

New Brunswick Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills Project (NBAWES)

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description												
1. Title of Initiative	New Brunswick Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills Project (NBAWES) – Pilot project												
2. Delivery Organization (Name) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not for Profit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Métis, Inuit <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) 	Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) is a non-profit organization, launched in 1995 as an on-going initiative. The purpose of JEDI is to stimulate economic development in the Aboriginal communities (both on-reserve and off-reserve) in New Brunswick; it is also intended to remove barriers and to enable the Aboriginal communities to gain access to the economic development programs of the federal and provincial governments.												
3. Contact Details	Karen LeBlanc, Executive Director Joint Economic Development Initiative Inc. (JEDI) 150 Cliffe St., 2nd floor, St. Mary's First Nation, NB (506) 444-7297 telephone; (506) 444-3387 fax Karen.leblanc@jedinb.ca												
4. Website or Other Information Source	http://www.nbawes.ca/main.html http://www.jedinb.ca/main.html http://www.awdi-nb.com/main.html												
5. Funder(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of funding: \$936,300 from GoC and \$606,000 in-kind from GNB 	HRSDC- Office of Literacy and Essential Skills Government of New Brunswick- Department of Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour (in-kind contributions)												
6. Other Partners involved	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Partner name</th> <th>Role</th> <th>Responsibilities</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>First Nation ASET Holders in NB (Mawiw Tribal Council; North Shore Mi'kmaq District Council; St. John River Valley Tribal Council; NB Aboriginal Peoples Council)</td> <td>Steering Committee members</td> <td>Providing oversight direction on the project</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GNB – Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat</td> <td>Steering Committee member</td> <td>Providing oversight direction on the project</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. Thomas University and New Brunswick Community College</td> <td>Host locations for pilot sites in two regions of the province</td> <td>Involving instructors and students into their institutes; assisting with graduation and PSE class monitoring.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Partner name	Role	Responsibilities	First Nation ASET Holders in NB (Mawiw Tribal Council; North Shore Mi'kmaq District Council; St. John River Valley Tribal Council; NB Aboriginal Peoples Council)	Steering Committee members	Providing oversight direction on the project	GNB – Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat	Steering Committee member	Providing oversight direction on the project	St. Thomas University and New Brunswick Community College	Host locations for pilot sites in two regions of the province	Involving instructors and students into their institutes; assisting with graduation and PSE class monitoring.
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8. Location (Name of city, community, etc.)	Miramichi and Fredericton (participants from various First Nations coming to two central locations).												
9. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location Type 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Fly-in (accessible only by air) <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Métis, Inuit community <input type="checkbox"/> Prison <input type="checkbox"/> Other:												

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope of Program <p>Project funded to be created as a national program. Piloted as provincial.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provincial/territorial <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Special interest group (in-house program)
<p>10. Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age 	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth (15-25) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult (18+ were accepted in) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Nations <input type="checkbox"/> Inuit <input type="checkbox"/> Métis
<p>11. Participant Eligibility Criteria:</p>	<p>Low level 2 Literacy and Essential Skills (as per International Assessment of Literacy and Life-skills Survey); over the age of 18; First Nation descent.</p>
<p>12. Year Program/Initiative Started</p>	<p>January 10th 2010</p>
<p>13. Year Program/Initiative Ended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did the program end? 	<p>March 31st 2012</p> <p>The NBAWES pilot project was funded by OLES to March 31st 2012 with no possibility for ongoing funding. The NBAWES curriculum as a tool continues to be utilised throughout the province of New Brunswick (NB) in various training initiatives and JEDI is currently in a partnership with the Province of NB to assist First Nation communities in delivering the curriculum during Workplace Essential Skills training.</p>
<p>14. Description of Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview 	<p>NBAWES adapted existing Workplace ES curriculum to meet the needs of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet adult learners through culturally relevant content, with the goal to improve literacy skills among the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet populations in NB. Adult learners in Miramichi and Fredericton spend 30 weeks with teachers and coaches improving their literacy and employability skills. To meet the distinctive needs of First Nations adults, the programs in both locations has clear First Nations identities in terms of content and orientation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics covered: 	<p>Courses cover First Nations culture and history through: Learning and Life; World of Words; Reading Text; Computer Systems; Key Boarding; Computer Software; Exploring a Post-Secondary Institution; Understanding Documents; Writing Basics; A Play in Four Dimensions; Writing at Work; Personal Wellness; Math Basics (Money Math); Working Math; Job Search Techniques; Targeted Resumes; Interviews; Networking; Business Manners and Etiquette; Placement and optional Course ideas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duration of program (# of sessions) 	<p>34 weeks (Christmas break and student placement practicum included but 30 week in class time) in the pilot delivery but the curriculum may be adapted to reflect the need of the project and/or learners. A current project</p>

