

## **Human Resource Planning**

### ***Description***

A human resource plan is a systematic process of matching the interests, skills and talents of individual community members with the long-term goals and economic opportunities in the community. Like all CED activities, creating a human resource plan needs to involve the relevant community sectors, so that their participation and input will lead to strong community support.

Based upon an assessment of community assets and limitations, a plan aims to ensure a good fit between program designs and the results that are sought. Recognizing that learning and skill development is a systematic building process, a plan can also ensure that the community provides the necessary comprehensive continuum of skill development. This implies, for example, that when someone completes a personal development program (such as a life-skills program), a succeeding step within the local human resource program uses that accomplishment to teach a new set of skills that are part of the path to employment and to other contributions to the community.

### ***Benefits***

A clear human resource development plan can include benefits like:

- Highlighting opportunities for strategic partnerships that allow communities and other partners to share the benefits, risks and training costs.
- Providing for the small successes that are encouraging and motivating for the community and can show funders, community members and others that the program is on track.
- Making it easier to evaluate progress (especially from feedback from clients) and to present funders, partners, and community members with effective information about that progress.

### ***Major challenges***

- A very real need to see results makes planning seem wasteful of time, diverting efforts from *doing*. Impatience with planning is always a challenge.
- Public expectations may be unrealistic, looking for jobs as an immediate outcome.
- Careful assessment may turn up more human resource development needs than the projected or existing resources and funding can handle, and this may require excruciating choices.

- Like all plans, a human resource plan must struggle between the need to be systematic and well thought out over several years and the need to be flexible to meet changing circumstances.

In every community, organizations already exist that are involved in training, employment services and other human resource functions. The challenge here is to construct partnerships and avoid turf wars. Participation in the planning process and establishing common community goals can help create a sense of co-operation and common vision among local labour market service providers.

### ***Some practical steps***

(Based on writings of Flo Frank and Anne Smith. See **Publications** below .)

1. Before planning begins there needs to be a number of conditions that will make the planning effective: an understanding that the planning process is indeed an essential part of organized skill building; the necessary resources to carry out an effective planning process; support, commitment, and participation from relevant sectors of the community. Perhaps most important, an overall community plan must be in place as a context for the human resource component of that plan.
2. If necessary to get the process started, hire a consultant who will help the responsible committee to organize its work. (See **Finding and Managing Good Consultants.**)
3. An assessment and analysis phase should be undertaken to identify the gaps between the current and desired skill/knowledge base, as well as the current and future job opportunities. The identified gaps will be analyzed as those that are most critical to the overall community development plan and should be among the first to be addressed, those that should be addressed over the next few years (developmental gaps), and those in skill areas that will have to be addressed in the longer future.
4. From the data of the preceding phase, goals should be set describing and prioritizing the steps to be taken that will ensure that training addresses the needs that are fundamental in nature first and that the training sequences occurs in a logical order. This involves drafting specific objectives and indicators of success.
5. Evaluation should be built into the plan, using both measurable data (quantitative) and peoples' perceptions or judgements (qualitative information). Aside from all the other benefits of being able to know what progress has or has not occurred, the evaluation gives community members the chance to give voice to their reactions. To encourage community commitment and involvement keep people informed of your progress. The message should be clear, positive, and answer questions that community members may have. The means of communication can vary depending upon your community, such as newspaper articles, word of mouth, town hall meetings, etc.

***Resource organizations & contacts***

- The Learning Enrichment Foundation has developed a highly respected full service employment program, their Action Centre for Employment (ACE). Contact them through their website ([www.lefca.org](http://www.lefca.org)) or telephone (416-769-0830) or fax (416-769-9912).
- Flo Frank of Common Ground Consulting Inc. (Box 39, Meacham, Saskatchewan, S0K 2V0] can be reached by phone: 306-376-2220 or email: [flofrank@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:flofrank@mb.sympatico.ca)

***Publications***

- *Human Resource Planning: Getting People Ready, Willing, & Able to Revitalize Their Community* by Flo Frank and Anne Smith (1994). Of particular note here is the human resource planning process in “Darfield, Alberta,” a hypothetical depiction based on the situation and experiences of several First Nation communities. Find this book in the “planning aisle” of The CED Bookshop at [www.cedworks.com](http://www.cedworks.com) or phone toll-free 888-255-6779. See also two articles by Flo Frank in *Making Waves* (January 1993) 4,1: 1-7.
- *Community Development Handbook* and *Community Development Facilitators Guide* are written from the standpoint of human resource specialists and published by Human Resource Development Canada. Download both of these documents from the HRDC website [www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/community/menu/index.shtml](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/community/menu/index.shtml).
- *The Community Strategic Planning Toolkit for Employment and Training*, prepared by Consilium for the Aboriginal Relations Office of Human Resources and Development Canada (819-953-7563). This manual is written for Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement Holders, but it is relevant to any community setting.