

Building a World Class Workforce

Partners in Ontario's renewed  
employment and training system

March 2007



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*“We will be able to reduce gaps and make the system both more flexible and effective with this transfer.”*

*- Hon. Chris Bentley,  
Minister of Training,  
Colleges and Universities*

*Ontario's vision for its education and training system is:  
To have the most educated people and highly skilled workforce in North America*

*College education has provided many members of under-represented groups with access to postsecondary education, and colleges will continue to play a central role in improving access for aboriginals, persons with disabilities, internationally trained and first generation students.*

## I. Executive Summary

Ontario faces significant challenges to its global competitiveness. At the same time, demographic trends point to growing skills shortages and to increased competition worldwide for skilled labour. In the face of these challenges, there is an urgent need to ensure the economy has the skills it needs and individuals have access to recognized, credentialed education and training that meets their individual aspirations and supports their transition to long-term employment.

The proposals contained in this document also address a key priority of the McGuinty government: addressing poverty. For example, with youth unemployment at nearly 14 per cent, Ontario must ensure that at-risk youth, who have even higher unemployment rates, participate in education and training programs such as the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, Job Connect and Learning to 18.

There is a need to refocus our employment and training programs and services to respond to identified labour market needs and support long-term labour force attachment.

Ontario's colleges have a mandate to offer a comprehensive program of career-oriented postsecondary education and training to assist individuals in finding and keeping employment, to meet the needs of employers and the changing work environment, and to support the economic and social development of their local and diverse communities. We represent a significant public investment.

A government-college partnership that capitalizes on the colleges' mandate and the public investment in colleges represents a prudent approach to meeting the labour market challenges Ontario faces.

The programs and services that individual colleges deliver at the local level vary depending on local needs and circumstances. Within this context, Ontario's colleges are committed to playing a pivotal role in assisting the province. We represent a stable, accountable, province-wide, publicly funded infrastructure that delivers a comprehensive range of programming in English and in French and provides essential support services to individuals to enhance their potential for success.

We have consistently advocated that the federal government implement the Labour Market Partnership Agreement and honour its commitment to increase the resources available to Ontario to deliver the programs and services the economy needs. We have been actively consulting with stakeholders in identifying priorities which, if addressed, could solve some of the nation's and the province's broader economic and social challenges. We have been working across the college system to develop guiding principles for Ontario's labour market system.

### **Moving Forward: Recommended Next Steps**

Ontario's colleges have identified some initial priorities for action for the government's consideration.

#### ***A government-college partnership process***

Ontario's colleges are proposing that:

- A government-college table be established to explore how colleges can effectively support the goals of a reformed system, examine barriers to change and opportunities for reform and consider system design issues

- A committee be established with the two French-language colleges to develop a plan to increase access for Francophones to quality programs and services in French.

### Strengthening Ontario's competitive edge

Ontario's colleges also offer the following program recommendations for the province's consideration. They include targeted initiatives, based on college plans developed at the local level, to address the needs of the economy and individuals for relevant training that strengthens Ontario's competitive edge and supports individual success.

- Critical Skills Development: Specific training programs and services in areas of local, regional and/or sectoral critical skills shortages
- Community Labour Market Adjustment: Programs and services for job-threatened, laid off and older workers
- Bridging for Work and Learning: Projects that give a "second chance" to underrepresented groups and individuals facing labour market barriers

### Transition Support

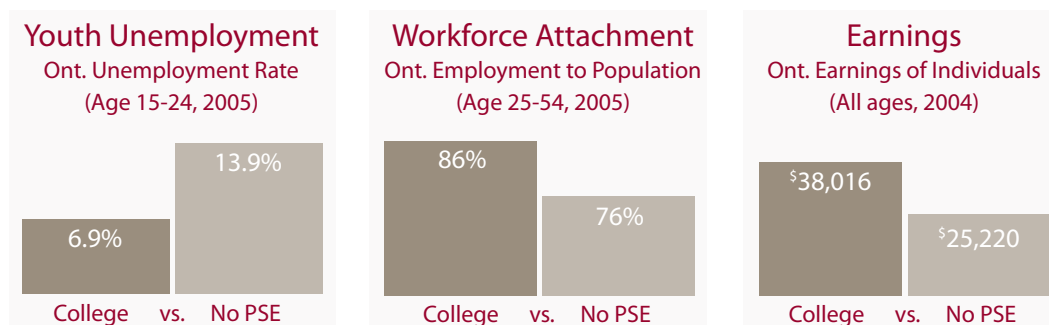
In addition, we are recommending investment in the colleges to strengthen the capacity to support Ontario's new employment and training system and provide innovative and integrated responses to community needs.

