

SUBJECT: Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy

SUBMITTED BY: Human Resources Committee

BACKGROUND/ISSUE

The Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission (SLMC) released a strategic plan in 2009 and then the Commission was dissolved. The actions outlined in the plan were then left to the Ministry of Advanced Education to manage and monitor. While many of the recommendations of the SLMC report were acted upon, there was no concerted effort outside of government. This was mostly because of the dissolution of the Commission which was made up of labour, businesses, training institutions and sector groups. When they stopped meeting, the sharing of information and project outcomes was significantly less. The Commission was funded by government but co-chaired by labour and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

In April of 2011, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce launched an effort to establish a new group called the Saskatchewan Labour Market Task Force (SLMTF) that would bring together key stakeholders in the labour market area to communicate, share program outcomes and information, and begin the creation of a new labour market strategy for the province. The provincial government asked to co-chair the effort and they, along with business sector groups, labour, and training institutions were all brought together to discuss the issue of Saskatchewan's labour market development.

Over the next three years a new strategy was created, along with a significant amount of information sharing amongst these key players. As the strategy was reaching the final stages of development, the process stalled as the group waited for the provincial government to approve the release the new strategy. As of March 2014, the appropriate government approvals had yet to be received. The SLMTF stopped meeting in anticipation of creating a new mandate for themselves after the release of their Labour Market Strategy document.

Clearly there is a important role for government Ministries to remain fully engaged in the broader discussions around labour markets. They provide funding for training and have a legislated responsibility to act in many of the areas necessary to create a healthy and sustainable labour market.

The current labour market in Saskatchewan is in a state of significant challenge as the demand for workers, particularly skilled workers, remains at an all-time high. The challenges of meeting the need for both the quantity and quality of workers are significant limiting factors to continued economic growth.

The need is clear to have a group of individuals with a high level of expertise and a vested interest to drive a province wide strategic effort that involves clear

communications and the sharing of the tasks required to make our labour market sustainable over the long term.

The Government of Saskatchewan has indicated their preference to continue moving forward with a new labour market group, but in an ex-officio basis and not as the co-chair. This will remove them from any conflicts that result from them being part of a process that advocates recommendations directly towards themselves.

RECOMMENDED

1) That the members of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce endorse the Saskatchewan Labour Market Task Force's "Developing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce - Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy and Work Plan."

2) That the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce create a "Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategic Working Group" to provide a forum for businesses, labour, and training agencies to discuss labour market issues, with the government serving in an ex-officio role.