



Urban Labour-Ready Program
Business Case

Final Report

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CWC co-op ventures
worker co-op

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Introduction

For a variety of reasons, some North Central residents have difficulties maintaining regular employment. Skill and education levels may be low and most often these individuals do not last long in a traditional work situation. By conducting community-based focus group sessions, we have determined the type of labour ready initiative that Inner City residents are interested in being involved in that provides supports they feel are necessary to make it viable for them as individuals to join the labour force,

The principal investigators met with staff and participants currently in employment programs to determine interest levels in different areas of work. Through these extensive consultations with North Central/ Inner City residents, employers, skills/training providers and students a strategy developed to introduce or re-introduce our clients to the labour force.

The result is the following business case for an **Urban Labour-Ready Program** for the North Central community that assists residents not yet able to maintain employment without some support mechanisms. We hope to enable them to traverse what can be a difficult transition to paid employment,

Urban Labour Ready Proposal

Contents

Executive Summary... 4

Rationale...5

Guiding Principles...7

Timeframe/Participant Selection...7

Program Structure ...8

Client Group barriers to employment... 12

Preliminary Budget...16

Expected outcomes ...17

Executive Summary

The mission of the Urban Labour Ready program is to facilitate labour market attachment between the North Central and Inner City labour force and Regina employers. The program will focus primarily on temporary or short-term employment that has the potential to lead to full time employment. Located in North Central Regina, our program will assist the business community to access this marginalized labour pool and enable residents to gain work experience, and re-enter the labour force. It will act as a bridging mechanism, linking work readiness program participants to meaningful employment. The Urban Labour Ready project will help to alleviate elements of the labour shortage and facilitate labour market attachment for our residents.

The program's participants will be North Central and inner-city youth ages 17 to 35. They will be on social assistance, under-employed or on summer break from high-school or a post secondary or skills training institution. Many have lived in impoverished homes for most of their lives, and deal with systemic poverty challenges. As a result of this systemic poverty and an under-exposure to active labour force participation, these youth have become marginalized from the labour force.

Community consultations have shown that target residents for this program have had sporadic or minimal work experience and additional risk indicators including minimal educational attainment, below average literacy rates, criminal histories and potential cognitive disorders or additional issues. Often youth with work experience have had negative experience such as racial prejudice, discrimination, and a workplace with a lack of understanding to other cultures. Many do not understand workplace expectations such as, punctuality, dress attire, and appropriate personal conduct. While many underemployed maintain an active interest in paid employment, many barriers exist in their home life including substandard housing, unstable neighbourhoods, childcare challenges, and family and friends discouraging their participation.

The 5 point plan is 1) to set up an office with two staff; 2) build relationships with Regina's business community, 3) determine their unmet staffing need; 4) link clients to the employer and 5) try to address some of the barriers that keep our clients unemployed. The program will not offer a broad spectrum of skills training. Rather, it will focus on job placement approaches that include an enhanced support structure.

The labour force in inner-city Regina remains one of Regina's last untapped labour resources. The proposed program will help North Central residents become active participants.

Mission Statement

The mission of this program is to facilitate labour market attachment between North Central/ Inner City labour and Regina's business community. The program will do this through building relationships, work life skills development and supporting healthier, lifestyles for our residents. Regina's marginalized labour pool and its business community will experience mutual advantage through our unique structure that facilitates job placements and ensures external support for both labour and businesses.

Program Start Date: July 1/ 2008 –June 31, 2009

Number of Participants: Flexible and directly correlated to the labour shortage and demand within Regina's economy. It is anticipated this program will hosts forty clients regularly.

Youth will gain transferable work skills and will be provided continual supports while working through the following program components:*

- Career Exploration
- Workplace communication skills, resume preparation
- Computer Instruction
- Community promotional outreach
- Work Placements
- Bus passes, bagged lunches
- Career counseling

The duration of service to our clients will depend on their ability to link permanently to employment.

