

# Partners for Jobs

*"We're facing a difficult challenge," said Chair Chiarelli. "On the one hand, many people are still unemployed. On the other, there is a serious shortage of skilled workers in sectors such as advanced technology and health care. We need to correct this mismatch. By investing in people, we'll be investing in the long-term health of our community."*

**INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY:  
AN EMPLOYMENT PLAN**

**Final  
Report**  
JUNE, 1999

**Partners  
for Jobs**



**Partenaires  
pour l'emploi**



## **Executive Summary**

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In January, 1999 the Task Force on Employment was established in Ottawa-Carleton with broad representation from the business sector, labour, community agencies, economic development agencies, business associations, education and training representatives, the Task Force on Poverty and government representatives.

The mandate of the Task Force on Employment was to develop an Employment Strategy. The goals of the Employment Strategy were to:

- integrate labour force development with economic development;
- reduce and prevent unemployment;
- increase labour force participation;
- identify and reduce skill shortages;
- increase access to training and employment services;
- reduce barriers to employment;
- strengthen and develop the labour force; and
- create a sustainable framework for labour force development.

The focus of the Employment Strategy was on the employment needs of the unemployed, the under-employed and social assistance recipients.

As part of this Employment Strategy, the Task Force has identified short and longer term strategies including nine pilot initiatives to strengthen the workforce, increase participation in the labour force, remove barriers to employment and provide supports and training. The Final Report also identifies nine Strategic Directions and thirty-four specific actions.

The Strategic Directions which have been identified by the Task Force require the Region of Ottawa-Carleton to provide overall leadership for the development of a comprehensive, community-based Employment Strategy. The Region will also ensure that there is an ongoing structure to support, implement, maintain and update the Strategy. There is also an expectation that the momentum will continue to build on the pilot initiatives identified by the Task Force and to further identify additional opportunities.

The Strategy acknowledges that there are many public policies and program rules which need to be changed in order to remove barriers to employment. The Region will be expected to work in collaboration with other levels of government to implement the Strategy. One of the requirements will be improvements to the labour force information system as the foundation for the Strategy. In addition, the role of technology will be examined in such areas as training, labour force information and literacy.

The partners will seek alternative funding arrangements for a range of supports to employment development and the Region will develop a public awareness campaign. In the interim, the pilots will be implemented, policies will be changed, an Emergency Assistance Fund and an Employment Transition Fund will be established.

The Final Report identifies Strategic Directions and Priorities as a foundation for the development of the local workforce and prevention of unemployment. This framework acknowledges that all sectors of the community have a role to play and that partnerships are essential to make this initiative a reality.

As part of the process to complete the Final Report, consultations took place with various individuals and organizations in the community. The feedback received from individuals and organizations will continue to guide the development and implementation of the Action Phase (September 1999 to March 2000).

The next steps will be for members of the Action Phase to take the strategic directions and priorities identified in the report and proceed with development and implementation of the identified initiatives. A progress report will be submitted by the Partners for Jobs : Action Phase in April, 2000.

## Introduction

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This document is the Final Report of the Task Force on Employment for the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The document outlines strategies which are intended to improve access to jobs for social assistance recipients, the unemployed and the under-employed in this community.

In January 1999, the Task Force on Employment was established with the leadership of the co-chairs: John Kelly (CEO, JetForm Corporation) and Andrée Lortie (President, La Cité collégiale) who are community leaders representing the business sector and the educational/training sector. In addition, a Working Group provided operational and technical assistance to the members of the Task Force. The Task Force and Working Group were composed of representatives from the sectors as shown below:

### Task Force and Working Group Representation

- board of trade
- business industries
- Caledon Institute
- community agencies
- community members
- economic development agencies
- federal government
- francophone community
- health services
- labour
- literacy
- local training board
- provincial government
- regional government
- Regroupement des gens d'affaires
- task force on poverty

The mandate of the Task Force was to develop an Employment Strategy within six months which included both short term projects and longer term initiatives targeted to unemployed and under-employed persons, with a primary focus on social assistance clients. Members of the Task Force recognized that the level of job creation and the quality of jobs depended in large part on factors which are outside the control of the Region (e.g., fiscal and monetary policy, national and provincial economic development policies). The major focus of the Task Force however, has been to identify what could realistically be achieved at the local level.

The overall objective of the Task Force was to reduce poverty through the development of a range of employment opportunities which support individuals and families to improve their financial situation. The goals of the Task Force were to:

- develop partnerships in the community;
- develop a range of employment opportunities;

- initiate pilot programs which remove barriers to employment; and
- identify short and longer term initiatives which improve employment opportunities for residents of this Region.

The overall goals of the Employment Strategy included the following:

- integrating labour force development with economic development;
- reducing and preventing unemployment;
- increasing labour force participation;
- identifying and reducing skill shortages;
- improving access to training and employment services;
- reducing barriers to employment;
- strengthening and developing a skilled workforce to meet the current and future labour market needs;
- creating a sustainable framework for labour force development; and
- reducing poverty in the community.

## **Background**

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The economy in Ottawa-Carleton has shown significant growth during the past year and it is projected that the local economy will continue to be strong. The Conference Board of Canada has ranked Ottawa-Carleton third in the country in terms of economic growth potential for the next few years. This community is also ranked as having a high quality of life which influences businesses to locate here and thereby contribute to economic development and prosperity.

A healthy and dynamic economy requires a skilled, adaptable workforce. These skills are important for both social and economic reasons since they influence both the type of jobs that an individual can perform and influence the earning potential and overall household income. People need jobs and employers need skilled workers.

On the one hand, the Region of Ottawa-Carleton is recognized as one of the leading communities in terms of overall economic growth. On the other hand, every day there are thousands of people who are unemployed, under-employed or receiving social assistance benefits to support themselves, their families and their children in this community. Many individuals have skills, education and experience that are not being fully utilized in our economy. For others, there is a need to acquire literacy and language skills, training and work experience. Lack of access to employment related supports such as child care, transportation, work clothing, is often a barrier to getting and keeping a job.

The incidence of low income residents (families and individuals) in Ottawa-Hull has risen from 14.5% in 1991 to 18.9 % in 1996. This figure represents approximately 190,000 low-income residents, nearly one in five in this region who are poor. Ottawa-Hull's poverty rate of 19% is the second highest of all urban centres in Ontario, behind Toronto (21%) and tied with Hamilton (19%) and Sault Ste. Marie (19%).<sup>1</sup>

In 1995, 33.2% of single parent families were at or below the low-income measure (LIM) in Ottawa-Carleton. The cities of Vanier (41.8%) and Ottawa (37.6%) have the highest incidence of low income for single parents. Recent data from the Region's Health Department indicates that during the period 1986-1996, the percentage of children living in low-income families almost doubled from 15 to 27% in Ottawa-Carleton.<sup>2</sup>

The Social Planning Council has recently noted that while household incomes have increased during the 1985-1995 period, there is a growing gap between high-income and low-income households across our Region. For example, in 1985 approximately 13% of the households in the Region had an average income of \$80,000 compared to 25% in 1995. On the other hand, 18% of the households had less than \$20,000 in both 1985 and 1995. The income gap is more pronounced in the Region of Ottawa-Carleton and the City of Ottawa than in Ontario or the rest of Canada.<sup>3</sup>

In the fall of 1998, the Ottawa Economic Development Corporation (OED) released its report, Ottawa's Hidden Workforce. The report identified that the real unemployment rate in Ottawa-Carleton is significantly higher than the official unemployment rate

when social assistance recipients, discouraged workers and other under-employed workers are factored into the formula. The OED report estimated that there are 145,000 unemployed and under-employed people in this community, some of whom may choose to remain outside the workforce.<sup>4</sup>

The OED report also highlighted that our community does not have sufficient information and knowledge about the people who constitute this hidden workforce, their educational level, skills profile and barriers to employment.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the Regional Chair commissioned the Caledon Institute to prepare a report identifying preliminary ideas and suggestions related to a labour force development strategy for the Region. The Caledon report proposed that a labour force development strategy “should be guided by a set of principles: integrating economic and social / educational agendas; involving key players; forming partnerships; engaging the private sector; using innovative financing; developing a good information base; removing barriers and designing selective interventions”<sup>6</sup>. There are a number of reasons why a labour force development strategy is critical for our community. Labour force development supports business activity and is a critical component of building healthy communities, increasing participation in the community and reducing the impacts of poverty.

In response to the release of the OED report and the Caledon report on a Labour Force Development Strategy, the Regional Chair announced in the fall of 1998 his intention to form a Task Force on Employment.

In January 1999, a report, Putting Ottawa on the Map, was submitted to the Region on economic development. The report presented a series of recommendations related to economic development. The proposed structure, The Ottawa Partnership Board (TOP), has been mandated to develop a Strategic Economic Development Plan for this Region.

## **INITIATIVES SUPPORTING LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT**

There are a variety of local community initiatives across Canada and the United States which have been developed to support labour force development and social welfare reforms.

