

ACTIVE MEASURES COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE



**ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECTOR**

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NOTE: This Guide is based on findings of *The Research Study & Report on Active Measures across Canada with Regard to the Income Assistance Program (Final Draft)* prepared for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development by Johnson Research Inc. dated August 29, 2007 and *Models of First Nations Community Active Measures Report* prepared for the Assembly of First Nations by Katenies Research and Management Services dated March 31, 2011. It also draws heavily on the 2009 First Nations Social Development Society and Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development *Active Measures Field Guide*. The Active Measures Community Resource Guide was prepared by consultants Brenda Kruger and Marcia Nickerson.

Introduction

Purpose of Active Measures Resource Guide

In recent years, there has been a philosophical shift in how welfare is viewed. A new concept within welfare reform is the idea of “active labour market measures.” Many provinces have undertaken significant reforms to their social development regimes, redefining their Income Assistance programs. In keeping with the practice of meeting provincial/territorial rates and eligibility criteria, Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada has begun to shift the Income Assistance program from a passive approach to a more active one to help Income Assistance recipients’ on reserve to make the transition to self-sufficiency.

Active Measures can help to break the cycle of dependence and contribute to improved opportunities and life chances for future generations, including First Nation children. In moving forward, a greater emphasis has been placed on First Nations community needs as well as greater partnerships with the provinces, other federal departments, and all First Nation partners.

The purpose of the Active Measures Resource Guide is to assist First Nations administering authorities with the tools, programs and services needed to ensure that First Nations communities receive an active, more supportive system of Income Assistance. By approaching client services holistically and building capacity, the long-term-goal of the Active Measures initiative is to improve the overall quality of life for First Nations individuals and families living on reserve.¹

Income Assistance in First Nation Communities

Quality of life is measured by the presence of certain factors important to all Canadians. These include the physical environment, such as adequate housing and clean water; access to education and training opportunities; the opportunity to participate in the economy and earn a meaningful living; and access to health, social, and cultural supports required to ensure that people remain healthy. According to every health and social indicator, Aboriginal people lag behind other Canadians.

¹ *Active Measures Field Guide*. First Nations Social Development Society and INAC. 2010: page 1
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The Income Assistance Program (IA) serves a broad client base including seniors, single parent families, the unemployed, those with physical and mental disabilities, youth at risk and the working poor. The program's primary purpose is to provide basic social assistance to individuals and families in need. Dependence on Income Assistance is much higher and more chronic in First Nation communities than for the population as a whole. The reasons for this relate to historical factors such as dispossession of land and lack of access to resources and economic opportunity - endemic poverty.

In 2007, 35 percent of on reserve residents received Income Assistance, while the national average for the rest of Canada was 5.5 percent. The majority of Aboriginals receiving Income Assistance were between 18 and 40 years of age, with 60 percent being male and 40 percent being female. Many clients have a grade 9 education level or lower. The 35% rate of dependency remains the same in 2010 according to the Indian Affairs & Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)² [Departmental Performance Report 2010-2011](#).

Income Assistance issues affecting First Nations include very high levels of Income Assistance recipients in First Nations communities, long term reliance on Income Assistance (generational), and the reality that Income Assistance creates dependence, at the individual and community level, as opposed to independence. Specific factors contributing to this situation can be divided into two broad categories: economic issues, and social issues.

Economic issues stem from the general lack of employment opportunities in, or near, First Nations communities; this is particularly true for remote communities that have seen declines in the resource-based industries that had traditionally provided some employment for First Nations. This situation is compounded by limited possibilities in certain communities, a lack of desire among many Income Assistance clients to work off reserve, and restricted funding support (e.g., transportation, child care) for those who desire to do so.

Social issues tend to reflect the conditions that exist in First Nations communities that can frustrate efforts to create self-sufficiency, such as alcohol and substance abuse, family dysfunction, low education success rates, and illiteracy. First Nations respondents frequently point to a history of economic deficiency and to the effects of residential schools as disrupting cultural transmission, thereby contributing to a population lacking self-esteem, confidence, and basic life skills. According to the Income Security Reform Evaluation, this social situation has contributed to generational dependence and to the perception of IA as a "rite of passage at 18 years of age."

² In 2011 the Department changed its official name to Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development (AANDC).

Many First Nations have attempted to create change in their communities and as a result, promising practices have emerged, even with limited resources. There seems to be a trend and many communities are sensing the need to become more innovative in addressing the needs of their communities. More and more community leaders are looking at priorities and realizing that Income Assistance is not just about giving money, it is about building sustainable conditions for the social well-being of First Nation individuals, families, and communities.

Moving Towards Active Measures

In 2007, INAC undertook an Evaluation of the Income Assistance Program. One of the key recommendations of the Evaluation was that the Department should move to an “Active Measures approach” to ensure that the program is relevant to clients needs and to keep pace with provincial and territorial changes to Income Assistance (IA). Some of the key strategies recommended in the Evaluation include:

- 1) Build Awareness and Capacity: INAC needs to build awareness of the benefits of moving from passive to Active Measures and undertake activities to obtain leaderships support develop qualified IA service providers and change attitudes toward welfare dependency.
- 2) Holistic Approach to Active Measure: Active Measures are needed to provide supports to assist IA recipients to become employable, to take advantage of work experience or training opportunities, and move toward self-sufficiency. Strong linkages with economic development, labour market programming, education, social programs and health and social services are needed.
- 3) Develop Strategies to Prevent Welfare Dependency: IA caseloads have increased as more young people on reserve receive Income Assistance. Preventative strategies to keep youth in school and alternative forms of education to develop employment skills are essential. Jobs for young people are essential for reducing intergenerational welfare dependency.³

Over the past several years, Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada (formerly INAC) has been working to support Active Measures initiatives in First Nations communities across Canada. Financial support for these initiatives was first provided in 2009-10 and has come from the department’s existing resources. The department has taken a region by region

³ INAC Evaluation of Income Assistance, December 2007: page 52.
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approach, working with provincial governments and regional First Nations organizations and communities.

AANDC has provided funding for various Active Measures pilot projects across Canada based on proposals submitted by First Nations communities or organizations. AANDC regional offices review and provide regional approval of projects based on proposals submitted. Regionally approved projects are then forwarded to AANDC Headquarters for final approval and funding. In certain cases, subject to feasibility and the availability of resources, AANDC regional offices may provide additional funding. More information about Active Measure pilot projects for the current fiscal year, as well as the funding process, can be obtained from AANDC Regional Offices.

There are many First Nations communities that have succeeded in developing and implementing strategies that have made a difference in the number of people on Income Assistance. Where there were jobs or educational opportunities to be had in the area, the emphasis was on working with the individuals and families.

AANDC supports the definition of Active Measures as tools to help individuals join the labour market such as:

- **Career planning and skills development;**
- **Access to training for literacy, adult basic education and essential skills in the workplace training;**
- **Transitional supports to access short term training opportunities (e.g. training allowances);**
- **Providing transitional supports for individuals to secure and sustain employment (e.g. transportation, child care); and**
- **Working with employers and industry to help meet their need for skilled workers by improving First Nations recruitment and retention strategies.⁴**

Where there were no available jobs or educational opportunities it was necessary for communities to focus on education, training and/or job creations activities so that members could remain in the community. Many of these efforts were possible only with partnerships with training/ educational program providers and or employers.⁴

Where job markets do not exist, many community success stories are the result of:

- Individual service providers who network, create new partnerships and otherwise engineer a patchwork of services, volunteer and subsidized work situations and self-employment opportunities for clients.
- Community driven efforts that often have cultural preservation and renewal components, access to external expertise for planning and implementation, and simultaneous economic development.⁵

⁴ *Research Study & Report on Active Measures across Canada with Regard to the Income Assistance Program (Final Draft)*. Prepared for AANDC by Johnson Research Inc. August 29, 2007: page 18.

⁵ *Ibid.* page 18.
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Defining Active Measures

The core strategy to assist Income Assistance (IA) recipients achieve greater economic independence and self-sufficiency is implementing IA Active Measures through a system of integrated client case management that includes assessment and pre-employment programs, life skills, intervention and diversion programs such as keeping students in school, access to day care and training and employment incentives for employers both on and off reserve.

Active Measures are intended to tackle both the problem of chronic dependence on Income Assistance as well as turn around the worrying trend of growing numbers of young and employable people coming on to IA. An active measure encourages an IA client to become more self-sufficient through work.

Examples of Active Measures include improving motivation, education upgrading, job training, job search skills and subsidized employment placement. Active Measures can also include making changes to institutional processes such as the integration of counselling, education, and employment support programs within a single office.

Types of Active Measures

This is a “quick list” of the different types of Active Measures that will be referenced in this paper and that can be employed by Social Development Administrators. The Active Measures Resources section provides information on how programs for many of these different Active Measures can be accessed.

Education

-  Basic education such as literacy and numeracy skills;
-  Referral to such services as vocational rehabilitation;
-  Referral for educational upgrading;
-  Post secondary supports;

Pre-Employment & Training

-  Employment and training opportunity referral;
-  Training allowance;
-  Job search and interview skills development;

- Career and job-seeking skills counselling and referral;
- Job Maintenance Skills;
- Work experience projects (wage subsidy);

General Health & Welfare

- Family relationships counselling;
- Financial management counselling;
- Life skills counselling - nutrition, meal planning and food shopping, health care;
- Addiction services for support to participants where addiction is a barrier to employment;
- Personal Care, Health, Social Skills, and Safety;
- Housing;

Employment Supports

- Community placements;
- Supports to self-employment;
- Employment placements, which can include incentives for employers;
- Temporary provision of transportation (eg. organizing carpooling arrangements; financial support to obtain a driver's license);
- Child or adult care information and referral;
- Transfers to employers, other institutions and governments for training and employment;
- Employment-related relocation costs;

Additional Supports

- Legal supports (eg. paying for pardons for criminal records); and
- Safety and protective equipment.

