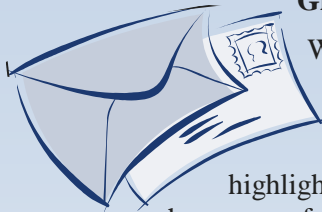




May 2005

First year of research brings valuable results



Greetings:

Workforce 2010 has been in full swing over the past year. As co-chairs this has been an exciting year for us. This newsletter highlights the findings and results that have come from the projects within Workforce 2010. This work would not have been able to proceed without the time, energy and talents of individuals across Alberta.

Members of the Workforce 2010 Advisory Committee provided direction and ensured that information, feedback and participation were occurring within their regions and departments. People who work in this field, families who both hire and access services and educators within the province have generously given of their time to ensure their ideas were part of the research done during the year. The importance of this work continues to be demonstrated through the participation and financial support of Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Family Supports for Children with Disabilities, Office of Disability Issues, PDD Provincial Board, PDD Community Boards and Service Providers.

People who work in this field and the services that they provide are essential to achieving Alberta's vision of "a vibrant and prosperous province where Albertans enjoy a superior quality of life and are confident about the future for themselves and their children." (Today's Opportunities, Tomorrow's Promise, Budget 2005). We enter Year Two of Workforce 2010 knowing together we are moving clearly towards our shared vision of having a well-trained and stable community rehabilitation workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service.

Ed Riediger, CEO of Robin Hood

Alex Hillyard, CEO of PDD Northeast
Community Board

Co-Chairs Workforce 2010

The Vision

By the year 2010, the Province of Alberta will have a well-trained and stable community rehabilitation workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service.

The Goal

To provide a comprehensive solution to current and long-term human resource challenges in service to persons with developmental disabilities through a series of integrated strategies.

The Objectives

Develop and disseminate labour market intelligence

Provide employers with industry-specific human resource management training and planning tools

Develop the groundwork for implementing a successful human resources social marketing campaign

Build community capacity by forging alliances and sharing best practices and principles

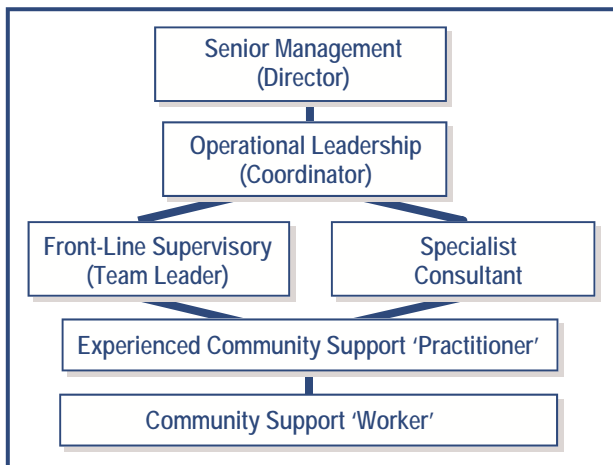




The results are rolling in

Project 1: Job Benchmarks and Job Evaluations

Workforce 2010 has created six common benchmark profiles that relate to work in the community rehabilitation sector and placed the profiles in a proposed career progression. Each profile is a reference that individual agencies can use as a guide to designing and defining jobs. While each agency will develop its own specific organizational arrangements, the role profiles provide a guide for career progression from entry level to senior management, with an option for non-managerial specialization. The career progression is illustrated in the following graphic.



A common benchmark job is a familiar bundle of work tasks, highly recognizable in the rehabilitation field, and typically with a recognizable title. They are designed to provide a reference point for other jobs (“bundles of work”) that an agency or other employer may have or want to create.

While organizations may have jobs that have responsibilities that are very similar to the common benchmark, it is not the intent for the common benchmarks to be prescriptive; but rather, they are guides to localized job definition and development to enable consistency within the field.

Each of these profiles identifies the primary activities and tasks common to a particular role, as well as the values, attitudes, aptitudes, relevant knowledge, skill base and education requirements associated with that role.

Here are a couple of examples of the descriptions to give you a flavour of the direction the job profiles are taking.

Community Support Worker

Typically reports to a coordinator or team leader

Primary Role: This person has responsibility to support and facilitate the development of skills and competencies that will assist persons with disabilities to pursue and fulfill their goals, objectives and aspirations. (15 specific tasks/activities are identified)

Qualifications: A positive attitude that acknowledges the gifts, talents and passions of persons with disabilities, an aptitude for service and support and a relevant knowledge and skill base. Secondary school education supported by additional relevant training/education. (16 specific qualifications identified)

Coordinator

Reports to the Executive Director, Program Director or Human Services Director.

