

Aboriginal Liaison Officer

Jurisdiction: Manitoba

Contact: Cheryl Lavallee

Level: Transitions

Theme: Transition and Linkages

Description of Practice:

The first Aboriginal Liaison Officer was hired in 2002. It has since expanded and there are currently four sector associations that have established partnerships with the Province of Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Employment and Training Services Branch for the hiring of Aboriginal Liaison Officers (Manitoba Customer Contact Association [MCCA], Manitoba Food Processors Association [MFPA], Manitoba Audio Recording Industry Association [MARIA], and the Arts and Cultural Industry Association of Manitoba [ACI]) These positions are focussed on creating partnerships among private and public sector, government and Aboriginal communities and organizations to promote understanding and identifying opportunities for employment of Aboriginal people.

Background:

Recognizing that Aboriginal people are currently an under-utilized resource, industry sector groups individually presented funding proposals to Advanced Education and Training requesting a partnership initiative with industry that would support the hiring of Aboriginal Liaison Officers. These positions focussed towards assisting in developing and implementing recruitment and retention strategies aimed at developing representative workforce strategies within the respective industry sector groups.

Development:

The development and implementation of long term Aboriginal human resource development plans specific to the industry is ongoing. This activity is managed by the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and through active participation of the industry association and board, and members of the Aboriginal community. The implementations of the strategic plans are intended to work towards the progress of a representative workforce strategy in partnership with industry, Aboriginal community and organizations and government.

These positions continue to evolve as they build on successes and relationships with stakeholders including their sector membership. They act as human resource liaisons to compliment current industry specific recruitment and training initiatives.

There continues to be ongoing development of employer toolkits for specific industries to enable and assist employers to better understand and effectively recruit and employ Aboriginal people. There is a focus that these toolkits address the issues of small and medium sized enterprises by providing mechanisms for the provision of support services, development of support networks and job orientations for Aboriginal employees. These toolkits will support and foster relationship building and successful working environments, designing and delivering of workshops/seminars aimed at cross

cultural awareness and bridging the gap. There is steady research to identify best practices and solutions to ensuring an effective representative workforce strategy that includes and provides information on the following components:

- i) demographics and community profiles
- ii) partnerships and the benefits of partnerships
- iii) partnership/stakeholder model
- iv) partnership steering committee
- v) employee/employer workplace preparation
- vi) recruitment and retention strategies
- vii) best practices and recruiting resources
- viii) work plan development and recommendations to move forward

Evidence:

The Aboriginal Liaison Officers' activities have evolved to include a common set of objectives which are currently being achieved. They include but are not limited to:

- developing long term programs to facilitate cultural and race relations within the industry
- promoting Aboriginal employment and career development with the sector
- providing retention support and act as a resource to industry stakeholders
- act as a consultant between industry and the Aboriginal community
- help to create a supportive relationship and awareness with employers
- provide retention support and act as an information resource about the Aboriginal community
- implementing representative workforce strategies, recommendations and timelines

As a result of these actions there have been a great number of training and employment interventions provided by various sector associations that have resulted in the direct employment of over 140 Aboriginal people within the industries.

As the initiative and its successes are shared, interest has increased across other industry sector associations. The department has supported these additional requests through a phased approach.

Phase I

- Conducting workforce surveys within these sectors to identify source data on the current statistics of how many Aboriginal people are currently employed within these industries, identifying and forecasting current and anticipated future opportunities reported as a work plan that can be implemented.

Phase II

- The hiring of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer charged with carrying out the priorities and activities identified in the work plan.

This phased approach is currently being conducted in partnership with Film Training Manitoba (FTM) and Information, Communication Technologies Association of Manitoba (ICTAM).

Adaptability:

Partnership Steering Committees have been established by the Aboriginal Liaison Officers to ensure that the activities meet the needs of all stakeholders. These committees are inclusive and representative of the stakeholders, comprised of Aboriginal community members, Aboriginal organizations/agencies, industry, and government.

The Aboriginal Liaison Officers Network Group was also established to provide ongoing support and an opportunity to share best practices and lessons learned.

The previous experience of the sector group in working with the Aboriginal community in terms of employment recruitment and retention practices works as the determinant in defining the level of support and guidance required by the Aboriginal Liaison Officer as they work towards identifying and increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people within their sector.

Further information:

Information regarding the Aboriginal Liaison positions, initiatives and documents available can be obtained by contacting these individuals:

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