

Community & Employer Partnership Plan

2014

Annual plan outlining the continued commitment of the Courtenay ESC to foster employment opportunities through community engagement.

Creative
Employment
Access Society
– Courtenay

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2014

INTRODUCTION

Creative Employment Access Society (CEAS) welcomes and embraces opportunities to collaborate with organizations and employers as a means to build relationships and add value to the services we provide to clients. Our strong reputation as the source for information and services to support employment in our community is in part, based on our work and our connections with other community organizations.

This Community and Employer Partnership Plan outlines the actions to be taken by Creative Employment Access Society to increase the employment opportunities for people of the Comox Valley. The Community and Employer Partnership Plan also outlines further action to be taken to support and enhance the community networks that the Creative Employment Access Society has developed over our 30 years of operation.

Through our long-term presence, our leadership, and participation in the local community, we have ensured the continued partnerships between ESC-Courtenay and employers and service providers of the Comox Valley to meet the goals of the Employment Program of BC.

GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP PLAN

1. Respond to Comox Valley labour market needs.
2. Identify strategies and tools to quickly address labour market changes.
3. Establish community and employer activities to address labour market needs.
4. Outline strategies that respond to the needs of Specialized Populations in the community.
5. Align the CEPP with the required annual plan produced for LMDA by the Province.
6. Develop a plan that can be renewed and updated annually and delivered to the Province.

ACTIONS TO MEET THESE GOALS

GOAL 1. Respond to Comox Valley Labour Market needs

- We continue to research and understand what the Labour Market needs of the Comox Valley are. CEAS has a staff position dedicated to conducting labour market research and sharing this

information with our staff, clients, employers and community organizations. In our Self-Serve Resource Centre a folder on the computer desktops offers clients up-to-date labour market information on the Comox Valley.

- One of our staff, the Employer Services Coordinator, regularly meets with employers throughout the service area to promote Work BC services and to gather their input on current and emerging labour market needs.
- We continue to offer reliable and accessible service to the unemployed in the Comox Valley.
- The Comox Valley Work BC Employment Service Centre hosts an annual valley wide job fair. Mount Washington Alpine Resort has been the anchor for the job fair.
- When a large business announces a closure or mass lay-off, our Employment Services Coordinator makes contact and develops a plan to facilitate early access to EPBC services for the affected employees.

GOAL 2. Identify strategies and tools to quickly address labour market changes

Labour market influences are global, national, provincial and local. Sometimes change happens immediate with almost no notice to prepare, and other times we waiting for a very long time for something significant and then nothing happens. Creative Employment Access Society has implemented proactive and responsive strategies for both sudden and slow change in the local labour market. Our plan is to respond to future challenges with similar actions as required.

Responses to Increased Labour Demand	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish communication with large employers moving to the Comox Valley and offer services such as advertising on our job bank, hiring fair participation, and communication of their hiring process to our clients 	<p>In the last few years, we worked with Costco, Applebees, Value Village and Target when they originally came to town. We invited Target to do their hiring at our storefront. The Store Manager and head of HR put on two information sessions in our facility for 90 clients. This resulted in many clients receiving interviews and jobs.</p> <p>We offered many other WorkBC clients targeted hiring information from Target including making application forms available to clients.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform our clients about regional and local Hiring Fairs organized by employers or industry 	<p>Recent hiring fairs we have referred clients to are: Sport Chek, Work BC Job Fairs – Parksville and Campbell River, North Island College hiring fair and and Aerotex job fair.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather LMI through attending community events which are employer focused and use this information to assist our clients who must change careers to find employment 	<p>Events hosted by Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, industry forums, and community events provided considerable anecdotal information. The information gathered is shared with Case Managers through weekly case</p>

	conferencing meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay extra attention to marketing and outreach to specialized populations 	<p>In addition to our storefront, we have established four alternate points of service to provide enhanced access to specialized populations. We have a contractor, Vancouver Island Vocational and Rehabilitation Services (VIVRS) providing services for persons with disabilities and multiple barriers. We have staff on an itinerant basis operating from the Immigrant Welcome Centre, Wachiay Friendship Centre and the Linc Youth Centre. We have actively promoted our services to the consumers of services in these locations.</p>