## Investing for Success: Resource Requirements

The initiatives Ontario's colleges are proposing, if adopted, would contribute to refocusing provincial investments on meeting skill shortages and strengthening long-term attachment to the labour force.

As federal programs transfer to the province under the Labour Market Development Agreement and the province increases its investment in labour market initiatives, there is an opportunity to review the alignment of the combined federal and provincial funds against Ontario's employment and training priorities. There is an opportunity to develop a policy and investment framework that supports sustainability of quality programs and services and to develop a partnership model based on a close working relationship between government and colleges.

Ontario colleges do not have the fiscal flexibility they once had to address many of the labour market priorities identified in their communities. With these initial proposals, we are proposing an investment of \$50 million in Ontario's colleges, annualizing to \$100 million in year three, to ensure a robust response to the labour market challenges facing Ontario.



*The initiatives Ontario's colleges are proposing, if adopted, would contribute to refocusing provincial investments on meeting skill shortages and strengthening long-term attachment to the labour force.*

- New federal-provincial agreements regarding labour market programs and services and immigration and Ontario's commitment to move to an integrated training and employment system provide an historic opportunity for the government and Ontario's colleges to work together to:
- Build a coordinated, streamlined employment and training system that emphasizes long-term outcomes
  - Focus on critical skills training that supports Ontario's competitiveness
  - Assist individuals in the transition to sustainable employment and the acquisition of relevant skills and recognized credentials that support long-term labour force attachment

## II. Background

### ***Ontario's Competitive Challenge: a shrinking labour market and growing competition***

Ontario has long enjoyed a strong and diversified economy that continues to generate prosperity and new opportunities for its citizens. However, changing world trade patterns, the globalization of financial markets, ongoing fast-paced technological change, recent sluggish productivity growth and the aging of the population pose significant challenges to Ontario's international competitiveness.

While Ontario has and will continue to rely heavily on the performance of the U.S. economy, both will be challenged by the rapid growth of the emerging economies such as India, China and Russia. The ability to meet those challenges and to take advantage of the market opportunities they represent will require concerted effort by businesses and governments.

With the globalization of financial markets, competition will intensify not only for jobs, but also for investment dollars. Efforts to enhance Ontario's sluggish productivity growth will be essential to attracting the investment we need to strengthen our competitiveness and continue to enhance our standard of living.

Fast-paced technological change is altering the nature of the skills required to compete in the global economy:

One of the most important changes in the economies of developed countries has been an ongoing shift towards more highly skilled workers. ...Advanced information and communication technologies, which are spreading throughout the economy, depend on high levels of literacy, numeracy and problem-solving ability.<sup>1</sup>

Yet a recent discussion paper prepared by Canadian Policy Research Networks on behalf of the Canadian Council on Learning notes that:

Measures of "essential skills" show that workers in Canada have lower levels than what is needed, according to international standards, to participate in the knowledge economy. Adult literacy levels in Canada have remained virtually unchanged over the last decade, with over 40 per cent of adult Canadians lacking the literacy and numeracy skills they need.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, it is estimated that up to 70 per cent of all new and replacement jobs require some form of postsecondary education or training.<sup>3</sup>

Like other countries, we are also faced with an aging labour force. In its report, 20/20 Building our Vision for the Future, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CMEC) note that: "At current rates of labour force growth, by 2010 there will be more people retiring than entering the manufacturing workforce." In the same report, CMEC notes that: "Canadian manufacturers will only be as competitive as the capabilities of their workforce allow."

According to a recent report by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce:

Reports show that Ontario will face a shortage of about 100,000 skilled trades workers in the manufacturing sector alone in the next 15 years. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that by 2020, Canada could be short about 1 million skilled workers due to an aging population and declining birth rates.<sup>4</sup>

In *Toward 2025: Assessing Ontario's Long-Term Outlook*, published in 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Finance notes that net migration is projected to remain the principal driver of population

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growth over the next two decades and that immigration is by far the largest component of net migration.

