

## Overview of “EXPERIENCE WORKS” Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Program MJTST Program delivered in Revelstoke 2014 – OKANAGAN COLLEGE

### **Program Summary:**

Okanagan College proposes to deliver the Experience Works program in Revelstoke and prepare older workers for new and immediate employment. Based on five years of successful experience delivering the Experience Works program in Revelstoke, Okanagan College can state with confidence that the program increases the employability of older workers and ensures they remain active and productive in the labour market. Okanagan College continually consults with community partners to ensure our program is current and meets the local labour market needs.

Experience Works combines relevant, hands on and practical skill training for older workers with community outreach activities. These activities promote and inform various employment sectors about the benefits associated with an older demographic of workers enhancing their opportunity to find employment. The program is marketed to the eligible older worker and promoted via our community partnerships.

Over two years, Experience Works will provide support to six groups of eight unemployed in our community between the ages of 55 – 64. Experience Works is a sixteen weeks program with participants receiving a minimum of 25 hours/week of programming for twelve weeks. The expected results include five of the eight participants in each intakes will be employed or self-employed within three months of their program end date. The program will provide participants with an increase in their employability, literacy, confidence, employment skill training, labour market knowledge and access to local resources.

Experience Works begins with two weeks of personal development in a group setting. This allows the participants to benefit greatly from the support network associated with team work, increase their confidence and develop a support network. During this time, Okanagan College will provide each individual with the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES). The TOWES assessment results provide participants and staff with the opportunity to determine the supports required for individual participants to achieve success. As appropriate, participants will be referred to Okanagan College’s Centre of Learning and/or to the College’s Adult Academic and Career Preparation Instructor to conduct an initial academic skills assessment which will be used to recommend a plan for academic upgrading. Upgrading is currently tuition free and participants will be encouraged to utilize this resource if it fits with their employment goals. The group will also be provided with workshops that include information on stress management, wellness and coping skills to benefit them throughout their job search.

Following the personal development group workshops, Experience Works provides two weeks of computer literacy/fundamental training for all participants. Again, based on our experience many older individuals are uncomfortable using computers, and low computer skills can be a significant barrier for an older worker’s ability to be successful in the current technology based world. Past participant evaluations of Experience Works frequently identify the computer training as one of the most beneficial components of the program.

Following the computer training, Experience Works moves into specific skills training. The training provided will vary depending upon the client’s identified employment goals. Okanagan

College recognizes the importance of not saturating a vulnerable labour market with too many individuals holding similar certificates, and the College also recognizes that some participants may be interested in training for employment in other areas of British Columbia. Okanagan College has the ability and resources to provide a variety of training options to meet the participant's employment goals. Participants will choose the certificates that best fit their employment goals in consultation with the Program Coordinator. For an example of a list of available certificates see Appendix A.

The certificates Okanagan College has identified are consistent with community labour market need as supported by the City of Revelstoke's Sustainability Action Plan 2013 (<http://bc Revelstoke.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1104>). The report indicates that between April – November 2012, Work BC Revelstoke advertised 555 hospitality, 207 trades, 90 office and professional and 57 retail positions. Certificate training such as Food safe, WHMIS and First Aid combined with computer training and customer service training help participants in develop the skills required to meet Revelstoke's labour market demands.

The Experience Works program concludes with a number job search and employment success workshops. For this proposal, Okanagan College partnered with WCG to provide job search and employment success workshops. WCG also operates the Revelstoke Work BC office. They will provide two weeks of workshops including Career Assessment (Intro to Strong Interest inventory and on-line completion of the assessment), personal planning and goal setting, time management/organizational skills, the Unemployment Rollercoaster, identifying employability skills/, resumes, cover letters, effective references, self marketing, networking, interview skills, informational interviewing, job leads, the hidden job market and effective workplace behavior.

Throughout the program, speakers from the business/employer community will be invited to provide information about various employment fields, and service providers will be invited to provide information about resources and programs available within our community.

Okanagan College recognizes the need for support to allow individuals to come in and speak with someone about their personal circumstances, needs and career plans. This aspect of our program is aligned with local evidence provided in the City of Revelstoke's Sustainability Action Plan 2013. The plan states that, "Most individuals who are not working experience multiple barriers to being successful full-time employees, including life skills challenges, substance abuse, mental health issues, lack of experience or training and limited transportation and child care options" (p.7).

A significant portion of our program will include individual support from Okanagan College staff. Each participant will meet with staff a minimum of once each week. Staff will support participants in exploring employment opportunities and refer them to additional community resources to address multiple barriers to employment.

Okanagan College staff will work diligently with the program participants and employers in our community to find employment opportunities for program participants. If a participant or staff member is able to find employment for the participant, Okanagan College will enter into a wage subsidy agreement with the employer. The program will end with individual follow-ups with each participant and continued support in finding employment. If additional support is required, Okanagan College will refer the participant to the employment center or another appropriate service provider.

### **Project Objectives:**

1. To support unemployed individuals ages 55 – 64 in increasing their employability in today's labour market.
2. To increase the participants' self-awareness and support them in developing a detailed and personal career plan.
3. To support the individual in their personal development including building self-confidence while enhancing their communication and conflict resolution skills.
4. To provide each participant with access to the TOWES to ensure that the program supports we provide are appropriate and set each participant up for success.
5. To refer program participants for a Skills Assessment conducted by a qualified Okanagan College Adult Academic and Career Preparation Instructor and provide individuals with opportunities to upgrade.
6. To provide participants with specific certificates including. See Appendix A for a list of possible certificates.
7. To provide participants with workshops designed to enhance their employability including resume writing, interview skills, job search skills and labour market information.
8. To provide participants with information about community resources through guest speakers in the classroom.
9. To provide participants with individual support throughout the program.
10. To provide program participants with the opportunity to gain work experience by participating in a wage subsidy or work experience.
11. To provide program participants with individual follow-up and support following their wage subsidy to enable them to secure employment following the program.
12. To market the program and older workers to our local employers and business community with the goal of assisting program participants in securing employment.
13. To refer program participants to the employment centre for appropriate employment interventions as necessary.
14. To provide information to the employer community about the benefits associated with hiring an older worker.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Courses / Workshops / Certificates**

#### **Computers / Social Media**

- Computer Literacy
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- WordPress Websites
- Social Media Basics (Google, Facebook, LinkedIn)

#### **Customer Service / Employment Workshops**

- WorldHost
- FoodSafe
- Customer Sales & Support
- Managing Performance
- Communication Skills / Conflict Resolution
- Working in Teams
- Creating and Updating Resumes and Cover letters.
- Being Adaptable
- Career Planning / Career Cruising
- Labour Market Research
- Interview Skills / Post Interview Follow-up
- Personal Planning and Goal Setting
- Accepting, Starting and Maintaining Employment
- Unemployment Roller Coaster
- Mock Interviews

#### Adult Education / Essential Skills

- AACP (Adult Academic Career Preparation) – English/Math
- TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills)

#### Vocational Training

- Occupational First Aid – Level 1 & Transportation Endorsement
- Occupational First Aid – Level 3
- Standard First Aid
- Emergency Childcare First Aid
- Air Brakes Endorsement
- WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems)
- H2S Alive
- Traffic Control Certification
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods
- Chainsaw ENFORM Certificate
- Ground Disturbance / Fire Suppression

#### Certificates

- Basic Accounting Certificate
- Simply Accounting Certificate
- Introduction to Office Administration