Implementing Active Measures

When implemented, Active Measures will help community members progress through a range of employee readiness stages by assessing needs, developing an individual plan of action, upgrading skills or education, gaining employment, or if employment is not an option, becoming actively engaged in their communities.

Numerous initiatives have been introduced in Canada and elsewhere to help individuals enter, reenter or stay in the workforce. Promoting labour market attachment requires different approaches to address different circumstances. Some people face barriers to labour market integration and need assistance to become job-ready. A number need assistance to improve their effectiveness in looking for a job or to help them develop social and personal connections (networks) that can better inform them about job openings. Others need literacy or numeric skills or require vocational or language training or basic education.⁶

In other cases, people need intensive support through continuous and individualized counselling to better define their work aspirations and elaborate an action plan towards achieving labour market participation. In some cases, counselling will address more difficult issues such as substance abuse or acute mental health problems. For these people, getting a job and sustaining economic self-sufficiency represent medium-term and sometimes longer-term goals.⁷

Economic opportunities with access to jobs are important, as are a range of supports required by a program clientele that is much younger and has a higher proportion of Income Assistance recipients with multiple barriers to employment than is found off reserve.⁸

For the Active Measures program to be effective there needs to be a major shift in the way leadership, communities and individuals view Income Assistance.

⁶ AANDC Evaluation of Income Assistance December 2007

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. p.42
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In 2008, the BC First Nations Social Development Society held various community dialogue sessions on implementing Active Measures which involved leadership, Social Development workers and government officials. The following recommendations were made:⁹

First Nations Leadership must agree that it is not acceptable to have employable people dependent on a system that was intended for short term relief.
Client support needs to be addressed holistically. All of a client's needs, including mental and physical health, and in some cases addictions, have to be addressed together if there is going to be movement along the employability continuum.
The community has to change the way it views the Income Assistance program. Band Social Development Workers report young people applying for Income Assistance when they reach their nineteenth birthday, even when alternatives such as jobs or training are available.
Many clients have been in a state of dependence for so long that they do not believe that they can manage life in any other way. For many clients, access to personal counselling is the first step towards employment or self sustainability.
Client-care workers stressed the importance of building or maintaining a cultural element in the growth and strengthening of each First Nations individual.
Clients have to take responsibility for their successes and challenges.
To see clients progress along the employability continuum, the community needs to work together in a positive and supportive manner. Many clients face multiple barriers to employment and will need the long-term support of their family members and community to be physically and mentally prepared for the challenges of day-to-day life.

⁹ *Active Measures to Improve the Income Assistance Policy Community Dialogue Report*. The First Nations Social Development Society. 2008: page 12.

Complimentary Components to Active Measures

Research shows that employment and training supports alone may not be sufficient to assist Income Assistance (IA) recipients in becoming self-sufficient. Complementary components and approaches are required for successful implementation of Active Measures (AM) on reserve.

A Holistic & Flexible Approach

When implementing an AM approach, take advantage of all resources available and involve key players that are required to provide a range of services. There is a need to build partnerships to share expertise and knowledge, for example, between areas of social development, education, health and housing. A well-coordinated AM initiative will capitalize on the strengths of all of these areas. Active Measures work best when communities can adapt interventions to local needs. Therefore, Active Measures should allow for different models of delivery at local level.¹⁰

Comprehensive Community Planning

Key informants of the *Active Measures to Improve the Income Assistance Policy Community Dialogue Report* recognize that comprehensive community planning is essential for local governments to adequately identify community needs and priorities and to promote better integration of resources and programs at the community level. Such planning could also be useful in coordinating programming to assist clients with multiple barriers to become job ready and to support them once they have employment so that they can get over the “welfare wall.” Community planning could also help to reduce gaps in services and to maximize benefits for First Nations members.¹¹

Client Assessment

It is important to introduce a model which can properly assess individuals’ need and respond with a tailored set of interventions. Action plans for IA recipients are important tools for identifying the needs of IA recipients and how to address them in the short and longer term. For clients that are not employable, it is important to recognize that they may need long term assistance and consider other strategies for this group as Active Measures may not be appropriate.¹²

¹⁰ AANDC *Evaluation of the Income Assistance Program*, December 2007 – p.44

¹¹ Ibid – p.42

¹² Ibid – p.44

Establish Links with Economic Development and Other Programs

Economic development is key to making Active Measures work, especially in remote areas. Most reserves are located near urban centre or in rural areas within 50 to 350 km to a major centre, and provinces, regions, and many First Nations communities recognize that these opportunities most often exist off reserve. It is also important to address issues related to access and gaps in economic opportunities in rural and remote communities.¹³ Develop strong linkages with education, health and other labour market programming available from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

Link with Provincial/Territorial Active Measures Programs

The Provincial/Territorial Governments can be a useful source of information and opportunities. In recent years, provinces and territories have refocused their IA programs to include more Active Measures, such as case management and participation in skills development, training and/or education. Provinces such as Alberta and Manitoba described a range of provincial programs that are targeted specifically to Aboriginal people on and off reserve. Western provinces recognize that Aboriginal people not only make up a large portion of their welfare case loads but are a potential labour pool that could fill gaps in the labour market, in particular in areas such as the trades, apprenticeship, and work on economic resourced based (e.g., hydro electricity, oil sands, pipelines) projects near First Nations communities.¹⁴

Develop Strategies to Prevent Welfare Dependency

IA caseloads have increased as more young people on reserve receive Income Assistance. Prevention strategies to keep youth in school and alternative forms of education to develop employment skills are essential. Jobs for young people are essential for reducing intergenerational welfare dependency.¹⁵

¹³ AANDC *Evaluation of the Income Assistance Program*, December 2007 – p. 44

¹⁴ Ibid – pp. 31, 35

¹⁵ Ibid – p. 53
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The Stages of Income Assistance: Active Measures

Figure 1 indicates the client stages of Income Assistance. Required Active Measures are determined at the Client Assessment stage and introduced to clients in the Case Management stage.

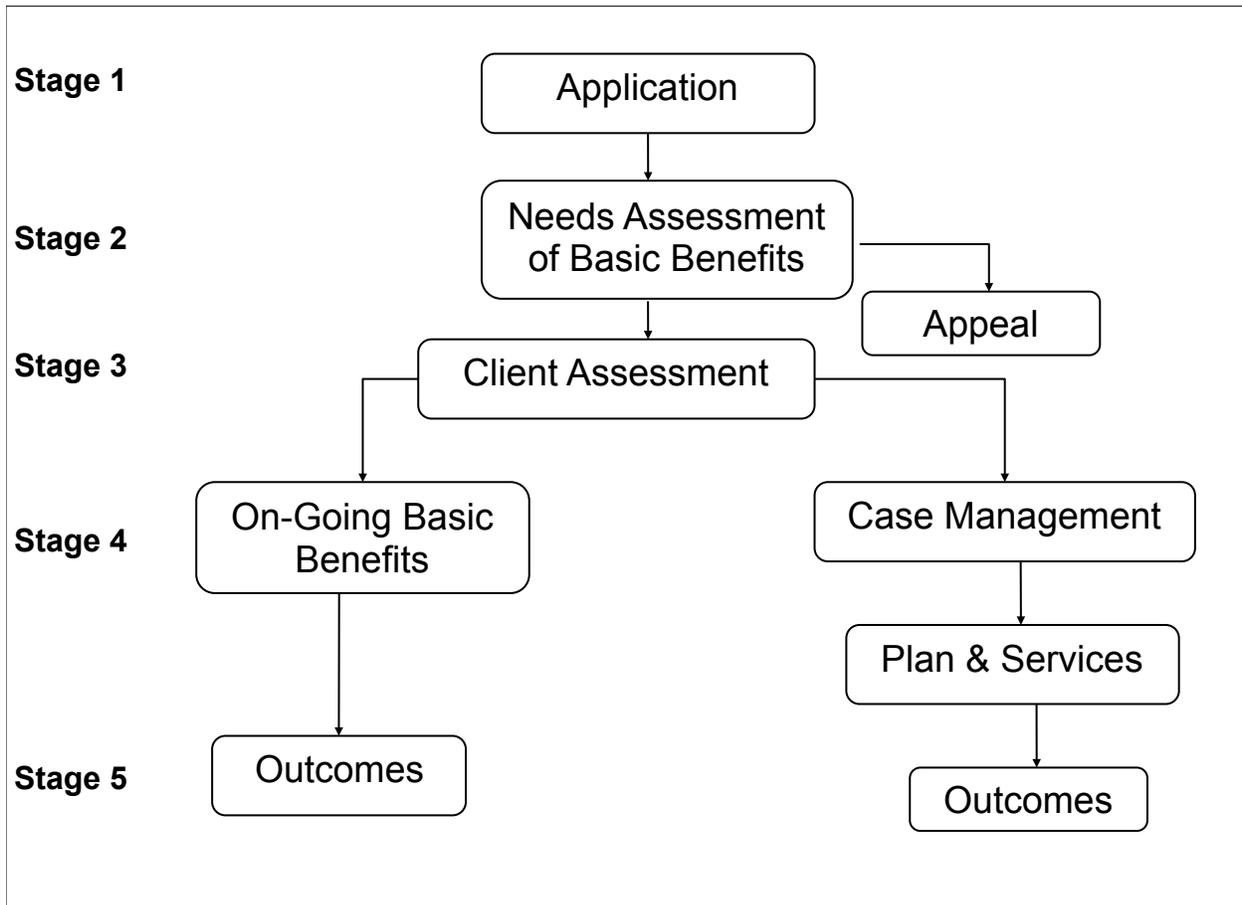


Figure 1: Stages of Income Assistance

Stage 1: Application

During the Application Stage, all aspects of the social system are explained. Intake workers review the information required, what the applicant's rights, roles and responsibilities are, all the procedures for meeting requirements, and explain the relevant forms, documents, and policies. Each person who applies to Income Assistance programs will go through this stage.

