

EDUCATION ► TRAINING ► EMPLOYMENT



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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

2024 - 2027

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# **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

## **WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE**



# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

A pilot project funded by Employment and Social Development Canada's Opportunities Fund. This initiative will achieve objectives aligned with the intentions of the Opportunities Fund.

1. To support 75 Indigenous persons with disabilities over a period of 3 years.
2. To improve employer awareness and capacity for adapting HR policies and practices for hiring, integrating retaining, and promoting Indigenous persons with disabilities.
3. To Increase the number, diversity and strength of AETS' community-based partner organizations; partner organizations may also be engaged with pre-employment programming or supports.

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## **AN IDENTIFIED NEED**

Our Labor Market Information Survey collects voluntary data from the citizens of our nine First Nations to improve services. The data suggests that there is a need for AETS to take a holistic approach inclusive of traditional practices with employment training and pre-employment readiness.

Many of the barriers that the citizens of our nine First Nations experience in relation to finding and keeping work are directly related to a disability (diagnosed or otherwise).

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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## PARTNERSHIPS THAT MATTER

With Dilico Anishinabek Family Care to utilize their programs and services participants based on their individual needs. Assessments would be conducted at the agency level to determine an individual path forward.

This project will require AETS to work closely with the service providers who are already working with citizens of our nine affiliated First Nations within their respective communities.

There are other organizations/agencies that we will collaborate with that will be integral to a smooth delivery of the project; some of these may include Thunder Bay Literacy Group and Turtle Concepts.



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## MEET THE TEAM

### **JOB DEVELOPER - KALLIE MILANI**

Will preview potential employer-participants to promote equitable hiring practices and an inclusive and welcoming workplace. Will ensure that all work experiences are being monitored and both the employer and employee feel supported.

### **LIFE SKILLS OFFICER - SANDI ERICKSON**

Will help participants identify the need for flexible working arrangements and assist with delivering pre-employment training such as soft skills, sleep hygiene, or self-management.

### **EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR - RODERICK WIGWAS**

Will work with participants and employers with individual based plans if any participant is experiencing mental illness or a substance use disorder to improve employability skills such as resume/cover letter writing and interviewing techniques.

### **WELLNESS COORDINATOR - EMILY MCCAULEY**

Will oversee the project working directly with clients, employers, and partners to ensure that the project meets intended goals. Support the wellness team with activities and challenges as it relates to the initiative.

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# **A CLOSER LOOK AT WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE**





# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## A CLOSER LOOK

The AETS Wellness Opportunities Initiative will be broken into two streams that will focus on supporting individuals and employers, respectively.

**STREAM 1** Participants will be supported with Enhanced Employment Assistance Services, Skills for Employment, Work Experience, and Self-Employment enabling participants to develop their skills and employability to prepare for, obtain, and keep employment or become self-employed.

**STREAM 2** Employers will be supported with Employer awareness and Enhanced Employer Supports enabling employers to diversify their workplaces and create inclusive and accessible work environments for employees with disabilities.

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## **START-UP ACTIVITIES**

During this period, staffing, marketing, promotion of the project, preparation of materials and facilities will be conducted. This also includes comprehensive design of the project while the training and onboarding of new staff is completed.

This project offers a continuous intake model. Recruitment and selection of participants will begin in the start-up phase and continue throughout the project. The project will be advertised in the Thunder Bay employment collective and promoted to the surrounding First Nation populations to inform the communities about the project.

Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS) will verify participant eligibility and submit a Participant Information Template upon intake.

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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

AETS will recruit participants using various methods including social media platforms, advertise with various organizations such as the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board and Ontario Disability Support Program Office, local employment agencies, Libraries, March of Dimes, Canadian Mental Health Association and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care.

The Community Coordinator and the Employment Advisor will conduct and lead recruitment, intake, disability severity assessments (supported by CMHA) and skills assessments for participants. Furthermore, participants will be assisted to make informed and accurate decisions about their participation in the project.

Participants will be further assessed and referred to specific employment opportunity and training trajectories based on their declaration of self-identified needs and barriers via specialized Action Plans.

More detailed and specific assessments will be carried out by Dilico Anishinabek Family Care using guidance and practice by the Canadian Mental Health Association to utilize industry expertise and assist participants with barriers that include drug dependencies, alcohol addiction and mental health stresses and disorders.