Responses to Decreased Labour Demand	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff the ESC to meet higher demand 	<p>Canada Safeway closed their Courtenay store unexpectedly this past year, putting 130 staff out of work. We met with the Regional manager of HR and the store manager to develop strategies to assist staff with their transitions to other employment or retirement. Our staff presented 4 group information sessions followed up by having one of our Case Managers visit the store once a week over a six week period to meet with affected staff one-on-one. Many of the staff began to use our services right away.</p> <p>We provided affected employees with resources, information on upcoming hiring fairs, and of course information on Work BC program and supports.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer specialized workshops to meet the needs of job seekers with common needs 	<p>We are maintaining contact with the project managers of the North Island Hospitals and John Hart Generating Station projects to stay current on the projects, and identify the employment opportunities and hiring processes at an early stage. This will enable us to prepare clients for these upcoming opportunities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist job seekers to connect with work outside of the community 	<p>We attended the John Hart Dam forums and one for oil and gas. We established relationships with key hydro and industry personnel, and become aware of and assisted clients with the skills and</p>

	<p>requirements to work in other provinces.</p> <p>We provide up to date information for clients interested in working in oil and gas to facilitate their decision making on re-locating for work.</p> <p>We instituted desktop links to oil and gas information on all of our Self Serve Centre computers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with JCP sponsors to create meaningful work experiences for unemployed clients 	<p>We refer ESC clients to current JCPs. We assist employers in creating JCP opportunities. Ex: Lush Valley and Cumberland Community School Society</p>

Goal 3. Establish community and employer activities to address labour market needs

Since 1982, CEAS has actively worked with community organizations in the Comox Valley and North Vancouver Island to enhance our delivery of employment services to clients and employers.

Over the past 30 years CEAS has committed to building and maintaining relationships with employers and service providers in our region. We will continue to do this in the following ways:

A. Through marketing to and engaging with the community

- Created a position, the Employer Services Coordinator, to work collaboratively with employers in the community to assist clients access sustainable employment
- Dedicated Labour Market research and reporting by our LMI analyst who regularly provides up-to-date job profiles, LMI for the Self Serve Centre computers, job leads internally posted to ESC clients and a LMI “Hot sheet” – offering trends, tips and employment leads and a monthly LMI workshop
- The Employer Service Coordinator responds to requests from employers. The nature of requests could be: labour market information – appropriate job titles and wages for positions offered, help with job descriptions and answering enquiries for information on programs that support employers and their staff such as work experience and wage subsidy.
- CEAS encourages employers to advertise their hiring on the online job board at www.thejobshop.ca
- CEAS will continue to encourage employers to post jobs on the National Job Bank
- We continue to engage with employers through paid and unpaid work experience, Get Youth Working program, Skills Connect for Immigrants, and the Safe Harbour program. These programs engage with employers at many levels and with a cross-section of our community
- We continue to recruit employers for our Employment Expo. Employers have an opportunity to provide current information about their hiring practices and current demands in their industry face to face with people looking for meaningful work. We have offered this opportunity to employers for four years resulting in many job seekers being interviewed and hired on the spot

with some of the Comox Valley's biggest employers – Mount Washington Alpine Resort, Applebee's Restaurant, Investors Group and Tim Horton's

- We continue to market the role of the ESC to the community. Marketing to the community will involve taking part in community events, being an active Chamber of Commerce member, attending Chamber of Commerce events, and hosting a Chamber of Commerce event. Advertising will also include ads in the two Comox Valley newspapers and other print media. Through our community involvement and delivery of consistent quality service the ESC will experience continued positive marketing through word of mouth.
- We maintain an online presence through our web site and Facebook page.
- Have a booth at community events such as the annual Resource Fair, the Military Resource Centre's Career fair and other hiring events.
- Through the Executive Director's participation on the board of the Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Association, we have developed strong working partnerships with senior managers from North Island College, SD #71, the Vancouver Island Public Library, Rotary, Wachiyay Friendship Centre, and the Comox Valley Adult Learning and Literacy Society.

