



## **Portage la Prairie Youth with Barriers 5-Year Community Employment Strategy**

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A report and recommendations to address the issues and barriers youth at risk face when trying to attain and retain employment in their community.

**FINAL REPORT**  
**April 21, 2011**



## **Acknowledgements**

In October 2010, Rural Communities in Manitoba initiated a project aimed at identifying the strengths and barriers faced by youth-at-risk in obtaining and retaining employment in rural Manitoba. The project involved 11 communities or regions in rural Manitoba, the Centre for Aboriginal and Rural Education Studies (BU C.A.R.E.S.) in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University and administrative staff from Service Canada. In addition to collecting and analyzing a comprehensive data set, the project involved the establishment of Youth Advisory Committees in each community or region and the development of a 5-year plan for youth-at-risk in each of the communities or regions based on a common framework.

Communities specifically identified to be part of the project within the Central Plains Region included the City of Portage la Prairie and the towns of Oakville, Gladstone, St. Claude, MacGregor, Treherne, St. Ambrose and Elm Creek. Unfortunately, time constraints limited the project to the City of Portage la Prairie. Consideration will need to be given in future as to whether investigation in these communities can be undertaken.

In Portage la Prairie and surrounding area S.A.M. Inc. assumed the role of project sponsor. Responsibilities included hiring appropriate staff, oversight of all aspects of the project, including financial, and accountability for reporting to Service Canada.

A project of this nature requires the collaboration and participation of many people. S.A.M. Inc. and their project staff gratefully acknowledge all those who participated in any way in the completion of this report. Thank you to those who hosted survey sites.

A special thank you goes out to the youth and employers who took time to consider the survey questions and to complete them to the best of their ability. The feedback they provided formed the heart of this report.

Thank you to Dr. Karen Rempel and the staff of the Brandon University Faculty of Education C.A.R.E.S. program for their guidance and scholastic oversight in the research process. Their support to project staff was essential to the successful completion of the community plans.

Thank you to the many administrators, business owners, staff and community members who participated in the community consultations. Through their vast experience they provided a solid context which strengthened the report and ensured its relevance to the larger community.

Thank you to Elicia Funk and the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation for support and assistance in reviewing and formatting the final document.

Last, but not least, thank you to the members of the Portage la Prairie Youth Employment Advisory Committee who provided direction and insight in the completion of this report.

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## 1 Executive Summary

The Portage la Prairie Youth Employment Community Plan is one of 11 plans completed in communities across Manitoba. It is part of a larger study of youth employment in the province. As such, the plan is presented in accordance with a framework common to all participating communities.

Section 1 of the plan includes the Executive Summary, a brief overview of the various sections of the report.

Section 2 of the plan includes the Mission Statement, Mandate and Terms of Reference developed in the course of establishing the local Youth Employment Advisory Committee (YEAC). The role of the YEAC in the development of the Plan has been to provide feedback and recommendations to Project Staff. On a going forward basis the role of the Advisory Committee is to oversee and guide the implementation of the Community Plan.

Section 3 of the plan includes a community profile of the City of Portage la Prairie, along with a brief business and employment profile. This section provides important background information to the remainder of the report.

Section 4 contains baseline information gleaned from a survey of 230 youth at risk and 49 employers. Results of the surveys are presented with graphic illustrations included where they were considered to be valuable in presenting the information. Key findings are identified throughout this section as they pertain directly to the survey information.

Section 5 contains findings from a series of community consultations with program and service providers and with members of the business community.

Section 6 provides an overview of related plans and reports previously conducted in the community. While there were other reports available, the three presented are the most closely aligned with the issue of youth employment.

Section 7 identifies the priorities arising from an analysis of the key findings of the report. In addition, this section lays out seven overall goals for inclusion in the 2011 work plan.

Section 8 concludes the report with a suggested work plan for this fiscal year.

Section 9 includes a sample year-at-a-glance summary sheet for tracking outcomes measured against the previous year's objectives.

## 2 Mission Statement, Mandate and Terms of Reference for the Youth Advisory Committee

**Name:** Portage la Prairie Youth Employment Advisory Committee

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Portage la Prairie Youth Employment Advisory Committee is to work together to assist youth in our community to achieve their potential by supporting actions that promote employment, further enhance education and create greater community awareness and involvement.

### **Mandate of the Committee:**

- a. To work as a team.
- b. To develop an understanding of the issue of youth employment through a variety of formal and informal research methodologies.
- c. To identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, over-laps, opportunities and challenges in the existing service system continuum.
- d. To develop strategic priorities for the local community based on the information collected.
- e. To utilize those strategic priorities to develop a 5-year Rural Youth Employment Community Plan setting out goals and outcomes and further, to develop one-year plans identifying objectives, activities and indicators of progress for each year of the 5-year plan.
- f. To disseminate information on the issue of youth employment generally and the Committee's activities specifically, and to provide regular updates on the implementation of the plan to the community at large.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Scope of the Committee:**

- a. To fulfill the Mandate of the Committee until such time as a guardian agency/group responsible for oversight and implementation of the Portage la Prairie 5-year Rural Youth Employment Community Plan is in place.

#### **Governance:**

- a. Meetings of the Youth Employment Advisory Committee shall be held as determined from time to time by the Advisory Committee.
- b. A duly constituted quorum for operation of the Youth Employment Advisory Committee shall be 51% of appointed members.
- c. Advisory Committee decisions requiring motions shall be made on the basis of a simple majority of members in attendance.
- d. The Youth Employment Project Community Coordinator for the area shall act as the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Committee until such time as the position no longer exists.
- e. Following expiry of the position of Community Coordinator, the Committee shall determine which officers are necessary for the operation of the Committee and shall elect such officers through the regular voting procedures of the Youth

- Employment Advisory Committee. The terms of service shall be for one year.
- f. The Chairperson shall prepare the agenda.
  - g. Committee members who wish to submit agenda items shall do so five days in advance of scheduled meetings.
  - h. An electronic copy of the agenda will be provided to Committee members three days in advance of meetings.
  - i. Changes may be made to the agenda by majority vote of the members present at any regular meeting of the Committee.
  - j. Minutes of each meeting will be recorded and circulated to all members in advance of the next meeting.
  - k. The Youth Employment Advisory Committee has no financial or other assets. All financial and other assets related to the Youth Employment Project are the responsibility of the project sponsor.
  - l. Committee Terms of Reference shall be reviewed for possible revision a minimum of once during each operating year.
  - m. Changes to the Terms of Reference are made by a simple majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee, provided all members receive written notice of intent to change the Terms of Reference a minimum of 10 days in advance of the meeting at which the change is to be considered.

**Responsibilities of Members:**

- a. Committee members advise the Chair in advance of their unavailability to attend any Committee meeting.
- b. Reasonable expenses for attendance at meetings are the responsibility of individual committee members or their organizations.

**Committee Membership:**

- a. Inaugural members of the committee shall be those individuals who volunteer at the initial Information Meeting.
- b. Additional members may be added at the invitation of the inaugural committee by majority motion of the committee.
- c. Inaugural appointments are for a term to be decided by the inaugural committee, but shall not be for a period of longer than one year.
- d. Following establishment of the committee, members may be re-appointed from year to year.
- e. Appointees shall be individuals who have a direct interest in the mission of the Committee (key stakeholders, youth, business representatives) or those who have a general interest in the area of youth employment and bring a beneficial skill set to the Committee.
- f. The Committee shall be comprised of not more than 15 members.
- g. Committee members representing key stakeholder organizations may name an alternate to attend meetings they are not able to attend. Alternates will have the same voting privileges as the committee members they represent.

**3 Background Information**

**3.1 General Demographics – City of Portage la Prairie**

General demographic information on the City of Portage la Prairie was taken from the Portage la Prairie Social Planning Initiative Phase One Report, published in August 2009 by the University of Winnipeg Institute of Urban Studies for the Portage Community Network and Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation, from the 2006 Census Community Profiles and in one instance from the Portage la Prairie School Division. Information taken directly from the Phase One Report is enclosed in quotation marks.