### **United States**

The recent labour force development initiatives in the United States have evolved as a result of the welfare reform legislation which was introduced in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The legislation requires that the majority of social assistance recipients find work and/or other means of economic support before their federal time-limited benefits end. This reform initiative in the United States is also referred to as “Work first”.

There are complex issues related to employment, promoting participation in the labour force and the different needs of the unemployed. Are there enough jobs available? What is the nature of the jobs that are available (e.g., part-time, contract, seasonal)? Will the jobs provide adequate incomes for individuals and families? Do the unemployed

have the skills for the jobs that are available? What additional training and supports are required for the unemployed?

The Mott Foundation in the United States has identified a number of innovative labour market strategies which provide a range of supports to employers and social assistance recipients. For example, strategies have been introduced to work with industry sectors and individual firms, to customize training for specific individuals and jobs, to use labour market data to influence educational efforts and to encourage and subsidize increased private-sector participation. There are a variety of organizations participating including: trade and industry organizations; individual firms; community-based organizations; education and vocational training institutions; government agencies and newly formed partnerships between public and private sectors.

The Mott Foundation funded a research study to identify and assess the impact of various strategies to assist the private sector to employ welfare recipients. The study identifies key strategies that are needed to integrate welfare-to-work policies and activities to the labour market. These include: pre-employment preparation; short term preparation and skills training; addressing personal barriers; job retention/worker adjustment; job retention/workplace adjustment; income enhancement and career advancement. The study concludes that “the most important lesson for policy makers is the need for the public sector to develop strategies that are responsive the labour market needs of employers”. The study also notes that there are important lessons learned from their research. These include the following conclusions:

- responding to the labour market needs of employers must become a top priority;
- no single labour market strategy will suffice;
- “work first” has limited value - employers expect government to invest in basic human resource development;
- short-term skills and occupational training is valued by employees and employers, and is feasible;
- attention to post-placement issues such as retention and career advancement are essential for achieving sustainable employment and economic self sufficiency;
- too little attention is currently devoted to addressing the needs of the hard-to-serve and more creative solutions are required; and
- significant effort and resources must be devoted to changing the culture and operations of the existing welfare-to-work system.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that the welfare reforms were introduced during a period of strong growth in the United States economy. The national unemployment rate in the USA is decreasing, total employment is increasing and there are increasing shortages of qualified labour. Despite the overall growth of the economy, there are concerns that some of the people have moved from welfare into low wage, unstable, jobs. There are other concerns that significant tax credits have been provided to support the transition from welfare to work.



## Canada

In Canada, the Federal and Provincial governments have changed both the funding and delivery models for social assistance and employment services. These changes were primarily a result of the restructuring of the Canada Assistance Plan into the Canada Health and Social Assistance Transfer. This restructuring resulted in significant reductions in the transfer payments to health, education and welfare. Provinces responded to the federal transfer payment reductions by redesigning social welfare programs.

According to a study by the Canadian Council on Social Development, most social welfare systems across Canada have amalgamated social welfare and employment and, most of the social welfare departments have shifted their mandate from an emphasis on distributing benefits to finding ways to help welfare recipients find work.<sup>8</sup>

The Canadian Council on Social Development study concludes that provincial welfare-to-work initiatives have resulted in new and conventional programs. For some, it appears that the welfare reform will better assist those welfare recipients who are the most employable. It may be problematic for those who require more than simply an employment opportunity in order to be able to exit the welfare system for any length of time.<sup>9</sup>

In Canada, there are many examples of local communities developing innovative initiatives to support labour force development, self-sufficiency and community development. Some of the following examples of best practices have been identified by the Centre for the Study of Training, Investment and Economic Restructuring (Carleton University) and the Caledon Institute.

- In Halifax, the Human Resources Development Association was established in 1978 with \$275,000 from the City of Halifax welfare budget. It is now a successful venture capital and business development group set up primarily to serve welfare recipients. The program has created small businesses that have placed more than 1,400 welfare recipients in newly created jobs.
- In Nova Scotia, the Co-operative Employment Partnership Program (CEPP) supports social assistance clients entering new co-operative businesses by making a \$20,000 equity investment which is paid on their behalf by the provincial Department of Community Services instead of the traditional wage subsidy support.
- The provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia are modifying welfare regulations to allow social assistance recipients to maintain benefits during the transition to work.
- The province of Saskatchewan is providing five year forgivable loans via community development corporations in three municipalities, for the purchase of affordable housing by the low-income earners and social assistance recipients.

- Municipalities such as Montreal and Prince Albert have made physical assets, such as land and buildings, available to community development corporations for development purposes.
- In Waterloo, the Community Opportunities Development Association (Lutherwood CODA) has developed Opportunities 2000, a project designed to enhance employability and reduce poverty. The goal is to move 2,000 households out of poverty by the year 2000. OP2000 is using a framework for community-based poverty reduction which was developed by the Caledon Institute. The community-based poverty reduction framework includes four key interventions: (1) meeting basic needs; (2) removing barriers; (3) building skills and, (4) promoting economic development.
- In Toronto, the Skills for Change non-profit organization provides a range of employment learning and training supports for new Canadians. One of its programs is a mentorship program which offers opportunities for mentors and foreign-trained individuals to learn from each other. The mentorship program has been highly successful and has expanded. Its success is based on a strong community partnership, a focus on individual needs, promotion of social awareness and a strong mentor-volunteer capacity.
- In Toronto, the Self-Employment Development Initiatives (SEDI) organization is conducting research related to the use of individual development accounts. The proposed individual development accounts would be a way for low-income earners and the unemployed to acquire savings and to access a range of assets such as: education; business; job development and housing. SEDI recognizes that savings contribute to long-term economic and social stability.

## **Ottawa**

- In Ottawa, Carleton University operates a community economic development technical assistance program (CEDTAP). This program provides technical assistance to groups and organizations involved in economic development.
- In Ottawa, community economic development initiatives have evolved over the years. For example, West End Community Ventures has been involved in employment and training activities, the development of a co-operative housing program, the Ottawa Green Community Initiative and the “Harvesting for a Hungry Market” initiative. In addition, the Conseil de la Coopération de l’Ontario is involved in more than 11 local community economic development projects.
- In Ottawa, the O-Vitesse program is a creative example of collaboration between local universities and the National Research Council to develop an intensive 16-month re-skilling program for engineers and scientists. This program has resulted in people being able to change their career to take advantage of the opportunities in the telecommunications and software industry.

- In Ottawa-Carleton, the Initiative to End Homelessness which includes community-based service providers, has identified the need to develop a range of enhanced supports to assist homeless persons (women, men and youth) to become employed. This initiative is being supported by the local Human Resources Development Canada.
- In Ottawa-Carleton, the Task Force on Poverty was established to seek solutions to poverty in our Region and to implement the intent of the recommendations appearing in “People First” into the solutions. Some of the recommendations of the “People First” report are directly related to employment. In the fall of 1999, the Task Force on Poverty will submit its final report and recommendations. The Task Force on Poverty has representation on the Task Force on Employment.

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

Employment can reduce the effects of poverty and increase participation in the community at large. Employment can provide income that is often higher than the level of financial assistance provided through social welfare programs. Being employed can also increase self-esteem and confidence and contribute towards an increased level of interaction and participation in the community. As a result of being employed, individuals also contribute to the overall economy through the purchase of good and services.

Unemployment, on the other hand, has a serious impact on individuals, families, children and communities. It has been estimated that the “loss to the Canadian economy due to reduced goods and services ranges from \$16-55 billion. The estimated cost of both demand-deficient and structural unemployment was anywhere from \$29 to \$77 billion in 1994. The social costs of being unemployed are also very high. The Department of Human Resources Development Canada estimated the costs at \$7.4 billion in 1982”.<sup>10</sup>

Developing the labour force to ensure that training and skills respond to current and future labour market needs makes sense.

Economic development mobilizes human, financial, capital, and other resources to generate goods and services. Employment and labour force development mobilizes and maximizes human potential by linking skilled human resources to employment opportunities.

## LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Table 1 presents information on the local labour force during the period March 1998- March 1999.

<b>Table 1</b>		
<b>Ottawa CMA: Economic Analysis</b>		
	<b>March 1999</b> (‘000)	<b>March 1998</b> (‘000)
Population 15+	663.0	658.5
Labour Force	445.2	440.9
Employed	417.1	410.9
Unemployment	28.2	30.0
Not in the Labour Force	217.7	217.6

*Source: Unadjusted Data, Human Resources Development Canada, Economic Analysis and Information Directorate.*

Table 2 indicates the changes in the participation rate, unemployment rate and employment to population ratio during the period March 1998 - March 1999.