Rationale

The Urban Labour Ready Program seeks to increase labour market attachment to ease the labour shortage in Regina, and assist our clients to become self sustainable. The program intends to act as a conduit to link inner city Regina residents to employment. Inner city Regina residents maintain unique strengths and challenges. It will be the goal of this program to educate employers and clients about their prospective relationship and to provide effective supports to employers and employees.

The Saskatchewan and Regina Chamber of Commerce and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education and Employment¹ have both recognized Saskatchewan's labour shortage as having the potential to adversely affect economic growth. In addition, The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, Saskatchewan Chapter has identified the current labour shortage as the primary concern of their members. Our program's physical location in North Central Regina staffed by those with unique insights into the community will assist the business community and government to access this marginalized labour pool.

According to Sask-Trends Monitor, 110,000, or 15% of Saskatchewan's labour pool aged 15-64 is currently not active in the labour force.² While Saskatchewan's jobs remain vacant pockets of racialized poverty and social and occupational exclusion persist. This presents a significant challenge.

There remain few segments of the population to fill the thousands of jobs vacant in Regina. As of March 2008, Saskjobs.ca listed over 2500 open jobs in Regina.³ Combined with internally posted and non-posted positions, this likely translates into a labour shortage of over 4000 vacancies in Regina. Saskatchewan is projected to have an estimated 79,300 employment opportunities, 73% due to attrition and 27% due to expansion demand, during the period 2006 to 2011.⁴ In order to fill these jobs, innovative grass-roots approaches will need to be employed. The Urban Labour Ready Program through extensive consultation with North Central/ Inner City residents, employers, skills/training providers and students has developed a unique strategy to introduce or re-introduce our clients to the labour force.

The program will build relationships with Regina's business community. The program will receive information from partnering businesses regarding the level of their unmet staffing needs. The program will then link clients from the Urban Labour Ready Program to the employer.

This program will focus primarily on temporary employment, or short term employment that has the potential of leading to full time employment.

The proposed client group for the Urban Labour Ready Program will be between the ages of 18-35.

Guiding Principles

The Urban Labour Ready Project's guiding principles were developed through consultation with skills development and business leaders which included, but were not limited to: Street Culture, Rainbow Youth Centre Road to Employment, North Central Community Association, CanSask, Ranch Ehrlo Services: Skills Trades Program, Youth

¹ www.saskchamber.com

² Sasktrends.ca Feb 08

³ www.saskjobs.ca

⁴ Saskatchewan Employment Forecast 2006-2011, www.aeel.gov.sk.ca

Employment Program, Cochrane High School, Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNET), Hire A Neighbour Program, Community Youth Mentorship Program, Regina Anti Gang Strategy, Working Towards Success, Regina Work Preparation Centre, Regina Public Interest Group, Paul Dojack Youth Correction Facility Youth, Construction Careers , Regina Elphinstone-Centre Member of the Legislative Assembly, local community leaders and First Nations Elders. These guiding principles are as follows:

1. Our program respects the community pride and cultural diversity of the North Central and Core areas of Regina
2. Our program recognizes that all people maintain unique skills, attributes and challenges in their lives.
3. Our program respects and welcomes all people regardless of race, gender, creed and sexual orientation.
4. Our program places an emphasis on respect in the facility, community and work place.
5. Our program believes that all people if afforded the appropriate support structure can experience meaningful paid employment.
6. Our program will be persistent, caring, understanding and innovative as we link unemployed or underemployed Regina residents to the labour force.

Funding Timeframe

12 months

Start Date: July 1, 2008

Participant Selection

Entrance Requirements: All participants must be interviewed by staff and complete the substance abuse subtle screening inventory, before they are admitted to the program. We will be basing our selection on participants with minimal substance use, according to the results of the tests. Our program is cognizant of the addiction and mental health issues which face many inner-city residents. It will be incumbent on program staff to refer clients suffering from these illnesses to the appropriate government or NGO agencies.

Potential participants will be referred through CanSask Career and Employment Services. In addition, traditional labour-ready programs experience success when their staff, graduates and current clients are able to recruit and admit clients. Further, our consultations throughout the community and NGO sector emphasized the advantage of accepting both CanSask referred clients, and clients referred through a community “grass roots” approach.