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# **STREAM 1**

**WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE**



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## **STREAM 1 ACTIVITIES**

The Wellness Team will offer a multitude of activities (special services) tailored to meet the needs of persons with disabilities to facilitate their inclusion into the labour market. Activities will be delivered in group-based workshops or delivered individually depending on the participant's needs.

Participants will experience 4 weeks of Enhanced Employment Assistance Services can be supported by appropriately assessed living allowances, drug and/or alcohol wellness and rehabilitation, dependent care, supportive technology, transportation, situational accommodations, and dedicated emergency assistance when warranted and approved to maximize the benefit to be gained by participants.

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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES (EEAS)

- Funding will be provided specifically to assist the participants in addressing a barrier to their achievement of a specific employment opportunity.
- Labour market information and information on other employment-related resources Identification of barriers to employment for persons with disabilities, such as:
  - Needs determination
  - Vocational testing
  - Diagnostic services
  - Learning disability detection and assessment;
- Employment counselling services including:
  - Decision-making and learning strategies for individuals with barriers to employment
  - Addressing issues during participation in activities
  - Supporting employment maintenance once a participant has obtained a job
  - Group sessions to help participants improve their job search capabilities, and
  - Assistance in determining appropriate skills training

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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES (EEAS) CONTINUED

- Job placement services, including assistance to participants in choosing and applying for suitable job opportunities, preparing résumés; and developing effective interview skills.
- Employment preparation or employability activities, such as: pre-employment training, individualized employability training, group workshops, and development of social-emotional skills such as adaptability, collaboration, and communication, etcetera
- Individual or group training to enhance:
  - Individuals' disability competence and their capacity to support disability inclusion, and
  - Accessibility in employment, including ensuring smooth transitions and long-term retention
- Provision of job coaches, advisors, technical experts, and teaching assistants to assist with inclusion into the workforce or the development of a participant's employability.

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

Work Experiences can be supported by supplemental job coaching, dependent care, access to technology, access to transportation and accommodation, and funds for personal protective equipment. AETS has provided a list of potential sectors to be targeted which includes but not limited to mining, construction, carpentry, health care and support work, and transportation and logistics industries.

Flexible working arrangements will be discussed with participants based on their individual needs.

The employer will pay participants' wages based on the prevailing wage rate for the occupation and Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERCs) and Workers Compensation Benefits (WCB). Employers will be reimbursed for 100% of the wages and MERCs by the Contribution Recipient. Anishinabek Employment and Training Services will reimburse 50% of employers for MERCs. Employer reimbursement will not exceed prevailing wage rate for the position in Ontario.

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## **SELF-EMPLOYMENT**

Participants will attend Self-Employment activities for 4 weeks and 20 hours per week on average. The Wellness Team will work one-on-one with participants to implement their business plan including technical and consultative support to help them assess their business concepts, further develop their business plan, and launch the enterprise once the business plan is developed.

The Wellness Team will continue to support participants with the implementation of their business plan. During this time, the participants may receive access to supplemental mentoring, dependent care, supportive technology, transportation, accommodations, and other various emergency supports paid by the Contribution Recipient depending on the participant's individual needs assessment.

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# WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES

- Information sessions to participants potentially interested in OF-SE
- Assessment services to help persons with disabilities articulate, identify and design responses and accommodations for their needs, and thereby allow them to pursue entrepreneurial activities
- Orientation sessions to enable participants to assess:
  - Risk & Business viability
  - Ability to cover costs
  - Personal suitability
  - Entrepreneurial training
- Workshops and coaching/mentoring activities to help participants develop and implement their business plan
- Mechanisms for independent review of the viability of the proposed business concepts and business plans
- Funding and/or provision of private professional certification (including training and fees), not otherwise covered by federal, provincial, or territorial governments, that permits entrepreneurship
- On-going group and individual mentoring and wrap around supports as participants develop their businesses and post-participation follow-up and support

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## **STREAM 1 OUTCOMES**

Program participants with disabilities will have:

- Tools, skills and information to obtain employment;
- Enhanced employability; and
- Become employed, self-employed or have returned to school.