However, Ontario can be expected to face strong competition for immigrants. Given that population aging is a global trend, international competition for skilled labour can be expected to intensify.

### ***Identifying Solutions: Pathway to Prosperity conclusions***

In recognition of the significant competitive challenges facing the Canadian economy, in the fall of 2005, Ontario's colleges conducted a consultation with employers, labour, politicians, educators and citizens on education and training. The colleges hosted 25 events. Over 2,000 individuals came to the consultations to present their views, and over 600 organizations sent representatives. Formal written submissions and website survey results were also received.

The consultations, called *Pathway to Prosperity*, identified five priorities which, if addressed, could solve some of the nation's and the province's broader economic and social challenges:

- Relevant knowledge and skills: a higher level of skills and a greater number of people with skills
- Flexible system: a more versatile postsecondary education and training system that can accommodate diverse needs of learners and employers
- Improved labour force participation: an increase in the potential of the workforce through more fully including those groups which traditionally have been underrepresented
- Better planning: long-term labour market planning where employer needs are identified early
- Investments: in the capacity to train people for the skills our economy demands

We need to ensure that all individuals are able to contribute to our economic performance, that we have a flexible, adaptable workforce to support our competitiveness and that we have the policies and programs in place to attract and effectively utilize the skills of the internationally trained. With the rapid pace of change and the aging of our workforce, we need to invest in lifelong learning to strengthen our competitive position.

We need to focus on areas of critical skills shortages, help communities adjust, and maximize the contribution of older workers, underrepresented groups and the underemployed.

Ontario's colleges continue to believe that a highly skilled workforce is key to competing in the 21st century economy. As David Dodge, Governor of the Bank of Canada, noted in his remarks to the 2006 Ontario Economic Leadership Summit:

Ultimately, the strength of our economy depends on the skills of its workforce. To maximize these skills, we need to take a truly lifelong approach to learning and to skills development...Skills development must be a priority for everyone – for parents, for students, for workers, for governments, and for employers.

### ***Ontario's New Labour Market System***

Ontario's vision for its education and training system is:

*To have the most educated people and highly skilled workforce in North America*

*"As postsecondary education becomes even more important to individual economic advancement, the social consequences of the lower participation rates of low-income Canadians, youth whose parents did not pursue higher education and Aboriginal peoples increase accordingly. The risks associated with the exclusion of such groups from the benefits of a postsecondary education include not only lower incomes for individuals and lower productivity, but also an increasingly fractured society and a resulting poorer quality of life for all Canadians."<sup>5</sup>*

*A recent survey indicated that 66 per cent of new immigrants planned to pursue further education or training upon arrival in Canada, and that 43 per cent of immigrants had enrolled in at least one training program in Ontario, including language training (68 per cent), postsecondary courses (23 per cent) and job-related courses (nine per cent).*

*The new federal-provincial agreements and Ontario's commitment to move to an integrated training and employment system provide an historic opportunity for the government and Ontario's colleges to work together.*

Achieving this vision is critical to meeting the competitive challenges facing Ontario. This submission focuses on the role that colleges can play in a reformed employment and training system.

On November 23, 2005, Canada and Ontario signed two new federal-provincial labour market agreements: the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA).

As well, in November 2005, the federal and Ontario governments signed a five-year Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) intended to establish a framework for a long-term partnership with respect to immigration.

The LMDA transfers responsibility for approximately \$525 million annually in existing federal funding to Ontario for labour market development programs and services under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. The main focus has been getting active EI-claimants into employment quickly. The LMDA took effect January 1, 2007, with the transfer of funding and federal staff to Ontario.

Taken together with provincial funding for employment and training programs and services, the combined federal and provincial annual investment is close to \$1 billion.

In the longer term, the harmonization of federal and provincial labour market programs and services should result in a system that is more closely aligned with Ontario's labour market priorities and is simpler and less confusing both for clients and delivery agents.

The LMPA provides for almost \$1.4 billion in new funding over six years for programs and services. It is focused on creating "an inclusive labour market by maximizing participation of those currently employed, under-employed, or unemployed." The implementation of the LMPA is fundamental to Ontario's ability to meet the competitive challenges it faces. This new funding would result in significantly enhanced training and employment services to those Ontarians who are not eligible under the Employment Insurance Act.