***Screening Criteria:**

- 1) Youth ages 17 – 35
- 2) Unemployed, on SAP, Transitional Employment Allowance, EI, or Reach back, high-school students on summer break, underemployed members of the labour force.
- 3) Maintain a positive attitude towards employment
- 4) Committed to improving lifestyle choices
- 5) Willing to commit to our guiding principles.
- 6) CPIC will be required, but will not screen out applicants
- 7) No pending jail term
- 8) Physical fitness – able to do light labour (e.g. Pushing a lawn mower) and work in the summer for approximately 5 hours a day
- 9) Must have clothing suitable for outdoor work (boots, gloves and safety glasses will be supplied)
- 10) Grade 8 completion
- 11) No active addictions issues

Income Support: The wage for our clients will be paid by their employers. Our program will provide supplementary support in the form of bus passes, bagged lunches, work boots, computer access, skills development and job placements.

Program Structure

Participants will receive classroom instruction in life skills, communication skills, employment preparation and exploration; resume building/interview preparation, and computer instruction.

The Urban Labour Ready Program will act both as a conduit to link labour and business, and as a bridging mechanism for graduates of such programs as Work to Get Work, Regina Work Preparation Centre, Cochrane/Scott High-School, Working Towards Success, Rainbow Youth Centre: Road to Employment and Street Culture.

The purpose of the Urban Labour Ready Program is not to reinvent or duplicate services currently offered in the community. The program will not offer a broad spectrum of skills training. Rather, it will focus on job placement approaches that include an enhanced support structure.

Our consultations have indicated that many participants in work readiness or introductory skills training programs experience a gap, or lull upon graduation from their programs. Many work readiness programs have indicated a strong desire to cross refer their graduates to our program.

Clients entering our program will initially undergo a screening conducted by the Program Coordinator or Personal Development Coach. Program clients will then

undergo an assessment conducted by the Program staff to determine the level of work experience and work readiness of the client. This assessment should ensure successful client to and business matching. Those with minimal exposure to the labour force will initially be referred to introductory placements.

Assessment Criteria

Clients will be assessed into Four levels of labour-readiness.

1. Has no job experience and little education or skills training pertinent to paid employment.
2. Maintains rudimentary education/skills training and has limited employment experience.
3. Has experienced periods of long term paid employment and has basic education/skills training. Has been socialized to participate in the labour force, but lacks concrete experience or connections to paid employment.
4. Client maintains strong cognitive, physical and emotional health and has experienced periods of prolonged employment. Client has a history of strong job performance and has a strong likelihood of prolonged attachment to paid labour.

Appropriate clients will then receive level specific coaching from Work Supervisor/Placement Liaison. Clients will then proceed to work placement which will include:

Career Planning and Job Search Skills

Job readiness and job search skills will include:

- Searching job sites on the internet
- Discussion and exercises on skills and interests
- Mock surprise interviews
- Cover letters, resumes, references (discussion, drafts, and typing)
- Job seeking (i.e. where? how? newspapers, internet, yellow pages, etc.)
- Prepared job interviews (video taped)
- "Thank you for the interview" letters
- Discussion of work place etiquette
- Analyze work interests/strengths/challenges and potential career choices

Work Placements

All participants will have the opportunity to access paid employment. The type of employment and the level of pay will relate to their abilities and to market demand. The Urban Labour Ready Program will maintain a data base of

employers seeking labour. Our program will liaise with these employers and educate them regarding the unique attributes and challenges of our clients. Employers will be encouraged to meet our clients prior to work placements where appropriate and available. All employers and clients who access the Urban Labour Ready Program will receive regular contact from the Work Placement Supervisor/ Liaison. This relationship will enable our clients and employers to work through potential difficulties, communicate constructive criticism and celebrate program success.

Continuum of Service*

All program components will assist youth in either finding work, becoming self employed or returning to school as they will have developed a clear understanding of work habits and workplace appropriate behaviors, confidence in themselves and their abilities; a positive work ethic; ability to work in a team environment; knowledge of career exploration and educational options. This program will give them a base of knowledge in work and life skills that will help them in the future, if not immediately.

