

MAPPING CANADA'S TRAINING PROGRAMS TO SKILLS AND JOBS

Issue

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in high job losses. Those that are unable to return to the industry that employed them have the daunting task of learning new skills within their industry or to find employment in new industries. Coupled with the inability to attend traditional in-person learning is the lack of a national information system that would help workers in need of reskilling to find suitable education and training options that could provide sought-after skills, which are linked directly to available jobs.

There needs to be an inventory of Canada's training programs and jobs that want individuals with those skills. It will not only benefit skills development for workers and employers who gain most directly from smart training choices, but the entire Canadian economy stands to benefit through improved international competitiveness.

Background

The pandemic has resulted in many industries shutting down. The tourism industry, hospitality, restaurants, and retailers have been hardest hit. The Government of Canada has provided many opportunities to supplement wages and provide economic support; however, these government programs are going to begin to slow down and cease to exist. To gain employment, many individuals will need to reskill or upskill.

The daunting task of finding suitable education and training options was intensified during the pandemic by the lack of in-person learning. There are many programs that could lead to gainful employment but navigating through the sheer number of options can be crippling. Having a centralized database could benefit skill seekers but there needs to be a way for individuals to sort through the available programs based on location, job opportunity, length of program, cost, and the time or day the program is offered.

Finding the skill that a job requires is a necessity. Ensuring that the training program is linked to certain jobs could be done through a central database. Jobs could be linked by using a keyword search system. As technology and the ways in which we do things evolves, keeping skills up to date will be crucial to remain competitive.

Employers, industry associations, academic institutions, and program providers must work collaboratively with government to ensure that there is up to date information on programs available, career positions available, and skills required. A strong working group will be essential in creating a mapping system that will accomplish what is needed.

To understand the workings of such a a databse, a pilot project is needed. We envision that the initial pilot project would occur in a few cities across Canada. . The demographic of the pilot cities should be representative of the diversity of Canada and include (but not be limited to):

- Rural towns;
- Cities that have a diverse population;
- Cities with large urban Indigenous populations;
- Indigenous reserves;

- Metropolitan cities such as Vancouver or Toronto
- Coastal cities; and,
- Resource-dependent cities.

Once initial learnings are gained through the implementation of the city pilot project, it can be scaled up to a regional approach, then provincial, and finally country wide. The data gathered by the pilot and subsequent projects will be crucial to developing a nation-wide mapping system linking individuals to skill programs and ultimately gainful employment.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Federal Government, in coordination with Provinces and Territories:

1. Create an efficient feasibility study and then a call for proposals that would determine where the pilot project would occur. Applications should include information such as: demographic; population size; industry information; and labour statistics;
2. Create a working group with industry associations, academic institutions, program providers, municipalities, and employers to create a database of vacant jobs, as well as potential jobs identifying what skills are required, and the programs that offer training to achieve those skills;
3. Utilize the information gained through working groups to launch the pilot program within the selected cities that is available on a single platform; and,
4. Launch a marketing campaign that will serve to educate the public on the mapping program.

Submitted by the Surrey Board of Trade

NOTE: 3 and 4 need to be in this proposal, as government needs methodical suggested next steps as ideas.