Yet the status of the implementation of the LMPA is unclear: no funding has flowed to date; there was no mention of the agreement in the 2006 federal budget; and no movement is apparent from the federal government. Ontario's colleges have consistently advocated that the federal government honour its commitment and implement the Labour Market Partnership Agreement.

On November 24, 2006, one year after the Canada-Ontario labour market agreements were signed, Ontario's colleges, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, ONESTEP and Canadian Policy Research Networks co-sponsored the Developing Skills through Partnerships symposium to take stock of progress and to collectively explore how partners can help governments move forward with the successful implementation of these agreements.

The event, with approximately 260 participants from business, labour, government, delivery agents, users and other stakeholder organizations, aimed to raise awareness of the importance to Ontario's economic and social well-being of a highly skilled workforce. Many delegates expressed support for the steps taken to integrate the federal and Ontario training and employment systems, but strong concern about the lack of progress in implementing the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Partnership Agreement.

Parallel to its negotiations with the federal government, Ontario indicated its intention to move to an integrated training and employment system that will continuously improve the quality and quantity of Ontario's skilled labour supply by providing seamless service, removing barriers to learning and strengthening links to employment.

In introducing Employment Ontario, the provincial government is looking to ensure that Ontario will have an efficient, integrated labour market system that matches a skilled labour force with current and emerging needs of employers.

The new federal-provincial agreements and Ontario's commitment to move to an integrated training and employment system provide an historic opportunity for the government and Ontario's colleges to work together to ensure:

- The province has the skills it needs to compete globally for jobs and investment.
- Individuals have the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their potential, adapt to changes in the workplace, and participate actively in society.

The initiatives provide an opportunity for the government and Ontario's colleges to work together to:

- Build a coordinated, streamlined employment and training system that emphasizes long-term outcomes.
- Focus on critical skills training that supports Ontario's competitiveness.
- Assist individuals in the transition to sustainable employment and the acquisition of relevant skills and recognized credentials that support long-term labour force attachment.

Ontario's colleges have a mandate to offer a comprehensive program of career-oriented postsecondary education and training to assist individuals in finding and keeping employment, to meet the needs of employers and the changing work environment, and to support the economic and social development of their local and diverse communities. We represent a significant public investment in learning infrastructure and we have a dynamic system of advisory committees with links into multiple sectors and to business and labour.

A government-college partnership that capitalizes on the colleges' mandate and the public investment in colleges represents a prudent approach to meeting the labour market challenges we face, avoiding duplication, allowing for more rapid implementation of new initiatives than would otherwise be possible and ensuring accountability.

### **III. Guiding Principles for a New Employment and Training System for Ontario**

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Given the economic and social challenges facing the province, the findings of the *Pathway to Prosperity* consultations, new federal-provincial agreements and the province's initiative to design a new labour market system, representatives from across the college system have been working to develop guiding principles for a new Ontario employment and training system that delivers relevant training, meets the economic challenges and supports individual success. It is our hope that the outcome of our deliberations will support the development and delivery of programs and services that meet the needs of the province's employers and learners.

*A government-college partnership that capitalizes on the colleges' mandate and the public investment in colleges represents a prudent approach to meeting the labour market challenges we face, avoiding duplication, allowing for more rapid implementation of new initiatives than would otherwise be possible and ensuring accountability.*



*Ontario's colleges believe the redesign of the labour market system and associated programs and services should be guided by the following outcomes.*

- 1. A highly skilled labour force – more and better knowledge and skills*
- 2. Individual success*
- 3. An effective and efficient labour market system*

*“It is implicit in the Canadian value system that all individuals should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, which is not the case at present. Moreover, there is a strong economic argument that all Canadians would be better off with the larger and more productive economy that would result if all Canadians were able to participate fully. Indeed, our only hope in paying for the infrastructure, health and education requirements of the future workforce is to address our long-standing weakness on productivity growth.”*

*- RBC Economics.*

*The Diversity Advantage: A Case for Canada's 21st Century Economy. 2005.*

Ontario's colleges believe the redesign of the labour market system and associated programs and services should be guided by the following outcomes.