- “Portage la Prairie has a population of 12,728 people. With more than half of this population (57%) under 45 years old, Portage can be considered to be a fairly young community.”
- Two thousand three hundred and forty citizens or 18.4 % of the total population fall into the Survey Participants age group.
- Approximately 20-25% of the 1000-1100 high school students at PCI are enrolled in specialized high school programs at any one time.
- “Similar to other small prairie cities, Portage la Prairie’s ethnic composition is highly homogenous. Despite a 56% increase in the number of persons identified as being a visible minority, no neighbourhood within the city has more than 3.2% of their population identified as a visible minority (this figure excludes Aboriginal persons).”
- “The city’s population of Aboriginal Canadians continues to increase. Comprising just over one-fifth of the population, the number of Aboriginal persons within Portage increased 11% from 2001 to 2006.”
- “The distribution of the Aboriginal population is far from uniform. Nearly 40% of the North North East’s population identifies themselves as Aboriginal while the Koko Platz/Mellenville neighbourhood has a city wide low of only 7%.”
- “When compared to Manitoba’s five largest cities, Portage’s rates of educational attainment rank in the middle. With approximately one third of the city’s adults aged 15 and older without a high school diploma or equivalent, this statistic is significantly higher than Winnipeg’s rate of 23.1% and lower than Thompson’s rate of nearly 40%.”
- “Within the City, certain neighbourhoods have lower rates of educational attainment.”
- In one designated area in the North North East, a low of 50% of residents do not hold a high school diploma or other certificate.
- “The highest rate of attainment is in Koko Platz/Mellenville, where almost 8 in 10 adults have some form of recognized educational attainment.”
- “According to the 2006 Census in 2005 the median household income in Portage la Prairie was \$43,015, an increase of 18% from 2000. The same data also indicated that, of Manitoba’s five largest urban areas, only Selkirk had a lower median income with \$42,502. Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson each had higher median incomes than Portage la Prairie.”
- “Within the city there is a large geographical variation within income. According to the

statistics provided by Neighbourhoods Alive, the average median income ranges from a high of \$83,171 in Koko Platz/Mellenville to a low of \$42,082 in North North East.”

- “On average, Portage families make 74.6% of their income from employment. The remaining 25% of income is generally drawn from government transfers or other sources.”
- “While the majority of residents (71.5%) in Portage la Prairie live in owner-occupied accommodations, a significant proportion (29.5%) resides in rented dwellings. The Koko Platz/Mellenville, Central North West and North North West neighbourhoods have the highest proportion of owners in the city (87.4%, 81.4% and 79.6% respectively). In contrast the lowest level of home ownership is found in the South East with less than half (45.8%) of the neighbourhood’s 295 dwellings owned by their occupants.” This is explainable by the fact that this area is largely made up of senior’s life lease apartments.
- “In terms of affordability, on average, nearly 11% of the city’s home owners are paying more than 30% of their monthly income on mortgage payments with the highest proportion occurring in South East (18.5%). The number of renters facing a similar situation jumps dramatically with nearly 37.5% in the South East, Central North East and South West neighbourhoods each experiencing above average rates (56.3%, 40.9% and 39% respectively).”
- “On average 60% of families (defined as more than one person living in the same residence related by blood, marriage or common-law partnership), have children. Of these, 36% are lone parent families. Lone parent families outnumber two parent households in two neighbourhoods: Central North East (56.4%) and North North East (51.7%).”

#### **Finding #1**

Taken directly from the Social Planning Initiative Phase One Report:

“the city of Portage la Prairie features some dramatic spatial disparities: for almost every indicator, positive and negative trends are each concentrated in certain areas. This points to a level of socio-spatial division within the community, that advantage and disadvantage can depend greatly on where one lives. It is not an ethnically diverse community, but does contain a significant proportion of Aboriginal residents, who again are concentrated in certain neighbourhoods.”

#### **Finding #2**

The proportion of Aboriginal residents in the City of Portage la Prairie is increasing.

### **3.2 Business and Employment**

Constructing a profile of the business community in Portage la Prairie was difficult from a purely demographic perspective. Since the elimination of the business tax in the City there are no formal records kept on the numbers or types of businesses in the community. The Chamber of Commerce was also unable to provide this information as not all businesses elect to secure Chamber memberships. Membership in the Chamber is usually in the neighbourhood of 250. Project staff were advised that the City operates using an estimate of 750 businesses in the community, loosely based on municipal services purchased by business. For the significant number of home based businesses in the community, no method is available for developing a credible estimate.

At the present time the City is in transition with respect to its Economic Development Department. Upon the retirement of the Economic Development Officer approximately three years ago, the City moved to contract out the services to a private company. With the expiry of that contract the City Manager has assumed temporary responsibility for economic development activities. Council is presently engaged in a process of developing its Strategic Plan for the coming four years. The resolution of this issue is high on the agenda.

Based on the 2006 census information, the Phase I Social Planning Report makes the following observations regarding employment in the City of Portage la Prairie.

“With an unemployment rate of 6.3%, Portage’s rate is slightly higher than the Manitoba average of 5.5%. The city’s participation rate of 65.5% is also slightly lower than the provincial average of 68.2%. With a rate of 31.8%, the South East neighbourhood has the lowest participation rate in the city (note that this is largely owed to the concentration of Senior’s housing in the South East). The Koko Platz/Mellenville neighbourhood has the highest labour participation rate with almost 74% of residents over 15 employed and just 3.9% actively searching for employment.”

#### **Finding #3**

A reliable system for securing and maintaining information on the numbers, types and changes in the business sector in the City does not exist.

## **4 Baseline Information from 2011 Youth and Employer Surveys**

### **4.1 General Information on Youth Surveys**

Surveys were developed by Brandon University. Young people aged 15 to 30 were eligible to complete surveys, provided they were out of school, not in receipt of Employment Insurance, unemployed or working less than 20 hours per week, Canadian citizens or granted Refugee Status. Surveys were also accepted on a limited basis from students presently enrolled at the Portage Collegiate Institute provided they were participating in one of four specific programs and were identified as “high risk” by Administration and staff of the school. The project provided an honorarium of \$10.00 for each completed survey to encourage participation. All surveys were collected at sites within the City of Portage la Prairie with the exception of one drop-in session held in the community of Oakville.

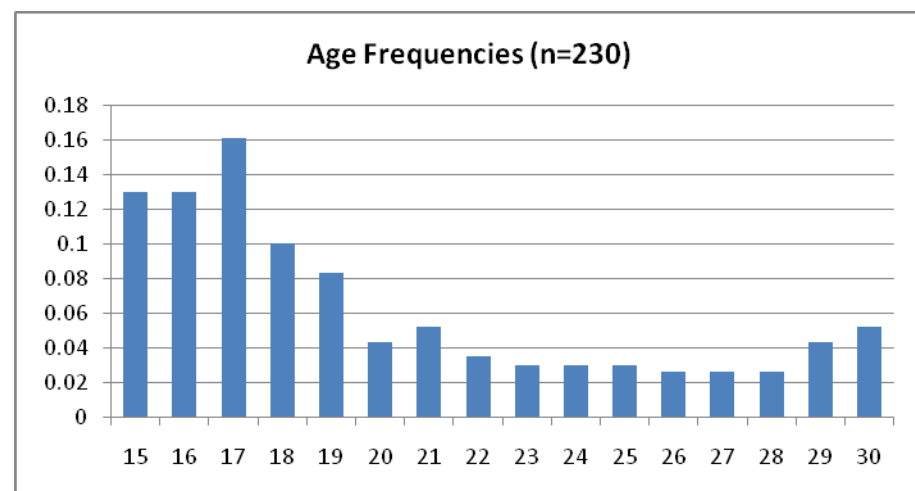
For detailed information on advertising and survey collection sites or copies of the Youth Surveys, please call S.A.M. Inc. at 857-6560.

### **4.2 Results of Youth Surveys**

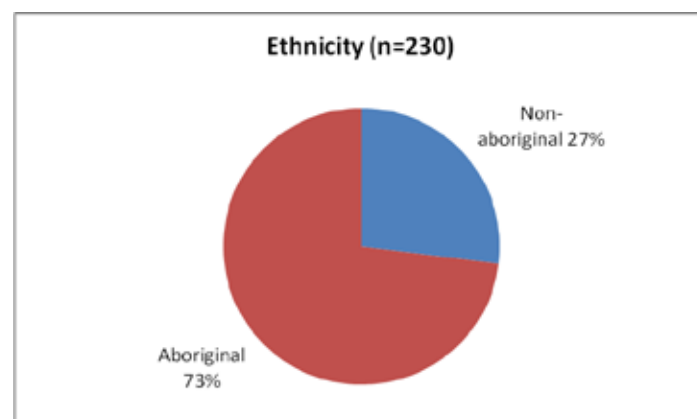
Two hundred and forty youth surveys were completed by participants during the survey period. Ten were disqualified due to eligibility issues, leaving a possible two hundred and thirty respondents. If the number of participants who answered a question was felt by the writer to be a legitimate cause for being concerned about the validity of the information, the actual number is noted in this report.

## Demographic Information

The median age of participants was 20 years with a range of 15 to 30 years. Every age group was represented with seventeen years olds having the highest representation.



Males (54%) slightly outnumbered females (46%). Almost three quarters of participants (73%) stated they were Aboriginal.



Almost all participants had lived in Canada for their entire lives. Eighty-five percent reported they resided in the City of Portage la Prairie.

Over half of the respondents (57%) reported they had lived only in Portage la Prairie during the past year. The balance had lived in Portage la Prairie and in a large variety of other communities, including a high of 26 participants who had lived at Long Plain First Nation. The results suggest significant mobility between Portage and many other communities in Manitoba. Very few participants indicated they had lived in communities outside of the province.

