



# YOUTH SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL IN BC

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The following document was developed through a face to face and virtual consultation of youth employment service providers from across BC. This business case for a Youth Specific Employment Service Delivery Model has been endorsed by the following organizations:

	<p><b>Organization:</b> First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition is a non-partisan, cross-sectoral partnership of organizations and individuals, committed to strengthening support for the rights and well-being of children and youth in BC. The coalition aims to ensure children and youth receive “first call” on society’s resources through public education, community mobilization and public policy advocacy.</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Federation of Youth In Care Network</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b></p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Represents youth leaving care for independence</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Thompson Community Services</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Kamloops, Terrace and Lower Mainland</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Services for individuals and families</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Hope Community Services</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Hope and Fraser Canyon</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Programming</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Victoria Youth Empowerment Society</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Greater Victoria</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Services For High Risk Youth including, Outreach, Youth Detox, Emergency Shelter, Evening Drop In Services (shower, laundry, meal), Daytime Drop In Services (resume, job search) Counseling, Mental Health Services, Services for Sexually Exploited Youth</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Pender Harbour School Society</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Area A-Rural and Remote</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Employment and Training, Recreation, Sport and Culture, Counselling Support and Youth Drop-in</p>

	<p><b>Organization:</b> Myert Corps Inc.  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Abbotsford and Langley  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Employment Zone, Youth Employment Resources</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Terrace and District Community Services Society  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Terrace  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Opportunities</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Pacific Community Resources Society  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Surrey, Vancouver, New Westminister  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Career Quest, Surrey Youth Job Search Program, New Westminister Youth Employment Resource Centre, Baristas Youth Skills Link Program, Surrey Youth Employment Resource Centre, Skills Connect, Immigrant and Young Adults</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Nanaimo Youth Services Agency  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Nanaimo  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Bladerunners, One Stop Youth Centre</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> YMCA-YWCA of the Central Okanagan  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Kelowna  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Career Contact Centre for Youth</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Richmond Youth Services Agency  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Richmond  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Connections Youth Employment Resource Centre, Rally – Richmond Aboriginal Leadership and Lifeskills for Youth Program</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Career Tracks Youth Employment Centre  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Chilliwack  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Employment Assistance Centre</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Gordon Neighborhood House  <b>Areas of Service:</b> Vancouver  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth S.E.A.R.C.H.</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> Boys and Girls Clubs Community Services of Delta/Richmond  <b>Areas of Service:</b> North and South Delta, Richmond  <b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Works, S. Delta Employment Resource Centre, Richmond Employment Resource Centre</p>

	<p><b>Organization:</b> Frog Hollow Neighborhood House</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Vancouver</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Youth Spot Employment Centre, Youth At Work</p>
	<p><b>Organization:</b> YWCA Vancouver</p> <p><b>Areas of Service:</b> Vancouver</p> <p><b>Programs Offered:</b> Career Zone, One Stop Career Shop</p>

### Issues Youth Confront Attaching to the Workforce:

The impact of the current recession on youth unemployment in Canada has reinforced the reality of a structural social problem facing attachment to the labour market for this demographic. This requires that both the Federal and Provincial governments work collaboratively in developing a long term solution to this problem, but the current youth unemployment situation in B.C. requires the immediate implementation of targeted programming designed to more effectively attach youth to the work force. The recession has put a strain on the economy to the point that without prudent policy action, there will be a generation of youth who are unable to acquire the appropriate work experience, skills and career planning necessary to significantly contribute to the economy in the coming years.



Like other young people across the country, BC youth face significant employment challenges, especially within the context of the current economic climate. People aged 15 - 24 have experienced a disproportionate increase in both job loss (in Canada, -225,000 jobs in total<sup>1</sup>) and unemployment rates since the recession took hold in October 2008. In fact, of the 1,893,000 people unemployed in BC, 543,000 are youth between the ages 15 – 24, representing 28.7%<sup>2</sup> of total provincial unemployment. The current BC youth unemployment rate sits at 16%<sup>3</sup>, a number that is “more than double that of adults aged 25 and over [6.9%]<sup>4</sup>. This trend of doubled youth unemployment rates is not specific to times of economic uncertainty (see Figure 1.1); even during the hot labour market of 2007-2008, when youth from all walks of life experienced some of their greatest economic success, many young people remained under-represented and marginalized, reflecting the tumultuous conditions for this age group in their efforts to attach to the labour market.