Stage 2: Needs Assessment of Basic Benefits

During this stage, Social Development Administrators (SDAs) apply the basic eligibility criteria to each applicant and works through a standard intake procedure.¹⁶ This procedure will provide a quick indication of whether the application may or may not proceed. If it appears to meet the criteria, the applicant's specific financial needs and the package of benefits for which they are eligible are determined. If it is determined that the application does not meet the criteria, then the applicant is notified in writing that he or she is ineligible for benefits.

Stage 3: Client Assessment

During this stage, the SDA completes a client assessment form that asks basic questions about employability, medical questions, education and training, etc. to determine where the client will be best served. In this initial interview it is important to identify any barriers to employment and possible resources to address these barriers.

Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has created a number of online tools to assist with a [Needs Assessment](#), in order to:

- better understand essential skills needed for the workplace;
- help identify essential skills strengths and areas to consider for improvement;
- ensure workers have the essential skills to get the job done; and
- inform training and career decisions.

¹⁶ Appeals: Should the applicant not be approved for benefits, or feel that the benefits are not sufficient to meet their needs, they may appeal the decision made by the Social Development Administrator.

On the HRSDC website the tools range from workplace surveys, hiring checklists, and work-books for the trades, to Essential Skills indicators for numeracy and reading.

Here is a sample question from the online Numeracy Level 1 online Test:

1. Servers calculate the cost of items ordered on restaurant bills. Look at the bill below.

Dimitiri's Deli	
Item	Price
Iced Tea :	\$3.50
Coffee:	\$4.00
Bagel:	\$3.00
Muffin :	\$2.50
Subtotal	\$

What is the subtotal?

Stage 4: Ongoing Basic Benefits or Case Management

After the basic benefit package has been determined, the application either moves to Case Management or continues with regular issuance of ongoing basic benefits. For regular issuance, ongoing eligibility criteria have to be met by the client on a regular basis.

Active Measures occur at the Case Management Stage (often also referred to as Single Window Service Delivery). Case Management is a process of coordinating and brokering the multiple career development services needed to progress an individual towards self-sufficiency. This is done in collaboration with the client, other team members and the service providers.

If a Case Management approach is chosen, a client plan¹⁷ is developed by the Social Development Administrator that includes services, incentives and supports needed by the client to achieve self-sufficiency and employability goals. Individual personal plans are created to address the most urgent needs first and often follow a progression of steps:

- 1) addressing needed supports,

¹⁷ In this document (and in practice) an individual's case plan may be referred to as a Client Action Plan, Personal Plan, or Participation Agreement.

- 2) addressing personal barriers,
- 3) developing/addressing skill gaps,
- 4) completing education upgrades,
- 5) employment training,
- 6) entering the workforce, and
- 7) maintaining employment.

In Ontario, for example, under the Ontario Works program, the client's Participation Agreement also serves as their personal plan. The Participation Agreement, an agreement between the case worker and the IA recipient, outlines what activities the participant will complete and approximately how much time is spent on each one. Participation agreements may include participation in job-search groups or employment training, attending a community or employment placement program, starting an approved business venture or attending school or upgrading.

The client plan may include such Active Measures as:

- Life skills counselling - nutrition, meal planning and food shopping, health care, etc.
- Referral for educational upgrading;
- Job search and interview skills development;
- Supported, job-related training counselling and referral; and
- Child or adult care information and referral.

If some of these basic needs are not met, the probability of achieving outcomes is minimal. Taking the time to talk with clients in interview identifies potential risk factors (eg. addictions) that determine appropriate referrals.

Referrals are crucial in Case Management. Social Development Administrators should know the range of programs and resources that are available within their region. One way of achieving this is by developing relationships with key providers, including your local Aboriginal Agreement Holder (AAH) and regional Health Canada and AANDC representatives. Make them aware that you are implementing Active Measures and have them identify programs that can be made available to your clients. Some referrals, related to addictions or housing or child-care, may mean working with organizations in your own community.

Social Development Administrators should also build relationships with their local Provincial Income Assistance/Support worker, particularly in instances when relocation to where there are educational and employment opportunities is required.

Stage 5: Outcomes

The fifth and final stage of the Income Assistance process is Outcomes. The major outcome for both issuance of ongoing basic benefits and Case Management is self-sufficiency. The measurements of outcomes, the success of efforts, and the communication of results, are an integral part of the system. Examples of outcomes might include:

- Number and range of training programs taken (and completed) by Income Assistance clients using the Case Management approach;
- Number and types of new jobs entered into by IA clients;
- Length of employment in new jobs;
- Change in funding levels (increase or decrease) over time on a per client basis;
- Change in overall funding requirements for IA over time;
- Participation rate in Case Management approach compared to traditional IA program;
- Positive/negative feedback from participants regarding Case Management approach;
- Change in literacy and numeracy levels.

Challenges to Implementing Active Measures

While AANDC has provided funding for various Active Measures pilot projects across Canada, no other new funding has been identified for implementing Active Measures. Some challenges and barriers to implementation are listed below.

- Many Social Development Administrators (SDAs) have a high case load; ideally, general IA administration and Case Management would be divided into two separate roles. Communities may not have the capacity for any additional workers readily available to assist with assessment, resume writing, job search and referrals on a daily basis, etc.

- Active Measures will have a higher degree of success when the First Nation is closer to a larger economic base and less success as the communities get more rural and remote or isolated. Remote and isolated communities will not have easy access to services or the Internet. These communities will require additional resources.
- Smaller communities may not have the capacity to operate effective Case Management systems or develop the kinds of partnerships needed to support Active Measures programs. In these instances, economies of scale and service specialization will require consideration of regional service models such as have been developed through a number of Tribal Councils and other collaborative bodies (B.C. First Nations Social Development Society).
- Some of the programs and resources identified may not be readily available in your area.

Additional costs to communities might include:

- training for SDAs and ongoing professional development;
- additional personnel to manage both regular case loads and the additional services (eg. referral) required by a Case Management approach;
- technology to support Case Management (data bases, computers, Internet)¹⁸.

Generally communities need to be mindful of the necessary infrastructure (connectivity, human and financial) to support information management and service delivery at the community level. At the beginning of the implementation process, communities should identify any unique challenges that they may face based on their location, demographics and capacity.

When considering the implementation of Active Measures, consult your AANDC Regional Office to determine if they may provide additional funding. Provinces /territories are also sources of knowledge, expertise and capacity that can be used to assist First Nations modernize their service delivery systems, particularly in relation to Case Management and “single window service” delivery models.

¹⁸ In Alberta, First Nations workers are encouraged to take the provincial Mobius Program to upgrade their skills and computers.

Models of Active Measures

There are likely many different approaches or models for implementing Active Measures. Each community will have to evaluate their own situation to determine how best to effectively implement an Active Measures approach that will meet the needs of their community and clientele. Two different models of implementing Active Measures are provided for consideration.

Model A: BC First Nations Social Development Society

The following approach, which is promoted by the BC First Nations Social Development Society (FNSDS)¹⁹, outlines the important elements of Active Measures (AM). It is important to recognize that your community may already have some of these elements in place and incorporating additional AM type activities allows you to build on some of the successes already achieved. The elements are not in any chronological order as there are multiple entry points based on already existing activities. For additional details on this approach and more resources click here: [First Nations Social Development Society](#).

Figure 2 below graphically illustrates the following elements that are required to implement Active Measures under the FNSDS approach.

i. Build a Team

To get Active Measures working in a community, building an Active Measures team or advisory committee is essential to success. A team can be an important source of support and can help generate ideas. A well rounded team may include members from Social Development, Health, Education, the Band Council, as well as Elders from the community.

ii. Set Goals

When setting goals, be sure to make your goals specific and have them supported by both short and long term objectives. It is also important to establish a vision that comes from the community for Active Measures to achieve a higher degree of success. A vision of success with meaning to your community will help to get people working together and motivate them to achieve their desired goals. Set a timeline to help you measure progress and success.

¹⁹ *Active Measures Field Guide*. First Nations Social Development Society and INAC. 2010: page 5
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Relate the goals to a comprehensive community plan. Comprehensive community planning is a holistic process that enables a community to build a roadmap to sustainability, self sufficiency and improved governance capacity. If your community does not have a comprehensive community plan, see the [Comprehensive Community Planning Handbook](#) available from the AANDC website. Active Measures needs to be a part of a plan for community growth and development.