Tools to market and engage

- We have established an Employer contact tracking database program to collect employer contact information and details on what Work BC services the employer or organization is interested in to better serve the employer and community organizations

B. By evaluating activities

- We will provide evaluation forms for participants in all of our events such as hiring fairs
- We will contact event hosts after attending an outside event to give and receive feedback
- We will monitor client levels monthly, with focus on specialized populations
- We will survey our clients verbally during orientation sessions to assess how people are finding out about our services.
- The information gathered will be used to inform our future practices for event planning, event attendance and marketing.

C. By reporting on successes

- Ring the Bell – When ESC clients are successful in finding work, they will often voluntarily come back to the ESC and ring the large brass bell hanging in our reception area. This moment is a public expression of their success and we celebrate with them. It has a noticeable motivating effect on other clients.
- We issue press releases on program start-ups and successful completions. Work BC, Safe Harbour, and Vintage Advantage– all operated by CEAS, often have newspaper coverage. These success stories are recorded and filed by each program officer.
- Weekly reporting of client success stories through attachment to training programs, wage subsidy, work experience or employment is shared at Case Conferencing with Case Managers.
- Successes are shared, with permission, in media releases, newsletters and program reports

Goal 4. Outline strategies that respond to the needs of Specialized Populations in the community.

From both our daily work serving the unemployed in the Comox Valley and what we do to maintain relationships with other service providers, we have an in-depth understanding of the specialized populations in the community.

Specialized Population	Lead Organization	Purpose	Result
All Specialized Populations	Comox Valley Community Services Directory	Provide a comprehensive, accessible listing of social programs, services and resources that are available in the Comox Valley.	Available to ESC staff to immediately respond to clients' needs with up-to-date information. The Directory is made available to other service workers in the community to ensure a consistent, current information source
	CV Social Planning Society	Foster awareness of service networks and increase awareness of local issues	Participate in 2014 Quality of Life Report and the semi-annual Inter-Agency Round Table
	Plan H - BC healthy Communities Society	Promote and organize an event to build coalitions of agencies for collaborative community improvement projects	Active participation with other sectors sharing common goal of healthy communities. Knowledge and network building with other sectors
First Nations	Partner with NVIATS through a Memorandum of Understanding "Defining a Cooperative Working Relationship between Creative Employment Access Society and North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society (NVIATS) negotiated.	To build, sustain and continuously improve services in our communities that will assist aboriginal peoples making successful work transitions.	Achieved through sharing information on programs and services, identification of resources available to aboriginal people, coordination of their delivery, and open communication.
First Nations	Partner with K'omoks First Nation	To articulate how CEAS could provide information and assistance to the First Nations economic and	Participate in community engagement events at the K'omoks Band Hall to let band members know what services are available.

		human resource development initiatives.	
		Attending "Building Bridges through understanding the Village" workshop to gain a cognitive and emotional understanding of First Nation values	Much improved understanding of First Nations culture and value systems
Aboriginal	Wachiay Friendship Centre	Job Shop/Work BC staff person is available one day per week at the Centre.	This coordinated service results in people having consistent employment support available at a familiar location.
At Risk	Ad Hoc Housing and Emergency Resources Committee – advocate for support and emergency services	Provides CEAS staff with current and timely information on services, program changes and challenges facing our shared clientele. provides member community agencies information on our services and upcoming events.	Attendance at monthly AHERO meetings. Offer professional development to staff through the Frontline on the Fringe event. Host Work BC information booth at the annual Community Resource Fair
	Family Literacy Day	Outreach to parents and children at risk	Encouraging and assisting parents to access literacy resources for themselves and their children
Disabilities and/or multiple barriers	Vancouver Island Vocational and Rehabilitation Services	Refer clients with significant disabilities or multiple barriers who want to integrate into the workforce and community.	Support ESC clients by making appropriate referrals to staff of VIVRS Assist VIVRS staff with the delivery of Wage Subsidies
Disabilities	ESC – Courtenay	Foster accessibility to clients with disabilities	Braille is used to label doors so that visually impaired clients can be