Two-thirds of participants (66%) indicated they did not have a steady source of income. The 34% who did have a steady source of income reported an average income of only \$175.26 per week. The main source of income for participants was Income Assistance (13%), followed by employment (12%) and family (4%).

Of those who did not have a steady source of income, reasons varied with unemployment being by far the most commonly reported reason.

Over half of participants (64%) had bank accounts. Considering the levels of income, a surprising 18% of participants indicated they had savings.

Participants were predominantly single, with only 13% married or living common-law.

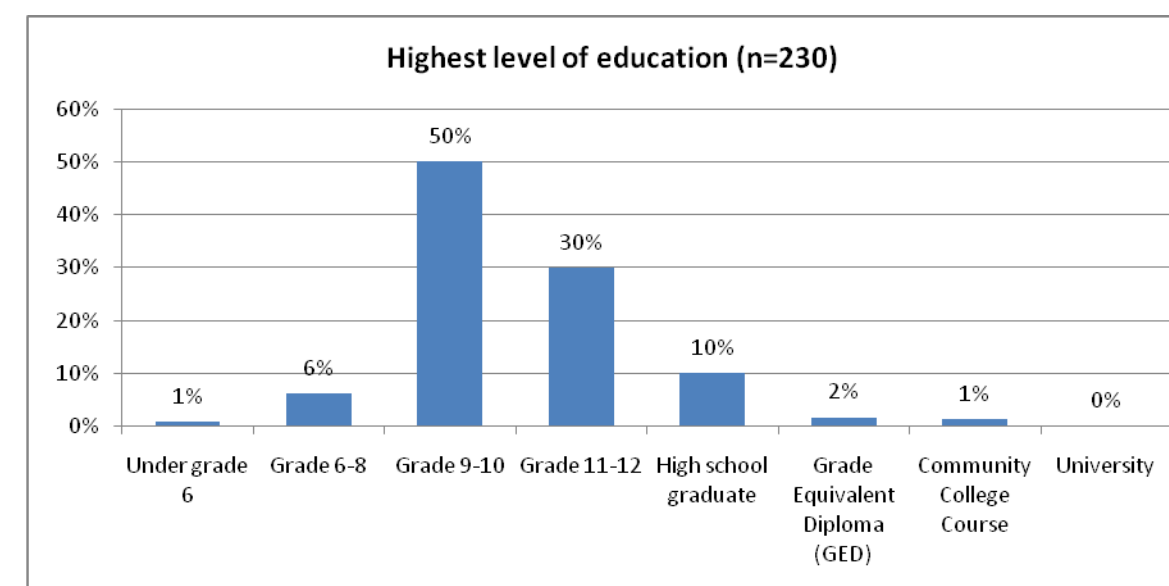
Participants were predominantly without children (70%). Those with children averaged two children. All children were under eight years of age, likely because of the young age of participants. Most lived with their families (76%) - with parents, other family members or independently with their own children.

Of the one hundred and sixty seven respondents who answered, individuals reported an average of just under four family members living with them, of which two were over the age of eighteen. Of those adults an average of .8 females and .5 males were currently working indicating a significant level of unemployment among family members.

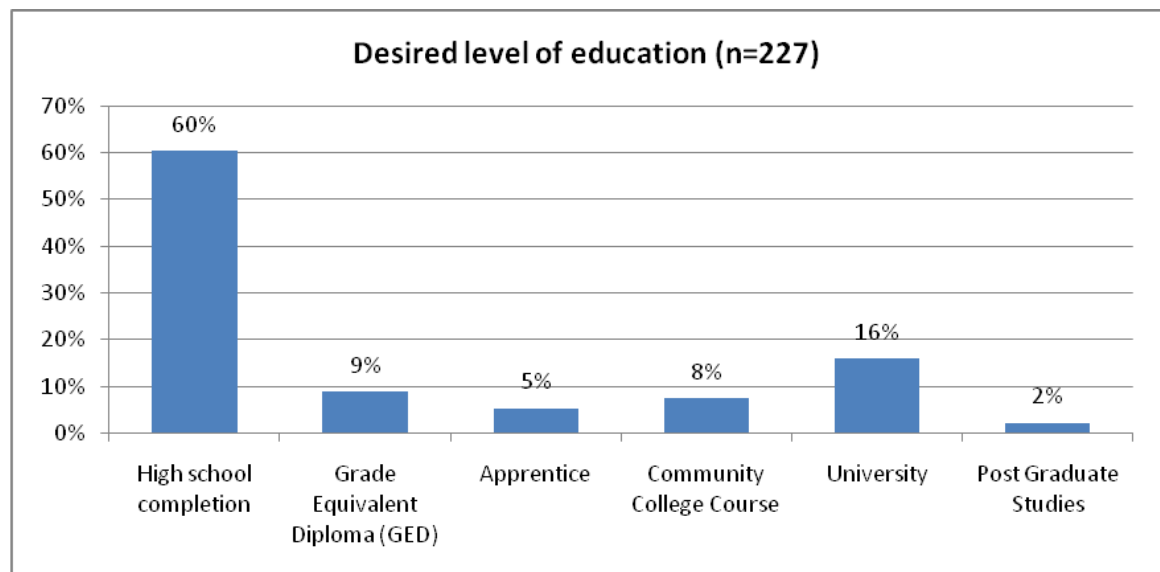
## Education and Training

All participants were currently out of school with the exception of approximately 40 youth who were identified by the High School as participating in specialized programs for youth at risk.

Fifty percent of participants reported a current educational level of either grade nine or grade ten. Only 13% of participants had a high school education or higher. Education levels were distributed according to the following chart.



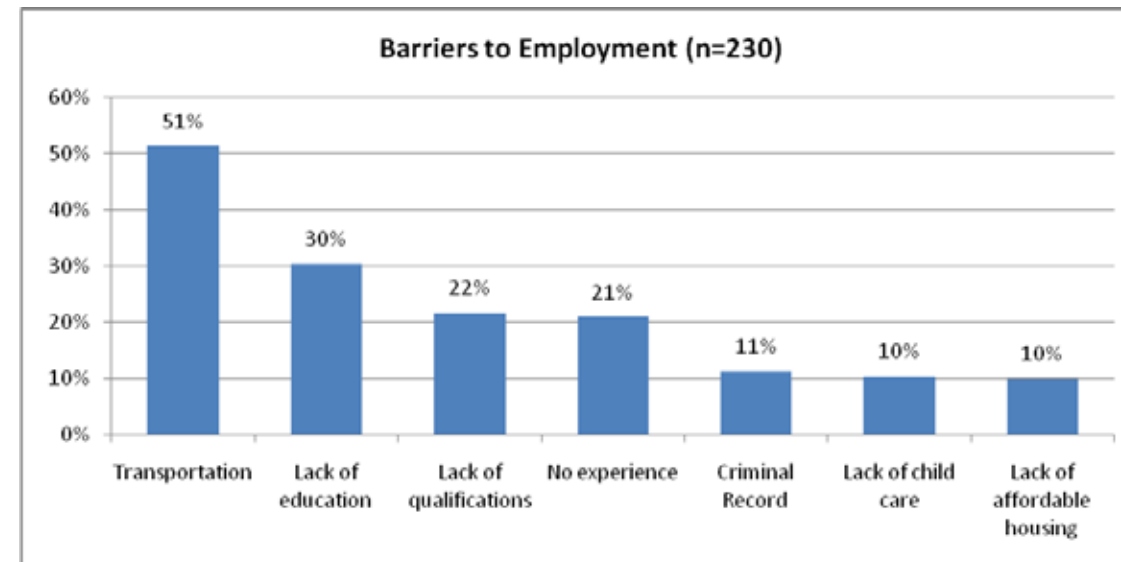
When asked what education level participants would like to achieve, 60% would like to complete high school, 9% would like to complete their GED and 31% would like to pursue some type of post-secondary education. It should be noted that the survey did not ask participants if they desired an educational level of less than high school or GED.



### Employment Experience

The majority of participants (86%) were unemployed. Of the 13% who indicated they did have employment, the work was largely part-time, casual or seasonal. The average number of hours worked per week was 15 hours. Most participants indicated they would like to work full time. Participants were paid for their work an average of \$10.01 per hour, with wages ranging from \$9.50 to \$14 per hour. Of participants who are not currently working, most reported they had been employed in the past (73%), but for the most part those jobs were seasonal or part time. It should be noted that the survey did not ask participants to identify if they had past full-time employment.

Lack of transportation was cited by over half of participants (51%) as a significant barrier to in obtaining employment or getting a different job. Next to lack of transportation, lack of education (30%), insufficient qualifications (22%) and lack of experience (21%) were reported as the most frequent barriers. Child care was also reported as a significant issue, cited by over ten percent of participants. This is reasonably high given that only 30% of participants reported having children.