Implementing Active Measures



Figure 2: Implementing Active Measures

iii. Obtain Leadership Support

Leadership needs to be fully involved and support decisions that involve long term changes in the community. To obtain this level of support, introduce them to Active Measures, share the vision, and demonstrate to them how the plan that your Active Measures team has developed can help your community make that vision a reality.

iv. Build Partnerships

Partnerships are an excellent way to combine and increase expertise and knowledge, access available funding, and ultimately achieve success. There are two types of partnerships that should be achieved. Internal partnerships between social development, education, health and housing are essential. External partnerships also need to be developed to increase the chances of success. Potential partners include provincial and regional First Nations organizations, federal and provincial governments, public and private postsecondary institutions, provincial and regional or local employers/businesses, and other organizations relevant to your goals.

v. Identify and Access Resources

First Nations can draw on the rich infrastructure of well managed organizations devoted to enhancing the capacity of First Nations communities to improve the quality of life for their members. As a starting point, knowledge of these organizations / resources²⁰ is relevant to any Active Measures initiative:

Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada (www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca)

First Nations Social Development Society (www.fnsds.org)

Service Canada (www.servicecanada.gc.ca)

Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

Check with in your province or region for other resources that may incorporate Active Measure related programs or services, including Education Councils or Steering Committees; Technology Initiatives; Health Councils or Steering Committees; and Economic Development activities.

²⁰ A more comprehensive list and description of these resources can be found at the end of this document in the Active Measure Resources and Online Resources section.

vi. Policy Development

To increase the chances of success, it is important that your community policies support Active Measures. One of the key policies to be developed one which ensures every client gets quality intake and assessment which will assist in determining client needs and proper program placement. Another useful tool is an action plan for the client.

vii. Client Assessments

To be successful, client's needs have to be addressed holistically. This means that all aspects of why a person has gotten to the point where they need Income Assistance need to be addressed. Many clients have barriers that have not been correctly determined. There can be a wide variety of reasons why a person cannot or feels that they cannot move forward in their life. These can include issues such as addiction, fetal alcohol syndrome, learning disabilities, family violence and many others. During intake, the service provider has to be able to assess where a client is on the employability continuum (see *Figure 3*). Individual circumstances will vary, but to be successful it is essential to address each step before proceeding with the next.



*Figure 3: Employability Continuum*²¹

Figure 3 illustrates the various barriers that can affect the employability continuum of an individual as part of their journey to being job ready.

²¹ www.fnsds.org
Assembly of First Nations

viii. Develop an Action Plan

An action plan is a contract between the client and the case worker for the client's success. Action plans break down what needs to happen into smaller more manageable steps and allow clients to quantify progress. Help the client design his or her action plan with their goals, passions and beliefs in mind. It is important that they view the plan as their own and take responsibility for their barriers, progress and success.

For reference, the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada has developed Guiding Circles which is an exceptionally good resource for development of a client's action plan. Guiding Circles is designed to assist Aboriginal people make career choices. The booklets are used to gain a better understanding of ones interests and values, and how to balance career with those principles in mind. The guided activities are also intended to help the career seeker stay connected with their aboriginal roots and use them as a foundation for development. Click [here](#) for more information on the [Guiding Circles](#).

ix. Data Management

Data management involves the development and implementation of plans, policies, programs and practices that control, protect, deliver and enhance the value of data and information. It is essential to obtain and maintain up-to-date, accurate data on each client. This includes personal information such as contact information, information gathered from prior assessments, actions plans and how the client has progressed with his or her plan. Collecting and sharing the appropriate information with members of a client's support team (social development, education, health, etc.) will help ensure that processes are not repeated and a client receives well coordinated case management. The Active Measures team should also collect and keep information from community discussion sessions and meetings. This will allow any strengths and weaknesses to be identified as your community develops it's best practices

x. Report

Reporting is an essential element to any Active Measures endeavor, both for the benefit of the community and to ensure funding requirements are met. To be eligible for program funding, communities must be up to date with their reporting requirements.

xi. Evaluate

Active Measures are an ongoing process and it is important to evaluate previous actions before determining your community's next step. Consider your community's vision and goals that

were set out in the beginning of the Active Measures process and use them to steer your next decisions. Your community's progress should be evaluated in:

- The quality and quantity of program activities provided; and
- The quality and the quantity of the outcomes your programs have achieved.
- Methods for gathering narrative information for evaluating efforts may include community discussions, open ended survey questions or observations for the programs in action.

Model B: Johnson Research Study on Active Measures

The following Active Measures approach is based on the recommended approach found in the report prepared by Johnson Research Inc.: *“Research Study and Report on Active Measures across Canada with regard to the Income Assistance Program”* dated August 29, 2007. Most of the information is taken directly from that report.

One of the concluding comments of the Johnston report is that a First Nations Active Measures program needs to incorporate measures that address the core of IA dependency issues **prior to** job placement. The majority of Active Measures focus on employability training for those with minimal skills, rather than multi-barriers, and those who are almost ready for employment; education upgrading or job training, and job search skills. This research emphasizes community readiness and capacity building and planning. It also emphasizes addressing the issues **behind** multi-barrier clients, such as addictions and family violence issues.

i. Community Involvement

Building a community or a sense of community is a result of many activities that use positive, First Nations appropriate, strategic planning approaches. Community unity is often the outcome of an appreciation for the strengths and assets within one’s community, and a newly developed sense of pride that may have previously been absent. The coalescing factor in building a community is the group’s unified desire for change that would ultimately benefit the members of the community. In this case, the most important benefit would be the achievement of self-sufficiency for as many community members as possible.

There are known barriers to developing a cohesive sense of community such as geographical location, size of the population or political factors, all of which can interfere with working together to create a strong sense of community. Dealing with these challenges can become part of the strategic planning process.

ii. Strategic/Comprehensive Community Planning

Community planning is a natural part of the process of change. It will lead to consensus about the vision for the community, the long, medium and short term objectives, an understanding of positive and negative influences, and create a strategy for moving forward and an action plan of the steps to be taken.

There are a variety of strategic planning methods used by communities, businesses and organizations. Any of them could be used for a blueprint for strategic planning. One method that has been developed or redesigned specifically for First Nations is known as Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH). PATH was developed by John O'Brien, Marsha Forrest and Jock Pierpoint of Inclusion Press to address personal goals and action planning. PATH is particularly useful for First Nations communities because it is designed to build inclusive, democratic communities, organizations, and people. The ultimate goal of PATH is to assist clients to define their ideal situation, what can be accomplished in one year and who or what resources are required to accomplish their one year objectives. The plan becomes an intricate timeline, enabling the group to see the detailed steps they need to take to see their goals come to fruition. For specific information and training tools regarding PATH refer to the website for Inclusion at: www.inclusion.com.

iii. Asset Mapping & Appreciative Inquiry

Asset mapping and appreciative inquiry are positive approaches focussing on community strengths. They allow First Nations to recognize the assets that exist in their communities, both at the individual, as well as community-level and develop sustainable strategies that provide for the good of the community today and for future generations.

Asset mapping helps participants think positively about the place in which they live and work. It also challenges them to recognize how other people see and experience the same community. Mapping community assets means:

- collecting an inventory of all the strengths and assets in a community/organization;
- ranking the most valued aspects of a community/organization; and
- discovering the reasons why people place high value on certain assets in the community.

Once these steps are complete, participants can use the map of valued aspects of the community to collectively strategize on how to build on the assets to sustain and enhance them for future generations. The process of asset mapping provides a critical element of community development – the engagement of people in the shaping of their community.

Appreciative inquiry is another method that focuses on the strengths of a community to initiate purposeful change. It uses interviews and affirmative questioning to conduct a collaborative inquiry; to collect and celebrate the positive and inspiring stories of a community; as well as stories that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision. In doing so, an appreciative inquiry identifies the best of "what is" and enables the development of a constructed vision of "what could be." The development of this vision is achieved through first identifying strengths, then by building upon achievements, to the creation of realistic dreams, which empowers a community to aspire for something better. The result of an appreciative inquiry is that through the process of a community's quest for empowerment, an appreciation is developed for local assets, which are essentially the core life forces of a community.

Asset mapping has been used most extensively in rural Canada, including some First Nations. It is considered a strong tool for community planning and problem solving. Appreciative inquiry has been used extensively in international settings where cultures rely on story telling and the spoken word for communication of ideas and lessons.

Asset mapping and appreciative inquiry allows First Nations to recognize the assets that exist in their communities, both at the individual level as well as community-level and develop sustainable strategies that provide for the good of the community today and the future generations.

iv. Community Supports and Infrastructure

There are a number of community supports that are necessary to assist the IA clients in achieving their goal of self sufficiency through work, education or training opportunities. Some key areas to focus on are Child Care, Community Infrastructure (IM/IT Support), Single Window Service Delivery / Case Management, and Other Supports.

Child Care

Accessible affordable childcare is a support that is often difficult to obtain, yet it is a vital necessity for clients aspiring to train for, or enter, the workforce. As more clients move into jobs, more formal child care spaces will be required. With increased access to affordable quality child care, First Nation parents are better able to work, go to school or take training to improve the financial prospects of their families. The provision of quality child care also fosters early childhood development and health.

Communication Infrastructure (IM/IT Support)

The primary need for communication infrastructure is for Internet and telephone access in remote communities. The satellite technology exists and can be provided to most individuals or communities. The need for this type of communication is for staff and client training, access to timely, cost-effective technical assistance, and many work related activities. Client training, for example, could open many doors if a set of computers were available with a satellite connection. Starting small businesses that operate over the Internet would become much easier if a set of computers were located in a small business office with a satellite connection.

