

2011

October 27 Meeting

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[YOUTH PARTNERSHIP PLAN]

This report captures the common themes from two reports published in May 2011 by the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin and the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board.

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INTRODUCTION

In May of 2011, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin released the Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Youth Employment Study. The purpose of the study was to better understand how best to facilitate linking youth with service providers and employers with the objective of increasing employment rates among the younger population.

At the same time, the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board released Electronic Youth: Creating the Current. This study looked at the electronic connection of youth to the labour market examining issues such as “How are youth seeking employment?”, “What electronic resources are they using?”, “How do they share labour market information?”, “How do employers use electronic sources successfully to hire employees?”, and “What attracts youth to a job posting?”

There were a wide variety of partners involved in each of the project steering committees. The Waterloo Wellington Dufferin steering committee included representatives from the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, Georgian College, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, Lutherwood, Conestoga College, wnd Chance Employment Counselling, Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region, Our Place Youth Centre, John Howard Society, City of Guelph Economic Development and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. The Electronic Youth study steering committee was comprised of representatives from the London Economic Development Corporation, Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Hamilton Training Advisory Board, Workforce WindsorEssex, Simcoe Muskoka Workforced Development Board, Emerging Leaders London and the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board. With such broad representation between the two studies, the studies were able to capture the concerns of youth and employers. The Waterloo Wellington Dufferin study also captured the concerns of service providers, giving a well-rounded picture of youth employment issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REPORTS

There were a total of 19 recommendations from the two reports that were reviewed at a meeting at the office of the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin. Those in attendance identified common themes and recommendations, grouping them into 8 clusters. The clusters were identified as:

Supports for employers

- Work with employers to inform them about the importance of providing adequate job orientation and training for youth as a way of fostering good relations and ensuring that employer/employee workplace expectations are communicated and understood.
- Work with employers to encourage the use of more user-friendly job posting and recruitment practices.
- Work with employers to inform them about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and how to integrate people with disabilities in their workforce. Also provide employers with support in developing/enhancing their human resource skills in relation to interacting with youth.
- Employers must be aware (*that youth look for*) education in the office. This is not just job training but further professional development that extends beyond the workplace.

Understanding the others' needs and expectations

- Help to educate employers and youth about each other's needs and expectations.
- To create transparency, youth have indicated that specific qualifications, detailed job description and job requirements are important when considering a job posting. Conversely, youth transparency is created when the appropriate information is submitted when applying, with the young applicant having read and understood the skills needed and ensuring they meet all the requirements.
- Employers have to understand that youth may take opportunities that will help them reach their goals and employees have to be appreciative of the chances that there are given and show commitment by acting professionally, working hard and taking initiative.
- Employers must be aware (*that youth look for*) education in the office. This is not just job training but further professional development that extends beyond the workplace.

Supports for youth

- Support one-on-one counselling activities in employment service agencies including counselling to help youth deal with life skills development and emotional issues.
- It is important that youth have guidance in their job search.
- Teach youth at younger ages to keep track of labour market information.

- Technology is only one in a number of steps through the process. Youth must realize that while using electronic communication is important, networking and face to face interaction is still an integral part of seeking employment.

Experiential learning

- More experiential learning opportunities are needed as well as greater awareness of those that exist.

Accessibility

- Facilitate greater accessibility to programs by relaxing/removing some of the program entry requirements.
- Facilitate greater accessibility to the service agency by exploring and supporting different transportation options for youth
- Facilitate greater accessibility to services by partnering with other existing service agencies in small communities and offer select employment service programming through their facility.
- Encourage job fair coordinators to host the events in spacious settings to facilitate better access and mobility for the attendants.

Marketing the use of social media to do job search ***(Note: this action is already being developed in the Elgin Middlesex Oxford area with a train-the-trainer program that will be shared with interested parties in the Waterloo Wellington Dufferin area)***

- Youth in our survey showed that most, if they do share information about jobs, do it by email.
- It is recommended that at an early age through traditional education or through community initiated programs that youth are educated on social media use for labour market purposes.