			more independent when accessing the building. Self-Serve Resource Centre has incorporated specific technology to assist persons with disabilities. Stock brochure rack with hand-outs on disability program information.
Youth	Nanaimo Youth Services Association	Provide services to young people to reach their full potential by providing them with skills to achieve their goals.	Coordinate the intake of eligible youth into the Bladerunners Construction, Customer Service and Marine tourism programs.
Youth	Specialized Population	Establish community awareness about workplace essential skills and provide basic workplace essential skills development to at-risk youth through Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Association programs.	7 community agencies, educational institutions and employment service providers work together to provide literacy coordination in the Comox Valley. Through these projects, low skilled youth have opportunities to learn essential skills for the workplace.
Youth	North Island College Career Fair	Provides students and recent graduates the opportunity to network with employers in attendance	Set up a booth and met with hundreds of students and all employers in attendance to showcase Work BC programs and services.
Youth	Soroptomist Club	Mentor Me provides hope, support and guidance to young women at risk	Provided a workshop on how to empower yourself and dressing for success at the annual Mentor Me Day workshop
Immigrants	Skills Connect for Immigrants Program	Offers English language assessments, career counseling, skills and qualifications assessment, and training and	Skilled immigrants receive assistance to enable them to better utilize their education and skills. CEAS staff person is connected with ESL service providers in the Comox Valley

		certification assistance.	resulting in appropriate referrals.
Immigrants	Immigrant Welcome Centre	Assist newcomers in looking for employment.	By maintaining an office at the Immigrant Welcome Centre, the CEAS staff person regularly meets with to help them access Work BC services.

Goal 5. Align the CEPP with the Province’s required annual plan produced for LMDA.

The CEPP will align with and support the achievement of the objectives of the most recent LMDA Annual plan (2013/2014) as follows:

LMDA Objective #1 Develop and enhance the skill level for labour market success of British Columbians in the 21st century.

Our frequent interface with employers provides us with the opportunity to collect timely information on their current and future hiring plans; their recruitment practices; education and experience requirements for new hires; and training needs for current operations and future expansions. The information gathered is compiled and analyzed by our Labour Market Information Analyst with support from the Employer Services Coordinator. This information is used along with information from other sources to produce a variety of LMI products that we make available to clients. The products inform clients of the types of occupations that are in demand locally and the training required by local employers. This information is invaluable in assisting clients make informed decisions on their career path and education plans. It often is the foundation of their training application research. This results in the alignment of skills training to where the jobs are and to the needs of local employers.

We engage with ITA, the Skilled Trades Employment Program and the BC Construction Association to direct interested clients to opportunities in the skilled trades.

These activities have two benefits. When we assist clients to make sound decisions to pursue a career where there is a local labour market demand we are improving their prospects for employment. At the same time, we are helping to improve the supply of appropriately skilled labour for employers.

LMDA Objective #2 Ensure access to employment and labour market programs and services.

As a long established organization in our community, we are well known for providing quality employment services. With the advent of the EPBC, we have expanded our role in the community to be the primary provider of employment services for all unemployed residents of the Comox Valley. To ensure that all segments of the community have access to services, we have developed a network of outreach services located at agencies serving under-represented populations in our community. We have arranged to have staff available each week to work with Aboriginal people through the Wachiy

Friendship Centre, immigrants at the Immigrant Welcome Centre and youth at the Courtenay Recreation Centre. Also we have contracted with Vancouver Island Vocational and Rehabilitation Centre to provide services for clients with disabilities or multiple barriers and with the Comox Valley Transition Centre to provide employment services to survivors of abuse or violence. By providing services at a variety of locations throughout our community, we are enabling clients to access services at locations that may be more familiar and more comfortable for them.