Primary role: Responsible for a set of services or processes within an agency/organization. Key aspects of the role include the development and implementation of process guidelines, service monitoring and evaluation, service delivery coordination and intervention, budget administration and management, funding proposal development and community liaison. (15 detailed activities identified)

Continued on Page 4.....



Trends in the workforce

Projects 2 & 3: Characteristics and Trends of the Current and Future Workforces and Characteristics and Profiles of Individuals Who Access Services

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Research Institute is putting the final touches on a document that will overview findings from the employer survey, the family focus groups and the literature review. Here are a few teasers on the employer survey results.

- 76 respondents (43.2%) returned the survey, providing information for 70 unique organizations representing 83 service locations.
- 69 organizations (98.6%) receive PDD funding to provide services to adults with developmental disabilities; of these, 48 serve only adults and 21 serve adults and children.
- 22 organizations (31.4%) receive FSCD funding to provide services to children with developmental disabilities; 21 serve adults and children, and one serves only children.
- The sample reported a total of 7,446 employees.
- Population estimates based on extrapolation suggest there could be as many as 13,600 PDD-funded and 2,630 FSCD-funded positions in community-based services funded by PDD in Alberta.
- The largest proportion of workers consists of people 26-35 years old.
- Job status/hours: Over 80% of PDD-funded workers are permanent, about 50% full-time and 30% part-time. Over 15% of PDD-funded and 24% of FSCD-funded workers are variable, casual or on-call workers. Compared to PDD-funded workers, there is a lower proportion of FSCD-funded permanent workers.
- Highest level of education: 26% of PDD-funded and 19% of FSCD-funded employees have just a high school diploma, while 15% of PDD-funded and 8% of FSCD-funded employees have a college diploma. 13% of PDD-funded and 6% of FSCD-funded employees have taken some college or university courses, and 12% of PDD-funded and 8% of FSCD-funded employees have at least one university degree or post-graduate training.

Do you want to know more?

The labour market research completed over the past year is comprehensive and impressive. It stands as the first comprehensive view of the workforce that supports adults and children with disabilities. This information will be integrated into multimedia presentations hosted on a website. The full suite of information will be available by Fall 2005.

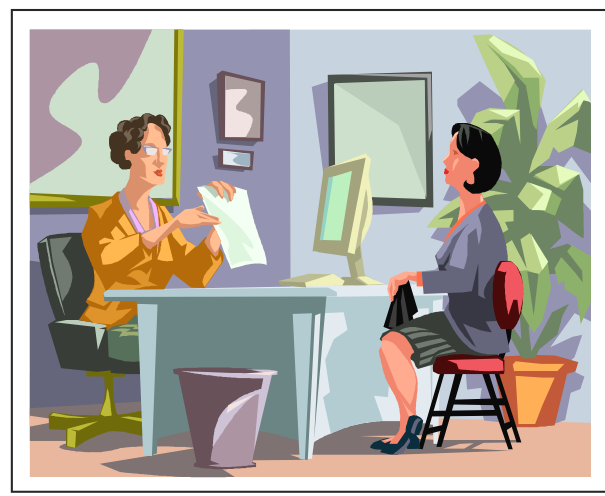


In addition, members of the Workforce Advisory Committee will be available to host information sessions across regions and to all interested groups. The September newsletter will provide information on scheduled sessions and contact info for website access and methods of scheduling information sessions.



More projects in the works

Projects 4 & 5: Good Employers; Public Perceptions



Project 4: Being an Employer of Choice

UNDER CONSTRUCTION! The literature review on this component is complete and the employer survey and family focus groups have provided ideas on being an employer of choice. These ideas are going to a focus group and they will be creating a guide for best employer practice.

Project 5: Public Image of the Industry

The objectives of this qualitative research are to identify perceptions and opinions regarding careers in the rehabilitation sector and to understand the barriers and motivations to entering and remaining in the workforce.

What happens next?

Information from this research and an Omnibus Survey conducted in mid-April will be used to create a marketing and communication plan. The plan will include ideas for an image for the field, a new name for the people who work in this field and suggestions for marketing strategies. This marketing and communication plan should be completed by the end of June.



Do you want to know more?

This report is posted on the AARC website at www.albertarehab.org under Workforce 2010 and is well worth a read.