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	partner is currently offering NBAWES in a 12 week/half day delivery option.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> length of each session 	Originally piloted as an 8 hour session, 4 days per week. Now run with variable lengths. Dependent on the learner assessments and/or project needs.
15. Number of times offered per year	JEDI is not hosting NBAWES deliveries but offers partnership with organizations and/or First Nation communities who wish to use the NBAWES curriculum as a tool.
16. Number of participants per intake	During the pilot delivery of NBAWES, 30 students with 15 in two sites. Currently the number of participants varies based on the needs of the host.
17. Completion rate (%)	<p>67%</p> <p>20 Students completed the program</p> <p>Ten students did not complete the program for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 students were asked to leave the program for absenteeism. 1 student was asked to leave the program for absenteeism as well as attitude and disrespect of school property (laptop). 2 students left because of behavioural/conflict related causes. 1 student had to withdraw because of health issues. 1 student left the program early to pursue training to obtain his Master Captain license. This last situation was considered to be a success rather than a challenge as the student left early to pursue his personal goal.
18. Which Essential Skills are covered (check all that are covered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading Text <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numeracy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Working with Others <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thinking Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Computer Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous Learning
19. Main Objectives	Raising IALLS levels to level 3 and having clients work ready. The vision of NBAWES is that all Mi'kmaq and Maliseet adult residents of New Brunswick have the literacy and workplace skills to make career choices that will fulfill their dreams and aspirations.
20. Does the program include special emphasis on: (check all that apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Language <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tradition
21. Type of Intervention: (Check more than one if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment of skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of Learning Plan

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training or Skill Development <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Development <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
22. Type of delivery approach: (check all that apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seminar, discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal reflection-awareness training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project/Theme Based <input type="checkbox"/> Skill practice by participants in sessions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skill practice by participants in work place <input type="checkbox"/> Interview/consultation with stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
23. Staff/Practitioner Training and Background	All instructors were required to have a B.Ed.; experience in adult education; First Nations ancestry preferred and knowledge of Mi'kmaq and/or Maliseet language and culture an asset. Two week orientation in the curriculum during the pilot phase of the project.
24. Tools and Resources Used to Implement program (e.g., assessment tools, video tapes of practice, etc.)	Assessment tools: during the pilot phase of the NBAWES Project, TOWES was used for pre and post assessments on learners. In current deliveries and through partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, CLAE is used. JEDI provides a copy of the NBAWES Curriculum and NBAWES Resource Kit (Making the Most of NBAWES) to organizations who wish to deliver NBAWES training.
25. Difficulties or Barriers encountered	Challenges came mainly through external funding supports as well as human resource issues. Barriers listed in report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum development delays • Diversity of student needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those wanting a GED and those that didn't ○ Wide variety of Essential Skills levels in the class ○ Variety in student commitment levels ○ Learning disabilities and addictions issues ○ Limited access to resources to support these needs • Absenteeism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addictions issues ○ Family emergency issues ○ Family care issues • Lack of Clarity between NBAWES and PETL re: Student Allowances and Supports • Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities between staff members • No budget for classroom resources or materials • Transportation challenges in Miramichi • Moving to participate in program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Little notice and support funding delayed ○ Difficulty finding affordable housing ○ Difficulty setting up utilities • Social distractions at the Fredericton site caused