Single Window Service Delivery/Case Management

Single Window Service Delivery is used as a label for combining services for the same client in one office/building and often with one application form used for several services. While single Window Service Delivery and Case Management are not synonymous, they are associated with each other. Single Window Service Delivery facilitates Case Management approaches, especially where computer software support is not available. Combined with Case Management, one person in the office would act as the primary contact for the client, make referrals to other service providers and track their interactions and results from all sources.

Other Support Leading to Employment

In research conducted by Johnson Research Inc., some communities have been very creative at implementing flexible and diverse services and supports for IA clients that lead to employment. Some examples are:

- temporary provision of transportation;
- organizing carpooling arrangements;
- financial support to obtain a driver's license;
- paying for pardons for criminal records; and
- financial assistance to purchase safety equipment and protective.

v. Personal Plan for the Client

It is recommended that a personal plan be developed with the client that would take the client from their current state to that of self-sufficiency. Planning might vary according to six readiness positions which include:

1. Multi Barrier,
2. Minimal Skills,
3. Ready for Education Upgrade,
4. Ready for Job Training,
5. Ready for Job/Self-Employment, and
6. On the Job/Self Employment.

Understanding by both the case worker and client of the logic of these six stages - which are outlined in “The Individual’s Journey to Self-Sufficiency” section - is important to the success of personal plans. People with multiple barriers would likely make two different plans. One would be for overcoming basic barriers and a second one, when they are ready, would be a career plan about skill building and self-sufficiency preparedness. It would likely be premature to engage in personal planning for a client with fewer skills.

The Individual's Journey to Self Sufficiency

As mentioned above, the Johnson Research revealed individual Active Measures can be grouped by the six readiness levels of the individuals. Almost identical categories are used by the BC First Nations Social Development Society. While the transition from welfare dependency to self-sufficiency is fast and smooth for some, this is not the reality for the vast majority. Therefore, a significant support system built into the program is required to help individuals recognize each step they take brings them that much closer to self-sufficiency. Each "level of readiness" would have programs and services attached that help clients move along the employment continuum.

Figure 4 illustrates the supports and steps required to take a client from dependency to self-sufficiency.

1. Multi-Barrier Clients

It is important to recognize that employment and employment-based training can only come after a client's immediate needs and crises mode have been addressed and that the client has taken the initiative to make the required changes to address and begin to live free of barriers. Multi-barrier clients must be allowed the option to engage in training of their choice to start. These measures seek to reduce the 'failure' prophecy by building a foundation of life skills and volunteer experiences prior to engaging clients in training programs. Once required stages and milestones are met then clients would be expected to engage in employment readiness training.

The BC First Nations Social Development Society has also developed a Category 1a: Multi-Barrier Clients with Medical Issues. If someone has been identified, for example with an addiction issue, that issue must be addressed first before anything else.

An effort must be made to work with the client to identify their barriers whether they are learning issues, addictions or other personal and family related issues. Due to residential school fall-out and unpleasant school experiences, many First Nations people may have blocked out learning or put up barriers to learning. The challenge is to change their self-concepts by reframing and then filling in the gaps in their learning skills. The reframing outcome frequently results in a renewed interest in removing barriers such as addictions and family violence.

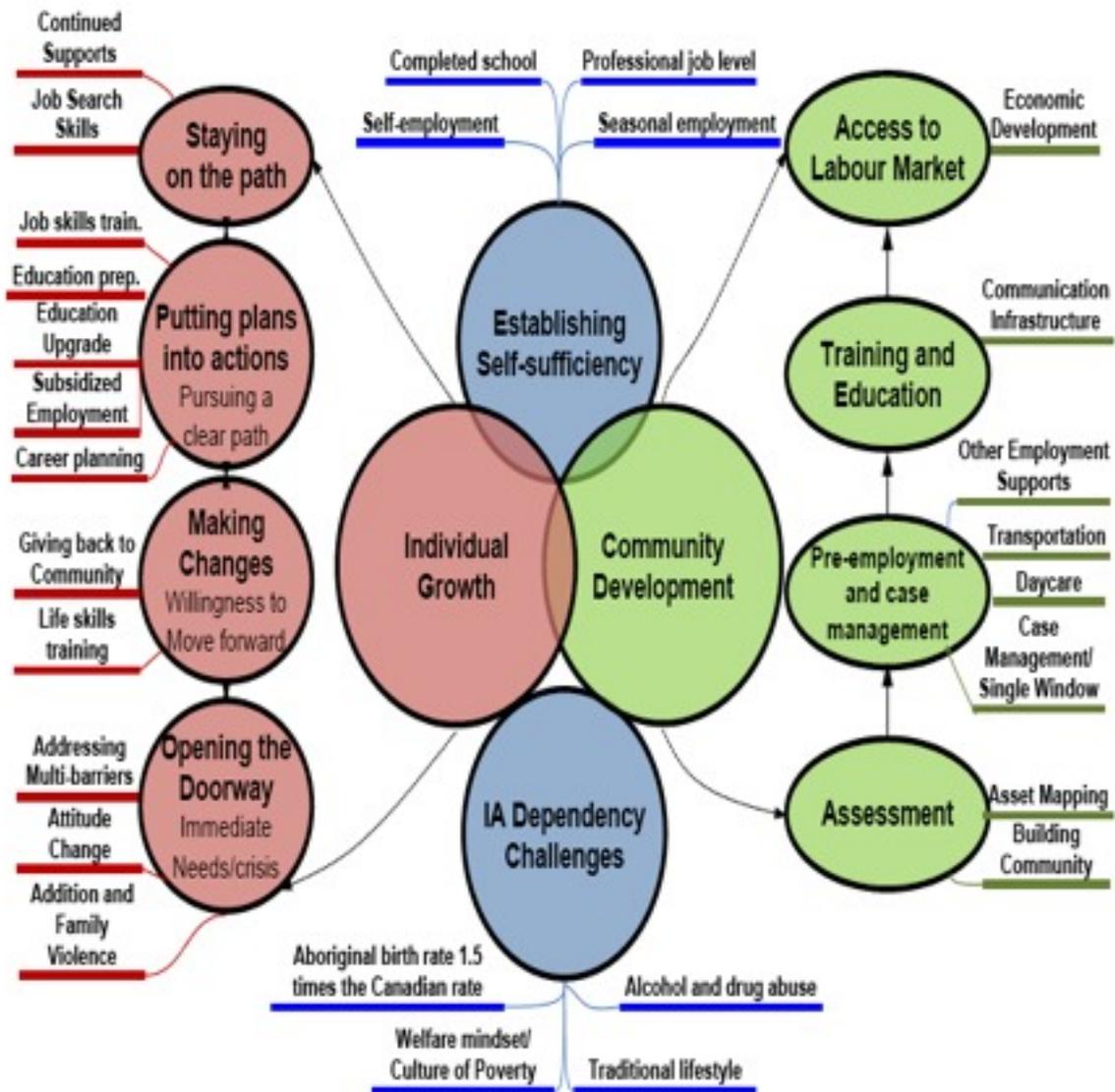


Figure 4: Beyond Welfare Towards Self-Sufficiency

2. Clients with Minimal Skills: Life Skills Training

The phrase life skills mean different things to different people. It can mean employability training, practical skills having to manage a household, taking care of oneself and parenting, or it can mean more subtle social skills such as communication, anger management, etc.

In the context of employment training, the emphasis is often on learning the expectations of employers (eg. timeliness, neatness, dependability, etc.) and how to do job searches and applications. In many cases, much more than that is needed for multi-barrier people and those who have lived in poverty all their lives. Hence, life skills that may be needed can include the following:²²

- Money, Home, and Food Management;
- Personal Care, Health, Social Skills, and Safety;
- Education, Job Seeking Skills, and Job Maintenance Skills;
- Housing, Transportation, Community Resources, Understanding the Law, and Recreation;
- Young Parents Guide.

Literacy

In terms of employment training, “life skills” may also refer improving literacy and essential skills. Information on these skills can be obtained from the [Office of Literacy and Essential Skills](#) (OLES) at the federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development. According to the OLES, literacy skills are defined as: reading, writing, document use and numeracy. Essential Skills are: computer use, thinking, oral communications, working with others and continuous learning. The OLES provides funding to various organizations to provide training in Literacy and Essential Skills.

Life Transition Programs

The [Aboriginal Life Transitions program](#), offered by the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, focusses on learning outcomes that are designed to facilitate academic achievement, personal development, employment readiness, and incorporate components that reflect cultural and traditional teachings.

²²Casey Family Programs: *Resources for American Indian Supplement*. Casey Life Skills. Seattle, Washington, USA. <www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/res/res_AmericanIndian.htm>. Accessed July 2007.

Employability Skill Building

“Giving Back to the Community” is a First Nations value that can be used to promote volunteer activities where multiple-barrier or minimal skilled persons need time to develop or where employable Income Assistance (IA) recipients have no hope of obtaining a job. In order to achieve a paradigm shift in how IA is viewed by the community and by IA clients, clients need to participate within their communities, as opposed to simply being identified as a “welfare recipient.”