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Ottawa CMA: Economic Analysis</b>		
	<b>March 1999</b>	<b>March 1998</b>
Participation Rate	67.1%	67.0%
Unemployment Rate	6.3%	6.8%
Employment/Population Ratio	62.9%	62.4%

*Source: Unadjusted Data, Human Resources Development Canada, Economic Analysis and Information Directorate*

As Tables 1 and 2 indicate, the population (15 years +) in the Ottawa CMA has increased by 4,500 during the past year and the number in the labour force has increased by 4,300. The number of people employed has increased by more than 6,000. The unemployment rate has decreased by .5% and the participation rate has slightly increased.

### Notes:

- *The Labour Force is the population 15 years of age and over who were employed or unemployed.*
- *The Participation Rate represents the labour force expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over.*
- *The Ottawa Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) includes the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the Township of Russell, Cambridge, Clarence and South Gower, Rockland, and Casselman.*

Comparatively, Ottawa's participation rate of 67.1% is one of the highest levels of participation across Ontario, is higher than that of Ontario (65.9%) and Canada (64.5%). Ottawa's unemployment rate of 6.3% is one of the lowest in Ontario, is lower than that of Ontario (7.1%) and Canada (8.5%).

Ottawa's employment growth is considered to be the strongest in eastern Ontario. The positive employment activity is drawing additional job seekers into the labour market and this has resulted in the official unemployment rate remaining relatively unchanged during the past few months.

Local job gains during the first few months of 1999 have occurred in the following occupations: construction; administration; manufacturing; education and tourism.

The following table presents information on local employment/by industry in 1999 and projected to 2001.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Projection: Employment by Industry Ottawa-Carleton</b>			
<b>Industry</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Commercial Services	141,400	148,500	5
Public Administration & Defence	108,900	115,100	6
Non Commercial Services	96,800	99,400	3
Trade	79,400	83,600	5
Manufacturing	40,700	44,100	8
Transportation, Storage & Communication	35,500	37,600	6
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	27,300	28,300	4
Construction	23,300	23,700	2
Primary Utilities	1,800	1,800	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>561,000</b>	<b>588,100</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: Conference Board of Canada.

The Conference Board of Canada has also projected a positive employment environment in this community during the 1999-2003 period, The Conference Board projects that total employment will increase 9% during the period 1999-2003. Please refer to Appendix A for additional details.

### **LOCAL PROFILE: SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE RECIPIENTS**

The following section presents a summary profile of the households receiving Ontario Works assistance; the users of the Region's Employment Resource Centres; summary data on the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Employment Insurance Program. In addition, information is provided on a sample of the users of the West

Employment Resource Centre who are members of the community at large, some of whom are under-employed and unemployed and not receiving social assistance or employment insurance.

### **Ontario Works**

Ontario Works (OW) is a program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services which is delivered by municipalities. The program has two components: (a) employment assistance which includes employment support, community participation and employment placement, and (b) financial assistance. Ontario Works is a program of “last resort” to assist individuals and families in financial need.

- There are 27,578 households, 64,980 beneficiaries, receiving Ontario Works financial and employment assistance in Ottawa-Carleton.
- More than half (54%) are families, 46% are single.
- More than half of the family households are female single parent families.
- Approximately 10 % of the “heads of household” have a grade 1-8 level of education; 34% have grade 9-11; 32% have grade 12-13; and 24 % have post-secondary education.
- 8,000 Ontario Works participants are involved in independent job search; approximately 6,000 are involved in educational-training activities; 4,500 are involved in structured job search activities and, approximately 3,000 are employed.
- A significant number of people receiving social assistance have had employment experience.
- Approximately 1,550 Ontario Works households stop receiving assistance each month. Almost half (43%) terminate assistance as a result of employment.

### **Employment Resource Centres**

The Region operates three Employment Resource Centres in Ottawa-Carleton. One of the three centres (located in the West area at the Lincoln Heights Shopping Centre) is a co-located centre with HRDC. This centre offers employment services to the general public, social assistance clients and Employment Insurance applicants and recipients.

- In April, 1999 there were 781 new clients/users of the three Employment Resource Centres. During this month, there were a total of 5,897 visits by individuals to the three Employment Resource Centres.

### **Ontario Disability Support Program**

The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is a Provincial program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services delivered by the Province. This income support program is available to persons with disabilities.

- In April 1999, there were 15,886 households, 26,525 beneficiaries, receiving Ontario Disability Support (ODSP) benefits in Ottawa-Carleton.

### **Employment Insurance Program**

The Employment Insurance Program (E.I.) is a federal program of Human Resource Development Canada.

- In March 1999, there were 10,690 Employment Insurance (E.I.) beneficiaries in the Ottawa CMA.
- In March 1999, 53% of the beneficiaries were male, 47% were female.
- Approximately 19% of the unemployed received Employment Insurance in Ottawa in 1997 compared to 27% in 1996. The reduction is a result of program and policy changes in the Employment Insurance program.<sup>11</sup>
- The average duration of unemployment is six months.

### **Profile of the Community Users of the Employment Resource Centres**

In 1999, the Region and Human Resources Development Canada collaborated to fund a research project to identify the “community users” of the West Employment Resource Centre. “Community users” are individuals in the community at large who are not receiving social assistance or employment insurance. The West Employment Resource Centre is the only Regional centre at this time that is open to the community at large.

Preliminary data from a survey conducted by Ekos Research Associates in 1999 on 545 community users of the West Resource Centre indicates the following profile:

- gender profile - males (51%), females (49%);
- education - 18% have less than high school; 14% are high school graduates; 23% have some post-secondary education; 17% have community college education; 25% have university education;
- two-thirds are anglophone; one in four is allophone;
- two-thirds are Canadian born; one in five self-identify as a visible minority;
- the majority of community clients are currently unemployed (65%);
- among the employed (30%), more than half are under-employed, often with short-term or tenuous employment;
- approximately 15-20% indicate a student status;
- one in two visited the centre to look for a job; one in three cite use of equipment for job search as the primary motivation;
- savings, wages and spousal income are the most common sources of income;
- lack of experience (38%) and lack of employment opportunities (34%) are the most frequently cited barriers for the community users; and

- bilingual capabilities were cited by 26% as a barrier.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE**

We know that investing in people has immediate and long-term benefits. For example, recent research completed by the McMaster University Faculties of Health and Social Sciences in June 1998 indicates that “providing comprehensive services to sole support parents receiving social assistance is more effective, no more expensive and has a greater benefit (costs that are averted). Front end investment in services to meet multiple needs results in immediate savings to society as a whole in reduced reliance on social assistance.”<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult to estimate the total savings that result from a reduction in the level of unemployment in our community. We can however, estimate the savings from reductions in the social assistance caseload and savings in the Employment Insurance program which result from employment. The Region estimates savings of \$175,000 (net) for every 100 social assistance households who no longer require social assistance. The Employment Insurance (E.I.) program in Ottawa-Carleton estimates savings of \$30 million (over a nine month period) for clients placed in 5,900 jobs in 1998/1999.

The local Employment Insurance budget is \$203 million. Approximately \$15 million of this amount is for Youth and the Opportunities Funds, which are not part of the Employment Insurance program. It is estimated that the combined budgets for social assistance (\$382 million) and Employment Insurance (\$203 million) in this Region are approximately \$585 million annually. A reduction in the number of people who require Employment Insurance or social assistance results in savings. While program savings are important, it is critical that we recognize the value of investing in people, programs and services that prevent unemployment and support labour force attachment. We need to ensure that people have access to job-related supports and services that provide immediate and long-term supports to individuals and families as they move from a reliance on social programs to employment.



## **Issue Identification**

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The Task Force on Employment met six times and the members of the Working Group met eight times to identify a range of issues related to employment and labour force development in this community. Currently, there are a range of gaps related to participation in the labour force. Some of the gaps are a result of policy and program criteria which restrict access to employment related services and programs based on income tests or other eligibility factors. Other gaps are a result of silo approaches to service delivery by three different levels of government. There are also specific issues and barriers related to employment that members of equity groups face and there is a need for a variety of employment strategies to be developed to meet the different needs of the unemployed. In addition, labour force development is not integrated with economic development initiatives within the community.

Individuals need to be assured that their basic needs are met before being able to consider labour force participation. Basic needs include access to secure, affordable, housing and access to essential income support to meet the needs of the household members. Individuals and families who are experiencing crisis need to have access to appropriate supports and resources before labour force participation can be considered. It is important to acknowledge that individuals and families want to become self-sufficient but, for some, there are other issues which need to be addressed before labour force participation can become a realistic goal. Our community needs to understand and support this reality.

The issues identified below have been the key areas of discussion for the Task Force and Working Group members. In addition, consultation with representatives of the networks and the public at large have built on these key issues. Please refer to Appendix B for additional details on the feedback.

Each of the key issues are briefly identified below:

### **BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

There are a wide range of issues and barriers related to employment. Some of the issues are based on the individual's needs and life experience, while others are structural or systemic. For some, dealing with an immediate crisis situation such as homelessness requires that the housing issue be resolved before employment can be pursued. For others, there are various issues and barriers which need to be addressed before employment becomes a realistic goal. This could include daily life skills support and training; it could include basic education and literacy; it could include an assessment and provision of targeted training.