## **STREAM 1 OUTPUTS**

- 75 (100%) participants with disabilities participated in one or more activities;
- 75 (100%) participants with disabilities with enhanced employability;
- 52 (69%) participants with disabilities employed post participation;
- 4 (5%) participants with disabilities self-employed post participation;
- 9 (12%) participants with disabilities returned to school post participation
- 2 (3%) participants with disabilities benefited from wrap-around supports for entrepreneurs who are successful in starting their business

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# **STREAM 2**

**WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE**



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## STREAM 2 ACTIVITIES

The Wellness team will provide support to 50 employers for the integration of persons with disabilities into their workplace through Employer Awareness activities. The Job Developer will preview potential Employer participants, to promote equitable hiring practices and an inclusive and welcoming workplace without gender-or-sex related barriers.

The Life Skills Officer would help the participant identify the need for flexible working arrangements. The Job Developer would ensure a participant plan to promote and encourage flexible working arrangements based on each participant's capacity to work.

The Employment Advisor will work with participants and employers with individual based plans if any participant is experiencing mental illness or substance use disorder.

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# EMPLOYER AWARENESS (EA)

## (EA) ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE

- Providing talent pools of unemployed persons with disabilities to employers experiencing labour shortages.
- Information sessions on inclusion and accessibility to support the hiring, inclusion, retention, and career advancement of persons with disabilities.
- Hosting events profiling businesses with positive hiring practices for persons with disabilities (could include testimonials from persons with disabilities who have been successfully included into employment).
- Supporting larger events, the production and distribution of educational materials and information, such as: Creating and distributing a brochure, dispelling myths of hiring persons with disabilities, outlining accommodative strategies, or providing success stories.
- Creating and distributing a video of success stories on the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the workplace.
- Supporting employer-led peer-to-peer networking, mentoring, and information-sharing on best practices for increasing the accessibility and inclusiveness of workplaces for persons with disabilities
- Developing employer policies and procedures to accommodate prospective employees with disabilities.

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# ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES (EES)

## (EES) ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE

- Organizing and delivering information sessions or workshops to better prepare the employer and staff to work with persons with disabilities, for example providing information: Supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the workplace, on the rights of persons with disabilities to appropriate accommodations, and on existing and upcoming legislation
- Reaching out and providing hands on supports to employers by: Developing, promoting, and disseminating strategies, programs, and tools to be made available to help them include potential employees with disabilities, and providing opportunities for career advancement.
- Make their workplaces more inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities including the provision of technological aids and other workplace accommodations that support: Hiring, onboarding, and retention; career advancement of persons with disabilities, and the general inclusiveness and accessibility of their workplace
- Providing employers support, such as: Management coaching, employee training,
- Providing human resources support to improve an employer's capacity to: Hire, accommodate, retain persons with disabilities, and support their career advancement.

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## **STREAM 2 OUTCOMES**

Participating employers will:

- Have increased ability to hire and support persons with disabilities in the workplace; and
- Hire and retain persons with disabilities.

## **STREAM 2 OUTPUTS**

- 50 (100%) employers actively engaged in OF activities;
- 50 (100%) employers that report increased ability to hire and support persons with disabilities in the workplace;
- 32 (64 %) employers that report hiring 1 or more persons with a disability post-participation in OF activities; 14 (28%) employers that report hiring 1 or more persons with a disability who have or had multiple and/or complex barriers; and
- 4 (8%) employers that retained 1 or more persons with a disability in post-participation in OF activities.

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## **AVERAGE COST PER PARTICIPANT**

The average cost per participant will be \$10,077.

This money is used to cover the cost of pre-employment activities among other supports that participants will be able to access.

The Wellness team will be utilizing a variety of community resources to support individuals and employers with their goals as it relates to the Wellness Opportunities Initiative.

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## INTERESTED IN THIS PROGRAM?

Phone the Wellness Team today to get started:

**(807) 598-5611**

Fill out an application today by visiting our website:

[aets.org/wellness](http://aets.org/wellness)

Visit any location to set up an appointment in person:

**250 Park Ave. Suite #210**

OR

**285 Red River Rd.**

OR

**216 Brodie St. S**



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**QUESTIONS?**

**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**



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