical occupations. Wrap around supports were seen as important for those more distant from the labour market and facing multiple barriers to employment. These supports were viewed as essential to address barriers or challenges to training/employment, including transportation, drivers' licensing, housing, addictions, and child care.

A common theme was the need for training that provides stronger links to employment opportunities and work experience. Also noted was the need for transitional supports for those who complete training, including mentoring at the workplace and on the job training. Also highlighted, for both individuals and employers, were post-employment and job retention supports.

Employer involvement in these services was viewed as important to support the willingness to hire those more distant from the labour market and ensure successful transitions to the workplace. It was also raised that more resources or programs may be needed to support employers who are willing to hire, train, and coach individuals to success such as tax and wage incentives. Wrap around services and supports were emphasized, to help people more distant from the labour market stay in the workforce.

5.   *Improved Coordination, Partnerships, and Engagement*

Multiple stakeholders noted the need for improved coordination across and within sectors to make programming more responsive and effective, reduce the duplication of services, and support innovative solutions to labour market needs. Many commented that more partnerships are needed between industry, employers, academics, schools, and post secondary institutions to help advance career development, build employability skills for youth from an early age, and ensure training responds to employer needs and expectations as well as leads to a job. It was widely agreed among stakeholders that there is a need for a connection between employers and service providers to

improve coordination and effectiveness of programs. Stakeholders identified additional positive value of partnering such as reducing the impact of competition as well as supporting innovative solutions.

Multiple stakeholders noted the need for better coordination of funding and programs and for partnering across and within sectors. Some expressed that multiple agencies may receive funding for similar activities resulting in duplication and noted a resistance to partner with others. Some attributed this to organizational silos while some expressed this could result from competition for resources.

Many stated that face to face consultations and meetings are effective ways to share information, engage stakeholders, and support collaboration. It was noted, however, that financial and logistical challenges, particularly in rural, northern and remote areas, can restrict partners from participating. Technology upgrades, such as video conferencing, were viewed as innovative opportunities for greater collaboration.

6. *Access and Awareness of Programs and Opportunities*

Stakeholders expressed that access to information about programs and services and opportunities are plentiful but not streamlined, resulting in some confusion for those seeking access. Several opportunities for improvement were noted. Participants suggested that single access point for information about programs and services could be created e.g. single labour market portal. It was also suggested that employers could be better linked with prospective job seekers through a skills database for clients who have completed training. Both of these centralized databases could work to reduce confusion for clients and employers.

Many highlighted the needs of northern communities and employers and spoke about meeting these needs by applying a northern preference filter in existing tools (e.g. Job Bank) or by creating a local Indigenous area database that could reflect information on local jobs, credentials, businesses, and procurement. Participants also suggested using innovative and attractive ways to engage youth including social media, as well as Indigenous media outlets to promote and share information on programs and services. Employers were also encouraged to engage in advisory committees. Some stakeholders identified "red tape", resulting from current federal-provincial funding arrangements, as an issue affecting access. They expressed that the application and proposal processes

are time consuming and lack flexibility and should be streamlined. This was viewed as particularly the case for small organizations whose time and resources are limited.

7.   High Quality Labour Market Information

Participants noted that timely, reliable, comprehensive and easily accessible labour market information (LMI) is critical to determining and continuing to meet labour market needs. Stakeholders identified the importance of labour market information to: Identify needs and inform programming; Support decision making for government, employers, and individuals; Help employers predict the skills needed to grow a business; and Forecast gaps in skills, industry demand, and location of work.

Employers expressed the importance of LMI in understanding their future needs, yet cited difficulty in obtaining LMI to identify labour market demand. Stakeholders suggested that a "one stop shop" approach to LMI is needed, for example a common database where information on programs and resources and opportunities could be accessed by employers and job seekers. Stakeholders felt that more LMI is needed on newcomers, age of workers and indigenous communities and that LMI needs to be captured through a cultural and gender lens.

8.   Outcomes of Success and Value of Investments

Stakeholders spoke of the need to improve information on program outcomes as a way to communicate value to the public and identify what works. There was support for improving measures, promoting and sharing results information with the public as well as providing the opportunity to receive feedback on results. Stakeholders suggested an important role for Sector Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and businesses in disseminating this type of information.

