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Workplace Skills Remains a Priority for Government of Canada

On September 25th, the federal government announced expenditure reductions to meet its 2006 budget commitment to identify \$1 billion in savings from programs and activities. The Sector Council program was not directly affected by the cuts. Savings were announced in four areas: funding for third parties to further their interests or programs that were not effective; unused funds from programs that had already achieved their objectives or had lower than expected take-up; programs or activities that do not meet the priorities of the federal government; and savings from streamlining or consolidating activities.

These announcements were followed, the next day, by the release of the plans and priorities for 2006-2007 for Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Concerning workforce related initiatives, priorities include

Further developing and strengthening Foreign Credential Recognition initiatives, including the proposed Canadian Agency for Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials

Implementation of the Trades & Apprenticeship Strategy including the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant

Continuing to work with provinces and territories to improve inter-provincial labour mobility under the Agreement on Internal Trade

Further developing and strengthening the Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative

Refining and broadening the impact of the Sector Council Program, testing new and innovative approaches to sectoral skills development.

Copies of the full report are available at http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/0607/hrsdcrhdsc/hrsdcrhdsc_e.asp

2006 Annual Survey of Sector Council Performance

The 2006 Annual Survey of Performance Indicators clearly demonstrates the value of sector council activities in addressing human resource issues:

29% of sector councils had 20,345 workers that took classroom training at a learning/academic institute to meet occupational/competency standards which had been developed or upgraded by sector councils;

21% of sector councils had 16,601 workers that took in-house training to meet the occupational/competency standards which had been developed or upgraded;

There were 8,221 enrollees in the 86 sector-specific courses or programs of study established by the sector councils;

There were 3,069 employers that established and/or upgraded in-house training programs as a result of council efforts or urging;

There were 31,371 attendees present at the 1,474 events, workshops, seminars and lectures convened by sector councils to upgrade workplace skills; and

There were 17,716 enrollees in the 10 on-line/distance learning capabilities developed by sector councils.

In a demonstration of industry support for the sector council program, sector councils received \$70,465,641 in outside support (cash and in-kind) from their sectors. During the same period, the government of Canada's sector council program invested \$67,144,000.

Skilled Trades A Career You Can Count On

Launched in January 2003, "Skilled Trades – A Career You Can Count On" is a joint initiative between the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and Skills Canada. With 12 million dollars in funding over a three-year period, the campaign has two objectives:

To reposition the image of careers in skilled trades as a first choice option in the minds of youth, parents and educators.

To encourage employers to hire, train and retain more apprentices.

The campaign features a pan-Canadian advertising campaign using three ads aimed at youth and running on youth-oriented speciality television channels, radio stations in every province and territory, cinema ads and on-line banner ads.

Several tools have been developed for the campaign including brochures and posters; copies of the commercials on CD Rom; Guide to Apprenticeship; education guide; champion program guide; skilled trades promotion presentation on CD Rom; employer toolkit; employer seminar and employer recognition program.

Research conducted during the campaign indicates that there is still work to be done – only 33% of youth surveyed indicated they were considering a career in skilled trades and only 18% of employers interviewed actually have apprentices.

For more information, and copies of resource materials, go to: www.careersintrades.ca

Aboriginal Peoples and the Workforce

The Alliance of Sector Councils and the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada have jointly released a fact sheet providing a statistical snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Canada and its workforce participation. Aboriginal people, in general, are younger than their Canadian counterparts. It is also clear that Aboriginal people are over represented in certain occupations and under represented in others. Thirteen percent (13%) of Aboriginal people are employed in public administration (including band administration), compared to only 5.8% in the total labour force. On the other end of the spectrum, barely 2% work in professional, scientific and technical services, compared to 6.3% of the total labour force.

Aboriginal people are not being hired at the same rate as other Canadians, despite the gains in education that Aboriginal people have made over the years. The unemployment rate on reserves is more than four times the average Canadian rate. The fact sheet identifies a number of challenges and barriers that exist to successful recruitment, retention and promotion of Aboriginal people in the workforce; identifies key areas where more work needs to be done; and profiles successful sector council initiatives to address identified concerns.

Copies of the fact sheet can be downloaded at <http://www.councils.org/tasc/nav.cfm?l=e>. More information on the work of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada can be obtained at their website (<http://www.ahrdcc.com>).