

Policy Position

May 2015

Government Support for Advanced Skills Training

Background

High quality, affordable, accessible, and flexible advanced skills training and post-secondary education are essential to achieving Saskatchewan's economic and social objectives in the 21st century.

According to the Canadian Council on Learning, over 70% of newly created jobs will require some form of post-secondary education, and over 90% of newly created jobs will require a high school education. Education also drives productivity gains and is essential for increasing labour participation rates, which can play an integral role in alleviating the increased demand for labour in the future.

Based on current trends, the demand for workers will outpace supply in this province, undermining Saskatchewan's productivity and competitiveness. Immigration alone will not fill this gap, so the province needs to strengthen its local labour pool.

Issue

While Saskatchewan employers are challenged with a labour shortage, the unemployment rate in the province remains below 5%. The current workforce available in Saskatchewan needs more advanced skills training to allow them to match the demands of the province's job market.

There is a significant unmet need for job-related education and training in Saskatchewan. The post-secondary education sector continues to be largely designed to respond to the needs of traditional, younger learners. The lifelong learning requirements of many adults are not being adequately addressed.

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Recommendations

- 1) That the Government of Saskatchewan and Government of Canada elevate the priority of essential skills and advanced skills training within the government and mobilize the whole post-secondary education system for action, including efforts to enhance adult learning opportunities.
- 2) That the Government of Saskatchewan ensure that the importance of essential skills and advanced skills training continues to be clearly communicated and acted upon within all relevant government Ministries.

- 3) That the Government of Saskatchewan ensure that the importance of essential skills and advanced skills training continues to be clearly communicated to the public with a particular emphasis on adult learners.
- 4) That the Government of Canada and Government of Saskatchewan continue to support employer-driven training programs like the Canada Job Grant.