Participants would continue to receive IA while they do volunteer activities to organize community improvement activities that would need minimal funding. Employable people could take the organizational initiative while multiple barrier people would contribute according to their abilities and strengths. The projects can remain simple so that those IA individuals who need it can start to assume responsibilities that are work-like but not requiring compensation. Volunteer activities may be centred around a number of community activities: health efforts, arts development projects, youth / student initiatives, working with Elders, food programs, etc.

3. Clients Ready for Education Upgrade

While education upgrade may seem to cover most circumstances, a category of activities called ‘preparation for education upgrade’ underscores the need for remedial and bridging programs from high school to post-secondary education. Sometimes this may be life skills and sometimes it might be learning skills or academic skills (learning about financial backing available, learning to make applications, increasing self-confidence).

Some social development programs have established partnerships with colleges and have liaison workers on-site to provide support to their clients. Once supports are in place (for example, daycare or transportation) referrals are initiated and counselor support is arranged within the local college or education centres.

Funding for education is a challenge in many First Nations communities; therefore another duty for the Social Development Administrator is to assist in finding funding for clients to attend education centres. Some federal sources of funding, which are detailed in the AM Resource Section below:

- Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)
- University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP)

- The Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI)

Indspire (formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation) also provides a number of [scholarships and bursaries](#) that can be accessed by First Nations.

4. Clients Ready for Job Training

There is a great value in providing jobs skills training to individuals who are entering the work force for the first time, as well as for those who may be re-entering the work force after a period of absence. The main goal of jobs skills training is to assist participants in developing an understanding of job expectations while they are engaged in employment. One of its main benefits is that it increases the likelihood that participants will maintain their employment for longer periods of time than those individuals who did not participate in job skills training.

There are a number of federally funded programs that create work and job training opportunities. One example is the Aboriginal Skills & Employment Strategy (ASETS)²³ funded by the Department of Human Resources Development. The [ASETS program](#) provides employment assistance services which are designed to assist unemployed individuals prepare for, obtain and maintain employment by providing them with services such as employment counselling, job search techniques, job placement and labour market information.

Further information on ASETS and additional job skills training programs are outlined in the Active Measures Resources section below.

5. Clients Ready For Job or Self-Employment

Subsidized Employment Placement

There are a number of programs across Canada that offer subsidized employment placement. The benefit of these programs is that they offer experiential learning while enabling the individual to earn wages. Many of these programs allow individuals to participate for a specific duration, thus allowing the opportunity for other Income Assistance participants to take advantage of the program. The timeline for participation also minimizes the amount of dependence

²³ The ASETS program (formerly known as the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement program or AHRDAs) is managed through various Aboriginal Agreement Holders that are situated in cities and communities across Canada.

created by the participants upon the program. The ultimate goal for many of these programs is to encourage individuals to obtain and develop work related skills, as well as to raise participants' interest in employment beyond the program or to further their education in order to enter the work force.

Self Employment

Self employment is a difficult way to make a living. It requires a range of skills that few people have or can afford to purchase from experts. Training in self-employment or small business strategies and practices is not easy and does not guarantee success even if the training is successful. The ASETS program noted above, in addition to other strategies, also promotes self employment by providing support to individuals seeking out self employment options.

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC)

[ABC](#) is a program funded by the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). Working with clients and partners, the ABC program provide a range of services and support that helps to promote the growth of a strong Aboriginal business sector in Canada. The support varies depending upon the needs of the client, the availability, and sources of funding, the eligibility of costs, the economic benefits, and the reasonableness and timing of financial returns on investment. Following are some of the services provided by the ABC program:

- financial assistance, most often in the form of a non-repayable contribution.
- advice and financial assistance to facilitate business partnerships.
- financing towards the costs of management training and for business advisors, once your business is operating
- financial assistance for conferences, workshops, and studies related to Aboriginal Business Canada program objectives.

6. Economic Development

Economic development is an important element in the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) [mandate](#). AANDC works to increase First Nation, Inuit and Métis participation in the workforce across Canada. AANDC's economic development programs (found in the Resources section) provide funding to community organizations (or organizations they designate). These organizations use the funding for their economic development projects and the delivery of services to community members. The Department also encourages both the private and public sectors to add First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to their current workforce, and promotes the use of Aboriginal businesses for federal government supplies and services.

Where job markets do not exist community success stories are related to individual service providers that network and form partnerships and/or community-driven efforts that include culture, external expertise, and simultaneous economic development.²⁴

There were generally two kinds of economic development observed in First Nations examples:

- creating agreements with local employers to train and hire First Nation employees
- creating businesses that employ their own people.

The typical employers for training/hiring agreements were large industrial businesses located in the north such as power companies or construction companies. Types of businesses that can be created are many, but a typical example focuses on the tourist business. Others may create mail order businesses for traditional foods and crafts.

²⁴ Research Study & Report on Active Measures across Canada with Regard to the Income Assistance Program (Final Draft). Prepared for AANDC by Johnson Research Inc. August 29, 2007: page 163.
Assembly of First Nations Active Measures Community Resource Guide

Active Measures Resources

Overview of Federal Programs

The programs outlined below are offered by federal departments and are categorized by type of Active Measure. The information about these programs has either been provided by the Departments or garnered from online resources. These include:

1. Income Assistance

2. Education

- Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)
- University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP)
- The Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI)

3. Child Care

- First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI)
- Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR)
- Daycares in Ontario & Alberta funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC)
- Aboriginal Head Start in Urban & Northern Communities (AHSUNC)

4. Addiction & Family Violence Programs

- Maternal Child Health
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Youth Solvent Abuse Program
- National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Building Healthy Communities Program
- Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program
- Family Violence Prevention Program
- Aboriginal Justice Strategy

5. Skills, Training & Job Placement

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development funds the following skills, training and job placement programs:

- Work Opportunity Program (WOP)
- First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)
- Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)
- National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR)
- The Training and Employment Support Initiative (TESI)
- The Aboriginal Social Assistance Recipient Employment Training Agreement (ASARET)

The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development provides funding for the following program:

- Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy
- The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program
- Skills & Partnership Fund - Aboriginal
- TESI (in partnership with AANDC)
- ASARET (in partnership with AANDC)

6. Economic Development

- Community Economic Development Program (CEDP)
- Community Economic Opportunities Program (CEOP)

7. Federal Employment Programs

- First Nations Health Careers Program
- Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program
- Bold Eagle Program for Aboriginal Youth
- Aboriginal Training Program in Museum Practices

1. Income Assistance

According to the Income Assistance [National Manual](#), Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) Income Assistance program provides resources to deliver the IA program on reserve at rates and eligibility criteria that are reasonably comparable to those of the reference province or territory. Clients may require financial assistance to cover specific costs related to the following activities:

1) Employment and pre-employment related costs, including but not limited to:

- Employment and training related child care and accommodation;
- Transportation and equipment costs;
- Employment-related relocation costs;
- Training; and
- Career and job-seeking skills counselling.

2) Employment and pre-employment financial assistance, including but not limited to:

- Training (training allowance);
- Work experience projects (wage subsidy);
- Transfers to employers, other institutions and governments for training and employment services e.g. (e.g., WOP, ASARET, Job Core); and
- Other items identified in the reference provincial / territorial legislation.

The program also provides funding for Service Delivery activities related to developing and implementing case management systems, including the following:

- structured client assessment
- referral
- job placement
- reassessment and counselling
- professional support for administrators and case managers
- developing operational policy and related documents and delivery options to encourage local integration of income support and labour market training and where possible, education, health and social services needed to effectively deliver and administer the Income Assistance Program.

2. Education

Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

The [PSSSP program](#) is funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC). This is a Band Administered program in which financial assistance may be provided in the following areas:

- Tuition support for part-time and full-time students that may include fees for registration, tuition and the cost of books and supplies required for courses.
- Travel support for full-time students who must leave their permanent place of residence to attend college or university. Students may qualify for funding to return home twice per academic year.
- Living expenses for full-time students to help cover the costs such as food, shelter, and transportation.

University and College Entrance Preparation Program (UCEPP)

The [UCEPP program](#) is also funded by AANDC and provides funding to students to prepare for post-secondary degree or diploma programs. Financial assistance is provided to First Nations students registered for university or college entrance programs that will assist them in achieving the academic requirements necessary for entrance into a post-secondary degree or diploma program. Tuition support for part-time and full-time students that may include fees for registration, tuition and the cost of books and supplies required for courses.

The Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI)

The [AHHRI program](#) is funded by Health Canada and is proposal driven. One objective is to increase the number of Aboriginal People working in health careers. It funds programs that achieve this objective as well as the objectives of maintaining qualified Aboriginal care providers and the adaptation of health care curricula to strengthen to support cultural competencies.

3. Child Care

First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI)

This program is funded through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) under the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSDC). ASETS is designed to help Aboriginal people prepare for and find high-demand jobs quickly, as well as keep them in the work force for the long term. The program is available to all Aboriginal people, regardless of status or location. The FNICCI program provides access to quality child care services for First Nations children whose parents are starting a new job or participating in a training program. It is a \$50-million program that has supported over 8,500 child care spaces in 486 First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada. These spaces are available through your local Aboriginal Agreement Holder. Each Aboriginal Agreement Holder under ASETS creates a program to best meet its clients' needs. In most cases, this will mean pre-school spaces; some Aboriginal Agreement Holders also have after-school programs. To find out about the child care available in your region contact your local Aboriginal Agreement Holder (AAH).

Click here for a list of [all AAH across Canada](#).

Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR)

This program, which is funded by Health Canada, funds early intervention strategies that support the learning and developmental needs of First Nations children ages zero to six and their families living on reserve. AHSOR Programming is centered around six components: education; health promotion; culture and language; nutrition; social support; and parental/family involvement. The AHSOR Program encourages parents, families and community members to play a key role in running the program. It also builds relationships with other community programs and services so that children get the best care. Health Canada provides \$59 million annually to support over 9,000 children in over 300 Aboriginal Head Start programs in First Nations communities on reserve. In Budget 2010, the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve Program received \$25 million in additional support to the program over five years (2010-2015). More information about AHSOR can be found on the [Public Health Agency](#) website.

Daycares in Ontario & Alberta funded by AANDC

[The Ontario Day Care program](#) - This program provides access to child care services that promote and nurture healthy child development through formal child day care programs and related support services which are comparable to off reserve services. The Ontario Day Care program is targeted to children under the age of six; however, after school spaces for children up to age 12 are also eligible. The Government of Canada has a financial cost sharing agreement with the Government of Ontario to support child care service on reserve. Through the 1965 Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development reimburses the province of Ontario for most of the costs of this program. The Province then enters into service contracts with First Nations for delivery of the on reserve day care programs. The Province is responsible for the program management, monitoring and licensing of the day care programs and AANDC reimburses the provincial government for approximately 92% of the cost of the on reserve day care programs. Day care subsidies are available to low-income parents, where child care would help them access employment and educational opportunities.

[The Alberta On Reserve Day Care Program](#) – AANDC has a financial and administrative agreement with the Government of Alberta, known as the Arrangement for Funding and Administration of Social Services, through which Canada directly funds more than 800 First Nations child care spaces on reserve.

Aboriginal Head Start in Urban & Northern Communities (AHSUNC)

Federally funded daycare programs are also available to First Nations living off reserve through the [Aboriginal Head Start Urban and Northern Communities Program](#) (AHSUNC). This program is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). It is a community-based children's program that focuses on early childhood development for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and their families living off reserve.

4. Addictions & Family Violence Programs

There are various federally funded programs available for First Nations clients that are seeking to address issues related to addictions. [Health Canada](#) funds a number of programs:

Maternal Child Health – pre- and post-natal nutrition program;

[Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder](#) – funding for community based programs to address prevention and early intervention;

[Youth Solvent Abuse Program](#)– a community-based prevention, intervention, after-care and in-patient treatment program that targets First Nations and Inuit youth who are addicted to, or at the risk of inhaling solvents;

[National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse](#) – funds are provided to First Nations communities for setting up and running treatment programs to help heal from abuse of alcohol, drugs and solvents;

[Building Healthy Communities Program](#) – designed to assist First Nations (which includes individuals and families) in developing community-based approaches to mental health crisis management. Activities include assessments, counselling services, referrals for treatment and follow-up treatment, aftercare and rehabilitation to individuals and communities in crisis;

[Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program](#) - provides mental health and emotional support services to former Indian Residential School students.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) funds the [Family Violence Prevention Program](#) provides operational funding for a network of 35 shelters for victims of family violence, as well as a number of community-based prevention projects. The program also supports public awareness and education campaigns, conferences, workshops, stress and anger management seminars, support groups, and community needs assessments for First Nations and Northern communities.

The Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) provides funding under the [Aboriginal Justice Strategy](#) (AJS) for various initiatives designed to reduce the rate of crime and incarceration of aboriginal people and assist Aboriginal people in assuming greater responsibility for the administration of justice in their communities. The objectives of the DOJ Community Based Justice Program are:

- to help reduce the rates of crime and incarceration among Aboriginal people in communities with cost-shared programs;
- to allow Aboriginal people the opportunity to assume greater responsibility for the administration of justice in their communities; and,
- to foster improved responsiveness, fairness, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of the justice system with respect to justice and its administration so as to meet the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people in the areas of appropriate models for:
 - diversion;
 - the development of pre-sentencing options;
 - community sentencing alternatives (circles);
 - the use of Justices of the Peace;
 - family and civil mediation; and,
 - additional community justice services such as victims support or offender-reintegration services which support the overall goals of the AJS.

There are [Regional Coordinators](#) that can answer any questions you have about the program or Strategy.

5. Skills, Training & Employability

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) funds the following programs:

Work Opportunity Program (WOP)

The [WOP](#) targets adult IA clients and utilizes the IA payments that a client would receive to fund them while the client is engaged in training or job placements. Placements are for one year with options to extend and include a project cost with the Band paying up to 10%. The objective of WOP is to enhance the independence and employability of persons in receipt of social assistance by participating in a WOP project for up to 12 months. The program seeks to achieve this by utilizing social assistance funds together with funds from another source to create an on-reserve employment experience for an individual who would otherwise be unemployed. Another secondary objective of the program is to provide needed community services, development of community facilities or the improvement of the community environment.

First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)

The [FNIYES program](#) funds summer employment for students and work and personal development employment for on-reserve out-of-school youth up to the age of 30. It also includes science and technology education and career awareness components for youth. AANDC's First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) supports initiatives to provide First Nations and Inuit youth with work experience, information about career options, and opportunities to develop skills to help them gain employment and develop careers. The objectives of the FNIYES are to:

- Support development and enhancement of essential employability skills
- Expose young people to a variety of career options
- Promote the benefits of education as key to labour market participation
- Help provide co-operative education work and study opportunities

AANDC delivers two programs under the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy. The [First Nations and Inuit Summer Work Experience Program](#) supports initiatives to help First Nations and Inuit youth acquire skills, prepare for full-time employment and earn income to support post-secondary education, through summer work experience.

The [First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program](#) supports initiatives that help First Nations and Inuit youth acquire essential employability and job-related skills, and to learn about job and career options, to prepare them for employment and career development.

Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)

A partnership initiative between AANDC and the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), the [Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative](#) (AWPI) is committed to increasing the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market. Initially launched in 1991, AWPI's mandate was renewed and enhanced in 1996. The goal is to educate and inform employers about the advantages of hiring Aboriginal peoples. We hope, by converging the efforts of Aboriginal peoples and employers, to emphasize the many benefits available to both through working together. AANDC oversees the AWPI external component geared to sectors of the economy other than the federal public service. TBS, in collaboration with Public Service Commission (PSC), looks after AWPI's internal component, aimed at the federal public service. This internal component is part of the federal Employment Equity Program.

National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR)

The First Nations' National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR) initiative provides a great opportunity to First Nations to develop projects that will address child poverty which exist in their individual community. The initiative is flexible enough to allow First Nations to choose different ways to improve the well-being of low-income families. Communities can decide which priority they would like to see addressed during the course of a given year. There is a wide range of activities that can be undertaken, such as hot lunch program for school children, improving employability of parents, cultural awareness, etc. These are but a few examples.

This program is a project based initiative that allows for creativity in implementation because it allows the First Nation community to define its cultural relevance and priority needs as they pertain to ensuring children receive the best possible opportunity to develop their potential as healthy, active and contributing members of their communities. These projects can include employment and training opportunities.

Click here for the [National NCBR Manual](#).

The Training and Employment Support Initiative (TESI)

TESI funded by AANDC and assists Income Assistance recipients to develop the skills that they need to take vocational training, education programs or become employed. It is primarily accessed by the IA program in British Columbia only. The Training and Employment Support Initiative (TESI) is intended to assist Income Assistance recipients in developing the skills they need in order to enter vocational training, educational programs, or employment.

The Aboriginal Social Assistance Recipient Employment Training Agreement

[Aboriginal Social Assistance Recipient Employment Training Agreement](#) (ASARET)

signed between AANDC & Employment and Immigration Canada in 1990 allows clients to continue to receive IA while participating in an employment intervention offered through the HRSDC programming. The ASARET agreement allows First Nation members to attend training on and off reserve and still keep their Income Assistance payment support while in training. Using the Work Opportunity Program social assistance transfer authority and mechanism, Aboriginal Agreement Holder (AAH) funding can be supplemented by the IA entitlement of eligible IA recipients. The offset to AAH employment training costs is intended to increase access of IA recipients to AAH programs and allow for greater numbers of IA recipients to participate in AAH sponsored programs and interventions.

The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development provides funding for the following program:

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy

[ASETS](#) is designed to help Aboriginal people prepare for and find high-demand jobs quickly, as well as keep them in the work force for the long term. Aboriginal Agreement Holders deliver ASETS through an extensive network of service points across Canada. All Aboriginal people, regardless of status or location, may access its programs and services, which include:

- skills development;
- training for high-demand jobs;
- job finding;
- programs for youth;
- programs for urban and Aboriginal people with disabilities; and
- access to child care.

Each Aboriginal Agreement Holder creates a program to best meet its clients' needs. To find out about the skills development programs and services available in your region contact your local [Aboriginal Agreement Holder \(AAH\)](#).

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program

[The ASEP program](#) is funded by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development. ASEP is a nationally managed, opportunity-driven, and project-based program that promotes increased participation of Aboriginal people in major economic developments. It achieves this through a collaborative approach of Aboriginal, private-sector, and provincial/territorial partnerships. The program supports multi-year training strategies developed by Aboriginal organizations and industry employers, leading to long-term skilled jobs for Aboriginal people in existing and emerging economic opportunities.