Of those participants who reported being employed or having been employed in the past, the most common place of employment was restaurants or bars (40%), followed by farms (26%) and then grocery or retail stores (23%). When asked where they would like to work, almost the same number indicated they would like to continue to work in restaurants or bars (37%), but participants expanded their list of desirable places of employment substantially. Areas such as construction, the trades, the public sector, oil, gas, mining, lumber, day cares and nursing homes rose in preference, possibly indicating that young men who participated in the survey were more dissatisfied with their employment options than young women. When asked what occupation or profession participants would like to have, responses ranged from a high of 27% for self-employment to a low of 14% for truck drivers.

### Current vs. Desired Industry

	Current or past	Desired
Restaurants or bars	40%	37%
Farms	26%	14%
Grocery or retail stores	23%	30%
Construction	18%	27%
Oil, gas, mining, lumber	8%	18%
Public sector (schools, hospital)	6%	17%
Day care	6%	18%
Private household	6%	8%
Manufacturing	5%	12%
Trades (welding, plumbing, electrical)	4%	20%
Trucking company	1%	11%
Nursing home	1%	14%
Other	16%	12%



**Experience with Employers**

When asked their opinions regarding what employers should do to attract more youth workers, the majority of participants (60%) felt that scheduling work around school time would be the most effective. Eighty-one percent indicated they had never had bad experiences in the work force. However, of the 19% who indicated they had experienced difficulty, the story was somewhat troubling, with four participants indicating they were treated unfairly due to pregnancy or their superiors became frustrated with pre-natal appointments and others reporting a wide range of issues from verbal abuse and assault to not being paid on time, having hours cut or not being paid for hours worked.

An almost equal number of participants felt that flexibility in providing some weekends off (51%) and better scheduling of hours (54%) would make obtaining a job easier for them.

Most participants felt the best place for employers to advertise was the newspaper (70%), on the internet (64%) and with signs in the window (53%).

**Community Involvement**

Participants were asked to indicate which of a wide variety of community services they used. Almost half reported using the library and restaurants (47% each), followed by drop-in centres (36%), doctors offices (34%), dentist's offices (32%) and hospitals (28%). Sports teams were the most commonly reported recreational activity participated in.

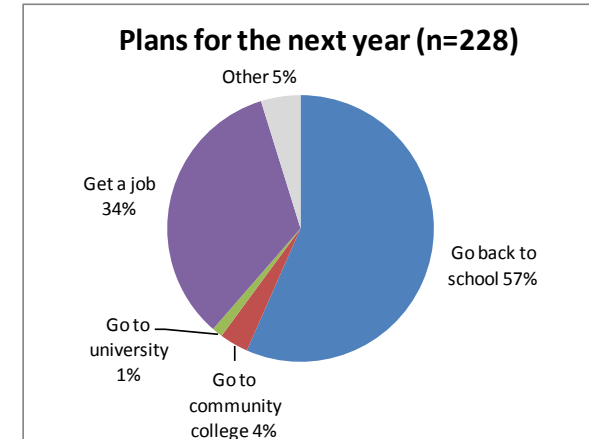
Impressively, 44% indicated they had volunteered in the community with a broad list of involvement ranging from the Salvation Army Food Bank and the soup kitchen to teaching swimming lessons. Leisure time was spent hanging out with friends (75%), using the computer (68%), watching TV (65%) and visiting with family. Forty percent indicated they spent time reading. Only 19% reported going to the bar although 61% were 18 or older. Participants spent an average of 20 hours a week on leisure activities. It should be noted that for many this was a difficult question because they are unemployed and it was difficult to separate leisure from other activities.

**Education, Training and Employment Services**

Two-thirds of participants (34%) indicated they had never used education, training or employment services in the community other than school. Those who had used such services were fairly evenly split between having used employment services (20%), adult literacy services (14%) and job site training programs (13%). Only 2% of participants had utilized English as an Additional Language programs. Only 10% of participants indicated that they did not need education, training or employment services. Those who had never used services either did not know of them (35%) or did not have access to transportation in order to use them (22%).

**Looking Ahead**

When asked what their plans were for the next year over half of participants (57%) reported it was their intention to go back to school. Another third (34%) reported they wished to get a job. Almost 80% of participants indicated they intend to remain in the community.



**Personal and Life Skills**

Participants felt most confident about their abilities in the areas of cooking and child care and least confident in the areas of mechanical skills, time management and household budgeting and income tax. The participant self ratings of their personal and life skills are presented in the following table.

**Youth Personal and Life Skills**

	Good	Fair	Poor
Cooking	71%	24%	6%
Childcare	62%	30%	8%
Elder care	43%	40%	17%
Completing application forms	41%	44%	15%
Household budgeting	35%	42%	23%
Time management	30%	55%	15%
Mechanical skills	24%	43%	33%
Income tax	23%	36%	42%

Most participants (78%) had an interest in attending training workshops. Participants had the highest level of interest in workshops in the areas of CPR (44%), money management (40%) and interview preparation (34%). Less interest was expressed in budgeting and resume development (27% each).

Youth self-ratings of their employability skills are shown in the table below. A significant percentage of participants believed they already had verbal skills, communication skills, writing skills, and computer skills. Skills identified as being needed most included interview skills and technical skills.

**Youth self-rated skills**

	Youth self-rated as "already have"
Verbal skills	70%
Communication skills	69%
Writing skills	63%
Computer skills	61%
Math skills	52%
Interpersonal skills	50%
Organizational skills	49%
Customer service	45%
Interview skills	29%
Technical skills	28%

Most participants (85%) had social insurance numbers. Although 87% of respondents were 16 or older, only 24% had a driver's license. Roughly two thirds believed they could live independently.

**Finding #4**

If the survey participants are representative of youth facing employment challenges in the community, a composite of participants in the survey suggests these youth are:

- predominantly Aboriginal Canadians (73%),
- distributed across an age range of 15 to 30 years,
- male and female with a slight bias towards being male (54%),
- living in the City of Portage (85%) with considerable mobility to other communities within Manitoba,
- unemployed, working part time at low paying positions, or on income assistance,
- predominantly single (87%) and without children (70%), living with family (76%), and
- having left school in grade nine or ten (50%).

**Finding #5**

Lack of transportation, education, qualifications and experience are viewed by participants as being the most significant barriers to obtaining employment or changing jobs, with child care cited as a significant barrier for those with children.

**Finding #6**

Participants expressed interest in a much broader selection of employment options than those they had experienced, particularly in traditionally male dominated fields.

**Finding #7**

Lack of awareness and transportation are barriers to participants engaging in employment programs and education beyond the public school system.

**4.3 General Information on Employer Surveys**

Employer surveys were developed by Brandon University. Employers were made aware of the surveys through personal contact. Employers received a visit where the project was explained and a copy of the survey was left with the business owner/manager/human resource officer, along with a commitment to pick it up on a specific date. Employers were gracious in their willingness to complete the surveys and almost without fail had them ready for pick up on the agreed upon date. A total of 49 Business Surveys were collected throughout the community. Every effort was made to obtain feedback from businesses and organizations of varying sizes. Particular attention was paid to businesses offering entry level employment or those who employed large numbers of people, many of whom work part time.

It should be noted that one health related employer with 3500 employees was disqualified at the data entry stage as a result of missing some information in the survey. Due to the large number of employment opportunities and the importance of this industry to the region, every effort has been made to include the perspectives of this employer in other sections of the report.

For copies of Employer Surveys please contact S.A.M. Inc. at 857-6560.

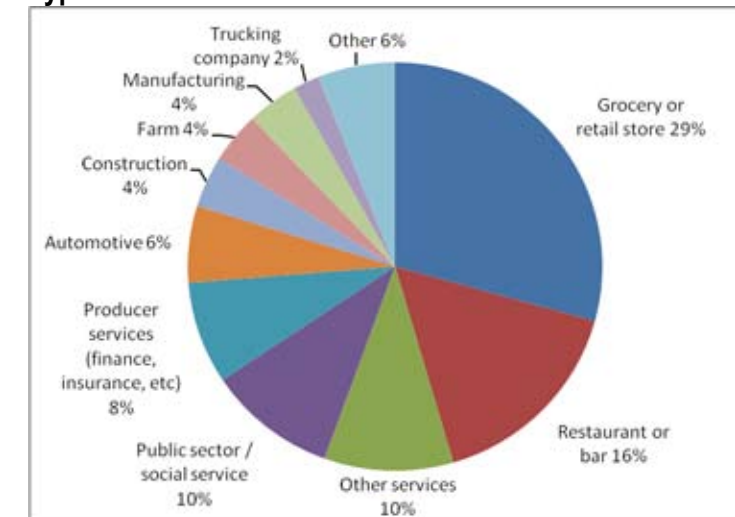
**4.4 Results of Employer Surveys**

**Demographics and workplace characteristics**

On average, employers who were surveyed had 26 employees. They ranged from a low of two employees to a high of 142. Female employees slightly outnumbered male employees.

Almost 29% of the businesses surveyed were grocery or retail outlets with 16% falling into the restaurant or bar category and another 8% falling into producer services such as finance, insurance or accounting.

