

# Anishinabek Employment and Training Services

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## PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Aboriginal Group and Partners Collaborate to Develop Entrepreneur Career Paths for Aboriginal Youth

July 4, 2014 --- Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS), in partnership with the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre (NOIC) and the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF), are proud to announce the launch of SAYbiz business program focusing on Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise and Business Development. The collaboration will engage and design a business network made up of 18 Aboriginal Youth from nine First Nation communities. The Aboriginal Youth will be gathered to begin developing an entrepreneurial culture for their home First Nation community and/or High School. The team will be provided with entrepreneurial education in co-operation with other stakeholders, along with experiences and activities.

The program which started on July 2, 2014 includes access to a laptop and a one-week pre-program orientation and one-week mid-summer retreat in Thunder Bay. The culturally aware and responsive program also involves an Elder, Mentor, Facilitator, Instructors, Classroom and Research Enrichment Activities and regular Monitors for the creation of Social Enterprises and a High School Entrepreneur Club(s). Participants will receive a certificate and advanced standing towards a course in Business at Confederation College.

“This initiative will provide First Nation Citizens with the stepping stones required to build skills and gain the knowledge needed to realize their entrepreneurship goals and dreams. It’s important that we continue to be the leader in the development of training programs that meet the needs of the First Nation communities,” said John DeGiacomo, Executive Director of the AETS.

Mutually beneficial partnerships like this one with NOIC and NADF will increase First Nation self reliance and contribute to ongoing improvements to the overall well being of First Nation individuals, families and communities in Northwestern Ontario. AETS successful secured funding for the development of the pilot program through FedNor and the Government of Ontario.

Participants who successfully complete the program requirements will receive Certificates of Achievement. SAYbiz is a unique and meaningful opportunity for Aboriginal Youth to develop their entrepreneurship skills and explore their personal and cultural identity. The initiative will help to increase engagement and achievement, encourage participation in extra-curricular activities, and increase the number of Aboriginal role models visible in school and communities. As Aboriginal Youth come to understand their roles as leaders and ambassadors for change within their communities, a positive, caring and safe school and community climate will be fostered, conducive to both learning and personal growth and development

Culturally-appropriate academic and workplace supports are provided to participants through mentorship, guidance and additional supports as required.

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**For more information, please feel free to visit during the orientation of this project anytime between 9am and 4pm on Friday July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 or Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in Room 286 at the Confederation College – McIntyre Building in Thunder Bay, Ontario or contact:**

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**Notes to Editors:**

*SAYbiz* is funded by FedNor and the Government of Ontario.

**About the Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS)**

The vision of Anishinabek Employment and Training Services is to lead in the development of a skilled Aboriginal Workforce empowering the Anishinabek, respectful of culture and heritage. AETS was established in 1997 and has assisted First Nation Citizens for over fifteen years to stay in or re-enter the labour force. It acts as a Local Delivery Mechanism (LDM) under the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) Anishinabek Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy (ASETS), which includes nine member First Nation communities or over 7,600 First Nation citizens. For more information, visit [www.aets.org](http://www.aets.org)

**SAYbiz 2014 Information:**

<http://www.aets.org/SAYbizPoster.pdf>  
<http://aets.org/SAYbizBrochure2014.pdf>  
<http://aets.org/SAYbizPresentation2014.pdf>