The following key barriers to employment have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- insufficient work related supports (e.g., child care, transportation, telephones)
- lack of supports for students to complete high school and for transition to the workplace
- low literacy and limited access to technology as a learning tool
- insufficient mentoring, job-shadowing, employment, co-op placements
- lack of work skills and experience
- inadequate supports for language development (English as a second language, French as a second language etc.)
- lack of recognition for individuals who are foreign trained, prior learning
- problems related to employment equity, accommodation within the workplace, attitudes
- insufficient employment supports and resources for the unemployed and under-employed

## **POLICY BARRIERS**

There are various Federal, Provincial and Regional policies which act as barriers and disincentives to employment. Some policies restrict participation in training and employment related services on the basis of income source, income testing or other related criteria.

In addition, there are specific policy directives and regulations related to the administration of the Provincial Ontario Works program that create obstacles and disincentives to securing and maintaining employment. Some of the Ontario Works policies require Provincial changes whereas the Region has some discretion in certain policy areas. Staff in the Region have identified the following policies which are barriers:

- job search and access to employment related supports
- provincial supports to employment program requirements
- access to transportation
- self-employment
- asset levels
- earnings levels
- income reporting periods
- categorical ineligibility for low income persons
- shared parenting and living with parents.

In addition, the focus group for community members at large and the focus group with members of the Task Force on Poverty identified the following issues related to the Provincial Ontario Works policies:

- the policy related to vehicles penalizes individuals who own a vehicle.
- the eligibility calculation method does not take into account real/actual payments such as mortgages.
- the method of reporting earnings is very discouraging, it is not gradual enough and has excessive clawbacks.
- the asset levels and the earnings levels are too low and need more flexibility.
- access to telephones and transportation are essential in order to acquire and maintain employment.

The following section presents a summary of the key Ontario Works policy areas which create barriers to employment.

### **Independent Job Search and Provision of Employment Related Financial Supports**

- **Issue**

With the implementation of Ontario Works, the Region introduced a policy which supported four months of independent job search as the first employment activity of choice for clients with employment obligations. During this time, no employment related financial supports were to be provided. Experience has indicated that it is now possible and desirable to change this policy.

### **Limited Access to Employment Related Financial Supports for Ontario Works Clients Who Are Working and Receiving a Social Assistance Top-Up**

- **Issue**

Ontario Works clients who are working, declaring income and receiving a social assistance top-up, are eligible under Regional policy for employment related financial assistance for items which are over and above the usual cost of going to work. For example, monthly bus passes would not be provided, but if a client needed \$300 to purchase a one-time item which was essential for success in employment, there would be eligibility.

In addition, if a family has child care costs, these can also be deducted from the net income to be budgeted against social assistance entitlement. As an Ontario Works client, there is also eligibility for the full range of mandatory and discretionary benefits such as dental care, vision care, prescription drugs, and many other goods and services.

## **Access to Financial Supports for Transportation**

- **Issue**

The Region's current policy provides financial assistance for transportation to all clients engaged in any approved employment activity, except independent job search due to the fiscal requirements.

## **Other Ontario Works Regulations and Directives Requiring Provincial Approval**

- **Issue**

Under Ontario Works regulations, persons engaged in self-employment activity may do so for a maximum of 72 weeks, at which time they must either be self-sufficient or end the self-employment in favour of another employment activity. This could be a short time for a new small business to demonstrate success, and tends to discourage people from this effort.

- **Issue**

Under Ontario Works directives, no financial assistance may be provided to a parent in a shared parenting situation to meet the needs of the children, unless the parent is the primary care-giver of the children. This can affect not only the capacity of the "non-custodial" parent to remain involved with the children, but can detract from the necessary focus on employment.

- **Issue**

Under Ontario Works regulations, adult children, regardless of age, who choose to reside with their parents, receive less financial assistance than would be the case if they resided on their own. If these adult children are found to be financially dependent, under Ontario Works rules, they may not be eligible at all, regardless of age. This may jeopardize the individual in finding and maintaining employment.

- **Issue**

Ontario Works regulations set the allowable limits for income, assets and earning exemption levels which can result in unemployed and under-employed individuals and families being found ineligible for any Ontario Works financial assistance. Forced to deplete any and all personal resources, poor individuals and families become poorer and less able to maintain self-sufficiency.

## **LABOUR FORCE INFORMATION**

There are various labour information products available in this community. The Federal government has the primary responsibility for labour force information. The Federal government produces data related to various components of the labour force. These include: a labour force survey analysis; an employment opportunity index; an analysis of employment insurance claimants and regular claims; a clippings file; analysis of occupational information; labour market reviews; wage rate surveys etc.

Labour force information is an essential component of effective workforce development strategies. We need to have accessible, local information on the current and future employment trends and skills requirements in order that training is tailored to the labour market needs. Without this information, it is difficult to anticipate and respond to the current and emerging employment opportunities in our community.

The following key issues have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- improvements are needed in the local labour force information system;
- the local labour force system should include information on current and future employment opportunities;
- the information system needs to integrate local data on skills, education and training requirements; and
- the system needs to be simple, ease to use, accessible and updated.

## **TRAINING**

There are approximately 145 trainers in Ottawa-Carleton registered on the HRDC Interactive Training Inventory. The Federal and Provincial governments are negotiating a labour market agreement which will see the transfer of training responsibilities from the Federal government to the Provincial government. It is expected that there will be changes to the current administrative structure related to training expenditures. In the past, training for social assistance and employment insurance recipients has been approved on a case-by-case basis with the payment for training expenditures made on behalf of the participant to the approved trainer. As a result of the federal/provincial changes, individuals will be issued the approved training allocation directly and they will directly select and pay the trainer.

In addition, the three levels of government are currently involved in training initiatives. Each level of government has developed specific criteria and eligibility requirements related to who can access government funded training. As a result, there are individuals in the community who are not in receipt of social assistance and employment insurance and who are required to pay the training costs on their own and/or apply for Canada/Ontario Student Assistance funding if the program qualifies.

The following key issues have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- limited access to training and employment services as a result of program specific eligibility criteria (e.g. for the general public). There are many people working in low-wage jobs who do not have access to publicly funded training services;
- lack of an easy to access inventory describing training resources, training curriculum and labour market outcome data;

- lack of quality assurance - monitoring mechanisms related to training effectiveness;
- inadequate range of short-term, specific training and financial support is available; and
- training should lead to a job.

## **JOB RETENTION STRATEGIES**

Job retention strategies include a range of supports to assist the employee and the employer. In the United States, job retention is seen as a critical issue. For example, statistics from an Oregon post-employment demonstration program found that job turnover was significant: 61% of participants lost their job. An innovative community program, Wire-Net, in the US responded to some of the job retention issues by offering workshops to address the skills needed for retention, workplace conflict and stress, advice on achieving career advancement and supervisory training to increase sensitivity to social support issues. Other innovations have included the use of mentoring and support services to improve job retention.<sup>13</sup>

The following key issues have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- flexible policies should provide financial assistance and supports to individuals leaving social assistance to secure employment and to individuals, who already have employment, to remain employed;
- job retention strategies should include initial screening, training, placement and post-placement job retention services for up to 6 - 12 months, as a support to both employers and employees;
- job upgrading, career advancement and recognition of qualifications brought to the position by many under-employed;
- lack of courses available to help people keep a job, make the transition between social assistance and work; and
- not enough funds to prepare those who are under-employed or job-hunting.

## **SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES**

There are limited Federal and Provincial supports and incentives available to employers to assist them with job creation. The primary incentives are wage subsidies. There are limited incentives available to directly assist employees with the transition to employment such as the provision of work-related supports and benefits during the first few months of employment.

The following key issues related to supports and incentives have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- some smaller companies do not/cannot provide a range of employment related benefits such as dental care, health coverage; prescription drug coverage etc. during the first six months of employment;
- limited financial assistance is available from the Region to assist with the transition from social assistance to employment;
- lack of ongoing support to employers/employees to improve recruiting and job retention;
- tax relief to employers if new jobs can be created; and
- ensure that existing employees are not displaced if wage subsidies are used.

### **SELF-EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT**

There are various resources available in the community to support self-employment development initiatives. The Entrepreneurship Centre and La Cité collégiale provide information and seminar/training workshops to assist individuals to develop businesses. Human Resources Development Canada's self-employment projects also include training and coaching modules for new entrepreneurs. An increasing number of jobs are being created through self-employment initiatives and the existing supports for self-employment need to be expanded.

The following key issues related to self-employment development have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- additional resources are required to support self-employment; increased financing vehicles for micro or small businesses are required, increased access to sources of equity capital, improved access to banking and links to investors, particularly for low income households who are interested in self-employment;
- there are limited resources available in the community which provide "hands on training" in the early years of business development;
- limited employment benefits are available to individuals who pursue self-employment (e.g.: Employment Insurance);
- lack of information, access to financial assistance/credit and support to assist entrepreneurs, including newcomers and women;
- more creative support for self-employment initiatives are needed; and
- lack of encouragement and support for co-operative initiatives, group self-employment.