### **1. A highly skilled labour force – more and better knowledge and skills**

- The economy has the knowledge and skills it needs to compete globally for jobs and investment.
- Current, accurate labour market information is accessible and links employment and training programs to identified gaps in knowledge and skills and emerging economic opportunities.
- The education and training system supports lifelong learning.
- The knowledge and skills that newcomers bring to Ontario are effectively utilized.

### **2. Individual success**

- Individuals have the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their potential, adapt to changes in the workplace and participate actively in society.
- There is a balance between short term employment objectives and access to relevant, accredited training that supports long term earnings potential and attachment to the labour force.
- There are clear pathways and transitions between programs, services and deliverers.
- High-quality programs and services are accessible to learners in English and French regardless of geography.
- Individuals have the information and supports they need to find suitable employment.
- Essential skills training, including numeracy and literacy skills, is universally accessible.
- Prior experience, learning, language skills and credentials are recognized.

### **3. An effective and efficient labour market system**

- All stakeholders recognize the importance of ongoing investment in human capital to our ability to compete in the new global economy.
- Higher participation and success rates are achieved.
- A comprehensive continuum of innovative, flexible programs and services responds to the diversity of local labour market and client needs and utilizes the full potential of technology.
- Program design and delivery facilitates individual and employer access and participation.
- Customized training solutions meet identified needs and ladder to further credentialed education and training that support lifelong learning.
- Performance is measured based on outcomes to ensure programs and services are driven by the needs of clients – both individuals and employers.

## IV. Moving Forward: Recommended Next Steps

To compete successfully in the 21st century global economy, all stakeholders must recognize the importance of ongoing investment in human capital. Canada and Ontario's workforce is aging, skills shortages are emerging and we will face strong competition from across the globe for skilled workers. The skills of our existing workforce are being underutilized and more of our workers are retiring early.

Working together, the partners in Ontario's labour market system need to:

- Ensure the economy has the skills it needs and individuals have access to recognized, credentialed education and training that supports their individual aspirations and their transition to long term employment
- Refocus the system to respond to identified labour market needs and support long-term labour force attachment and lifelong learning

Ontario's colleges represent a strategic resource on which to build. We are publicly accountable. We are key deliverers of education, training and employment programs. We are uniquely positioned to build links between short term training and employment and long-term, credentialed education and training that is relevant to local, provincial and national labour market needs and supports long-term labour market attachment.

The programs and services that individual colleges deliver at the local level vary depending on local needs and circumstances. Within this context, Ontario's colleges can play a pivotal role in Ontario's new employment and training system by:

- Capitalizing on our leadership role in our communities and our strong links with employers to build partnerships in the planning and delivery of labour market programs and services for employed and unemployed Ontarians
- Capitalizing on the significant investment in our public infrastructure and in the experience and expertise of our staff
- Building on our history of delivering a comprehensive range of high quality, accessible, accredited education, training and employment programs across the province
- Building on our expertise in prior learning, experience and credential assessment
- Strengthening our capacity to quick start flexible programs that address critical skills shortages, sudden workforce displacement and the unique needs of underrepresented groups, including internationally trained individuals.

We look forward to working with the Government of Ontario towards a more streamlined, client-focused system of programs and services that meet learners' needs and support lifelong learning.

Ontario's colleges have identified some initial priorities for action for the government's consideration. We are proposing a government-college partnership process and strategic investments to position colleges to more effectively help government achieve its goals for the new system. These initiatives would strengthen our capacity to deliver programs and services in English and French.

*Ontario's colleges represent a strategic resource on which to build. We are publicly accountable. We are key deliverers of education, training and employment programs.*

*We look forward to working with the Government of Ontario towards a more streamlined, client-focused system of programs and services that meet learners' needs and support lifelong learning.*

*It is difficult for individuals to navigate the system, identify training options and understand the skills that employers require, particularly at a time when they are facing economic and emotional pressures. Ontario's colleges believe it is imperative to refocus the system to respond to identified labour market needs and support long-term labour force attachment and lifelong learning.*

*Ontario's colleges are recommending the government invest \$25 million in college programs in the first year, annualizing to \$60 million by year three. It is estimated that the number of learners served would grow to 8,000 - 10,000 at maturity.*