Opportunities to learn about careers

- It may be important for employers and employment assistance services to focus marketing towards parents and educators.

Government funding of programs and services – local focus

MOVING FORWARD

In reviewing the clusters, it was determined that the **Support for Employers** theme would be the most beneficial for a collaborative action to be initiated across the region during 2012-2013. The other themes of Accessibility, Understanding the others' needs and expectations, Support for youth, and Marketing the use of social media to do job search will be undertaken as opportunities are presented. The addition themes of Experiential learning, Opportunities to learn about careers and Government funding of programs and services are underlying themes that will continue to support the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken as collaborative action across the region.

Recommended actions:

For 2012-2013

1. WPBWWD and EOMWPDB partner to create an environmental scan of supports for employers currently available across the western region of the province.
2. Form a steering committee drawn from across the region to determine the series of actions that will be developed to provide the necessary information to employers to enable them to effectively find and retain the younger workers within our local communities.

APPENDIX 1 Full List of Recommendations From Both Reports

Recommendations from Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Youth Employment Study

1. Facilitate greater accessibility to programs by relaxing/removing some of the program entry requirements. For example, remove the Grade 12 diploma entry requirements for programs or at least remove the requirement for youth with disabilities.
2. Facilitate greater accessibility to the service agency by exploring and supporting different transportation options for youth (e.g. providing bus tokens or gas vouchers, coordinating car pooling, etc.).
3. Facilitate greater accessibility to services by partnering with other existing service agencies in small communities and offer select employment service programming through their facility.
4. Support one-on-one counselling activities in employment service agencies including counselling to help youth deal with life skills development and emotional issues.
5. Help to educate employers and youth about each other's needs and expectations.
6. Work with employers to educate them about the importance of providing adequate job orientation and training for youth as a way of fostering good relations and ensuring that employer/employee workplace expectations are communicated and understood.
7. Work with employers to encourage the use of more user-friendly job posting and recruitment practices (e.g. if collecting job applications through the Internet do not make it feel like a test and allow the applicant to expand on questions if they want to provide context, be sure to conduct follow-up calls or return calls if you make the offer).
8. Work with employers to educate them about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and how to integrate people with disabilities in their workforce. Also provide employers with support in developing/enhancing their human resource skills in relation to interacting with youth.
9. Encourage job fair coordinators to host the events in spacious settings to facilitate better access and mobility for the attendants. Encourage business representatives at job fairs to have detailed information available on the work duties and activities associated with the positions they are hiring for.

Recommendations from Electronic Youth: Creating the Current

10. It is important that youth have guidance in their job search. Many youth that were interviewed were often confused or misunderstood different aspects of the job search process. While educators, parents and friends can be helpful it would be pertinent to have someone who is involved in the job searching process.
11. Youth in our survey showed that most, if they do share information about jobs, do it by email. It can be deciphered that this occurs because many job postings offer an "email this to a friend" option. It can be recommended that employers or job sharing sites may want to consider offering (if not already as some do) not just the email option but social media options as well.
12. Teach youth at younger ages to keep track of labour market information: what industries are on the rise, where are the jobs going to be in five years, how they can diversify themselves and what exact qualifications they need.

13. Technology is only one in a number of steps through the process. Youth must realize that while using electronic communication is important, networking and face to face interaction is still an integral part of seeking employment.
14. It is recommended that at an early age through traditional education or through community initiated programs that youth are educated on social media use for labour market purposes.
15. To create transparency, youth have indicated that specific qualifications, detailed job description and job requirements are important when considering a job posting. Conversely, youth transparency is created when the appropriate information is submitted when applying, with the young applicant having read and understood the skills needed and ensuring they meet all the requirements.
16. More experiential learning opportunities are needed as well as greater awareness of those that exist.
17. Employers have to understand that youth may take opportunities that will help them reach their goals and employees have to be appreciative of the chances that there are given and show commitment by acting professionally, working hard and taking initiative.
18. Employers must be aware of the need to provide education in the office. This is not just job training but further professional development that extends beyond the workplace.
19. It may be important for employers and employment assistance services to focus marketing towards parents and educators.