Skills & Partnership Fund - Aboriginal

[The Skills and Partnership Fund](#) (SPF) promotes government priorities (federal/provincial/territorial), strategic partnerships and innovation in project delivery. The focus is to drive change towards a more demand-driven, partnership-based program and create employment by addressing cases of low employment in depressed regions. The SPF was launched in July 2010

with an investment of \$210 million over five years. SPF is available to all Aboriginal organizations, including those who are not current Aboriginal Agreement Holders. The SPF:

- drives innovation in service delivery and systems through partnership (system improvement);
- responds to economic partnership opportunities with targeted labour force development initiatives (training-to-employment); and
- addresses program delivery weaknesses and/or gaps in Canada's network of Aboriginal organizations that provide labour market services (service delivery gaps).

6. Economic Development Programs

Community Economic Development Program

AANDC's [Community Economic Development Program \(CEDP\)](#) provides core financial support for First Nation and Inuit communities for public services in economic development. The financial support is intended for community economic development planning and capacity development initiatives, development of proposals and leveraging financial resources, and carrying out economic development activities.

Community Economic Opportunities Program

AANDC's [Community Economic Opportunities Program \(CEOP\)](#) provides project-based support to those First Nation and Inuit communities that have the best opportunities for public services in economic development. In these communities, the CEOP is expected to lead to community economic benefits including more community employment, greater use of land and resources under community control, enhanced community economic infrastructure, more and larger community businesses, more business opportunities, and a better climate and environment for community economic development.

7. Other Federal Employment Programs

First Nations Health Careers Program

The [First Nations and Inuit Health Careers Program](#) (FNIHCP), offered by Health Canada, is intended to increase awareness of health career opportunities and foster an interest in health science studies in Aboriginal students. The FNIHCP provides contributions to support Aboriginal participation in education leading to careers in the health field. Program clients: all Aboriginal peoples (status, non-status, Métis and Inuit).

The Department of Service Canada website provides information related to different federal employment programs, including:

[Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program](#)

The Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program aims to facilitate the selection and enrollment of Aboriginal people who are interested in full-time employment in the Canadian Forces by acquainting them with military training prior to making a formal commitment to enlist.

[Bold Eagle Program](#)

The Bold Eagle Program provides Aboriginal youth with summer employment that offers a combination of military training and First Nations cultural awareness.

[Aboriginal Training Program in Museum Practices](#)

The Aboriginal Training Program in Museum Practices provides Aboriginal people with professional and technical training in museum practices as well as internship opportunities at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Regional Initiatives

British Columbia

[BC First Nations in Social Development](#)

The First Nation Social Development Society (FNSDS) has been involved in Active Measures development with government partners and First Nations organizations with the purpose of brainstorming ways to better network resources between Aboriginal Agreement Holders services providers, the Social Assistance Transition to Employment allowances and Band Education funding to support BC Income Assistance clients', (and other First Nation on reserve residents), in securing employment and reducing their dependence on Income Assistance. FNSDS provides training modules on caseload management, documentation, file management, IA forms and reporting. There are also resources available such as Policy Essentials and Active Measures Essentials.

Alberta

[Active Measures.ca](#) is a portal for Alberta First Nations that are coming together and getting active to support their clients by implementing Active Measures. Events are held by different First Nations in Alberta and the site is a source for workshops and events. It also houses some resources, including presentations and has indicated that it will soon host Active Measure related policies and best practices.

Saskatchewan

[Saskatchewan Active Measures MOU](#)

Five Tribal Councils have formally joined in partnership with the federal and provincial governments by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. The partnership remains open to all Saskatchewan Tribal Councils and their member First Nations. The MOU includes:

1. providing greater access to career planning, skills development and employment counselling services;

2. providing greater access to literacy, adult basic education and workplace essential skills training;
3. providing transitional supports, such as training allowances, to improve access to short-term training opportunities;
4. providing supports, such as transportation and child care; and,
5. working with employers and industry to align skills training with the demands of the labour market and economy.

Manitoba

[Manitoba Economic Development Advisory Committee](#)

The Manitoba Economic Development Advisory Committee (MEDAC), represents a number of Manitoba Tribal Councils and First Nation Political Territorial Organizations

MEDAC and INAC jointly developed a multi-year strategy for reducing the Human Development Index (HDI) disparity through a process of targeted development at the local community level. The implementation of the process would facilitate a First Nation community to capitalize on local/regional opportunities for economic development.

The approach to implementing the process was to promote a multi-year initiative that would target the low capacity of First Nation communities to carry out effective Community Economic Development (CED) which MEDAC perceives as the core problem area contributing to the HDI disparity. The CDP is MEDAC's primary approach to helping build CED capacity at the FN community level.

Ontario

[Ontario Works Training](#)

The Ontario Native Welfare Administrator's Association (ONWAA) is a professional association committed to providing services to First Nation Social Service Administrators in Ontario. Currently, 105 First Nation Ontario Works delivery agents support ONWAA through annual membership submissions. The membership is comprised of Social Service Administrators commissioned to administer social services in Ontario. ONWAA provides its membership with First

Nations specific Ontario Works training throughout the year. Ontario Works training always focuses on two separate and distinct forums:

1. Financial Assistance Training Ontario Works Financial Assistance Training focuses exclusively on Ontario Works policy directives that legislate the issuance of basic financial assistance. Training is reflective of First Nations culture and values.

2. Employment Assistance Training Ontario Works Employment Training focuses exclusively on Ontario Works policy directives that legislate employment supports or Active Measures. Training incorporates and promotes program flexibility required to effectively deliver employment supports in First Nation communities.

Quebec

[Tripartite Agreement](#)

In July 2010, a Tripartite agreement related to income security was signed between the Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec and the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador. The framework agreement formalizes the relationship among the parties through the creation of the Tripartite Committee charged with proposing solutions to the administration and delivery of Income Assistance and Active Measures in First Nation communities.

[First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health & Social Services Commission](#)

The [Social & Professional Integration project](#) aims to render social and professional integration programs accessible to First Nations communities to facilitate a return to active living for people who are experiencing problems related to integration into the workforce. It allows for the development of training programs and Active Measures that aim to provide income security human resources with practices and tools through adaptation to First Nations culture.

[First Nations Human Resource Development Commission of Quebec](#)

The FNHRDCQ has twenty-two member organizations that provide front-line services to its clientele. This is done through [Local First Nation Commissions](#). The main role of the LFNCs is

to offer their respective communities training and job development services that promote short or medium-term integration into the on- and off-reserve job market. Every LFNC that is a member of the FNHRDCQ also has a budget to provide support services for job-market reintegration and to provide financial support for specific action plans that may be developed for individual clients:

- Information about the job market
- Professional resources
- Research and development
- Professional training
- General academic training
- On-the-job training
- Job creation initiative
- Self-employment assistance

Atlantic Canada

The [Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs](#) (APC) is currently supporting two First Nations in the region who are running Active Measures projects (Membertou - STAIRS program and Pictou Landing's PLAY IT program). The APC is assisting with drafting/ revisions to their Active Measures program policy manuals and forms to support their projects. These programs are financially supported projects via the Nova Scotia Tripartite Project Fund. Within the past two years the AANDC regional office has financially supported three Active Measures projects: Pabineau First Nation (New Brunswick), Elsipogtog (Big Cove, New Brunswick) and Eskasoni (Nova Scotia).

OnLine Resources

A) www.servicecanada.gc.ca

The Service Canada website acts as a portal for a number of relevant government program and services. Some are Aboriginal specific and indicate when information is available in an Aboriginal language. This site is comprehensive and information ranges from how to obtain a Social Insurance Number to Growth Capital for Aboriginal Businesses (Business Development Bank of Canada). There are links to education and training programs as well.

B) www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

The Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) website provides information on a number of Active Measure related initiatives, programs and services. These range from First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES), Economic Development Programs, and Education initiatives.

C) www.hrsdc.gc.ca

The Human Resources & Skills Development Canada website focusses on Aboriginal labour market programs and services.

D) www.fnsds.org

The First Nations Social Development Society is a non-profit society that provides support services to the Band Social Development Workers of British Columbia. While many of the references are specific to BC, there are a number of noteworthy reports, reference guides and links for Income Assistance and Active Measures.

E) [Guiding Circles](#)

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada has developed Guiding Circles which is an exceptionally good resource for development of a client's action plan. Guiding Circles is designed to assist Aboriginal people make career choices. The booklets are used to gain a better understanding of ones interests and values, and how to balance career with those principles in mind. The guided activities are also intended to help the

career seeker stay connected with their aboriginal roots and use them as a foundation for development.

F) [Comprehensive Community Planning](#)

Comprehensive community planning is a holistic process that enables a community to build a roadmap to sustainability, self sufficiency and improved governance capacity. If your community does not have a comprehensive community plan, see the Comprehensive Community Planning Handbook link above available from AANDC.

G) [Aboriginal Job Centre](#)

The goal of the Aboriginal Job Centre (AJC) is twofold. On one side, it provides a free online platform for all employers – including Aboriginal organizations – to publish job opportunities that are targeted towards the Aboriginal workforce. On the other side, Aboriginal job seekers can search for employment opportunities, whether it is by location, job sector or keywords.

The AJC can be contacted at aboriginaljobs@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca or at 1-888-399-0111.

H) [Active Measures Field Guide](#)

This Guide was developed by the First Nations Social Development Society in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development is the basis for one of the Active Measures Models cited in this document.

I) [Needs Assessments](#)

The HRSDC website also houses a number of on-line assessment tools to assist Social Development Administrators evaluated the Essential Skills of job seekers as part of the client assessment process.

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