Monitoring of ongoing project and participant activities will be conducted through weekly supervision and through participant action plans at the onset of admission into the Program. The Program Coordinator will supervise all project activities. Mentoring will also occur in the job placement. Daily, weekly, and monthly logs and reports will be submitted to the Program Coordinator. Weekly meeting will occur with participants individually as needed. Contact Sheets will be kept of all relevant interactions including phone calls (i.e. phoning in sick) with participants and employers. Meetings will also occur between Program Staff, weekly and as needed.

Client Group and Barriers to Employment

Program participants will be North Central and inner-city youth ages 17 to 35. They are on social assistance, Transitional Employment Allowance, under-employed, on summer break from high-school or a post-secondary or skills training institution. Most of the participants live in the North Central and Core areas of Regina. It is envisioned that the majority of our clients will be of First Nations and Métis descent. Many of our clients have lived in impoverished homes for most of their lives, and deal with systemic poverty challenges. As a result of this systemic poverty and an under-exposure to active labour force participation, these youth have become marginalized from the labor force.

From our extensive consultations we have concluded that most of our clients will have had sporadic or minimal work experience. In addition, many of these clients

have additional risk indicators including minimal educational attainment, below average literacy rates, criminal histories and potential cognitive disorders or addiction issues. Some youth have had negative work experience such as racial prejudice, discrimination, and a workplace with a lack of understanding to other cultures. Some of these clients don't understand workplace expectations such as, punctuality, dress attire, and appropriate personal conduct.

Our consultations have led us to understand that many of our clients have not been socialized within their family structures and community peer group to actively participate in the labour force. In fact, the opposite is often the case, with multi-generation reliance on government assistance being the norm. While many of our clients maintain an active interest in paid employment, many barriers exist in their home life including substandard housing, unstable neighbourhoods, childcare challenges and family and friends discouraging their participation.

Many of our prospective clients have poor communication skills and have become accustomed to settling disputes through verbal confrontation or physical violence. They often lack the necessary communication and life skills to sustain a job and work through temporary conflict and or crisis.

Childcare also inhibits some youth from finding employment. Many youth are parents to one or more children, without a stable environment to raise them in. They often have strained relationships with their partners. A Lack of dependable childcare, means the youth may have to focus on looking after their children, instead of increasing their employment opportunities.

Addictions have a tendency to either preclude employment or inhibit long term attachment to employment. Addiction can manifest in the form of drugs, alcohol or gambling and can be systemic in nature. Our consultations have indicated that early usage can occur as early as eight years old and exposure to these substances or activities is often initiated by a family member. Those dealing with an addiction must address the physical, emotional and environmental components of their addiction as pre-requisite to full time employment. Our program can facilitate referrals to the appropriate agencies and then reemerge as an option for potential workers.

Gang involvement remains an extensive problem for residents in North Central and Core Regina. Regina's youth are targeted at young and vulnerable stages in their lives. Gang involvement can be inherent in a youth's family structure. Those who have been able to leave these criminal organizations often find themselves marginalized from their former peer groups and support structure, as well as adversely labeled by the business community because of their former way of life. The Urban Labour Ready Program will work with former gang members and their potential employers to increase awareness and understanding and to connect former members to paid employment.

Community Consultation

The steering committee will consist of representatives from skills development programs and business leaders such as Rainbow Youth Centre, Road to Employment, North Central Community Association, Ranch Ehrlo Services: Skills Trades Program, Youth Employment Program, Cochrane High School, Canadian Community Economic Development Network, Hire A Neighbour Program, Community Youth Mentorship Program, Regina Anti Gang Strategy, Working Towards Success, Regina Work Preparation Centre, Paul Dojack Youth Correction Facility Youth and the Food Bank Life skills program. While the precise mix and number on the steering committee is not fixed yet, the idea is to have feedback, support and discussion with others in the field and to have a collaborative, community based work environment.