## **i. A government-college partnership process**

Ontario's colleges are proposing that a government-college table be established to explore how colleges and government can work together to support the goals of a reformed system and examine barriers to change and opportunities for reform, including:

- Strengthening our ability to serve clients, including non-EI eligible clients
- Reaching those who are underrepresented in the labour force or are underemployed
- Supporting the development of services and programs administered by Francophones for Francophones
- Addressing the special needs of rural and remote areas
- Balancing the rights of clients to choose training that meets personal goals and abilities but also links to real opportunities for long-term employment
- Recognizing literacy and numeracy as essential components of skills training that leads to long term labour force attachment
- Improving system responsiveness and flexibility
- Enhancing flexibility in financial support for individuals and in training plans to accommodate lengthier programs
- Improving linkages between training and postsecondary programs
- Ensuring equity in operating grant support for non-postsecondary and post-secondary programs
- Ensuring accountability based on outcomes

We are also proposing that a committee be established with the two French-language colleges to develop a plan to increase access for Francophones to quality programs and services in French. One of the priorities for the committee would be to review the funding to these colleges, given the special challenges facing French colleges in Ontario.

## **ii. Strengthening Ontario's competitive edge**

Currently, federal funding for skills development is based heavily on individual training plans and rapid re-entry to the labour force. It is difficult for individuals to navigate the system, identify training options and understand the skills that employers require, particularly at a time when they are facing economic and emotional pressures. Ontario's colleges believe it is imperative to refocus the system to respond to identified labour market needs and support long-term labour force attachment and lifelong learning.

The recommendations below include targeted initiatives to address the long-term needs of the economy and individuals for relevant training in English and French that strengthens Ontario's competitive edge and supports individual success.

### ***a. Critical Skills Development***

The proposal is for government investment in the delivery of college programs for employed and unemployed Ontarians in specific areas of critical skills shortages.

Plans would be developed in partnership with industry based on local, regional and/or sectoral priorities.

Plans submitted by individual colleges might include:

- Curriculum development and delivery
- Promotion and recruitment
- Information, guidance and support to individuals and employers
- Assessment of prior learning and/or experience
- Individualized integration, training and employment plans that match individual aspirations and aptitudes to employment opportunities
- Related training such as academic upgrading, literacy and basic skills and employment preparation

Responsive and innovative approaches to curriculum design and delivery would be incorporated, for example:

- Modular/fast track delivery models
- Workplace-based options
- Part-time/evening options
- Condensed programs that ladder to longer-term programs and allow for credit accumulation toward full time qualification

Eligible costs would include start-up, facilities and equipment, materials, services, human resource and administrative costs.

Results would be evaluated based on the following outcomes:

- Number of clients who successfully complete training
- Graduate satisfaction rate
- Number of clients employed or in further education and training
- Employer satisfaction

Ontario's colleges are recommending the government invest \$25 million in college programs in the first year, annualizing to \$60 million by year three. It is estimated that the number of learners served annually would grow to 8,000 - 10,000 at maturity.

### ***b. Community Labour Market Adjustment***

The proposal is to actively support the province's initiatives related to services and programs to help job-threatened and laid off workers and provide career counselling/upgrading/retraining programs.

College plans would be delivered in consultation with employers based on local, regional and/or sectoral trends and opportunities.

### *Colleges: foundation for access to good jobs and successful careers*

- 5% of Ontario college students are Francophones
- 16% of college students (28% in Toronto) report neither French nor English as their first language.
- 18% of surveyed applicants were not born in Canada, and a further 11% were first generation Canadians.
- 14% of surveyed applicants report belonging to a visible minority group.
- 6.3% of college applicants indicate they have a disability;
- 10% of college students use "Special Needs/Disability Services."

*The proposal is to actively support the province's initiatives related to services and programs to help job-threatened and laid off workers and provide career counselling/upgrading/retraining programs.*

*Our proposal is for government investment in college initiatives that give a "second chance" to underrepresented groups and individuals facing labour market barriers and help them connect to meaningful, sustainable employment.*

Plans submitted by individual colleges might include:

- Individual needs assessment
- Information, guidance and support to individuals and employers
- Assessment of prior learning/experience
- Individualized integration, training and employment plans that match individual aspirations and aptitudes to employment opportunities
- An emphasis on skill broadening
- Education and training ranging from literacy and basic skills through academic upgrading to specific occupational skills and self-employment
- Monitoring and support for participants

Plans would be characterized by partnerships that maximize the use of existing local services and enhance service coordination and delivery strategies that respond to the particular needs and circumstances of job-threatened, laid off and older workers.

