



Now and Tomorrow  
Excellence in Everything We Do

## Essential Skills and Apprenticeship

# CASE STUDY INTEGRATING ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SUCCESS Training to Employment Pathways Initiative



## Key Facts and Information

**Name of Project:** Training to Employment Pathways Initiative

**Organizations:** Workplace Education Manitoba and Northern Manitoba Sector Council

**Issue:** A large and rising number of vacant trades-related jobs across the province and not enough skilled workers available to fill the positions

**Objective:** Increase the number of qualified workers to fill available industry positions by supporting them to develop their essential skills

**Essential Skills Tools Used:** Essential Skills Tools for the Skilled Trades

**Other Tools Used:** Essential Skills Profiles

## About the Training to Employment Pathways Initiative

Over the last decade, Manitoba has faced, and continues to face, a significant trades' labour shortage. With increasing development in mining, forestry and energy sectors, particularly in the North, industry employers are finding it difficult to recruit workers with the required skills. A lack of essential skills and employability skills was identified as two of the main reasons why available workers were not competing for the jobs.

In response to the skills and labour shortages issues, the **Northern Manitoba Sector Council** – the main organization in the region helping employers to recruit, train and retain employees – approached **Workplace Education Manitoba** – an organization created to provide Manitobans access to essential skills knowledge and training – to develop a joint initiative called Training to Employment Pathways.

The goal of the initiative is to address employers' labour market needs by better preparing Manitobans to fill available entry level semi-skilled and skilled trades' jobs. This is achieved through a step-by-step pathway to sustainable employment to help Manitobans interested in industry jobs to:

- Identify their suitability and experience related to semi-skilled or skilled trades occupations;
- Acquire the skills needed to get and maintain employment; and
- Gain the skills needed to complete apprenticeships and employer training programs.

# Implementation

To begin, Workplace Education Manitoba and the Northern Manitoba Sector Council, worked with employers and the Province of Manitoba to identify current and future labour market needs in northern Manitoba. Skills requirements for in-demand unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs at entry level were analyzed and validated by industry employers. Based on identified labour market needs, Workplace Education Manitoba developed a curriculum customized to the sector, occupation or employer to help participants gain the skills most needed in industry positions. Essential skills and employability skills training was provided on average for 14 weeks full-time with an optional two-week co-op placement.

As a result of the initiative, the number of qualified workers available to fill vacant industry positions in northern Manitoba has increased. To date, over 1,000 individuals

have received support through collaborative efforts with 29 partners including 13 communities, seven industry employers, six training providers and three provincial government departments.

The focus of the curriculum is to improve participants' essential skills and employability skills, including:	
Responsibility	Digital technology skills
Adaptability	Entry level technical skills
Continuous learning	Managing information
Valuing safety	Thinking skills
Communication skills	Working with others
Numeracy skills	Knowledge of the industry

# Use of Essential Skills Tools and Resources

The training provided includes the use of Essential Skills Tools for the Skilled Trades available on both the Red Seal and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada websites. The tools are used to inform participants on how essential skills are used in the trades, assess essential skills needs and support skills development.

**Awareness tools help to identify skill requirements for jobs in the trades.** After identifying various industry employment opportunities in Manitoba, participants use the essential skills tools to identify specific skills required for each type of job. For example, Essential Skills for Success as a Plumber is used by instructors, advisors and potential participants to inform and support decision-making around assessment and training choices on a pathway to employment.

**Needs assessments help to better understand participants' essential skills.** The skill levels of all participants are assessed before they start the training. The results of the assessments help instructors develop

individual learning plans to improve participants' essential skills. For example, training instructors use the Essential Skills Self-Assessment for the Trades to get an indication of participants' numeracy, reading and document use skills.

**Learning and training supports help to support skills upgrading and enhance existing training programs.** For example, the Trades Math Workbook is used to help participants improve their numeracy skills by solving practical, trade-specific questions.

## WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL SKILLS?

The Government of Canada has identified key literacy and essential skills for the workplace. These skills are used in nearly every job and at different levels of complexity. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to keep pace with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.

# Benefits and Impacts

The essential skills tools provided the necessary support to the program and several benefits to participants, training providers and employers including:

**Improved essential skills of participants.** Using essential skills tools provided an opportunity to share information and develop customized responses. With the help of instructors, participants developed individual portfolios to document skill improvements that could be shared with potential employers.

**Increased capacity to better recruit and train new hires.** Employers integrated essential skills into recruitment and training processes to ensure employees’ essential skills met the requirements of the job.

**Increased training completion rates.** The essential skills tools facilitated hands-on learning by making the link between the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom and practical application on the jobsite. A representative of Workplace Education Manitoba noted that due to the relevance of essential skills to the employment goals of adults, *“the completion rate for the training was approximately 95% which is exceptionally high in comparison to retention rates of any type of job training delivered to the same target population.”*

**Increased success in entering formal training.** When participants were aware of the types of skills they needed for a job, it was highly motivational and when they had an opportunity to develop those skills, it led to increased success in obtaining employment. One project representative, who was in frequent contact with communities across Manitoba, shared that many participants who completed the training were successful in entering formal trades training.

**Access to free, easy-to-use, practical tools and resources.** The essential skills tools were instrumental in developing the training. Using existing resources helped save time and effort of those involved in the initiative.

**Increased capacity to identify gaps and customize training programs.** The tools helped instructors to assess and identify the essential skills needs of participants and develop customized learning plans for increased success in training.

**A more skilled workforce.** Having skilled workers leads to greater productivity and success for industry. In the north, this means *northern workers for northern jobs*.

*“The tools include practical and useful exercises that work well for the training participants. For example, to understand the numeracy and problem solving skills needed for carpenters, the participants had to calculate how many shingles to buy when they are given the dimensions of a house and the cost per shingle and asked how to order the roof supplies. It’s hands-on and very effective.”*

An instructor involved in the initiative

Benefits for Participants / Workers
Increased essential skills
Increased success in training and in the workplace
Increased job opportunities
Benefits for Training Providers
Access to free, easy-to-use and practical tools and resources
Increased capacity to identify gaps and customize training programs to meet clients’ needs
More cost effective programs
Benefits for Employers
Increased capacity to better recruit and train new hires
Better prepared new recruits
Access to a skilled workforce
Increased productivity

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

---

Essential skills tools are integrated in numerous training programs across Manitoba. Participants in the Training to Employment Pathways Initiative who require additional support and skills upgrading can access complementary programs to further increase their likelihood of success in training and at work. Increased awareness and integration of essential skills can lead to improved programming that can help Canadians get jobs and succeed at work.

### Practical Tips to Help You Get Started

---

1. Learn about the skilled trades on the **Red Seal** website.
2. Learn about resources available to assess essential skills needs and support skills development. Find free profiles, quizzes, checklists, workbooks and more on the **HRSDC** website.
3. Find out how to make the tools work for you, take a look at **A Guide to Using the Essential Skills Tools and Resources** and learn about a simple three-step process to putting the tools into practice.

For more information on essential skills and related resources, visit [hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills)

For more information on the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, visit [www.red-seal.ca](http://www.red-seal.ca)

You can download this publication by going online: <http://www12.hrsdc.gc.ca>

This document is available on demand in multiple formats (large print, Braille, audio cassette, audio CD, e-text diskette, e-text CD, or DAISY), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). If you use a teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2012

For information regarding reproduction rights, please contact Public Works and Government Services Canada at: 613-996-6886 or [copyright.droitdauteur@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca](mailto:copyright.droitdauteur@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca)

#### PDF

Cat. No.: HS18-38/2013E-PDF

ISBN: 978-1-100-21906-6