

**FIRST NATIONS LABOUR MARKET****OVERVIEW**

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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 resolution 32/2017, *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 work jointly with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) in the implementation of a new distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy.

**UPDATE**

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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 that resources to support a new governance structure, a First Nations Labour Market Council and Secretariat, be sought outside of First Nations labour market program funds that will be the bridge between First Nations Service Organizations and the Government of Canada, replacing the role of Service Canada and developing needed capacity for the complete transfer of labour market program authority to First Nations.

The AFN Economic Sector has organized four Transition Working Groups comprised of representatives of the 57 First Nations labour market organizations to work with ESDC in the transition and implementation phase.

# ISSUE UPDATE

## October 2018

A **Labour Market Council (FMLMC) and Secretariat (FNS) Working Group** was established to review the planning, concept and role of a Labour Market Council and Secretariat. It is hoped such an organization would provide leadership and capacity, act at arm's length from the Government of Canada and direct research development and maintain outreach with First Nations labour market partners, organizations and agencies under the control and leadership of First Nations.

A **Financial Model Working Group** will examine and refine the financial model recommended in March 2017 against information received in Budget 2018. The task is to work with ESDC officials to ensure that all information is considered in developing a distribution methodology that is fair and equitable, based on the budget amounts provided by Budget 2018.

A **Communications Working Group** will focus on a strategy that promotes a positive outlook on labour force development for First Nations rights holders, governments and service

organizations. Key products will include background information on the First Nations Labour Market Strategy and details on the proposed policy and governance approach in the transition to a new labour market structure.

A Sub-Technical Working Group, comprised of First Nations regional representatives, has been working with ESDC on new draft terms and conditions for grants and contributions that will guide the implementation of a new First Nations labour market strategy.

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.

### NEXT STEPS

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- A First Nations Technical Working Group on Human Resources Development (TWG) National Meeting on the First Nations Labour Market was convened on September 13 and 14, 2018, to report on the progress made in the co-development and implementation of the new framework requirements that will form the new distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy. The discussions included dialogue on the funding considerations for a First

Nations labour market strategy, the terms and conditions for a new First Nations labour market agreement, and planning for new First Nations agreement holders.

- A second National Meeting on the First Nations Labour Market is planned for late October /early November 2018.
- Seek support for the inclusion of First Nations at the upcoming Federal Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) meeting.