Eligible costs would include start-up, facilities and equipment, materials, services, human resource and administrative costs.

Results would be evaluated based on the following outcomes:

- Number of clients successfully completing their program
- Client satisfaction rate
- Number of clients employed, self-employed or in further education and training
- Employer satisfaction rate

The investment in community labour market adjustment would be from the government's initiatives related to services and programs to help job-threatened and laid off workers.

### *c. Bridging for Work and Learning*

The proposal is for government investment in college initiatives that give a "second chance" to underrepresented groups and individuals facing labour market barriers and help them connect to meaningful, sustainable employment.

Those who may be assisted include unemployed or low-income individuals with low literacy/numeracy skills, older workers, Aboriginals, Francophones, immigrants and persons with disabilities.

Plans would be developed by colleges in partnership with local service delivery partners to jointly deliver programs aimed at addressing local needs. Partners might provide some or all of the support services, maximizing the use of existing community resources.

Planned activities in individual college proposals would focus on prior learning/skills assessment and academic upgrading and may also include:

- Outreach, recruitment and selection of participants
- Needs assessment and counselling
- Labour market and job search information
- Life skills training

- Occupational skills training (classroom, online and on-the job)
- Employment preparation and placement

Eligible costs would include start-up, facilities and equipment, materials, services, human resource and administrative costs.

The results would be evaluated based on the following outcomes:

- Number of clients successfully completing the program
- Client satisfaction rate
- Number of clients in employment or further education and training
  - three weeks after course completion
  - six months after course completion
  - one year after course completion

Colleges are recommending an investment of \$15 million in year one, annualizing to \$30 million in year three.

### iii. Transition Support

Ontario's colleges are key players in the development and delivery of employment and training programs. We represent a significant investment in public infrastructure that can deliver the skills Ontario needs, provide clear links to further accredited education and training in support of lifelong learning, and provide essential support services to individuals to help ensure their success and develop long term attachment to the labour force.

In order to capitalize on the investment to date, rebuild the skills training capacity lost when funding was redirected in the 1990s, and better serve client needs, Ontario's colleges are proposing that the government invest \$10 million annually in proposals of up to three years for colleges to:

- Strengthen assessment, training/educational planning and learner support services
- Facilitate the development of high quality programs and services that address local and provincial skills gaps
- Strengthen community partnerships and provide integrated responses to community needs
- Expand outreach to individuals and employers
- Undertake program redesign that incorporates innovative approaches to curriculum design and delivery and laddering to full qualifications
- Establish capacity to review and redesign institutional policies, practices and processes to support institutional reform

Approval would be based on review of detailed business plans submitted by colleges that include college contributions to transition costs. Eligible costs would include start-up, facilities and equipment, materials, services, human resource and administrative costs.

Results would be evaluated based on agreed upon deliverables. It is proposed that the Transition Support Fund would be reviewed after three years.

*We represent a significant investment in public infrastructure that can deliver the skills Ontario needs, provide clear links to further accredited education and training in support of lifelong learning, and provide essential support services to individuals to help ensure their success and develop long-term attachment to the labour force.*

*There is an opportunity to develop a policy and investment framework that supports sustainability of quality programs and services and predictability in investment over time. There is also an opportunity to look at partnership models, such as apprenticeship, that are based on a close working relationship between government and colleges.*

## V. Investing for Success: Resource Requirements

Ontario's Colleges are seeking investment from the province to support a partnership focused on achieving three key goals:

- Building a coordinated, streamlined employment system that emphasizes long-term outcomes
- Focusing on critical skills training that supports Ontario's competitiveness
- Assisting individuals in the transition to sustainable employment and the acquisition of relevant skills and recognized credentials that support long-term labour force attachment.

Ontario's colleges recognize that identifying sources of investment for some of the initiatives outlined here would be more straightforward if the Labour Market Partnership Agreement is implemented.