***Job Descriptions**

Title: Program Coordinator

Primary Purpose:

Oversees all aspects of the development, implementation, and Management of the Urban Labour Ready Program. The Program Coordinator shall ensure that the program activities will address community needs by physically enhancing the labour market attachment of North Central/Inner City Regina residents and Regina's business community. The Coordinator will be tasked to foster relationships with community partners and the business community. The Program Coordinator will also ensure that the participants employed with the Youth Employment Program will receive the necessary support to provide employment preparation, readiness, and opportunities.

Duties and Responsibilities

Administration and Program Management:

- Establish policies and procedures in keeping with the overall objectives of the program
- Ensuring adequate record keeping in all areas of operations
- Ensuring sufficient maintenance of all equipment owned, rented, or leased by the program
- Maintaining confidentiality of all internal matters pertaining to the program and its operations

- Establish an advisory committee(s) to help develop the purpose and articulate a vision for the program
- Develop ideas, program, and opportunities which will benefit participants, staff, and partnerships of the program
- Planning, organizing, implementing special projects of benefit to the program

Reporting and Communication:

- Provide the Board with monthly update reports of the program
- Provide any federal, provincial or private sector program funders with monthly, or as requested, updated reports of the program
- Maintaining ongoing contact with potential participant case managers to provide information concerning participant status and progress
- Ensuring that all pertinent information is provided in a timely and efficient manner

Personnel:

- Establish and maintain an environment which is conducive to positive staff morale and directed towards achievement of the program mission
- Assist in the recruitment, selection, and retention of staff with the skills necessary to communicate with the target population
- Establish clear lines of communication and authority at all levels of the program
- Lead regular staff meetings to ensure well-coordinated and effective delivery of program objectives
- Foster collegiality and team building among program staff; encourage active involvement in decision process
- Communicate and promote high expectation levels for staff and student performance in an enabling, supporting way; provide proper recognition of excellence and achievement
- Effectively develop and communicate to participants and staff, guidelines for conduct and ensure that consequences are applied equitable to all
- Providing general direction to, and review of, all employees
- Maintain ongoing contact with participants in work placements to provide support and direction
- Resolving employee and participant grievances
- Taking disciplinary action
- Dismissal of participants upon consultation of the staff
- Termination of staff upon consultation of Advisory Committee

Public Relations:

- Promoting the objectives of the program through establishing positive working relationships with staff, participants, Board and committees, the public, government departments, cultural agencies, and the media
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with organizations in the community in support of issues of mutual concern
- Representing the program at meetings with government and other agencies
- Promoting the program, its goals, and objectives at cultural community functions or other events as requested
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Financial:

- Preparing a yearly program funding proposal and budget
- Assessing short and long term financial needs and recommending appropriate courses of action
- Maintain record of program expenses
- Provide expense receipts to the Executive Director of the North Central Community Association

Qualifications:

- Strongly committed the improvement of program participant's lives and the betterment of the inner city communities
- Ability to lead and train staff and/or participants
- Skill in organizing resources and establishing priorities
- Ability to coordinate and organize meetings and/or special events
- Previous experience in a supervisory, or management capacity
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work effectively with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse community
- Knowledge of First Nation's culture and multiculturalism, and experience working with First Nation's peoples
- Knowledge of current social issues
- Ability to gather and analyze data and generate reports
- Skill in the use of personal computers and related software applications
- Excellent writing skills
- Records maintenance skills
- Clerical, word processing, and/or office skills
- Ability to interact with participants and/or staff in a team environment, and assert a positive leadership role
- Ability to make administrative/procedural decisions and judgments
- Must maintain emotional control under stress
- Hold a valid class 5 drivers license
- Criminal record check

Title: Community Activities Supervisor & Work Placement Liaison

Primary Purpose:

Oversee the daily work activities of youth in the North Central and Core areas of Regina.

