

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

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

These resolutions, including resolution 32/2017, *Distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy*, provide direction to the AFN; affirm First Nations rights to improved economic and social conditions; mandated efforts to address

personal and systemic barriers to labour market opportunities faced by First Nations; and, support access and options to secure greater economic independence.

AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the Chiefs Committee on Human Resources Development (CCHRD) to work jointly with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) in the implementation of a new distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy.

UPDATE

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

The CCHRD communicated to Minister Hajdu, Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, that Budget 2018 is a good starting point on the investments that are needed, however, the budget did not take into consideration inflation and population increases. It also fell short of identifying funds separate from program funding to support the

development of a First Nations Labour Market Council and capacity as recommended by First Nations.

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

The AFN Economic Sector has organized four Transition Working Groups comprised of representatives of the 57 First Nations labour

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market organizations to work with ESDC in the transition and implementation phase.

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

A **Financial Model Working Group** will examine and refine the financial model recommended in March 2017 against

information received in Budget 2018. The task is to work with ESDC officials to ensure that all information is considered in developing a distribution methodology that is fair and equitable, based on the budget amounts provided by Budget 2018.

A **Communications Working Group** will focus on a strategy that promotes a positive outlook on labour force development for First Nations rights holders, governments and service organizations. Key products will include background information on the First Nations Labour Market Strategy and details on the proposed policy and governance approach in the transition to a new labour market structure.

NEXT STEPS

A National First Nations Labour Market Forum will be convened in August 2018 to report on the progress made in the co-development and

implementation of the new framework requirements that will form the new distinct First Nations Labour Market Strategy.

