

# ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

<b>Program Area:</b>	2.0	Workforce Development
<b>Sub Program:</b>	2.4	Programs Sponsored by Government and Non-Profit Agencies
<b>Template:</b>	2.4.8	Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAP)
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	<i>Alberta Advanced Education, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada</i>	

## 1. Objective

To significantly improve the participation of Aboriginal people in Alberta's apprenticeship program, which will have a positive impact on the economies of Aboriginal communities while addressing the increasing demand for skilled tradespeople.

## 2. Description

The Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAP) is an innovative project that will see a minimum of 255 Aboriginal people registered as apprentices in the various trades by 2007. The project links employers with Aboriginal people and offers additional assistance to build successful working and learning relationships.

The AAP was established by the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Committee (AAAC), a partnership of Aboriginal communities/organizations, industry, educational jurisdictions, and government that was formed to implement the recommendations of the 1999 report *Aboriginal Participation in Apprenticeship: Making it Work*.

Through the project's employment support model, applicants receive informed choice counselling to identify trades of interest, referrals to potential employers and mentorship, and coaching while completing their training.

The project works with employers, encouraging them to welcome Aboriginal apprentices, introducing them to qualified applicants, and working with them to improve cultural awareness in the workplace.

The project's success in the past three years has resulted in an expansion to southern Alberta. The project is now operational in five Alberta communities: Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, High Level, and Lethbridge. The model in each community includes:

- A project officer who works with Aboriginal people/organizations, local employment and training centres, employers, and a community advisory committee.
- A community advisory committee of community members knowledgeable about local Aboriginal issues, the trades and apprenticeship, and the workplace. Committee members understand Aboriginal culture and the difficulties Aboriginal apprentices may face in completing an apprenticeship. Their role is to mentor apprentices through the

apprenticeship process. If an applicant meets the project criteria, the community advisory committee for the region reviews the resumes and approves the applicants for employer interviews.

- An employment centre. Staff members from employment centres assist individual applicants to become apprenticeship ready and provide referrals to the project officer.
- Employers providing apprenticeship opportunities and subsequent employment for successful applicants. Employers also participate on the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Committee, the Operational Steering Committee, and community advisory committees.

### **3. Implementation**

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this project are:

- The AAAP takes a unique approach to working with Aboriginal people, building on the traditional means of passing on knowledge within Aboriginal society. Support mechanisms built into the employment support model are key to ensuring the apprentices successfully complete their programs. The model includes mechanisms to prepare the workplace for Aboriginal apprentices as well as to prepare Aboriginal apprentices for the workplace.
- The collaborative model will address challenges that have traditionally prevented Aboriginal people from entering the trades.
- The major challenge is to gain the support and interest of employers, who have the key role of identifying apprenticeship opportunities and supporting Aboriginal apprentices through the project.
- Many potential Aboriginal applicants do not have the entrance requirements for apprenticeship positions or the workplace essential skills required to be successful in the trades. However, pre-apprenticeship programs are being revised and appropriate programs to provide the essential skills are under development.
- Employers assist by providing information on what trades they need and what criteria they require to hire apprentices. They have committed to hiring first year apprentices and to supporting cultural adjustments for both Aboriginal apprentices and non-Aboriginal workers.
- The AAAP continues to promote trades as viable career options.

### **4. Timeframe for Results**

The goal is to register a minimum of 255 Aboriginal apprentices by 2007.

### **5. Measurable Criteria**

Success factors are:

- The number of Aboriginal people who enter the process, select a trade, are screened, and then successfully enter and complete the apprenticeship program
- The number of Aboriginal apprentices who maintain employment following completion of their apprenticeship program
- Acceptance of the project by the Aboriginal community, and involvement in the

community steering committees

- "Repeat business" from satisfied employers and their involvement in the process

## **6. Budget**

The operation of the five offices and project team costs approximately \$300,000 per year. The total value of support, both direct and in-kind, is expected to reach \$25 million over five years. Industry partners and Aboriginal organizations will contribute more than \$18.5 million for training and employment. The Alberta government will contribute approximately \$3.5 million and the federal government, approximately \$3 million to cover project infrastructure and administration.

## **7. Partners and Sponsors**

Project partners and sponsors include Aboriginal organizations, industry, educational jurisdictions, and federal and provincial governments (Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada).

## **8. Experience with the Project**

Projects are underway in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, High Level and Lethbridge, which are areas where tradespeople are required. All offices are in operation and have community advisory committees established. As of September 2005, there were over 200 registered apprentices in these locations, and three had already completed their apprenticeship and were Alberta-certified journeymen.

## **9. General Applicability**

The project is a valuable template for Aboriginal people/organizations, industry, government and others across Canada to undertake similar labour market projects.

## **10. Additional Information or Support**

Dean Bourque, Acting Project Coordinator, Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, Suite 203, 10707-100 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 2W3

Telephone: (780) 408-1840 or toll-free, 1-866-408-1844

Website: [www.thinktrades.com](http://www.thinktrades.com)

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