Nevertheless, we believe that the competitive challenges facing Ontario will continue to intensify. Labour supply and productivity are fundamental to Ontario's long-term growth. In the face of an aging workforce, we need to maximize the contribution that individuals make to our economy and focus on relevant skills that boost our productivity performance.

As federal programs transfer to the province under the LMDA and the province increases its investment in labour market programs and services, including services and programs to help job-threatened and laid off workers, there is an opportunity to review the alignment of the combined federal and provincial funds against Ontario's employment and training priorities. There is an opportunity to develop a policy and investment framework that supports sustainability of quality programs and services and predictability in investment over time. There is also an opportunity to look at partnership models, such as apprenticeship, that are based on a close working relationship between government and colleges.

Finally, we believe that Ontario's fiscal planning should continue to address investment in the training and employment programs we need to meet global economic pressures, encourage individual success and support the long-term growth that allows us to fund critical social programs.

Ontario colleges do not have the fiscal flexibility they once had to address most of the labour market priorities identified in their communities. With these initial proposals, we are proposing an investment of \$50 million in Ontario's colleges, annualizing to \$100 million in year three, to ensure a robust response to the labour market challenges facing Ontario.

### Sources:

1. Queen's Printer for Ontario, Ontario, Ministry of Finance, *Toward 2025: Assessing Ontario's Long-Term Outlook*, 2005, pg. 60
2. Goldenberg M., *Employer Investment in Workplace Learning in Canada*, CPRN/CCL, pg.ii
3. Bergeron L.P., Dunn K., Lapointe M., Roth W., & Tremblay-Cote N. (2004) Looking Ahead: A 10-Year Outlook for the Canadian Labour Market 2004-2013. Human Resources and Social Development Canada: Policy Research and Coordination Directorate, Strategic Policy and Planning. SP-615-10-04E. Ottawa
4. Ontario Chamber of Commerce, *Retooling for a Prosperous Ontario: A Global Perspective on Skilled Trades*, October 2006, pg. 5
5. Joseph Berger, Anne Motte and Andrew Parkin. The Price of Knowledge 2006-07: Why Access Matters. Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Millennium Research Series. February 2007. p. 5.

*We believe that Ontario's fiscal planning should continue to address investment in the training and employment programs we need to meet global economic pressures, encourage individual success and support the long-term growth that allows us to fund critical social programs.*

## Ontario's Colleges – Ontario's Strength

### Ontario's colleges are learner centred

- We are accessible across a broad range of age groups, backgrounds and needs.
- We provide learners with links to further education and training, including formal accreditation and transfer agreements within colleges and between colleges and universities in support of clear pathways to lifelong learning.
- We offer programs and services in French and in English.
- We are experienced in assessing prior experience, learning and language skills, developing effective bridging programs and providing essential support services from counselling through placement to support individual success.
- We have geographically dispersed delivery networks in 200 communities and a growing array of distance education and online learning courses to enhance access and provide options for learning.
- 96% of college graduates would recommend their college to others.

### Ontario's colleges are market driven

- We develop and deliver a broad range of programs and services responsive to shifting labour market needs.
- Our programs and services are based on extensive consultation with industry through a strong network of program advisory committees and labour market surveys.
- We are active in local and regional labour market planning.
- We have a long and successful history of partnership with industry, labour, non-profit community-based groups, the public sector and our communities.
- 89% of graduates who enter the labour force have jobs within 6 months of graduation.

### Ontario's colleges deliver results

- We deliver a comprehensive range of programming from pre-literacy and employability skills to continuing, postsecondary and post-graduate education.
- On an annual basis we:
  - Graduate 60,000 students from one to four-year postsecondary programs.
  - Serve 25,000 apprentices, train 11,000 in literacy and basic skills, and place 27,000 young people in jobs through Job Connect.
  - Operate 50 bridging and language training programs for internationally trained individuals.
- We achieve a high employer satisfaction rate:
  - Over 90% of employers were satisfied or very satisfied with our graduates' overall college preparation, quality of work and productivity.
  - 95% of corporate customers reported that college-based training contributed to the success of their organizations.
  - 93 % of employers were satisfied or very satisfied with the services offered by colleges' Job Connect program.



Learner  
Centred



Market  
Driven



Deliver  
Results





Algonquin • Boréal • Cambrian • Canadore • Centennial • Conestoga • Confederation • Durham  
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