

ICE Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development

Second ICE Youth Employment Forum

EMPLOYING YOUTH TODAY FOR A PROSPEROUS TOMORROW

Event Summary

The Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development in Toronto (ICE) hosted a forum on "Employing Youth Today for a Prosperous Tomorrow" on February 12, 2004. The focus of the forum was on job placement for youth. Job placement is important because at the same time that we are facing skills shortages in Toronto, the youth unemployment rate remains high. A dynamic and focused approach to improving the transition of youth to the workplace is essential to maintaining a healthy labour market and economy.

The forum brought together representatives from federal, provincial and municipal governments, non-profit youth employment agencies, and business and trade associations to talk about successful models for employing youth.

This forum is the second event sponsored by ICE to increase job opportunities for youth. The first event, held on April 29, 2003, brought together business associations and non-profit youth employment agencies to discuss opportunities for improving employer access to the pool of available youth and to employment support services. As a result of this event, successful new partnerships were forged between these business associations and the youth employment sector leading to more jobs for youth. Building on the success of the first event, ICE expanded the number of participants to include more employer associations and youth employment agencies.

Job Developers from youth employment centres throughout the city were present at the forum to assist business and association representatives to make the right connections and develop the appropriate program for their organization. Job Developers work with businesses to ensure that they can meet the company's specific employment needs. As experts in youth employment abilities, Job Developers can match potential young employees to jobs that are right for them. Working closely with young people, the non-profit youth employment sector provides the guidance and support youth need to succeed at their jobs.

Participants to the forum learned about partnership models that have been successful at employing youth and about programs and services for

employers that will assist them in hiring youth. Presentations were made by: Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association, Collision Industry Action Group, Ontario Tourism Education Corporation, and Operation Springboard.

Total attendance was 62 people, of which 19 were employers/associations, 26 were from the youth employment service sector, and 19 were government representatives. Since some employers have difficulty getting out to these forums, other ways to widen the information network and stimulate partnerships between employers/associations and the youth employment service sector will be explored for future initiatives.

As a direct result of this forum, the development of partnerships between the Youth Employment Job Development network (YEJD) and a variety of employers/associations has been initiated. Since the forum, YEJD has met or scheduled meetings with the following employers/associations:

- Hotel Human Resources Association and the Hilton Hotel Group
- HMV Canada Inc.
- Hydro One
- Retail Council of Canada
- Blockbuster Canada Co.
- IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees)
- Construction Sector

Discussions explore and develop ways to build partnerships to increase youth awareness of and access to job or learning opportunities within various industries, address job retention, plan job fairs, improve training and the matching of youth to positions by job developers. Better information-sharing is another key focus – increased posting of available jobs on the YEJD job board and circulating data on YEJD agency locations and services through existing resources such as hiring manuals or newsletters.

The creation of partnerships between employers/associations and the youth employment service sector improves employer access to a large pool of available youth and cost-free services. Partnerships provide easier and more effective access for youth to increased job opportunities.

Based on the feedback and the follow-up actions, *Employing Youth Today for a Prosperous Tomorrow* was a great success.