We will continue to expand our marketing and community engagement efforts to increase the awareness of the specialized services we provide. As an organization that is extensively connected with our community, we are constantly seeking ways to expand and improve our services to marginalized populations.

LMDA Objective #3 Partner with employers and communities to address regional and sector -specific labour market needs.

Through our involvement with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations, we attempt to stay current on the issues facing local employers. We hear of the struggles and achievements of the business community as a whole, and often, this is useful information to pass on to clients. Our hiring fairs are a good example of how we partner with employers to help them meet their labour market needs. Nowhere else are they able to so easily meet with large numbers of job seekers. While not all employers attend with the specific intention of hiring, many job seekers are hired on the spot or shortly after the event. At our last employment expo, we were able to identify 35+ hires that occurred during the event or shortly thereafter.

Employers generally appreciate the high level of preparedness of the job seekers, many of whom are our clients. We have a number of employers returning year after year because of this. One of our region's largest employers, Mt. Washington Alpine Resort uses our hiring fair as the kickoff event for its annual recruitment of up to 600 seasonal employees.

We are actively engaged with the planning and delivery of community-based literacy through our Executive Director's role as a Director of the Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Association. This society was formed to promote and foster literacy programs focused on family literacy and workplace essential skills. The lack of workplace essential skills presents a real barrier for many unemployed in our community. Through this initiative, CVLLA served 24 people in the past year improve their literacy, essential skills, financial literacy, and food knowledge.

LMDA Objective #4 Continue to develop Labour Market Information Services

CEAS has been providing local, regional, provincial and national LMI to our clients for the past 30 years. We are strong believers in the value of current local information as a tool to assist job seekers to direct their career planning and job search. We have a dedicated LMI Specialist on staff whose role is to search out relevant information and use it to produce useful LMI products for job seekers and employers. The establishment of our position, the Employer Services Coordinator, has enhanced our ability to gather

information useful to clients. Overall, the dedication of substantial new resources to the LMI function will result in an improved service to clients.

All of our staff are engaged in the collection of LMI to a greater or lesser degree. Often it comes in the form of someone hearing of a job opening and passing this information on to front line staff. It also comes in the form of articles, publications, web sites and other resources staff come across. Front line staff make it available to clients. We produce LMI products that are available through our website and in print. We also provide a regular LMI workshop that is updated on an on-going basis to ensure its currency and relevance. The Work BC LMI site is the primary resource we use with clients to explore career planning and transition.

Goal 6. Develop a plan that can be renewed and updated annually and delivered to the Province.

- CEAS will renew, update annually and deliver the Community and Employer Partnership Plan
- Provide a link to the Community and Employer Partnership Plan on the Creative Employment Access Society website www.ceas.ca . Update this link annually.

TIMELINE TO MEET GOALS

July 14 – June 15	Meet goals of the 2014 CEPP
July 14– June 15	Employer Services Coordinator – attending other agencies Job Fairs, Plan and implement a minimum of two in-house industry specific job fairs. CEAS attend and host a booth at the AHERO Community Resources Fair
October 2014	Host Mount Washington Alpine Resort on-site hiring. This year the event is planned for Oct 24th.
April 2015	Host Spring Community Job Fair
June 2015	Update, renew and produce Community and Employer Partnership Plan. Make plan available to other stakeholders and employers in the community through the ceas.ca website.
June 2015	Present 2014 Community and Employer Partnership Plan to the Province

SUMMARY

Creative Employment Access Society will continue to implement proactive and responsive strategies to increase fair and efficient access to employment services in the Comox Valley. We will use our strong community and employer relationships, our tasked Labour Market Information staff and our extensive community knowledge and resources to serve employers, clients and our community.