



# SKILLSFORSUCCESS INITIATIVES SERVICE DELIVERY PILOTS 2023/24

## CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

From 2022 to 2024, Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program received federal funding to undertake projects in support of Canada's Skills for Success (SFS) framework.

Resource development and/or service delivery pilots were funded under five initiatives:

- **Supporting Underrepresented Groups;**
- **Supporting Apprenticeship Integration;**
- **Supporting Better Jobs Ontario Integration;**
- **Workplace Literacy;** and
- **Expanding and Enhancing Digital Delivery.**

Projects were designed in accordance with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).

**The goals of SFS initiatives are:**

- to support ongoing LBS program development objectives by building capacity across cultural streams and delivery sectors;
- to strengthen LBS employment and apprenticeship outcomes;
- to integrate LBS services into the broader workforce development system; and
- to enhance and expand blended and fully distance learning opportunities.



## CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

**PROGRAM: SAULT COLLEGE ACADEMIC UPGRADING**

**SECTOR: COLLEGE**    **CULTURAL STREAM: ANGLOPHONE**

**INITIATIVE: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS** (Indigenous Apprenticeship & Trades Exploration)

### GOALS

- Goal is to **bring all Service Providers together** to provide updates on current program and stay "in the know" on supports offered in the community for apprentices, job seekers, or potential students
- **Overview** of all current apprenticeship support services provided by community partners
- **Ongoing partnership development and continuation of the Apprenticeship Hub** to streamline referrals between programs and ability to determine best path for individuals based on their current needs (education, apprenticeship registration support, academic upgrading, etc.)

We wanted a project that would increase participants' self-awareness of career expectations, trades and apprenticeship demands, and financial stability/needs while also developing their soft skills as identified through the Skills for Success project.

Furthermore, we hoped to increase the number of people prepared to enter and succeed in pre-trades/pre-

apprenticeship and any required LBS training to meet academic entrance requirements.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- 1) Working closely with Employment Service Providers and having signed releases so participants can be effectively case managed and supported together. Once career goals and expectations are clarified, this assists with the transition to job search as Employment Service Providers have the employer connections in the community.
- 2) Including signed releases with Ontario Works clients to effectively case manage; participants may have a better relationship or more familiarity with LBS/OW Case Manager and this can assist with retention knowing they have a full wrap-around support system or "team" encouraging them to achieve their goals.



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## CASE STUDY

**PROGRAM: SAULT COLLEGE ACADEMIC UPGRADING**

**SECTOR: COLLEGE CULTURAL STREAM: INDIGENOUS**

**INITIATIVE: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS** (Indigenous Apprenticeship & Trades Exploration)

### SNAPSHOT

#### SKILLS FOR SUCCESS FOR APPRENTICESHIP & TRADES EXPLORATION -- UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS -- INDIGENOUS

Location: Sault College, Sault Ste Marie, ON

# of Participants: 17 participants

Target audience: Local area Indigenous peoples interested in trades and apprenticeship; Ontario Works clients;

Partners involved: Ontario Works, Employment Solutions, Academic Upgrading, Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation

# of intake planned: 10

Still in progress to end of March 2024

### REASON FOR PROJECT

During our 2022 Phase 1 SFS Apprenticeship pilot research (funded through the MidNorth Network), we learned that many adults lacked the skills and experience needed to enter and follow through with essential training and meaningful employment, or, once employed, lack the ability to thrive in the work environment. Furthermore, these issues were identified:

- 1) Limited time, funding, and/or participation in career exploration and planning to discover suitable training and employment opportunities (especially those experiencing poverty, addictions, mental health issues).
- 2) Limited access to (or are unaware of) career planning programs or support available (especially in smaller communities and rural areas of the Algoma District).
- 3) Frequently make hasty, coerced, or uninformed decisions around employment and training that lead to dropping out of training programs or leaving employment.
- 4) Lack awareness of training or career expectations, as well as workplace demands and are not able to or willing to meet those expectations.
- 5) Lack various soft skills needed for success in training, education, employment
- 6) Lack of suitable reading and numeracy skills for pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training
- 7) High turnover/stop out of participants due to lack of preparation and supports

Furthermore, Sault Ste Marie does not have a clear, centralized approach to promoting trades and apprenticeship awareness, delivering trades and apprenticeship exploration programs, and preparing individuals for entrance into trades and apprenticeship.

We wanted a project that would increase participants' self-awareness of career expectations, trades and apprenticeship demands, and financial stability/needs while also developing their soft skills as identified through the Skills for Success project. Furthermore, we hoped to increase the number of people prepared to enter and succeed in pre-trades/pre-apprenticeship and any required LBS training to meet academic entrance requirements.

1) Participants had the opportunity to work through several modules that walked them through career exploration to generate career ideas they may be a fit for, how to navigate the Skilled Trades Ontario website, education or training requirements, identifying any skills gaps they possess and could acquire, and labour market information (wage, employers they may be interested in working for, etc.). The final module was completed with the Project Coordinator and provided them with an Apprenticeship Plan for a chosen trade, outlining their next steps.