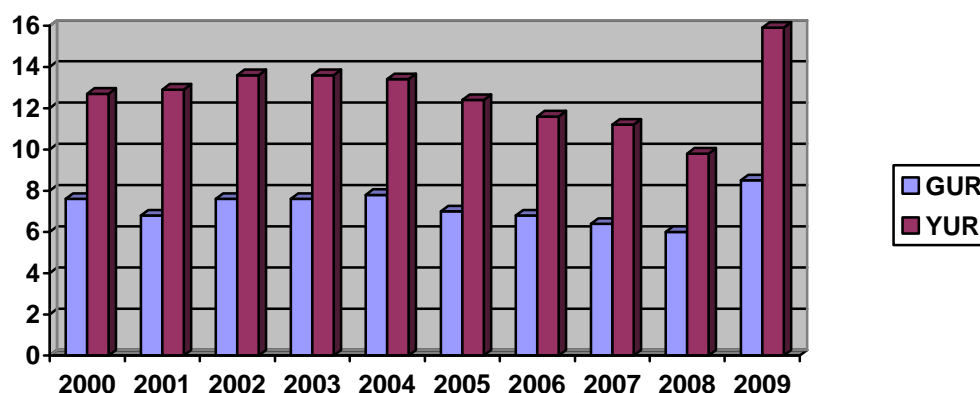
<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada (November 2009). “The Daily: Labour Force Survey, October 2009.”

<sup>2</sup> BC Stats (December 2009). “Data Tables: Labour Force Statistics.” *Data Services, Issue 09-11*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> BC Stats (November 2009). “Labour Force Statistics October 2009: Highlights.” *Data Services, Issue 09-10*, p. 2.

**FIGURE 1.1: Youth (YUR) & General Unemployment (GUR) Rates in Canada, 2000-2009<sup>5</sup>**



It is clear that youth as a target group have a unique set of barriers which prevents them from securing meaningful employment. Some of these barriers include limited skills, lack of education and experience, restriction to entry level employment, job maintenance issues, and minimal support networks. These barriers constrain youth from gaining access to meaningful employment opportunities, and restrict their ability to contribute to economic growth. This problem will become more evident over the next decade, as the BC economy will face a significant skills shortage due to baby boomers attrition rates, symbolizing an opportunity to invest in youth which will allow them to step in and fill in the projected gaps in the labour force. To be successful, however, young people will require considerable support that will only be accomplished through the development of a targeted workforce development strategy that is aimed at laddering youth from entry level employment to higher level positions, facilitating their ability to make meaningful contributions to future economic development.

### **Rationale for Youth Service Delivery Model:**

As noted above, unemployed youth face a specific set of barriers to employment, and require specialized supports and services that operate outside of a general service delivery framework. The EI Part II EAS continuum of service developed by Service Canada has allowed some recognition of this, with some communities (Surrey, Vancouver, Kelowna, Prince Rupert, etc...) establishing specialized services for youth as well as for people with disabilities and immigrants. These targeted groups cannot be integrated within the general service stream, as they require employment professionals that understand their needs, and can provide specific solutions to alleviate some of the pressures they experience. We cannot assume that young people will respond to employment interventions in the same manner as other demographic populations; this has been historically recognized by government, and must continue to be a key consideration in the development of tailored youth programming.

<sup>5</sup> Data collected from: OECD (2009). "Employment Outlook 2008." & Statistics Canada (2009). "Labour Force Historical Review 2008." Current (2009) data retrieved from: Statistics Canada (December 2009). "The Daily: Labour Force Statistics, Data Table #1, Labour Force Characteristics by Age and Sex."

Other jurisdictions have recognized the reality of youth unemployment and have responded effectively by implementing youth specific programming in a one-stop-shop model. For example, Alberta and Ontario have both experienced notable success with their respective youth employment strategies. An evaluation of the Youth Connections Program in Alberta revealed that one year after implementation the provincial youth unemployment rate dropped 2%. In Ontario, it was found that the Job Connect program yielded an 80% success rate for youth attaching either to the labour market or to education and training programs (1999 – 2002). The effectiveness of these two provincial initiatives in specifically addressing the needs of youth is clear, as each has been successful in bolstering attachment to the labour market for this demographic, and ultimately increasing economic prosperity. These two examples of best practices solidify the need for BC to follow suit, by developing and implementing a similar one – stop shop youth programming model for employment services.

### **Model for Youth Employment Resource Centres in BC:**



The proposed BC model for one-stop-shop youth programming would include a variety of services being offered in one location, eliminating the current fragmentation of services. Currently in BC, youth access services across vast geographic areas, creating frustration and confusion about which services are available in the community. Working with youth successfully requires an atmosphere of familiarity, a high level of relationship development, and a skilled

staff capable of recognizing and responding to their specialized needs. The one – stop shop model will create an inclusive environment where youth can congregate and feel comfortable connecting with staff who will assist them to make positive life choices. The model would operate YERCs year round (including summer student employment) with continuous intake and outreach services specifically designed to prepare young people for learning and work by providing them with education, career planning and employment assistance.

The current system sees youth regularly ‘fall through the cracks’ because they don’t follow through on referrals to interventions due to a number of barriers,



including resistance to change, motivational issues, and access to transportation. The one – stop shop model would eliminate the need for youth to travel to other locations, by allowing them to access case management, job search and career planning supports all under one roof. Youth and other stakeholders would benefit from a community based distribution of one – stop shop youth employment centres in a number of ways.