**Type of Business**



One hundred percent of the businesses were located in Portage la Prairie. Almost two thirds of positions provided by these businesses were full time. Of those that were not full time the vast majority were part-time with an average of only 1.7 jobs being seasonal. Seasonal jobs were primarily in the spring, summer and fall, with some required during the Christmas season. An average of 1.4 positions were casual.

Businesses averaged just over four managerial positions and just over six low-skilled positions. Those surveyed had a long history in the community, averaging 29 years.

### Hiring Experience

Sixty-one percent of employers reported having difficulty finding qualified applicants within the past year. When asked which positions they had difficulty filling, the range was very diverse and included both entry level and skilled positions. No one position stood out as being more difficult to fill.

Employers reported a range of challenges when trying to hire, the top three of which they identified as a lack of young people willing to work, a lack of workplace skills and life style issues.

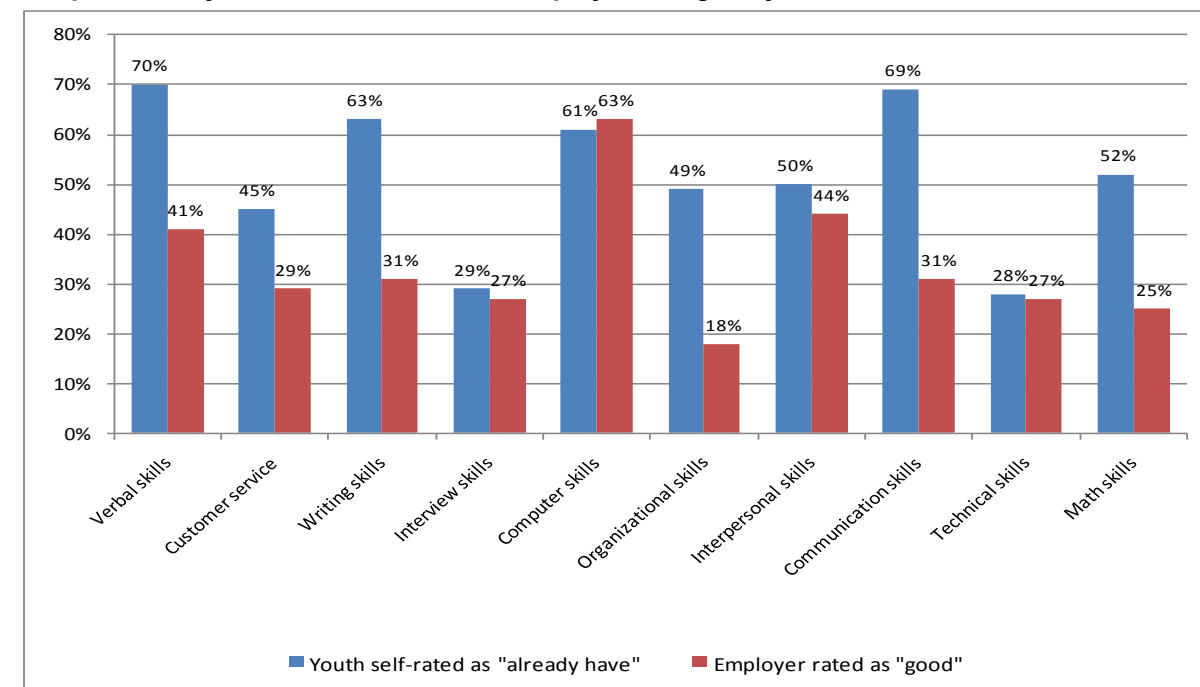
Over sixty five percent of employers did not see transportation as a barrier, in direct contrast to youth survey participants who reported it as the most significant problem facing them in their quest for employment.

### Education and Workplace Skills of Employees

Half of the employers (51%) surveyed did not require a minimum level of education and just under a third (29%) required a high school diploma. Eighteen percent were willing to accept a G.E.D. Another 2% required apprentice level employees. The health related employer reported a need for employees at all levels of education with the exception of apprentices.

Employers were asked to rate the current skills of the youth employees they hire. Youth survey participants were asked to rate themselves on the same skill set. The following graph shows which skills youth participants rated themselves as “already have” alongside those areas where employers rated their present youth staff as “good”. Results indicate that in many areas, including communication skills, verbal skills, writing skills and organizational skills, youth have over estimated their own abilities compared to employer expectations. Based on Project Staff contact with the young people in the survey, this is much more likely to be a result of youth having little idea or experience related to employer expectations than any intent to mislead researchers.

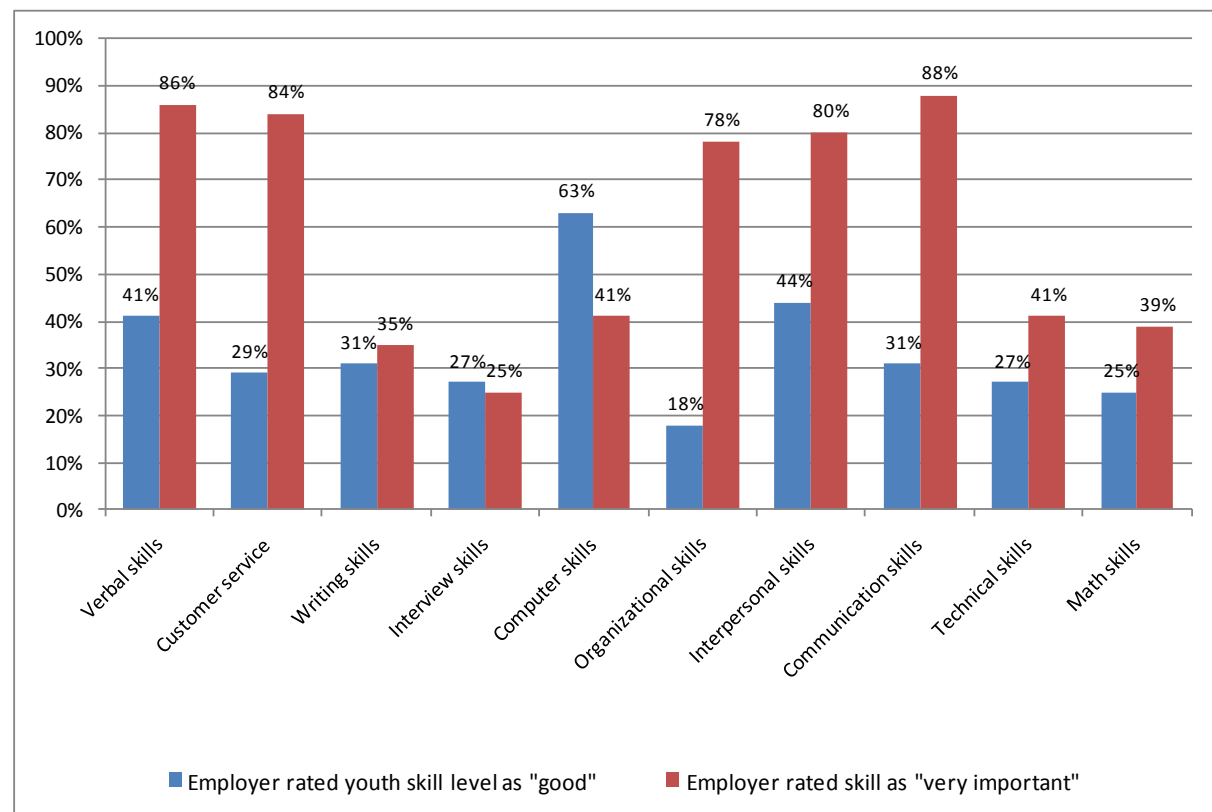
### Comparison of youth self-rated skills to employer ratings of youth skills



The top five skills employers identified as very important to their businesses included communication skills (88%), verbal skills (86%), customer service skills (84%), interpersonal skills (80%) and organizational skills (78%).

When comparing the skills that employers found to be very important to their business to their ratings of skills youth are proficient in, large disparities were seen in several areas. For example, 86% of employers indicated verbal skills were very important to their business, but only 41% of employers indicated that youth had a “good” skill level in this area. Other skills where a large gap existing between skill importance and skill level included customer service, organizational skills, interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

**Comparison of employer ratings of youth skills to employer rating of “very important” skills**



Eighty percent of employers provide workplace training for youth employees. Training ranged from safe food handling to first aid to a wide range of other on the job training, most often specific to the position being assumed.

When employers were asked to select the one most important thing that service agencies could do to help raise the employability of youth, helping youth prepare for interviews (46%) was cited most frequently as being most essential. The next most popular answer was providing training in customer service (31%).