One interested participant attended a tour of Tenaris (pipe manufacturer) for exposure to an industrial environment.

2) Partnered with Ontario Works to improve soft skills in participants.

3) Partnered with Employment Service Provider to clarify career goals and expectations working in the trades.

4) Participants were provided the opportunity to make informed longer-term plans and decisions with clear goals and steps to achieve them.

5) Exposure to the physical post-secondary environment in a non-stressful manner to familiarize themselves with the College lay out and classroom style.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Choosing the appropriate intake assessment (used Soft Skills Self-Assessment for the Trades) to alleviate intake bottlenecks. The more comprehensive ESEE (Skillsmarker) assessment was not deemed appropriate for this specific SFS stream as participants with an interest in the trades tend to be more hands-on learners, with on-the-job training preferred vs. academically-focused preparation at this time.

In-class time was provided in addition to the delivery of the modules asynchronously, but participants preferred to work one-on-one through the modules for additional support.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

1) Working closely with Employment Service Providers and having signed releases so participants can be effectively case managed and supported together. Once career goals and expectations are clarified, this assists with the transition to job search as Employment Service Providers have the employer connections in the community.

2) Including signed releases with Ontario Works clients to effectively case manage; participants may have a better relationship or more familiarity with LBS/OW Case Manager and this can assist with retention knowing they have a full wrap-around support system or "team" encouraging them to achieve their goals. Ontario Works offers the Building Maintenance and Construction program and this was proven to be an effective pipeline for both referrals in and out as an introduction to the construction trades. The 2 programs together covered both soft/essential skills training through SFS, in combination with the hands-on technical piece that Ontario Works provides.

## **FUTURE IMPACT POTENTIAL**

A) Due to the challenges starting the pilot (hiring staff issues) and turnover within the various organizations, we were not able to further build upon our relationships with both Batchewana First Nation and Garden River First Nation. We would love to continue our work and hope to do some of that through our additional pilot project--The Apprenticeship Hub.

B) With funding from the MidNorth Network's pilot, we implemented (in February 2024) the Sault Ste Marie Apprenticeship Hub which is intended to further develop into a centralized information gathering group. The intent is to develop a website and/or document targeting community members interested in the trades or apprenticeship who have no idea where to start or do not currently have supports in place to guide them through career exploration, career planning and preparation process, training program or apprenticeship application processes, etc.

C) This program would continue to educate those individuals who may be far removed from the trades, but have a general interest in learning more about what is required to enter the trades or how to register as an apprentice. The final module (Apprenticeship Plan), provides a clear path to what their next steps should be if they choose to pursue the trade they have decided they are most interested in.

The completion of free programming can act as a personal milestone in participants' lives and provides a sense of accomplishment once completed. For those who are unemployed and not in education, soft skills training is an effective way to fill in any time gaps in employment or education, as employers are frequently looking for these types of skills and may inquire about time gaps on resumes.

## RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

CoP Meetings were unfortunately held at a conflicting time with our Skills for Success in-person classroom component.

### Resources used from LBS Resources and Discussion forum:

#### 1) Resource: Essential Skills Self Assessment for the Trades

Author(s): Human Resources and Skills Development

#### 2) Resource: Apprenticeship Answers

Author(s): Community Literacy of Ontario \*Booklets 1,2,4,5

### Additional resources:

9 Essential Skills Workbooks from Skills Competencies Canada

### We consulted with the following groups/agencies to learn about the needs of the Algoma Region:

AWIC (Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation), Kegegaunseebee (Garden River) First Nations, Batchewana First Nations, Sault College Employment Solutions, The Mid North Network (MNN), Local area employers who hire apprentices, Union executives who oversee apprenticeship training programs and work with employers, Pre-apprenticeship program coordinators, Sault College pre-trades and apprenticeship training program faculty and staff

**Since "Apprenticeship Integration" was not a phase 2 funding option for us, we worked with the Mid-North Network to create ideas for an Apprenticeship Hub which will enhance the Underrepresented-Indigenous pilot as well as support anyone who might be interested in trades/apprenticeship.**

### We planned and delivered in February 2024 our first "Apprenticeship Hub" meeting with the following stakeholders:

Sault College Employment Solutions, Sault Community Career Centre, Ontario Works, Algoma District School Board (OYAP), Sault College Continuing Education/Academic Upgrading, Sault College Trades and Technology

### SUMMARY:

- Goal is to bring all Service Providers together to provide updates on current program and stay "in the know" on supports offered in the community for apprentices, job seekers, or potential students.
- Overview of all current apprenticeship support services provided by community partners.
- Ongoing partnership development and continuation of the Apprenticeship Hub to streamline referrals between programs and ability to determine best path for individuals based on their current needs (education, apprenticeship registration support, academic upgrading, etc.)

**The intent is to create a centralized "hub" (webpage? document? physical location?) of information that supports community members who might be interested in apprenticeship, service providers who support apprenticeship, employers/unions who hire apprentices, etc....but we ran out of time and resources to develop this prior to the end of the fiscal year.**