## **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Community economic development (CED) is an activity whereby communities become organized to gain access to some of the managerial, technical, financial and support resources which are perceived to be readily available, particularly for those who have become economically marginalized. CED involves people from a community working together with resources from government, local businesses, industry, churches, financial organizations, training and educational institutions, non-profit groups etc. to solve local problems. These resources are mobilized for the purpose of empowering community members to create new and expanded businesses or specialized institutions and organizations, all with the ultimate aim of creating jobs particularly for people who have difficulty entering the labour market.

The following key issues related to community economic development have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- a range of community economic development initiatives/businesses should be encouraged and supported for marginalized groups (e.g.: psychiatric survivors; people living in poverty etc.);
- lack of adequate access to capital and micro loans for business start-up through a broad financing base, including a technical assistance component;
- ongoing support, mentoring, links with training and other entrepreneurial resources are required for projects to succeed;
- lack of creative support and financing for community organizations to develop training and economic development activities and provide ongoing support for the crucial years of implementation; and
- need for a central group focused on community economic development to be established. This group would be a cross section of the community (i.e. the Region, trainers, educators, funders, research group, community representatives and others as determined by community needs).

## **LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Labour force development requires a co-ordinated and integrated approach to both business development and community development. It requires that business activity within a community is continuously cognisant of the requirements of the labour force. Labour force development must be seen as a primary element of, not secondary to, economic development. Building our human resources requires a different approach.

It will require that we consider different approaches to training and development, different approaches towards savings for educational purposes.



The following issues related to labour force development have been identified by the Task Force and the consultation process:

- lack of adequate mechanisms for people living on low incomes to acquire and retain assets (e.g. saving towards education ) and not having to liquidate these assets. Need to involve the banking sector as partners;
- current eligibility criteria related to training and employment services creates barriers for the community at large and significant gaps in access;
- lack of a comprehensive labour force development fund that assists with training and development. This fund should be supported through a broad financing base that includes funding from various sources; and
- public awareness and marketing of the skills and abilities of the potential workforce, the roles of community organizations and employers.

## **COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK**

A community framework is a shared commitment towards the development of a community. A framework can provide focus and momentum in achieving community goals. A framework can include partnerships with all sectors of the community, information-sharing, promotion and concrete action steps to achieve shared goals.

The following components related to a community framework have been identified by the Task Force and through the consultation process:

- ongoing partnerships and commitments in this community are required between the private sector and all sectors of the Region to promote employment and labour force development;
- defining the role of the private sector, the non-profit sector, the public sector and the community at large in creating and sustaining a community framework focused on employment is required. Ensure that there is a shared responsibility and commitment among all sectors of the community;
- develop labour force and social action partnerships which include all stakeholders;
- develop a forum for information sharing, building on the Task Force findings and ensure broad representation/participation;
- a structure to sustain the progress of the Task Force on Employment; and
- need to network with local, provincial and national organizations.

## **Employment Strategy**

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The Task Force and Working Group members have identified nine pilot initiatives which address various issues and barriers identified in the previous section. In addition, this section describes the consultation process which was used and the Strategic Directions and Priorities identified for the employment strategy.

The Region of Ottawa-Carleton has also developed seven employment initiatives which address various employment barriers and issues. These initiatives are briefly described in Appendix C.

The following pilot initiatives have been identified by the members of the Task Force and Working Group. Each of these pilot proposals are in various stages of development and implementation. These pilot initiatives will remove barriers to employment and improve access to employment opportunities for social assistance clients, the unemployed and the under-employed. The initiatives are intended to provide adequate wage levels, ensure that gaps in the labour market are addressed by responding to expanding job opportunities and to ensure that existing employees are not displaced. The initiatives are intended to create employment opportunities which are stable and provide good living wages.

The pilot initiatives identified below provide a brief description of the overall objective of the initiative; the various partners involved; the target outcomes; the budgetary requirements; the language that the initiative will be initially be offered in and the implementation time-frame.

### **PILOT PROJECT INITIATIVES**

#### **1. Foreign Trained Teacher Project**

- Objective:** This project will assist foreign trained teachers to acquire certification and become employed in their profession.
- Partners:** The Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI), Association of Somali Canadian Teachers of Ottawa-Carleton (ASCTOC), the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and, Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI).
- Target Outcomes:** Preliminary information indicates that there are approximately 100 individuals, teachers trained outside of Canada, who have not been able to work in their profession due to accreditation related difficulties. This project aims to assist 10-50 individuals to gain part-time or full-time employment in the field of teaching by the fall, 1999.
- Budget:** The budget for this project is \$6,000 - \$10,000.

Language: This pilot will be available in English and French.

Time-frame: Ongoing.

## **2. Human Resources: Biotechnology Sector**

Objective: This project will identify the short and long-term human resource requirements in the field of biotechnology in this region. The project will develop an integrated human resources strategy that addresses the diverse range of needs in biotechnology. The methodology and results will also serve as a template for other human resource sector development.

Partners: Ottawa Life Sciences Council, Biotechnology Human Resources Council, Human Resources Development Canada, Ministry of Education and Training, Region of Ottawa-Carleton, public and private sector partners.

Target Outcomes: This report will provide critical information on the emerging employment growth areas in our region as well as specific information on the skills requirements for these emerging employment areas.

Budget: The budget allocation from Partners for Jobs is \$75,000, which is shared between the Region; Human Resource Development Canada and the Ministry of Education and Training. Other sectors are contributing “in-kind” services.

Language: The report will be available in English.

Time-frame: The report will be submitted in September, 1999.

## **3. Hidden Skills Project**

Objective: This initiative will provide work-based assessment and training supports for employees working in entry level positions in the hotel sector. Some employees have “hidden skills” that can be used in other employment sectors.

Partners: Representatives from the Hoteliers Association, a mid-sized hotel to pilot the initiative, Ottawa Tourism and Convention Authority, educational/training sector and the Region.

Target Outcomes: Increased awareness by existing hotel staff of community-based employment resources; skills assessment and matching of hotel staff to other employment opportunities

that respond to “hidden skills”; participation in customized training etc.

**Budget:** The hotel will provide “services in kind” such as use of meeting rooms for the information and assessment components. The Region will provide staff resources to develop and implement the information/assessment component. If customized training is required, costs will be determined.

**Language:** This initiative will be available in English and French.

**Time-frame:** This project will begin in August, 1999 with the information /assessment component arranged for hotel staff. Customized training requirements may be determined in the fall, 1999.

#### **4. Computers in the Community**

**Objective:** This initiative will provide low income earners with access to technological skills development in 13 accessible and user friendly technology access sites across the region.

**Partners:** The employment sub-group of the Task Force on Poverty and the Coalition of Community Resource and Health Centres; Human Resources Development Canada Office of Learning Technologies; Urban Cap; Year 2000 Project; community mentors and participants.

**Target Outcomes:** This initiative will provide employment for local residents. It will provide low income earners with training and skill development related to technology.

**Budget:** The total budget is \$100,000 in funding and/or “in kind” services each year for three years. “In-kind” services includes; facility costs, administrative operating costs, volunteer time and expertise.

**Language:** This initiative will be available in English and French.

**Time-frame:** To be determined.

## **5. La Clé de l'opportunité**

- Objective:** This initiative will provide training to 30 francophones who are 25 years of age and older, and who have significant barriers to employment (e.g. limited employment experience, literacy barriers etc).
- Partners:** La Cité collégiale and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.
- Target Outcomes:** The program will provide enhanced employability, referrals to training, education, apprenticeship and employment placement.
- Budget:** \$54,000 (\$1,800 per participant).
- Language:** This initiative will be available in French.
- Time-frame:** October 1999 - March 2000.

## **6. Youth-At-Risk: Employment Skill Enhancement Internship**

- Objective:** This initiative will identify ongoing funding for an effective program located in the Somerset West Community Health Centre that provides youth-at-risk with technical and employment skill development for entry level positions in the high tech sector.
- Partners:** Somerset West Community Health Centre; local high tech employers; Region of Ottawa-Carleton, Human Resources Development Canada and potentially the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Target Outcomes:** This program has demonstrated a high success rate of youth employment or continued education (85%). The program requires a stable funding source.
- Budget:** The total project budget is \$109,321.
- Language:** This initiative is available in English.
- Time-frame:** Decisions related to the ongoing funding source need to be resolved in 1999. The Human Resource Development Canada and the Ministry of Education and Training are discussing creative solutions.

