



FIRST NATIONS LABOUR MARKET

OVERVIEW

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) work on a new distinct First Nations labour market strategy is a result of Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions pertaining to the Economic Portfolio.

These resolutions, including AFN Resolution 25/2018, *Next Steps on a Distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy*, provide direction to the AFN; affirm First Nations' rights to improved economic and social conditions; mandated efforts to address personal and systemic barriers to labour market opportunities faced by First Nations; and

support access and options to secure greater economic independence.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the Chiefs Committee on Human Resources Development (CCHRD) to call on the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to address the shortfall of Budget 2018 and to initiate a parallel process for the full devolution of labour market authority and jurisdiction and to continue to work jointly with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) in the implementation of a First Nations Labour Market Strategy.

UPDATE

The Government of Canada has acknowledged the importance of a distinctions-based approach that recognizes the unique needs of First Nations. Budget 2018 identified a First Nations stream that will provide \$1.1 billion over 5 years and \$235.7 million ongoing to support a stronger focus on training for high-quality, better-paying jobs, rather than rapid re-employment, and allow for long-term career success.

The CCHRD communicated to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour that Budget 2018 is a good starting point on the investments that are needed; however, the budget did not take into consideration inflation and population

increases. It also fell short of identifying funds separate from program funding to support the development of a First Nations Labour Market Council and capacity as recommended by First Nations.

The AFN continues to advocate for the complete transfer of labour market program authority to First Nations. The AFN also advocates that resources for a capacity-building and support-focused structures, such as a First Nations Labour Market Council and Secretariat, be identified outside of the First Nations labour market program funds. The AFN will continue to work on finding ways to bridge information and research needs to; assist First Nations and First Nations Service

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Organizations; and work with the Government of Canada on reducing/replacing the role of Service Canada, as capacities locally and regionally are enhanced.

A First Nations Sub-Technical Working Group on Human Resources (TWG), comprised of First Nations regional representatives and the AFN, has been working with ESDC on the implementation of the First Nations strategy. In addition, the AFN Economic Sector has organized Transition Working Groups comprised of representatives of the 57 First Nations labour market organizations who have volunteered to work with ESDC in the transition and implementation phase.

In July 2018, Resolution 25/2018, *Next Steps on a Distinct First Nations Labour Market*

Strategy, was passed directing the CCCHR and Technical Working Groups to continue to work with ESDC to respond to the funding impacts of inflation and population growth, financial supports for the development of capacity, and to advance labour market authority and jurisdiction under the control of First Nations Governments.

The Sub-TWG and the Transition Working Groups continue work focused on performance measurements, capacity building, labour market information requirements, and the funding impacts of inflation and population growth that were not addressed in Budget 2018.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to coordinate First Nations input into the distinct First Nations stream of the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program to come into effect on April 1, 2019.
- Outline with ESDC the co-development process, new agreement development, performance measurement objectives, and ongoing capacity assessment, supports and labour market information research and development.
- Seek support for the meaningful inclusion of First Nations at the Federal Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) meeting.
- Continue to review the planning, concept and role of a Labour Market Council and Secretariat. The discussion focuses on an instrument to provide support and capacity, act at arm's length from the Government of Canada, direct research development and maintain outreach with First Nations labour market partners, organizations, and agencies under the control and leadership of First Nations.