Project 1Continued from Page 2

Qualifications: The role requires a positive attitude that acknowledges the gifts, talents and passions of persons with disabilities, an aptitude for service and support, and a relevant knowledge and skill base. An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline (a graduate degree is preferred) augmented by progressive experience. (14 specific qualifications)



Do you want to know more?

All service providers/employers will be invited to participate in a pilot to test the job profiles. Organizations will be provided with a one-day workshop and follow-up consultation. The one-day workshop on Job Profiles and Job Evaluation will be offered in each region in the fall. The full Job Profile and Implementation Manual will be provided at the workshop.

In addition, an overview of the key elements of the job profiles and evaluation process will be available for review by September.



Who said what?

The qualitative research done for Workforce 2010 has provided excellent data on the opinions held by stakeholders on the work done in this field. Here is a quiz to check your impressions of who may hold what impression of our field.

Options for Opinion Holder

1. Front-line staff
2. Specialists and managers who work in the community rehabilitation sector
3. Career or employment counselors
4. People who influence others to go into a career (e.g. family members or friends)
5. Potential workforce: people who are thinking about making a career change or entering a career.

If you think a career counselor made the first remark, write 3 in the empty space and so on. Answers on Page 6.

"I knew that my skills were needed and my contribution would be meaningful."	
"I'm not sure what someone would make in this industry, but I think it is low, and probably doesn't reflect what they should get paid."	
"I took a temporary job for two weeks as a clerical replacement and never left the industry. I got my undergraduate and graduate degrees and have always worked in community rehabilitation."	
"It is common that staff have to work two jobs just to be able to feed their families."	
"It's work, and some people need to take whatever they can get."	
"They are wonderful people helping individuals to develop and grow."	
"Every time the fourth quarter rolls around, we have to cut costs, which means cutting programs and services."	

Community Rehabilitation Profile

Krista Staples

Currently I am Executive Director for the Taber Special Needs Society. I first became connected to the society as a practicum student in the mid 1980s through the Rehabilitation Program at Lethbridge Community College.

At that time adults with developmental disabilities had to leave their home communities to access any types of support. This gave rise to the concept of Taber Special Needs Society providing community-based services. As with every worthwhile endeavour, however, it did not happen overnight.

It has been a great experience being part of the Taber Special Needs Society's vision, progress and growing pains from infancy to where we are today.

I look forward to the day when people with developmental disabilities live in reciprocal inclusive communities, when individuals are noticed not for their differences but rather their abilities and when they are acknowledged by their names in communities rather than by their disabilities. I hope that we will live in a community where all people are unique and valued.

I also hope that communities will some day recognize the field of Rehabilitation as a profession, that the Rehabilitation field will be a career choice that more people make, and that employees will have the respect and value that goes with being members of an acknowledged profession.

I was part of the South Region focus group for Workforce 2010's Project 1. The group reviewed and commented on the benchmarks for jobs within the field. It was an opportunity for me to envision and provide feedback to the work that will be required of Community Rehabilitation workers in the future. I was honored to be a part of a valuable task. I hope this project will generate standardized benchmarks for the field of Rehabilitation and that people with disabilities have an educated workforce to support them in all aspects of community life.

I stay in the field for lots of reasons, but mostly because of the commitment individuals, families, employees, board members and Taber community all have to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. When I look back on the last 20 years and see how far the field of Rehabilitation has come I certainly don't want to miss the future. It holds positive impacts on the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

I feel lucky to be a part of that.



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Full descriptions of Workforce 2010 and the sub projects are available at <http://www.albertarehab.org/>

AARC Inter-related HR Strategies



The Emerging Picture

The projects of Workforce 2010 are key to meeting the vision of “Alberta having a well-trained and stable community rehabilitation workforce recognized as professionals providing valued service.” The projects are also assisting us understand the many other elements that must be put in place to ensure a comprehensive Human Resource Framework. Workshop 2010 is just one initiative in this Framework. The graphic above illustrates the different initiatives and projects that The Strategic Planning Committee of the AARC Board views as steps on the journey to a stable community rehabilitation workforce.

Do you want to know more?

Each of these areas of work has committees and initiatives that are continually evolving. Information on these committees and initiatives can be found on the AARC website www.albertarehab.org.

People on the committees would also be happy to share with you what is happening. Committee and staff membership is available on the website or by connecting the AARC office at 403-250-9495. We would love to talk to you.

The answers from Page 5.....