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	<p>some students to lose focus and concentration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office and classroom facilities were not optimal for the needs of the program • Work placement issues • Policies having to be developed as problems were encountered • Human Resources Related Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficulty finding and retaining staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited communication between outgoing and incoming staff (e.g. new teaching staff not knowing what previous staff had covered) • Reporting Requirements and Accountabilities to OLES kept changing depending upon which of the 6 OLES project and financial officers they were working with at the time.
<p>26.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms. Please provide details on how you assess the following: • Achieving general program goals 	<p>Interviews with all stakeholders (phone or in-person) – 13 semi-structured interview questions</p> <p>Student focus group interviews – 16 semi-structured interview questions</p> <p>NBAWES administration staff interviews – 16 semi-structured interview questions</p> <p>NBAWES teaching staff interviews – 18 semi-structured interview questions</p> <p>Employer interview – 13 structured interview questions (qualitative and quantitative questions)</p> <p>Review and analysis of student and staff reflection journals</p> <p>77 Likert-like questions (7 point scale) for students and staff to fill out</p> <p>The Evaluation Committee, comprised of staff, students and stakeholders, developed a logic model for the program. This logic model also had input from program participants when their classmates updated them on the work being carried out during Evaluation Committee meetings. The logic model outlined activities, outputs and expected results.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking program adherence by participants 	<p>Attendance taken and attendance policy enforced Student reflection journals were also developed and given to teachers and students as an option for monthly or periodic collection of data. Reporting forms for NBAWES teachers, coaches and staff were also developed. These forms incorporated information required for evaluation purposes but collected data so that the information could be useful to the Program Manager for ongoing management and monitoring of the program.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking program adherence by Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analysis of program records created by staff (proposal, agreement, program accountability reports to funders, minutes, internal reports, staff monthly reports, communications, job descriptions, student attendance and monitoring reports). Stakeholder interviews (phone or in person), student group interviews, NBAWES staff interviews, and employer interviews. Review and analysis of student and staff reflection journals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBAWES staff, teachers and coaches were interviewed either through an individual interview or group interview, with teachers and coaches in each site preferring the group interview approach if scheduling permitted. Additional opportunities were also made available for NBAWES staff, teachers and coaches to provide further feedback for the evaluation if they wished to supplement their input. Site visits were made to each of the classroom delivery sites to administer the individual survey to program participants as well as to conduct a group interview.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing participant skill attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student perception of skill attainment obtained through student questionnaire (Likert-like evaluation items). Pre, mid-term and post program data was examined to determine changes in students’ skill levels and personal development. Changes in student skill levels were obtained through pre and post TOWES scores as well as mid-term and post self-assessment tests for the Essential Skills available through HRSDC’s Office of Literacy and Essential Skills website. Student self-assessments completed for eight Essential Skills and a comparison undertaken for mid-term and final scores to determine changes in the areas of reading text, document use and

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	numeracy. Self-perceived changes to mid-term and post skill levels were reviewed and analyzed for the remaining Essential Skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing participant knowledge acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development and implementation of their personal education/employment plans Students engaged in a work placement program to be able to demonstrate their learning and to put key concepts into practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers were interviewed to assess student performance Student perception of knowledge acquisition obtained through student questionnaire (Likert-like evaluation items). Pre, mid-term and post program data was examined to determine changes in students' skill levels and personal development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing changes in participant attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 of the Likert questions assessed student's ratings of their personal development during the program at mid-term and post-course points of the program. During the group interview process, students responded to questions about the skills and personal gains the program had brought for them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Impact including key results or outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success with learning A few students were able to stay drug and alcohol free through their participation in the program and encouragement from their classmates Making concrete plans to pursue further education and/or having clear personal goals in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the 20 students who completed the program, 13 demonstrated active pursuit of continuing education/training at follow-up Successfully securing employment after the program Positive changes in motivation, attitude, self-esteem, and self-confidence including confidence to pursue their career goals Successes in participant's personal lives that they attributed to the program (e.g. obtaining a driver's license, obtaining the testing and tools to assess and deal with learning disabilities.) Developing positive relationships with teachers, coaches and other students. Students from both sites had a desire to meet each other and strengthen their NBAWES community. Becoming role models for their children. Being able to make contributions to their families or communities, e.g. helping kids with homework, writing a grant proposal for a community.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning independence and adaptation to new environment
27. Lesson Learned	Duration of the pilot roll out was too long. Having willing employers lined up early on for practicum(s) or employment at the end is an excellent incentive during the training. Difficulties of creating human resource policies and student guidelines “as you go” made the management of the program more challenging.
28. Reporting (what and to whom)	Financials and activity monitoring to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (quarterly and annually). Quarterly meetings with Steering Committee to update on the project targets and timelines.