## **7. Youth Internship-to-Employment Project**

- Objective:** This initiative will provide internships and employment to 60 youth.
- Partners:** Youth 2000 jobs; Local Agencies Serving Immigrants; local businesses; Malkam consultants; Human Resources Development Canada and other potential sponsors.
- Target Outcomes:** Internship and employment of 60 youth-at-risk. Provision of: job-specific recruitment of internship hosts and candidates; in-class pre-employment preparation; job-specific skills orientation; on-site workplace mentoring; case-management of participants and project evaluation.
- Budget:** The budget is \$167,500. Funding proposals have been submitted to Human Resources Development Canada and other sponsors.
- Language:** This initiative will be available in English.
- Time-frame:** This program is targeted to begin June, 1999 pending finalization of partnerships and funding support.

## **8. Career Development Tool for Literacy Learners**

- Objective:** This initiative will develop and use a career development tool for individuals who have literacy barriers.
- Partners:** La Magie des lettres, other literacy services in the community, colleges and school boards.
- Budget:** \$60,000.
- Target Outcomes:** This initiative will provide an essential tool for literacy and basic skills trainers in community centres, colleges and adult schools. This career development tool will help the learner to determine his or her career choice.
- Language:** This initiative will be available in French.
- Time-frame:** To be determined.

## 9. Health and Home Care Services

Objective:	This initiative will provide employment opportunities and training certification which increases incomes for health and home support service providers. There is a growing demand and a shortage of individuals trained as home care workers in the health care services sector.
Partners:	A training institution and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. This initiative will be available in English and French.
Target Outcomes:	Approximately 10-15 individuals will be offered employment as Home Support Workers after training and certification has been provided.
Budget:	The project will cost \$12,000 - \$15,000 for training and certification in the Home Support Worker 11 program.
Language:	This initiative will be available in English and French.
Time-frame:	To be determined.

### Cost of Pilot Projects

The preliminary cost of the nine pilot projects is approximately \$591,000. The projects seek funding from the three levels of government and other sponsors.

The initiatives above will begin to address some of the issues and barriers to employment identified by members of the Task Force and Working Group and the public. Additional projects will need to be identified to strategically address other issues and barriers identified in this report.

## **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

A web site was developed to provide the community at large with information on the Task Force. The web site is located at: [www.rmoc.on.ca/partners-partenaires](http://www.rmoc.on.ca/partners-partenaires). In addition, an automated telephone line was made available at: 560-6065 extension 4386 to receive questions and comments about the Task Force from the community at large.

An Interim Report was developed and distributed to the members of the Task Force and Working Group in order to obtain preliminary feedback from the various networks on the overall direction of the Task Force. In addition, the Interim Report was placed on the web site. An executive summary was developed and a fax back survey form was developed for organizations wishing to provide written feedback.

Focus groups were held with Regional staff, members of the public who expressed an interest in the Task Force, the small business sector, the Task Force on Poverty and community agencies. In addition, fourteen organizations provided written feedback. Please refer to Appendix B for details.

### **Feedback**

Overall, there was positive feedback from individuals and organizations about the mandate and direction of the work of the Task Force on Employment. We have identified and summarized the key issues that were provided by individuals and organizations. The feedback will continue to be considered throughout the action phase of Partners for Jobs. Please refer to Appendix B for details.

In general, the feedback indicated that while there was support for the strategic directions contained in the Interim Report, participants want concrete action which can be implemented in the community and which can be assessed annually. The strategic directions and priorities contained in this report will respond to the concerns about concrete, specific action which can be implemented locally.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES**

This section presents the Strategic Directions and Priorities developed by the members of the Task Force and Working Group and integrates the feedback from the individuals and organizations involved in the consultation process. In addition, the following chart presents information on the specific actions to be taken and the key partners. The Region will have the overall responsibility for the community-based Employment Strategy. It is assumed that all sectors (e.g. private and public sectors and community organizations) must have an active role in each of these Strategic Directions.

The Task Force has recommended that a Partners for Jobs Action Phase be established for a six month period effective September, 1999 - March 2000 with the Region having a leadership role to co-ordinate, chair, convene meetings, and provide the required support and resources. The Region will ensure that key partners are involved in this phase.



The Action Phase will have a mandate to strengthen the networks; to continue the focus on employment; to advise and recommend specific actions to Regional Council, Provincial and Federal governments.

The Action Phase will report on the status of the Strategic Directions and Priorities and will identify new and emerging issues/initiatives through Social Services to Community Services Committee and Regional Council.

Representation on the six month Action Phase will include organizations willing to commit to their participation.

The Action Phase will seek public and private sector funding for specific projects and initiatives and there will be a link to the Ottawa Carleton Training Board.

Each of the Strategic Directions will have a work plan established and the progress will be reported.

### **Strategic Directions and Priorities**

<b>Strategic Directions</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>
1. That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton provide the overall leadership for the comprehensive community-based Employment Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate ongoing discussions on job creation and workforce development</li>   <li>• Integrate labour force development and economic development activities</li>   <li>• Obtain Regional approval to adopt this plan</li> </ul>	Business community; community at large.  The Ottawa Partnership (TOP); community-at-large.  Regional Council.
2. That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton ensure that there is an ongoing structure for the Employment Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the six month Action Phase with broad representation.</li>   <li>• Exchange information / communication with l'Outaouais.</li>   <li>• Organize bi-annual meetings with local MPs, MPPs to discuss workforce development.</li>   <li>• Create Community Economic Development (CED) initiatives and related funding support for CED and self-employment.</li> </ul>	Region.  Region; l'Outaouais  Local politicians.  Community agencies.

Strategic Directions	Priorities	Key Partners
<p>3. That the <i>Partners for Jobs</i> continue to build on the successes of the new pilots and identify additional opportunities for new initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate discussions to identify new and emerging partnerships.</li> <li>• Implement the nine identified pilot initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>Partners; community-at-large.</p> <p>Pilot Partners.</p>
<p>4. That the <i>Partners for Jobs</i> continue to identify public policies and program rules and advocate for the necessary changes to support increased attachment to the labour force.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to identify public policies and program rules that require changes.</li> <li>• Continue to identify Ontario Works and employment related policies requiring changes.</li> <li>• Promote access to training and employment services, regardless of income source and program criteria.</li> <li>• Immediately implement the policy changes over which the Region has authority/control.</li> <li>• Lobby the Province to change the other Ontario Works policies which create barriers to employment, as identified by the Region..</li> <li>• Develop the Emergency Assistance Fund for low income persons.</li> <li>• Identify ongoing funding sources for the Emergency Assistance Fund</li> <li>• Develop the Employment Transition Fund for low income persons.</li> <li>• Develop policy proposals for employment transition supports and seek ongoing funding.</li> <li>• Develop job retention strategies.</li> <li>• Advocate for adequate funding of local Adult Education programs.</li> <li>• Review other Regional services and programs to reduce barriers to employment (e.g.: by laws, transportation, child care).</li> </ul>	<p>Partners; community-at-large.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region; Province; Federal Govt.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region; Province; Federal Govt.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region; Province; Federal Govt.</p> <p>Region; Community Reps.</p> <p>Region.</p> <p>Region.</p>

Strategic Directions	Priorities	Key Partners
5. That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton identify ways to improve the labour force information system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and implement the components of a local labour force information system.</li> <li>• Define core competencies, skills and educational requirements of current/future employment opportunities and create a centralized inventory for this information.</li> <li>• Ensure that training is tailored to meet the labour market needs.</li> </ul>	<p>Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).</p> <p>Min. of Education and Training (MET); business sector.</p> <p>MET; business sector; Community Reps.</p>
6. That the Region of Ottawa-Carleton work with the Federal and Provincial governments to support the implementation of the Employment Strategy for Ottawa-Carleton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a centralized inventory of training resources which contains outcome data related to employment.</li> <li>• Develop more opportunities for “on the job work experience” and employment placements as part of the training curriculum.</li> <li>• Identify and develop customized training requirements to meet labour market needs.</li> <li>• Develop a quality assurance program for training.</li> <li>• Strengthen links with the educational sector (universities) to promote local research related to workforce development.</li> </ul>	<p>MET.</p> <p>MET.</p> <p>Region; business and community reps.</p> <p>MET.</p> <p>Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI).</p>
7. That <i>Partners for Jobs</i> examine the role of technology to increase efficiencies related to training, labour force information, literacy, etc...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify specific opportunities to increase efficiencies and increase skill development opportunities using technology.</li> </ul>	<p>OCRI.</p>

<p>8. That the <b><i>Partners for Jobs</i></b> seek alternative funding arrangements for a range of supports to employment development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a labour force/human resource development fund accessible to all unemployed persons.</li> <li>• Assist low income persons to invest in their future employment (i.e. through Individualized Development Accounts).</li> <li>• Increase the availability of micro loan funds and other sources of financial support for new business / self employment.</li> </ul>	<p>Region; Province; Federal Govt.</p> <p>Region; community reps.</p> <p>Ottawa Economic Development (OED).</p>
<p>9. That the Region develop a public awareness campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing / promotional / public awareness strategy for workforce development.</li> </ul>	<p>Region.</p>

## Conclusions

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The Task Force and Working Group members have identified key issues and barriers related to:

- barriers to employment;
- policy barriers;
- training;
- job retention strategies;
- supports for employers and employees;
- self-employment development;
- community economic development;
- labour force development; and
- a community framework to sustain the initiative.