Employers were asked which employment services for employers and employees they had used in the past twelve months. The results indicate that employers utilize very few of these types of services. The most commonly used services were Employability Skills through on-the-job (subsidized) work experience (12%), Province of Manitoba programs (8%) and the Apprenticeship Program (6%). Awareness of programs may be an issue for some employers, with an average of 6-8% of employers being unaware of each listed program. The highest awareness was of Canada Summer Jobs and the Apprenticeship program, with only 4% of employers being unaware of these programs. The program with the least awareness was Individual Skills Enhancement (training up to 15 weeks for youth to develop employability skills); 13% of employers were unaware of this program.

**Finding #8**

Portage la Prairie has a stable core of businesses who have served the community for many years.

**Finding #9**

The majority of employers experience difficulty finding employees. No one type of position stands out as being more difficult to fill.

**Finding #10**

Almost 100% of the youth who reported employment experience had been employed only in the 30% of positions that employers identify as part-time, casual or seasonal jobs.

**Finding #11**

There is a significant disconnect between what participants identify as barriers to employment and what employers identify as barriers to youth employment.

**Finding #12**

The skills rated by employers to be most important to their businesses were soft, transferrable skills.

**5 Findings from Community Consultations**

**5.1 Findings**

Following the completion of the Youth and Employer Surveys, Project Staff engaged in a series of meetings to gather additional information and obtain feedback on the Five-Year Plan.

Community Consultations were held with the following:

- Senior administration and the head of Career Counseling at Portage Collegiate Institute
- Executive Director and Program heads from Portage Learning and Literacy Centre, including Settlement Services for Newcomers
- Employment Consultant from the Partners for Careers Program at Portage Friendship Centre
- Manager of Red River College – Portage Campus
- Director of S.A.M. Inc.
- Job Connections Program Worker, Family Services and Consumer Affairs
- City Manager and former Economic Development Director for the City of Portage la Prairie
- Human Resources Officer- Aboriginal Employment - Regional Health Authority
- Chair and business representatives from the Portage la Prairie Chamber of Commerce and Positively Portage
- General members of the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation and community members at large
- Program Manager, Employment and Income Assistance, Family Services and Consumer Affairs

Community groups/representatives were provided a brief overview of the findings, asked to describe the programs and services provided by their organizations in the area of education and employment and asked a number of common questions. The findings and recommendations from the Community Consultations are as follows:

**Finding #13**

Portage la Prairie is home to a broad range of programs and services focused on employment preparation for members of the Survey Participant group.

**Finding #14**

Communication between program and service providers, other than in the area of cross referrals, is infrequent and knowledge of one another's programs is limited.

**Finding #15**

Communication between the business community and program and service providers is limited to occasional interaction related to specific clients. The groups have little understanding of the pressures and challenges faced by one another.

**Finding #16**

The majority of education and employment program and service providers agree that transportation is the most significant barrier to employment for the Survey Participant group.

Other barriers cited, in no particular order, included shortages of day care, lack of education, reading and math skills, fines preventing acquisition of a driver's license, criminal records or problems obtaining Part B Criminal Checks in a timely way, physical and mental health issues including anxiety, personality disorders, etc. and the shortage of treatment services to address them, lifestyle issues including addictions, family violence, chronic family crisis, lack of direction from parents and resulting lack of motivation, low levels of confidence and self esteem, lack of housing located within distance of services and programs and teen pregnancy.

Girlfriends and wives were cited as both positive influences in encouraging male partners to improve their situation and negative influences in pulling them away from school or work to deal with family situations.

**Finding #17**

The majority of education and employment program and service providers agree that the quality of student-instructor engagement is the most important element in a successful program for high risk youth.

Other elements identified, in no particular order, included the need for flexibility and choice in programming, the need for positive reinforcement, a person-centered approach, a focus on identified outcomes, using material geared to the level of participants, support from the Board and CEO of the organization, and dollars to ensure programs continued.

**Finding #18**

The education and training needs of newcomers have changed since organizations have begun recruiting under the Provincial Nominee program.

**Finding #19**

Programs with on-site child care (PCI Infant Lab and Learning Centre) report strong demand for child care and wait lists.

**Finding #20**

Employers are generally responsive to the need for practicum placements for students at both the high school and college level. Apprenticeships are more difficult to find, resulting in some students having to leave the community.

**Finding #21**

The opportunity for entry level jobs in Portage is perceived to be quite good, but opportunities for construction or trade jobs are perceived to be a greater challenge for youth to acquire.

**Finding #22**

Inability to adjust to newfound freedom and responsibility, the shift to the credit system where each course requires a clear pass to move on and the change to the block system where absences result in significant lost class time are significant factors in students dropping out at the grade nine and ten high school level.

**Finding #23**

Large businesses with human resource departments are in a strong position to implement innovative internal programs to facilitate increased youth employment. Smaller businesses would benefit from external support and coordination to enable them to participate.

It is worthy of note that business representatives interviewed from the Chamber of Commerce were surprised at the employer survey finding that helping youth prepare for interviews was regarded by businesses as the most important thing employment and service providers could do to raise their employability level. They did agree that "soft" or "transferable" skills were very important.

**5.2 Community Recommendations**

In the course of community consultations a number of recommendations were made that, in the view of project staff, were worthy of inclusion in this report. It should be noted that these recommendations were taken at face value. No effort has been made to determine their value beyond noting that they were made by credible individuals with experience in their fields. It should also be noted that these recommendations were not common across organizations, but rather individual suggestions that arose during discussion as a result of experiences or observations:

### **Recommendation #1**

It was recommended that a pre-apprentice ship period be built into the apprenticeship system to allow employers and apprentices a period of time to determine whether the situation is a good “fit” for both.

### **Recommendation #2**

It was recommended that a stronger orientation be provided by employers to students who are being placed for practicum or apprenticeship purposes.

### **Recommendation #3**

It was recommended that students be oriented to the changes they will face at the high school level at an earlier age (even grade 6 or 7), that they be introduced to careers at an earlier age, and that Aboriginal students have a personal area within the high school where they feel comfortable and welcome.

### **Recommendation #4**

It was recommended that businesses look for creative ways to deal with the issue of employee transportation (utilizing the shuttle system, paying employees with vehicles an additional allowance for picking up other employees).

### **Recommendation #5**

It was recommended that education and employment programs expand their scope to give equal attention to those individuals in high risk situations showing promise.

### **Recommendation #6**

It was recommended that the Youth Employment Job Fair be re-vamped to be more structured and individualized.

## **6 Related Plans in the Community**

### **6.1 The City of Portage la Prairie Phase II Labour Needs Assessment Survey**

The Phase II Labour Needs Assessment Survey report was completed on March 9, 2007. The survey was conducted as a follow-up to a previous report completed February 8, 2002. Eighty-seven businesses in the community took part in the detailed survey. Those eighty-seven businesses were in control of 3,748 jobs in the community. The results paint a detailed picture of what employers viewed to be the labour needs in the community at the time.

The researcher utilized the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) which categorizes positions according to four skill levels required - Skill level A which requires university or college education, Skill level B which requires specialized training or apprenticeship and Skill levels C and D where education is not as high a priority and of more importance to employers is the employees ability and willingness to learn.

Finding with relevance to the Youth Employment Project included:

- Employers experienced a shortage of employees in Skill levels A and B.
- Employers experienced a shortage of employees in Skill levels C and D, but also a shortage of individuals with the appropriate skill set to function appropriately in the workplace.
- Employers experienced an increase in turnover rates in correlation with the decrease in skill level requirements.
- An untapped labour pool exists within driving distance of Portage la Prairie on First Nations communities where the birth rate is much higher than the national average.
- Soft, transferable skills were identified as extremely important across all skill levels.
- More jobs were available than people to fill them.
- Increased mentoring is required on the part of employers with new employees.

Given the focus of the Manitoba Rural Youth Employment Project on high-risk youth within the community, project staff identified within the Labour Needs Assessment the sub-area of “soft” or “transferable” skills as being worthy of further examination. Soft or transferable skills were defined in the Labour Needs Assessment report as being skills which job seekers can use from one job/career to the next. Employers regarded these soft skills across the board as being of high importance.

Soft or transferable skills included:

- Communication skills where listening was rated as the most important in the work place.
- Research and Planning skills where identifying and resolving problems was highly valued.
- Human Relations skills where cooperating, listening and sharing credit were viewed positively.
- Organization, Management and Leadership skills where handling details was rated highly.
- Work Survival skills where abilities in the area of anger management, managing fear, enforcing policies, enlisting help, organizing and thinking rationally, along with many others, were all viewed positively.
- Self-Psychology skills such as caring for oneself, confidence, good mental health, personal development, self awareness and self respect which received high ratings for importance.

Consistent with the findings of this study, a significant finding in the report was that employers generally viewed younger workers as lacking in “soft” or transferable skills.

The completion of a Phase III Labour Needs Assessment was recommended.

For copies of the Phase I and Phase II Labour Needs Assessments, please contact the City of Portage la Prairie at 239-8337.

### **Finding #24**

The community of Portage la Prairie and surrounding area would benefit from the completion of a Phase III Labour Needs Assessment Survey.