First, existing service providers understand the needs of the youth, and the resources available in the community, allowing them to take advantage of pre – existing community relationships. Second, youth will have the opportunity to

contribute to their local economies by working close to home, and this is especially important in some of the smaller BC communities, where populations are diminishing as youth move to the larger city centres in search of work. Youth can work with local employers, creating a local labour pool to draw from, thus facilitating the development of new partnerships, and reducing the severity of the labour shortage. All community stakeholders will benefit from working collaboratively in a comprehensive, coordinated approach towards a common vision for the future that includes the involvement of all partners - government, youth, learning institutions, employers and community organizations. The end result will be improved accessibility of services, which will improve youth engagement, increase attendance and participation in programming, and eventually result in a higher success rate of attaching youth to the workforce and educational / training opportunities.

- **One-Stop-Shop YERCs would include:**

- Case Management
- Pre employment/life skills
- Youth Job Club
- Career Planning
- Educational attachment
  - i. GED
  - ii. Alternate Education
  - iii. Transitioning to post – secondary education
- Summer Student employment
- Vocational and career assessments
- Certificates (short – term)
- Outreach Support/Job Development/Job coaching
- Attachment to Apprenticeships
- Wage subsidies
- Practicum placements/mentoring opportunities
- Part time year round employment
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Supports (work clothing, work tools, etc)
- Occupational Health and Safety Instruction
- Employment Standards Instruction
- Essential Skills Instruction



### **Community Based Contracting Model:**

As outlined above in the identification of the specific needs of the youth cohort, it is clear that a regionally based contracting model requiring youth to travel significant distances for access to service would constitute an additional barrier to the effective delivery of employment services to this particular demographic.

We propose that the one-stop-shop YERC's contracting model follow a similar design to the current CAP service delivery system. The CAP services were contracted on a community based model and are located in approximately 50 communities across BC. These communities were identified through an

assessment of the size of the caseload of multi – barriered IA clients accessing resource services from the MHSD local offices. A similar assessment of community need could serve as the rationale for the geographical distribution of YERC's across the province.

We would propose the development of a provincial community based network of YERC's, with locations identified based on the size of each community's youth cohort as reflected in Stats Canada, and BC school district demographic statistics. Those communities with a higher proportion of youth in their populations would get priority in the consideration of the establishment of a YERC as well as the size of the program budget. Rural communities would however require special consideration given their smaller youth cohort and larger service area.

### **Performance Based / Payment Model:**

100% performance based contracts focusing solely on employment outcomes is not an effective mechanism for measuring success of service for the youth cohort.. Initial attachment of youth to the workforce usually results in cyclical employment which is caused by a number of factors including survival jobs, experimentation with occupations, unsuitability to occupations based on personality / interests, and misinformation regarding educational choices. Outcomes should be measured on a variety of performance indicators based on workforce development which includes a combination of educational enrollment, life skills development, labour market knowledge and ultimately employment.

The need for innovation in performance measurement was addressed in the development of the Alberta youth strategy which resulted in a system that incorporates multiple indicators of success including knowledge and skills obtained, levels of satisfaction for stakeholders along with the traditional measures for labour market attachment. In their most recent RFP for the Edmonton Youth Connections contract (August 2009) the Alberta Government outlined a contractor's reimbursement model with a 65% payment for a bundle of regularly provided indentified services, a 15% deliverable payment for training courses and 20% outcomes payment for a wide variety of successful outcomes including placement to both employment and training.

Evaluating performance using this kind of a multi – faceted performance based payment model is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the services offered to youth as well as the business sustainability of the community based youth employment agencies and would be the recommended payment model for a BC youth initiative.

### **Conclusion:**

While we believe that at the national level the Forum of Labour Market Ministers must initiate a Federal / Provincial / Territorial consultation towards the development of a new youth employment strategy for Canada, it is



imperative that the government of B.C. immediately address this issue by developing a network of one-stop shop YERCs in a new “Made in B.C.” service delivery model. The government will benefit from this initiative in a number of ways including decreased pressure on social programs including housing, criminal justice and social assistance. The increased revenues from income taxes and consumer spending will allow funds to be allocated into other government initiatives, improving economic and social prosperity. In times such as these where revenues have fallen off and policymakers are struggling to find financing to support existing programs, government needs to recognize and respond to potential opportunities that serve to bolster public income and improve the services within its jurisdiction.

BC’s immediate implementation of a youth employment initiative based on the one-stop-shop YERC model lays out principles, goals and actions for responding to the persistent employment challenges faced by BC youth. The model is designed to help young people take advantage of the many economic and educational opportunities that exist in our province. Moreover, it will also benefit employers by giving them increased access to a localized labour pool, drawing on the community strengths in the context of their own needs. This model could provide promising best practices that could lead to the development of a new national integrated Youth Employment Strategy.

Youth represent the core of our future economic development and we must not jeopardize our comparative position of strength by failing to invest in a strategy aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of high youth unemployment. Ultimately, working together, employers, governments of all levels, community partners and youth can and will build a foundation for a bright and healthy future for the province of British Columbia, and all of Canada.