In addition, the Task Force has identified nine specific pilot initiatives and priority actions which address various barriers and issues related to employment. The strategies and actions seek to improve access to employment and reduce poverty in the community.

It is also important to note that this initiative has created significant linkages between the various sectors represented on the Task Force/Working Group. The members have developed new partnerships, shared ideas and expertise and collaborated on a broad range of initiatives supporting employment and labour force development.

Members have been very committed to the initiative and to working together. For example, gaps have been identified related to the existing labour market information tools. Members have benefited from the representation of three levels of government and the commitment to work together to find solutions to the issues. Members have also been able to quickly provide support for other projects external to the work of the Task Force which have an impact on employment development. For example, a commitment was made at the first Task Force meeting to provide a letter of support for the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation's engineering proposal to the Province. The initiative has recently been approved by the Province.

The Working Group and Task Force members have developed recommendations on how to sustain the momentum of this initiative. The commitment for issues related to workforce development, employment and poverty reduction are seen as a shared responsibility between all sectors of our community: employers, the public sector, community agencies, the public at large and the unemployed.

## Notes

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13. Brandon, Welfare to Wages: Strategies to Assist the Private Sector to Employ Welfare Recipients, p. 62-63.

## Appendix A      Projection: Employment by Industry in Ottawa-Carleton

Industry	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	From 1999 - 2003
Primary	5,900	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,100	3.39%
Manufacturing	40,700	42,800	44,100	44,900	45,700	12.29%
Construction	23,300	23,800	23,700	24,200	24,500	5.15%
Utilities	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,900	1,900	5.56%
Transportation, Storage & Communication	35,500	36,600	37,600	38,500	39,400	10.99%
Trade	79,400	81,700	83,600	85,400	87,200	9.82%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	27,300	27,900	28,300	28,800	29,200	6.96%
Commercial Services	141,400	145,200	148,500	151,600	154,700	9.41%
Non Commercial Services	96,800	97,900	99,400	101,300	103,100	6.51%
Public Administration and Defence	108,900	112,000	115,100	118,200	121,200	11.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>561,000</b>	<b>575,700</b>	<b>588,100</b>	<b>600,800</b>	<b>613,000</b>	<b>9.27%</b>

Source: Conference Board of Canada

## **Appendix B      Consultation Feedback**

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### **Barriers to Employment**

The following barriers to employment have been identified:

- not enough job creation;
- work related supports, (e.g. child care, transportation, telephones, housing);
- housing is critical for personal empowerment, as a prerequisite to stable and secure labour force participation and as job creation opportunities;
- lack of high school education;
- lack of adequate intervention and support to help “students at risk” stay in school;
- lack of bridge between school and the workplace, more support needed for “work rooms”;
- literacy and access to technology as a learning tool;
- inadequate levels of adult education resources; English as a second language (ESL), French as a second language (FSL) and basic skill development programs and services;
- inadequate levels of work-related, vocational, language skill development;
- additional mentoring/job shadowing/employment/co-op placements are required;
- lack of work skills and work experience;
- lack of understanding of the Canadian work culture;
- changing nature of jobs: part-time, contractual, some jobs that do not offer benefit plans;
- increasing requirement for bilingualism, particularly for service related positions;
- lack of career related supports (e.g. advisors);
- difficulties and confusion related to various assessment, regulatory and professional requirements;
- accreditation and certification of foreign trained professionals;
- lack of recognition for individuals who are foreign trained, have educational attainment from another country and lack “Canadian” work experience;
- lack of fair assessment and recognition of prior learning ( knowledge and skills from study and experience acquired in Canada or abroad);



- problems related to employment equity, equal opportunity or other special measures which address the situation of those with special needs /challenges (e.g., equity groups, francophones, youth, older workers);
- lack of physical site accommodation for the disabled (e.g., training facilities and workplaces);
- insufficient funding for sign language interpreters, inadequate supply of interpreters;
- lack of central access point for information on technical aids and adaptive services;
- inadequate transportation system for people with disabilities;
- limited access to attendant care/personal assistance in the workplace for people with disabilities;
- attitudinal barriers limit opportunities for people with disabilities;
- different barriers for visible minorities;
- difficulties related to immigration status, particularly for youth, immigration policies;
- cycle of dependency, tools needed to break the cycle;
- systemic and structural barriers to employment such as prejudice, racism, sexism, ageism;
- lack of social networks for newcomers;
- issues related to mental health and abuse and the need for adequate support services;
- lack of adequate support for single parents and parenting support as an investment in society;
- lack of adequate, ongoing resources for both individuals and groups re: employment services and employment support; and
- complexity in funding requirements and funding administration.

## **Training**

The following issues related to training have been identified:

- lack of customized training, skills upgrading and shared training resources for small/medium businesses;
- there is no single point of access/service related to training for francophones;
- structural changes to the future funding and delivery of training;
- increasing costs to pursue post secondary education (e.g., OSAP issues), particularly for single parents;
- lack of a federal and provincial agreement on training;

- inadequate volume and types of placements, co-ops, internships, apprenticeships available in the community;
- links to employers are needed;
- lack of adequate assessment/standards for training;
- links between the Task Force and the Ottawa-Carleton Training Board are needed;
- the training approval process is not known by clients;
- lack of flexibility to design and develop training to meet the needs of clients;
- equity group members are rejected for some training as a result of their literacy and/or communication skills;
- lack of “gradual ongoing training” that would allow client access to entry-level positions but with an expectation that second or third level of training would be provided on the job and allow progress;
- access to computers is an issue if you are taking computer training;
- lack of long-distance training options with community supports in place;
- limited access to training for low-income families;
- over-stated skills/training requirements from employers;
- lack of basic competencies, basic literacy training;
- ensure that participation in training is voluntary and that individuals have choices;
- ensure that the training, trainers, the tools (hardware and software) are up-to date and not obsolete; and
- access to publicly funded training and employment services is too restrictive.

## **Supports to Employers/Employees**

The following issues related to supports to employers/employees have been identified:

- alternative types of wage subsidies could be considered - e.g., providing the wage subsidies directly to the employee, similar to the new direction for training funding;
- lack of job upgrading and career advancement opportunities;
- free up investment funds to create jobs and allow self-employment;
- employers need employees to be job-ready, literate and have appropriate work-related skills; and
- tax relief to employers if new jobs are created.

## **Self-Employment Development**

The following issues related to self-employment development have been identified:

- networking forums are an important mechanism to support business development;
- mentoring opportunities are needed to address growth issues with all business sectors;
- not enough links with the Ottawa Economic Development Corporation;
- no distinction between different types of employment (e.g., insurable job versus self-employment where you have no benefits);
- need for short term return on investment to start a small business;
- lack of information on established funding sources, marketing networks -- Entrepreneurship Centre could assist;
- need measures to demystify entrepreneurship, self-employment that does not require a large investment;
- lack of micro-loan credit, access to a fund to support the creation of micro-credits;
- increase the number of loans available (e.g., “Fonds Solide” in Quebec);
- lack of an “association” for self-employed workers to obtain/purchase benefits;
- “incubateur d’entreprise” required;
- link with the national initiative which is looking at the issue of employment insurance for self-employed workers; and
- free up investment funds to create jobs and allow self employment.

## Other General Comments

- There was an interest in developing additional partnerships/pilots with the health sector, the educational sectors and adult high schools.
- There were suggestions that the Region needs to have a role in the following areas: enforcing aspects of labour law (e.g., employers who discriminate); providing short-term temporary placements; giving priority to social assistance clients for the summer employment program; educating the general public and politicians about the reality of social assistance, under-employment and poverty; demonstrating leadership by changing policies and identifying ideas to produce revenues.
- There were suggestions that Ontario Works participants could be recruited by the Provincial and Federal levels of government similar to the Region's initiative, that some of the federal Employment Insurance fund could be provided to create opportunities for recipients and that statistics related to the level of unemployment and poverty levels are not realistic. Suggestions were also identified the need for further analysis related to the financial impact and tax revenue losses that result from unemployment and underemployment.
- There was a suggestion that the Region or the Ottawa Carleton Training Board co-ordinate an environmental scan of the area to identify the needs and the demographics of the community.
- There were several suggestions related to the need for a public education/awareness campaign which would follow the release of the report, highlight the findings, profile the abilities and skills of the unemployed, the under-employed and social assistance clients. The campaign should focus on the value of hiring the unemployed, supporting the under-employed and the wealth of experience, education, skills and motivation that people have.
- There were several suggestions made regarding the next phase of the Task Force. One suggestion was to include a representative from Immigration Canada and the Provincial Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation because of the issues related to assessment and accreditation. Another suggestion is to invite a representative from the co-operative sector to be involved. There should also be more representation from people living in poverty.
- There was a suggestion that the pilots need to be provided with financial assistance to ensure that various barriers are reduced and/or eliminated for the participants (e.g., child care, transportation, health care).
- There were suggestions that the roles of Regional staff in Social Services are changing towards more of a focus on employment and that we need to ensure that staff have appropriate training and support and that workloads can support the new role and responsibility.
- There were suggestions that the Action Phase needs to be community driven (by the unemployed and individuals living in poverty).