## 6.2 The Portage la Prairie Social Planning Initiative Phase One Report

The Social Planning Initiative in Portage la Prairie is a two-part initiative which included the study of social conditions in the City of Portage la Prairie and the development of a social plan for the community, utilizing the findings from the study. The Portage Community Network contracted the University of Winnipeg Institute of Urban Studies to complete the research and develop the report. The Phase One Report was published in August of 2009. Responsibility and ownership of the report and completion of the social plan for Portage la Prairie were formally accepted by the Board of Directors of the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation.

In completing the report researchers engaged in a best practices review in the area of social planning, analyzed demographic data (which has been previously referred to in this report), engaged in a broad consultation with key informants and residents about social needs and assets, identified social policy and program areas of strength and weakness, proposed improvements and additions to the programming environment and proposed an evaluative framework to guide the production of a social plan and indicators to gauge its effectiveness.

Researchers categorized community consultation findings under the following headings - poverty, housing, transportation, racial equity issues, community economic development, public safety, a family-friendly city, and social services. They concluded with the statement "While many voices were heard, there was a fairly consistent coalescing around major themes, including the need for more affordable housing, mass public transportation, and child care spaces. Young people need more affordable recreational opportunities. The public realm needs to be made safer. The community would benefit from improved relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons."

## 6.3 The Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation Five-Year Plan

The Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC) is a non-profit organization serving the City of Portage la Prairie whose mandate is to enhance the well-being of the community by empowering citizens, improving neighbourhoods, fostering community spirit and building the capacity of community organizations.

Following the completion of the Social Planning Initiative Phase One Report, the PCRC (Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation), utilizing the findings and recommendations of the report, developed a five-year plan focused on the identified social issues in the community. Each year the plan is reviewed and, where necessary, amended by the Board of Directors.

Based on consultations with the community the following priority areas and goals were identified for the PCRC as part of a 5 Year Community Plan. More information on the Community Plan can be found on the PCRC website: [www.PortageCRC.com](http://www.PortageCRC.com).

### Housing

- To improve the quality of existing housing stock while encouraging the creation of additional safe, affordable and appropriate housing.
- To ensure the establishment of a community infrastructure to facilitate the development and management of emergency, transitional and affordable housing.

### Poverty Reduction

- To facilitate opportunities that link lower income residents with activities to improve their well-being and economic situation; and to address barriers to economic security.

### Community Engagement

- To engage citizens and organizations within Portage la Prairie in community initiatives to foster participation and a stronger sense of community and pride.
- To promote initiatives that enhance a feeling of safety and well-being.
- To build awareness of social and cultural diversity within the community to reduce discrimination and racism.

### Affordable Recreation and Leisure

- To encourage the creation of affordable recreational opportunities and the development of physical spaces with a focus on the needs of families and youth.

### Capacity Building

- To provide resources to build the capacity of neighbourhood groups and social service organizations to together develop sustainable solutions to community issues.

### Organizational Development

- To operate an effective community revitalization organization that meets the goals in the Community Plan while remaining accountable to the community, funders and government.

## 7 Priority Areas, Goals and Outcomes

The following priority areas, goals and outcomes for the 5-year Youth Community Plan were developed utilizing information obtained during Youth and Employer Surveys and Community Consultations.

### 7.1 Priority Areas

- To establish an effective Youth Employment Advisory Committee (YEAC) committed to long-term oversight of the five-year plan.
- To raise awareness among stakeholders and the community at large of the findings of the Youth Employment study.
- To secure stable funding and hire a Youth Employment Coordinator to ensure the required human resources are available to meet the objectives of the Plan.
- To improve communication between program and service providers.
- To reduce barriers and improve access to meaningful employment for at risk youth.
- To promote and encourage innovative programming.
- To engage in value added activities to further inform the findings in the report.

### 7.2 Goals and Outcomes

<b>Goal 1:</b> To establish an effective Youth Employment Advisory Committee (YEAC) committed to long term oversight of the five year plan.	
<b>Priority area:</b> Youth Employment Advisory Committee	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> An effective and enduring Youth Advisory Committee
<b>Short-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Mission Statement, Mandate and Terms of Reference for the YEAC.</li> <li>• Secure an agreement with a partner agency to provide administrative support to the YEAC beyond May 1, 2011.</li> <li>• Secure an agreement with a partner agency to provide interim leadership for the group from May 1, 2011 until October 1, 2011.</li> <li>• Secure a volunteer Chair to lead the Youth Employment Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Terms of Reference to reflect the establishment of the YEAC as an on-going entity providing leadership and oversight to the Community Plan in conjunction with the partner Agency.</li> <li>• Ensure all stakeholders are represented on the YEAC.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure continuity of interest in the 5 Year Community Plan within the committee, stakeholders and the community at large.</li> <li>• Ensure continued sustainability in the Youth Advisory Committee through effective succession planning.</li> </ul>



<b>Goal 2:</b> To raise awareness among stakeholders and the community at large of the findings of the Youth Employment study.	
<b>Priority areas:</b> Awareness and understanding	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> A community that is more informed and motivated to act on the findings of the Youth Employment Report. Stakeholders who are more understanding of the challenges being faced by one another.
<b>Short-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through a series of meetings, share the findings of the Portage la Prairie Rural Youth Employment Project with youth, employers, key collaterals and the community at large.</li> <li>Circulate hard copies of the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan throughout the community.</li> <li>With permission, post the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan on the PCRC, City of Portage la Prairie and Chamber of Commerce web sites.</li> <li>Through various media, make the public aware of the availability of the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Excel sheet with contact and program information on existing programs and services to be posted on the PCRC web site for the use of providers, employ youth and the general public.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work towards the inclusion of youth employment as a pillar in the City of Portage la Prairie economic development plan.</li> <li>Develop a long term education and awareness strategy directed at ensuring employers, youth, program and service providers and the larger community maintain a strong and positive understanding of one another's issues.</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 3:</b> Secure stable funding to hire a Youth Employment Coordinator to ensure the required human resources are available to meet the goals and objectives of the Plan.	
<b>Priority areas:</b> Human Resources	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> Goals and objectives of the five-year plan will be achieved in a timely way. The project will have made a meaningful difference in the lives of youth and employers.
<b>Short-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree on a "home" for the position.</li> <li>Develop a job description based on the needs identified in the five-year plan.</li> <li>Explore available grants at the local, private, provincial and federal level to cover the cost of the position.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a qualified individual to fill the position.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that steady progress is made on fulfilling the goals and objectives of the five year plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 4:</b> To improve communication between program and service providers.	
<b>Priority area:</b> Communication and collaboration	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> Service delivery organizations will be more aware of one another's programs, will share information and problem solve collaboratively.
<b>Short-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate Community Consultation Notes and Recommendations among those who participated.</li> <li>• Establish sharing time as a permanent agenda item at Youth Advisory Committee meetings</li> </ul>	
<b>Intermediate</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Excel sheet with contact and program information on existing programs and services to be posted on the PCRC web site for the use of providers, employers and the general public.</li> </ul>	
<b>Long-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Handbook of Programs and Services related to Youth Employment to be posted on the PCRC and other related web sites.</li> <li>• Consider the development of a Youth Employment Council that meets four times a year for the sole purpose of sharing, collaborating and evaluating the needs of youth on an on-going basis.</li> </ul>	

<b>Goal 5:</b> To reduce barriers and improve access to meaningful employment for at risk youth.	
<b>Priority area:</b> Barrier Reduction	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> A higher percentage of youth at risk employed. Better access and fewer challenges for youth in obtaining full time, year round, adequately paid work. Employers facing fewer challenges in securing good employees to meet the needs of their businesses.
<b>Short-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a sub-committee of the YEAC to focus on reducing the primary external barriers to youth employment identified in the report.</li> </ul>	
<b>Intermediate</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Chamber of Commerce and business owners to identify potential employer lead solutions to the problem of transportation.</li> <li>• Work with the City of Portage la Prairie to jointly secure funding for a Transportation Study.</li> </ul>	
<b>Long-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote Child Care as Economic Development.</li> <li>• Encourage innovative programming.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor outcomes and pursue new and additional strategies for reduction of employment barriers.</li> </ul>	

<b>Goal 6:</b> Promote and encourage innovative program proposals.	
<b>Priority area:</b> Innovative Program Development	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> Gaps in service will be addressed. Greater emphasis will be placed on key findings in the Youth Employment report.
<b>Short-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold brainstorming sessions with interested parties to review findings and discuss innovative approaches and partnerships.</li> <li>• Conduct a literature review of successful and innovative programs in other areas and circulate information to interested parties.</li> <li>• Encourage community organizations to develop proposals focused on key areas identified in the five-year Youth Employment Community Plan. Examples might include addressing the grade 9-10 drop out phenomenon, developing a program focused on “soft” or “transferable” skills in a real life setting, supporting youth interested in trades/apprenticeship based careers, expanding programs such as the RHA Job Shadowing program to private business, etc.</li> <li>• If funding cannot be found for a stand-alone Youth Employment Coordinator, encourage the inclusion of the Coordinator duties as part of a program proposal.</li> <li>• Explore existing funding opportunities that match the needs of youth and employers and circulate to stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
<b>Intermediate</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support organizations in proposal development.</li> <li>• Develop a checklist of “best practices” based on a literature review and the experience of program and service providers.</li> </ul>	
<b>Long-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor outcomes utilizing findings in the report as a base measurement.</li> </ul>	

<b>Goal 7:</b> Engage in value added activities to further inform the findings in the report.	
<b>Priority area:</b> Value added activities	<b>Anticipated outcomes:</b> A broad information base upon which to base decisions. Better overall decisions.
<b>Short-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support “Positively Portage” and the City of Portage la Prairie in their efforts to develop a reliable system for securing and maintaining information on the numbers, types and changes in the business sector of the City of Portage la Prairie.</li> <li>• Encourage the City of Portage la Prairie to complete a Phase III Labour Needs Assessment Survey.</li> </ul>	
<b>Intermediate</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate new reports related to youth employment to stakeholders as they become available.</li> </ul>	
<b>Long-term</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track gaps in information as they arise and continue to develop new value added strategies for informing stakeholders.</li> </ul>	

## 8 Annual Work Plan for the Year 2011

**Goal #1: To establish an effective Youth Employment Advisory Committee (YEAC) committed to long-term oversight of the five-year plan.**

Objective	Activities	Outputs	Indicators
1.1 Develop a Mission Statement, Mandate and Terms of Reference for the YEAC.	Meet with YEAC. Present a draft proposal. Amend as required. Adopt by resolution.	An established YEAC working on goals and objectives outlined in the five-year Youth Employment Community Plan	Advisory Committee meetings will be regular, well run and well attended. Steady progress will be made on the Plan.
1.2 Secure an agreement with a partner agency to provide administrative support to the YEAC beyond May 1, 2011.	With the YEAC approval, make a formal written request to the Board of a potential partner agency through the Executive Director. Negotiate and adopt the terms of the arrangement.	An effective YEAC with strong administrative support.	Terms of the arrangement will be in place. Both parties will be clear. Administrative duties will be carried out seamlessly.
1.3 Secure an agreement with a partner agency to provide interim leadership for the group from May 1, 2011 until October 1, 2011.	With the YEAC approval, make a formal written request to the Board of a potential partner agency through the Executive Director. Negotiate and adopt the terms of the arrangement.	A more effective YEAC with strong leadership and a steady focus on the goals and objectives of the 5-year plan.	Meetings will be called regularly. Agenda items will be addressed. The goals and objectives of the 5-year plan will be addressed.
1.4 Secure a volunteer Chair to lead the Youth Employment Advisory Committee.	Develop a job description. Ask YEAC members to suggest appropriate individuals. Prioritize list. Approach individuals. Develop an agreement with a Volunteer Chair to lead the committee for a specified time.	An effective YEAC with strong leadership for the long term.	Well attended, well run meetings, progress on the Plan.

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**Goal 2: To raise awareness among stakeholders and the community at large of the findings of the Youth Employment study.**

Objective	Activities	Outputs	Indicators
2.1 Through a series of meetings, share the findings of the Portage la Prairie Rural Youth Employment Project with youth, employers, key collaterals and the community at large.	Decide on venues and target audience. Invite participants. Present information.	A more informed and engaged community	Broad participation in the process of resolving the issues identified in the 5-year plan.
2.2 Circulate hard copies of the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan throughout the community.	Identify stakeholders. Drop off copies of the plan. Identify readily known and accessible pick-up spots. Advertise locations in the community.	A community that is well informed regarding issues of youth employment.	Stakeholders will unite around the issues. Problem solving will occur. Progress will be made on the plan.
2.3 With permission, post the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan on the PCRC, City of Portage la Prairie and Chamber of Commerce web sites.	Seek permission of the parties. Provide PDF documents for uploading.	Readily accessible information in an electronic form.	YEAC will receive feedback from the community that the plan is being accessed through a variety of means.
2.4 Through various media, make the public aware of the availability of the Portage la Prairie 5-year Youth Employment Community Plan.	Develop a press release advertising pick up sites and web sites. Circulate to CFRY, MIX 96 and the Daily Graphic.	A well advertised community plan.	Members of the community are picking up copies of the report and logging in to read it on-line.

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**Goal 3: Secure stable funding to hire a Youth Employment Coordinator to ensure the required human resources are available to meet the goals and objectives of the Plan.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
3.1 Agree on a "home" for the position.	Discuss possibilities and the "best fit" for the position at the YEAC and with the partner agency. Collectively decide on the most appropriate location.	A worksite with appropriate administrative and supervisory supports located within an agency with a mandate congruent with the goals and objectives of the five-year Youth Employment Community Plan.	Stakeholders are satisfied with the location of the position.
3.2 Develop a job description based on the needs identified in the five-year plan.	Seek volunteers on the YEAC to develop the job description. Review responsibilities in the five-year plan. Structure job description around responsibilities.	A well articulated job description that lays out the requirements of the position of Youth Employment Coordinator.	YEAC members and the "home agency" are satisfied with the job description.
3.3 Explore available grants at the local, private, provincial and federal level to cover the cost of the position.	Contact local foundations and granting agencies for grant information. Review fundraising and grant directories at the local library and on-line. Determine best options. Contact granting organizations. Complete applications and submit.	Stable funding for the position of Youth Employment Coordinator	A Youth Employment Coordinator is hired and working on achieving the objectives of the five-year plan.

**Goal 4: To improve communication between program and service providers.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
4.1 Circulate Community Consultation Notes and Recommendations among those who participated.	Prepare notes and recommendations from community consultations in a common format. Identify parties who participated. Drop off copies of the information for senior administrators and those who participated in the consultations.	Program and Service Providers will have a beginning sense of the extent and nature of the programs offered by others and of the issues that are unique or common to them all.	Program and Service Providers will engage with one another around common concerns and opportunities. Streamlining of services will occur where necessary.
4.2 Establish sharing time as a permanent agenda item at Youth Advisory Committee meetings.	Discuss the concept with YEAC members. Seek commitment to the concept. Discuss options for how to proceed to maximize the potential of the idea. Agree on an approach and implement.	A regularly scheduled time for YEAC members to share with one another what is happening within their own organization.	Sharing time is valued and protected as an important part of YEAC meetings. Organizations come prepared with information that is interesting and useful to other members.

**Goal 5: To reduce barriers and improve access to meaningful employment for at risk youth.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
5.1 Establish a sub-committee of the YEAC to focus on reducing the primary external barriers to youth employment identified in the report.	Seek volunteers from YEAC and other stakeholders to sit on the sub-committee. Ensure a wide representation including youth, employers, program and service providers and others who would make meaningful contributions to the discussion. Develop a work plan based on key findings in the Youth Employment Community Plan.	A committed group of individuals dedicated to reducing barriers to youth employment in the community.	Individuals show up for meetings and make meaningful contributions. A work plan is developed.

**Goal 6: To promote and encourage innovative program proposals.**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
6.1 Hold brainstorming sessions with interested parties to review findings and discuss innovative approaches and partnerships.	Invite stakeholders to a discussion forum. Review findings. Brainstorm potential projects focused on addressing barriers or gaps identified in the report.	Partnerships and ideas for potential proposals.	Solid proposals will begin to formulate.
6.2 Conduct a literature review of successful and innovative programs in other areas and circulate information to interested parties.	Conduct an on-line review of innovative and successful programs. Develop summaries of programs based on a common framework. Circulate information to stakeholders at meetings and via e-mail.	New ideas for addressing the needs of youth and employers.	Stakeholders borrow what is best to improve on ideas for new programs and services.
6.3 Encourage community organizations to develop proposals focused on key findings identified in the five-year Youth Employment Community Plan.	Circulate memos highlighting the needs identified in the five-year plan and providing information on innovative proposals. Provide support to the process as is possible. Act as a clearing house for information and decision making.	A dynamic process for developing proposals.	Innovative ideas for new interventions emerge.
6.4 If funding cannot be found for a stand-alone Youth Employment Coordinator, encourage the inclusion of the Coordinator duties as part of a program proposal.	Include discussions of the role of a Youth Employment Coordinator in all discussions related to proposal development. Determine if there is a potential "fit" for such a position. Provide the job description. Develop agreements on how to proceed for the benefit of all.	Some elements of the Youth Employment Coordinator position built into a new proposal for funding.	A part time focus on the job responsibilities of a Youth Employment Coordinator is included in a proposal submitted for funding.
6.5 Explore existing funding opportunities that match the needs of youth and employers and circulate information to stakeholders.	Review funding opportunities specific to youth employment at the non-profit, private and government levels. Compile information. Circulate to stakeholders.	Program and service providers receive information on funding that may be available.	Program and service providers reduce time required to research funding opportunities.