Duties:

- Assert a positive leadership role in a team environment
- Create daily community work activities for program participants
- Record time sheets, attendance, and prepare accurate reports on the day to day community activities
- Resolve conflict
- Ensure participant understanding of work place expectations
- Work in conjunction with other program staff and community groups
- Be committed the improvement of youths' lives and the betterment of the North Central and Inner City communities of Regina
- Assist coordinator in establishing work placements
- Acting as a liaison between employers and program participants
- Ongoing monitoring of work placements and participant progress
- Report to the program coordinator

Qualifications:

- Hold a valid class 5 drivers license
- Have an understanding of First Nation's culture and the
- Ability to provide the youth with a positive and supportive environment
- Possess effective communication and instruction skills
- Be capable of resolving conflict
- Have excellent organization and time management skills
- Communicate and liaise with members of the community, and employers in the community
- Be flexible and creative
- Have reasonable physical stamina
- Have the ability to operate outdoor maintenance equipment, such as lawn mowers, weed trimmers, etc., and have basic knowledge of yard maintenance.
- Have practical carpentry skills and knowledge of small construction projects (fences, painting, landscaping, repairing)
- Minimum of Grade 12, and/or Post Secondary Education in a related field
- Minimum of one year supervising youth
- Criminal record check

2008/2009 Urban Labour Ready Program Budget

Facility

Office and classroom (includes heat, water, electricity, gas) \$1533/month for 12 months	\$ 18,400
Other	\$ 1000

Equipment

Indoor Supplies (cleaning and bathroom)	\$ 500
Computers (\$950X 5)	\$ 4,750

Transportation (Community Work Activities/staff travel to work sites, business partners outreach)

60 Kilometers/day @ \$.39/km for 240 days (staff reimbursement)	\$ 5,616
Gas for vans \$300.00/month x 2 vans	\$ 600
Daily van rental \$50.00/day for 20 days	\$ 1,000

Participant Related Costs

Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (participant interviews)	\$ 150
First Aid/CPR \$125.00/participant for 18 participants	\$ 2,250
Steel Toed Boots \$100.00/participant 50 participants	\$ 5,000
Participant celebrations and graduation	\$ 1,000
Bagged Lunches \$30 per day/5 days a week/12 months/	\$ 7,200

Staff

Position		Wage	Gross	MERC	
Coordinator	Salary for 12 months	\$4000/month	\$48,000.00	\$6513.6	\$ 54,514
		June/08-June1/09			
Personal Development Coach	7.5h/day for 52 weeks	\$20.00/hr	\$39,000.00	\$45292.30	\$ 44,292
Elder Consultant	5 visits @ \$200.00/visit				\$ 1,000

Staff Training	\$ 1,000
Professional Development Seminars	
In kind payments 10 presentations @ 200/visit	\$ 2,000

Organizational Infrastructure (10% of Total Project Cost) \$ 15,027

Staff wages and MERCS, employment related benefits cost, Rent, HR costs (extended illness and maternity leave, vacation leave payout, severance pay) lease - including applicant owned premises, utilities, furniture, signage, equipment Costs, office supplies and bank charges. Membership and affiliation fees.

Other Direct Project Costs (4% of Total Project Cost) \$ 6011

Insurance (fire, theft, liability)

Standard regular day to day operational recurring costs related to basic telephone and fax,

Total Program Cost:

\$156,281

Expected Outcomes

Evaluation of results will be conducted with both the Participants and the Staff. Participant Action Plans will also serve as a tool to indicate if personal goals have been achieved. Program results will be measured from Community Activity Logs, and daily, weekly and monthly reports from all Program Staff. Measurables will include: tenure of employment, attendance record, assessments of employers and workers as well as qualitative analysis from our participants.

It is anticipated this program will enable many North Central Core residents to gain work experience, re-enter the labour force or act as a bridge mechanism linking work readiness program participants to meaningful employment. With a physical office in North Central, and with caring and persistent staff, it is anticipated the Urban Labour Ready Project will alleviate elements of the labour shortage and facilitate long-term labour market attachment for our clients.

*With exerts from Youth Employment Program Submission to the North Central Community Association.

Prepared with the assistance of David Froh (Urban Labour Ready Program Committee Member)