## **Feedback on the Pilots**

The following suggestions were provided on the specific pilots identified in the report:

- foreign trained teachers must have the skills equivalent to Canadian trained teachers. The Faculty(ies) of Education and/or the College of Teachers should be added to the partners. The problems are partly due to the recognition of learning experience (their training may not be equivalent) and the language training — possible solution: appropriate training session + training course + language test;
- focus one aspect of the bio-tech pilot on youth; look for ways to encourage the establishment of new ventures in the chemical; biotech and pharmaceutical sectors;
- strong support for the Hidden Skills Project;
- focus one aspect of the Computers in the Community pilot on youth;
- ensure that there are supports for the participants of the Work Skills Project, that the participants are not used as free labour and sensitize trainers to the individual needs of the participants by providing special needs awareness training;
- link the Youth at Risk Pilot with the Biotech Project and the Computers in the Community projects to prepare youth for jobs that will be available in the future. Develop a public relations/media project to seek donations from the public to create employment projects as an alternative for squeegee kids and youth panhandlers; and
- home support workers need to be trained and recognized as professional partners in the overall case management.

## **Feedback from Small Business**

- Tax situation has to change.
- Literacy, grooming, work related skills, interpersonal skills are issues.
- Small businesses can't afford to advertise positions.
- Small employers need people to be "job ready", employers have to be "employee ready".
- Support for wage subsidies required.
- Need to focus on the retail sector - establish a Retail Human Resources Group.
- Need to involve the employer sector.
- The Region needs to market its Social Services programs and clients.
- Need to develop a link between the Region and the Board of Trade for Social Services issues.

- Board of Trade could set up parallel groups in key priority sectors.

### **Written Feedback**

The following organizations provided written feedback on the Interim Report:

- the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (nine centres represented);
- Carleton University: Office of the Dean, Public Affairs;
- Carleton University: Management and the Centre for the Study of Training, Investment and Economic Restructuring;
- Carleton University: Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program;
- Ministry of Community and Social Services: Employment Supports Systems Manager;
- Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario;
- University of Ottawa: Office of the Vice-Rector;
- Waterloo's Opportunities 2000 (two submissions);
- Saint John Human Development Council;
- National Visible Minority Council on Labour Force Development (two submissions);
- Algonquin College: President's Office;
- Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française;
- École des adultes Le Carrefour; and
- Association of Somali Teachers of Ottawa-Carleton.

### **Focus Groups**

- Approximately 80 staff from the Region of Ottawa-Carleton participated in focus groups related to the Task Force on Employment and the initiatives within the Community Funding and Employment Development Division. An operational work plan which identifies the staff suggestions has been developed for the Region.
- Members of The Task Force on Poverty were involved in a focus group.
- The Board of Trade organized a focus group with the small business sector - seven members participated.
- Two focus groups were held with members of the public - seven participated.
- One focus group was organized for the community agencies - approximately 20 people participated.

## **Appendix C      Summary of Current Region of Ottawa-Carleton Employment Development Initiatives**

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This section provides a brief description of the various employment development initiatives which have been initiated by or in partnership with the Region. These programs are primarily targeted to people receiving Ontario Works benefits.

### **1. Painter-Decorator Program**

The objective of this program is to provide youth with a pre-apprenticeship training program leading to full apprenticeship and paid employment. Partners include: municipalities of Kanata, Goulbourn, West-Carleton, Ministry of Education and Training, the Painting Institute, the Youth Employment Resource Centre, HRDC and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

### **2. Food Beverage Program**

The objective of this program is to provide youth with industry specific training and paid employment, with a six month wage subsidy to employers in the food and beverage sector. Partners include: the Youth Services Bureau, the Youth Employment Resource Centre, La Cité, Algonquin College, the Tourism and Convention Authority and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

### **3. Call Centre**

The objective of this program is to provide flexible work opportunities in a call centre company which provides a range of marketing, survey and sales services. Partners include: TeleMark Call Centre and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

### **4. Community Economic Development**

The objective of this initiative is to provide services and economic opportunities to francophone, visible minority women facing multiple barriers to employment. Cashier training and development of a samosa entreprise are in progress. Partners include: Centre d'intégration, de formation et de développement économique and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

### **5. The Region of Ottawa-Carleton**

There are two initiatives which are being developed by the Region, as an employer. The first initiative is related to Administration-Clerical Services. The objective of this initiative is to encourage and support social assistance clients to apply for administrative support positions within the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

The second initiative is related to Skills Shortages. The objective of this initiative is to identify current and future skills shortages within various Region of Ottawa-

Carleton Departments and to identify potential employment opportunities for social assistance clients.

## **6. Customer Service Training**

The objective of this initiative is to provide customer service training opportunities for social assistance clients to become employed in the financial/customer service sectors. Partners include: a training provider, a financial institution and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

## **7. Mature Student High School Equivalency Assessment**

The objective of this initiative is to provide an assessment/evaluation of past earned credits, training and experience for mature students. Partners include: the Ottawa - Carleton District School Board/Adult High School and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

It is important to note that the Region is continuously engaged in a process to identify, develop and implement a range of employment development programs to respond to the needs of social assistance clients. Staff are currently working with several employers to: define their recruiting requirements, develop profiles of core competencies and skills, identify customized short-term training which will respond to recruitment and job retention issues.

Front-line staff play a critical role in assessing and referring clients to training and employment development initiatives. During the past two years, the role of front-line staff has continued to change from a focus on financial eligibility determination to a focus on assessment and supporting clients to become employed.



## Appendix D Task Force - Working Group Membership

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### Task Force

**John Kelly (Co-Chair)**  
JetForm Corporation

**Andrée Lortie (Co-Chair)**  
La Cité collégiale  
Francophone community

Peter Becke  
Nortel Networks

Nick Mulder  
Mulder Management Assoc.

Michel Bilodeau  
Sisters of Charity Health Services

Larry O'Brien  
Calian Technology Ltd.

Cliff Gazee  
Task Force on Poverty

Heidi Webster  
Cartier Place & Towers

Andrew Jackson  
Canadian Labour Congress

David Welch  
Social Planning Council

Andy Kusi-Appiah  
Recent Immigrant Communities

### Working Group

**Dick Stewart (Chair)**  
Region of Ottawa-Carleton, Social Services

Brian Barge /  
Caroline Robertson (alternate)  
Ottawa Economic Development Corp.  
  
Colette Brisson-Lacroix  
Le Forum francophone permanent sur  
l'employabilité de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton

Colleen Hendrick  
Region of Ottawa-Carleton, Social Services

Johanne Lacombe  
Regroupement des gens d'affaires

Ken Lawless  
Ottawa Life Science Council

Linda Capperauld  
Region of Ottawa-Carleton, Social Services

Gail Logan  
Ottawa Board of Trade

Ken Clavette  
Ottawa District Labour Council

Alex Munter  
Regional Council, Community Services  
Committee

Bill Collins  
Gary Bishop (alternate)  
Ottawa Centre for Research & Innovation

Sherri Torjman  
Caledon Institute of Social Policy

Louise Crandall  
Ottawa Tourism & Convention Authority

Mengistab Tsegaye  
Local Agencies Serving Immigrants

Peggy Feltmate  
Ginette Desmarais (alternate)  
Coalition of Community Health and Resources  
Centres

Dave Watchorn  
Ottawa-Carleton Training Board

Cliff Gazee  
Linda Lalonde (alternate)  
Task Force on Poverty

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Kie Delgaty (Provincial Resource  
Representative)  
Ministry of Education and Training

Cheryl Gorman  
Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation –  
Education Rep

Yves Vaillancourt (Federal Resource  
Representative)  
Ottawa Human Resource Centre Canada

# Table of Contents

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<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
Initiatives Supporting Labour Force Development	4
Our Community	8
Local Employment Profile	9
Local Profile: Social Assistance, Disability And Employment Insurance Recipients	10
Financial Impact Of Employment And Investment In People	13
<b>Issue Identification</b>	<b>14</b>
Barriers To Employment	14
Policy Barriers	15
Labour Force Information	17
Training	18
Job Retention Strategies	19
Supports For Employers And Employees	19
Self-Employment Development	20
Community Economic Development	20
Labour Force Development	21
Community Framework	22
<b>Employment Strategy</b>	<b>23</b>
Pilot Project Initiatives	23
Consultation Process	28
Strategic Directions And Priorities	29
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix A Projection: Employment by Industry in Ottawa-Carleton</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix B Consultation Feedback</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix C Summary of Current Region of Ottawa-Carleton Employment Development Initiatives</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix D Task Force - Working Group Membership</b>	<b>46</b>