



FIRST NATIONS LABOUR MARKET

OVERVIEW

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

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

and support access and options to secure greater economic independence.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the Chiefs Committee on Human Resources Development (CCHRD) to call on the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to address the shortfall of Budget 2018 and to initiate a parallel process for the full devolution of labour market authority and jurisdiction, and to continue to work with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) on the implementation of a 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. ESDC launched the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program on April 1, 2019 which included a distinct First Nations Labour Market stream.

The CCHRD communicated to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour that the long-term investments (10 years) realized in Budget 2018 was a good starting point and relief on the freeze on investments in place since 1999. The CCHRD and the Minister agreed that work to support additional indexed investments for governance capacity, new fiscal instruments

and respond to inflation and population growth will need to be completed. Ideally, this will be before the next FNLMS budget cycle (2023).

The implementation of an approach envisioned by First Nations has been challenging, both at the political and bureaucratic levels. This is due to the continued use of the contribution agreement structure within the government Transfer Payment Policy directives for Indigenous programming, which maintains accountability to Canada.

The First Nations Technical Working Group on Human Resources (TWG), comprised of First

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Nations regional representatives and the AFN, continue work focused on new agreement implementation, performance measurement, capacity building assessment and monitoring, enhancement for labour market information

and research to undertake the effects of inflation and population growth in time for the next FNLMMS budget cycle.

NEXT STEPS

- The AFN Economic Sector and the TWG will seek agreement with ESDC on a workplan to focus on First Nations priorities and undertake research to validate future investments and transition of governance and authority.
- Coordinate a meeting between the CCHRD and the Minister of Employment,

Workforce Development and Labour to outline priorities and reach understanding on why supports and investments for First Nation human capital needs will enhance Canada's economy.

- Seek support for the meaningful inclusion of First Nations at the next Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) meeting.