Stakeholders identified the need for a new definition and measures of "success" that reflects perspectives of individuals, employers, community and government and is meaningful to all Canadians. They also expressed the need to measure outcomes of wrap around supports that are relevant to different regions, programs, client groups, and employers. There was support for dedicated funding for research and innovation to support evidence based decision making. Stakeholders recognized it can take years to see the results of programs and emphasized the need to track longer term outcomes through surveys and evaluation.

APPENDIX – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Anonymous	Manitoba Beef Producers
Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development	Manitoba Building Trades
Family Dynamics	Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
Film Training Manitoba	Manitoba Child Care Association
Manitoba Chamber of Commerce	Manitoba Dental Association
Manitoba Dental Association	Manitoba Federation of Labour
Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.	Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanank Inc.	Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
Manitoba Nursery Landscape Association	Manitoba Home Builders Association
Member of the Legislative Assembly Thompson	Manitoba Hydro
Composite Innovation Centre Manitoba Inc.	Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology
Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Inc.	Manitoba Métis Federation
ACI Manitoba	Manitoba Music
Agassiz Youth Centre	Manitoba Print Industry Association
Alicia Rae Career Centre Inc.	Manitoba Start
Altered Minds, Inc.	Manitoba Supported Employment Network
Apprenticeship and Certification Board	Manitoba Tourism Education Council and MB Tourism Education College
Assiniboine Community College	Manitoba Trucking Association
Association of Manitoba Municipalities	Manitoba-Saskatchewan Restaurants Canada
Atom-Jet Group	Member of the Legislative Assembly Brandon East
Birchwood, Manitoba Motor Dealers	Member of the Legislative Assembly Brandon West
Brandon Chamber of Commerce	Meridian
Brandon Friendship Centre	NEEDS Inc.
Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation	New Media Manitoba
Brandon University	NMSC and MKO
Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council	Norima Consulting (ICTAM)
Buffalo Gal Pictures	Northern Health Authority
Buhler Industries	Northern Manitoba Sector Council
Building Independence Project, St. Amant	Opaskwayak Educational Authority Inc.
C.E.Y.S. Brandon Inc.	Opening Doors to Success Inc.
Campus Manitoba	Opportunities for Employment
Canadian Community Economic Development Network	Options Employment Services for Youth
Canadian Institute for the Blind	Osborne Village Resource Centre
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters	Planners Plus
Canadian Mental Health Association	Portage and District Chamber of Commerce
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Portage Credit Union
Canexus Corporation	Portage Friendship Centre

Career Trek	Portage Learning and Literacy Centre
CentrePort Canada Inc.	Prairie Skills Employment Services Inc.
City of Brandon	Professional Engineering – Engineer Geoscience Manitoba
City of Morden	Project SAM Inc.
City of Thompson	Reaching E-Quality Employment Services
College of Medical Lab Technicians of Manitoba	Red River College
College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba	Roofing Contractors Association of Manitoba
Community Employment and Resource Centre	Rural Economic Development Steering Committee
Connect Employment Services	Safe Workers of Tommorrow
Dakota Tipi First Nation	Samaritan House Training Centre
Eastman Employment Services	Sara Riel Inc.
EDGE Skills Centre	Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba	Society for Manitobans with Disabilities
English Online Inc.	Southern Chiefs Organization Inc.
Executive Assistant to MP Larry McGuire	Southern Health – Santé Sud
Fieldstone Ventures	Southport Airport and Commercial Properties
Film Training Manitoba	St. Amant Centre
FireSpirit Inc.	Success Skills Centre
Food and Beverage Manitoba	Taking Charge! Inc.
Frontier School Division	The Momentum Centre
Gateway Counseling Services	The Pas and District Chamber of Commerce
Gateway Resources Winkler	Thompson Chamber of Commerce
Hi-Tech Industries	Town of Winnipeg Beach
ID Fusion Software	UFCW Training Centre
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba	United Steel Workers Local 6166
Individual - Independent Artist	University College of the North
Inferno Pictures Inc.	University de Saint-Boniface
Innovate Life Options	University of Manitoba
International Institute for Sustainable Development	University of Winnipeg
JUST Training Corp.	Urban Circle Training Centre
Ka Ni Kanichink Inc.	Vale, Manitoba Operations
Keeyask Hydropower Limited Partnership	WASO Winnipeg
Life Science Association of Manitoba	Westman Employment Services and Career Connections
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.	Westoba Credit Union
Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre	Winnipeg Construction Association
Manitoba Aerospace HR Council	Workplace Education Manitoba
Manitoba Association of Career Colleges	Youth Employment Services
Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres	YWCA Thompson
Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations	