



**C**onnect, **C**ommunicate, **C**ollaborate

Strengthening the Service Delivery Network in Hamilton

# Final Report



**Workforce Planning Hamilton**  
Planification de main d'oeuvre de Hamilton



**Adult Basic Education Association**  
Hamilton's Connection to Lifelong Learning

With support from Skills  
Development Flagship (SDF).



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Report prepared by: Kelly Culver, Culver Group Inc.

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# Executive Summary

**Connect, Communicate, Collaborate** (also known as C3) is a project focused on identifying ways to strengthen the Employment and Training service delivery network in Hamilton. This is done through reviewing the network's structure and identifying a model that improves connectivity and strengthens linkages across the Employment and Training system including those agencies that are Employment Ontario (EO) funded and those that are funded through other Ministries.

Through our research, literature reviews, key informant interviews and community consultations, we have found that the Employment and Training community in Hamilton is aligned and operating with an integrated approach to service delivery. The connectivity and linkages within this community are foundations that enable strengthening client-centred service delivery and allow for service coordination at both the informal and formal levels which ultimately benefits and improves client outcomes. **Our conclusion is that C3 is alive and present Hamilton.**

We also know that sustainability, targeted actions and evolution are key to maintaining momentum and influencing change and continuous improvements within networks. As a result, this project has developed a number of recommendations for Hamilton's Employment and Training community to action as it continues to evolve and move C3 to the next level.

Recommendations for the Hamilton community include the following:

1. Strengthening Knowledge Transfer Within and Across the Sector
2. Developing a Program for Targeted and Strategic C3 Events
3. Actively Marketing WIN Hamilton as the Go-To Communications Hub
4. Creating Succession Planning and Evolutionary Strategies for the Employment and Training Network
5. Conducting Annual Needs Assessments within the Working Groups
6. Integrating Planning and Priority Setting Between the Working Groups
7. Instituting Annual Monitoring and Evaluation of the Continuity and Continuous Improvement of C3 within the Community
8. Expanding the Community Mapping beyond the borders of Hamilton

In addition, one of the key knowledge transfer commitments of this project was to identify lessons and recommendations for other Employment and Training communities in Ontario to explore in terms of transferability or applicability.

Recommendations and/or considerations for transferability include the following:

1. C3 will only work if there is an environment of trust. Communities need to actively explore ways and opportunities to come together to discuss common goals and create shared agendas and objectives.
2. True power lies in informal networks because informal networks have credibility, and you cannot force networks to happen or to be sustained. Working Groups are good examples of both formal and informal networks, and work well and keep members engaged when they are inter-connected and their mandates have common goals and objectives.
3. Sectors/communities need to have integrated planning tables to ensure cross-pollination and identify issues from a cross-cutting perspective so that plans of action can be developed on behalf of the community as a whole.
4. C3 only works if there is ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
5. Community mapping is an important exercise to see linkages and identify and address gaps.
6. Individuals require common goals to feel comfortable networking and see the value that collaboration brings. It is important to create opportunities to bring together front line staff to raise their awareness of the sector/community which will inherently strengthen linkages, connectivity and confidence.



## Why Is This Important Now?

**So much to know and so little time.** Employment and training service providers and their staff are pressed for time constantly in the current climate. There is access to more information than ever and the challenge is distilling what is relevant or important in order to help clients in obtaining their best possible outcomes. This means that employment and training linkages across the community are critical to ensure that clients are navigating the system seamlessly and effectively.

In many ways, this project builds on Workforce Planning Hamilton's *Community Mapping: Hamilton's Employment and Training Network* produced in January 2014. This mapping exercise identified how relationships between agencies at all levels (front line, management, executive) worked and/or could be strengthened in addition to ensuring that clients were receiving the services they needed. The community mapping provided visual evidence that the employment and training network is well connected and integrated in Hamilton. See Figure 1.

As illustrated in Figure 1, with 119 respondents, there were 1,397 unique connections which demonstrate a healthy and connected network. More strategically, it also enabled a dialogue with and about those organizations or entities on the fringes and what their role and place is or should be within the network particularly from a client-centred/holistic service lens (such as mental health and addictions, social services and those agencies not directly related to employment but whose mandate is to help address barriers to employment).

The outcome of the mapping exercise led to the question: how do we connect, communicate and collaborate even better and what needs to be done to strengthen linkages within this sector even more so that clients access and work through this system seamlessly, effectively and have successful outcomes?



## Key Findings and Celebrations

Hamilton is a community that connects, communicates and collaborates well!

We have found that the Employment and Training community in Hamilton is aligned and operating with an integrated approach to service delivery. The connectivity and linkages within this community are foundations that enable strengthening client-centred service delivery and allow for service coordination at both the informal and formal levels.

**Our conclusion is that C3 is alive and present Hamilton, which presents two interesting questions:**

1. How do we make Hamilton's model become the globally-recognized model/best practice?
2. What lessons and recommendations for transferability can this project make to other Employment and Training communities within Ontario?





# Research and Reviews

Our research methodology was comprised of four distinct yet inter-connected pieces:

- Literature and jurisdictional reviews, including reviewing Terms of Reference for all Employment and Training Working Groups;
- Conducting key informant interviews as identified by the Advisory Committee;
- Conducting Employment and Training Service Provider Surveys; and
- Holding Service Delivery Network and Working Group Consultations.

The literature review set out to (a) identify best practices for networks in other jurisdictions or sectors and (b) analyse existing documentation within the Employment and Training community in Hamilton.

To that end, we have reviewed publications about networks, collaborations and collective impact in order to extrapolate methods, trends, practices and frameworks to inform analysis of and application/extension to the Employment and Training community in Hamilton. We also have reviewed published reports, existing Terms of Reference, and other supporting documentation developed for or by the Skills Development Flagship and its ancillary Working Groups<sup>1</sup> and/or key affiliations including Workforce Planning Hamilton and the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council.

The key informant interviews were conducted with senior leaders of various employment and training organizations, chairs of the Skills Development Flagship and its working groups, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council as well as municipal and provincial representatives (City of Hamilton and Ontario Ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities and Citizenship and Immigration). A copy of the key informant interview questions is attached as Appendix 1, Survey Instruments.

The service provider surveys and service delivery network consultations were focused specifically on:

- understanding connections and/or how to strengthen connections to the Working Groups;
- uncovering how organizations within the community communicate and share information;
- defining ways and means this project could leverage WIN Hamilton;
- collaborating on how to enhance client services; and
- understanding the community's professional development needs in order to develop a targeted, meaningful and strategic professional development session using the C3 platform.

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<sup>1</sup> Skills Development Flagship, Employment Assistance Resource Network, Job Developers Group, Literacy Community Planning Committee, LBS Front Line Staff Meetings, Youth Employment Network, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council

The literature review uncovered an interesting piece about networks, which has direct application to Hamilton's Employment and Training community:

*"...Canada is viewed as a world leader in using networks of organizations to integrate services, create and transfer knowledge, and build community capacity.*

*Networks have been established in the public and non-profit sectors to create collective solutions to complex problems through cross-boundary action, whether those boundaries are jurisdictional, organizational, programmatic, geographic, professional or sectoral. Those looking to maximize results on complex social issues will find investment in networks to be particularly useful in a comprehensive strategy, as networks have been demonstrated to facilitate progress by:*

- *Leveraging scarce resources and achieving economies*
- *Strengthening integration, collaboration and coordination across and within programs, funders, organizations and sectors, while maintaining the benefits of diversity*
- *Leveraging change by increasing shared learning, creativity and innovation among individuals and organizations*
- *Addressing needs in a more comprehensive way and improving responsiveness by enhancing the flow of information; and*
- *Empowering communities to respond to change and problems with greater capacity and resilience*

*Networks are collaborative structures that rely on trust and reciprocity for exchange and accountability, rather than price systems (markets) or chain of command (hierarchies). Networks create new patterns of relationships that go beyond members' primary affiliations and are thus effective mechanisms to integrate otherwise isolated capacities for a common purpose. They establish the infrastructure of processes, information, people and relationships needed to create synergies across multiple organizations and across wide geographic areas...."<sup>2</sup>*

We have evidence that Hamilton is practicing many components of this Consensus Statement and we have evidence that the Employment and Training community is aligned and operating with an integrated approach to service delivery.



# The Evidence: A Networked Approach

We have evidence that the Hamilton employment and training community leverages its networks and that connection and collaboration is at the centre of what this community does together.

1. Hamilton is contained within a specific and well-defined geographic boundary and the municipality encourages and supports employment and training collaboration. This makes it easy to communicate mandates quickly, roll out new programs, services and information because Hamilton is not splintered. There is leadership and support between various levels of government and employment and training organizations that are well established and do not operate with a competitive mindset.
2. People relationships and process relationships that have been developed are based on trust, honesty, openness.... “This is how we move things forward and is the underlying reason for why things work”
3. There are different planning tables that are cross-pollinating (HIPC, SDF, HUBS, etc) which allows the sector to identify issues from a cross-cutting perspective and develop plans of action on behalf of Hamilton as a whole
4. There is no “what’s in it for me” attitude demonstrated by employment and training organizations. Hamilton takes a different approach to say “it’s our issue and this is how we will deal with it”, resulting in organizations quickly focusing their mandate(s) to achieve a larger vision. The level of leadership and level of involvement is high right now and this allows for immediate action, resulting in tangible evidence of collaboration (such as the Poverty Round Table). Partners and funders see evidence collaboration and as such continue to support this community
5. The Skills Development Flagship, as a coordinating and connecting body provides the leadership and the leaders want to work together, as evidenced in their key informant interviews:
  - “We have honest discussions on what works well/does not work well. We make decisions (actionable decisions) on behalf of clients and on behalf of Hamilton as a whole”
  - “Senior leaders can come together and talk in a safe environment, can make decisions, address issues and actually do something”
6. The value of the Working Groups is essential and the uniqueness of these Working Groups is that they provide both a formal and informal network structure
  - “In Hamilton we can pick up the phone, talk and make decisions across our very strong Employment and Training network”
7. Hamilton continues to be used as an example of collaboration or collective impact that works by various funding organizations (CIC, ODSP, MCI)



# C3 Evolution and Next Steps

There are a number of next steps for the Employment and Training Community to action and sustain C3's momentum and evolution:

## Sustaining the Enabling Environment for C3

While Employment and Training senior leaders may feel and believe there are strong linkages and connectivity through their access to the Skills Development Flagship, this may not necessarily always be present at the front line level which then impacts on service delivery to the client.

### **Recommendation #1: Strengthen Knowledge Transfer Within and Across the Sector**

There is an opportunity resulting from this project to strengthen (a) management and the service delivery; (b) front line and the service delivery; (c) clients and the service delivery through more effective knowledge transfer between all three levels. Employment and Training Service Provider organizations, senior leaders and Working Group Chairs need to continue to communicate and ensure that succinct, relevant and timely information is available for front line staff so that enhanced collaboration and service coordination for clients continues. In addition, relevant and timely information will serve to ensure that decisions are based on evidence and data rather than intuition.

As an indicator of this commitment the C3 project was able to bring together over 114 front line staff on March 4, 2015 for a C3 celebration and professional development event. Participants heard findings from this project, a keynote speaker addressed the value of networks and client-centred collaboration, service provider displays helped raise front line staff awareness about the breadth and depth of this community and participants worked together to solve client case studies using a collaborative approach. Key learnings from this session, as noted by participants included:

- *"When you have more people together across service provider organizations, you come up with a more comprehensive approach and look at the client as a whole entity"*
- *"C3 builds trust and allows us to see enhancements to what we do"*
- *"Raising awareness of the importance of collaboration and understanding how service providers are the central piece to help our clients to make the connections necessary to be successful"*
- *"At a higher level understanding the importance of referring out...we do not need to do it all ourselves in-house"*

Feedback from evaluations on this event included:

- *"I really appreciate the interactive nature of this session, we talk a lot about collaborating but often this is not respected in the structure. Thanks for making us talk!"*
- *"Hamilton Rocks! The service providers collaborate well and build relationships to benefit our clients. We are a community!"*

- *“It is good to bring everyone together like this from time to time. I felt really proud about our city and the work we do here. We need more unity and collaboration in the days to come. Thanks again! It got us out of our offices and connecting with other professionals.”*

We hope that this is the first of many C3 events to sustain action and momentum.

### **Recommendation #2:**

#### **Develop a Program for Targeted and Strategic C3 Events**

As noted by the participants themselves, bringing together people who share a common goal and helping them learn more about each other and their shared purpose is a very powerful tool to effect and implement the principles of C3. We recommend that the Employment and Training sector continue to develop, on an annual basis, opportunities to bring together front line staff, enhance linkages and connectivity which ultimately will improve client outcomes through enhanced service coordination.

## Expanding the C3 Platform

We know based on our key informant interviews, that staff is pressed for time and that it is challenging to distill what is relevant or important. There is possibly too much information to sift and filter through. Emails distributing information are not necessarily being read or absorbed. The Employment and Training community acknowledges it can do a better job at targeting messages appropriately through different communication platforms.

The Workforce Information Network or WIN Hamilton, through a refresh enabled by this project, is now the Electronic C3. It has transformed into the Employment and Training communications hub - the go-to place for news, resources, events, professional development and leading edge practices. WIN Hamilton’s interactiveness and “social media” look and feel is making it as easy as possible for all service providers to work together in a client-centred manner, enable better communication between service providers and strengthen the service delivery network.

### **Recommendation #3:**

#### **Actively Market WIN Hamilton as the Go-To Communications Hub**

WIN Hamilton’s refresh is only as good as the audience it serves. The goal is to have WIN Hamilton be the Electronic C3 Communications Hub, and this will only be possible through targeted and ongoing marketing within the Employment and Training community to encourage broader usage and users and demonstrate the value WIN Hamilton brings as a connect, communicate, collaborate tool. There should be an ongoing strategy to push information and people to WIN Hamilton, ensure the site does not duplicate what already exists elsewhere and present information in an organized “virtual hub” manner.

# The Networks and Network Succession Planning

We know that there is redundancy in networks when there is no change. Mandates, focus, priorities and membership should be continuously reviewed for impact and for evidence that addresses whether the network is making a difference in the community.

One of the findings from this project is that people relationships and process relationships that have been developed are based on trust, honesty, openness and by extension, time and commitment on the part of the individuals involved. Strategic human resource practices tell us that succession planning and talent management are key building blocks for organizational sustainability. But, what is the natural evolution and succession planning within these Working Groups? Is it necessary to have strategic and targeted turnover to leverage new creativity and evolution?

## **Recommendation #4: Create Succession Planning and Evolutionary Strategies for the Employment and Training Network**

Networks create mutually beneficial relationships through which all network members can accomplish specific goals. It is therefore then important to maintain connection strategies beyond personal relationships as individuals transition into other roles or retire; in other words create succession planning and evolutionary strategies at the network level as well as at the organizational level.

The Working Groups are a conduit for network succession planning. The Working Groups also are a resource and tool for analysing and evaluating the Employment and Training network, setting clear and concise goals and collectively identifying opportunities, but only if they are brought together to think strategically, have a common purpose, common understanding and common goals<sup>3</sup>.

## **Recommendation #5: Conduct Annual Needs Assessments within the Working Groups**

For continuous improvement for connectivity and linkages, the Employment and Training system could leverage the Working Groups already in existence more strategically including conducting a needs assessment annually to determine (a) what organizations/service providers are in the community; (b) who is or is not at the Working Group table(s); (c) fill the gaps to ensure the broadest representation possible and identify means for continuous improvement.

The Terms of Reference for the different Hamilton Employment and Training sector Working Groups note that information and resource sharing, collaborating within the community to improve client and agency outcomes and increased services integration are key to successful client outcomes. Terms of Reference do not suggest a sector that is not aligned in a common direction towards a common goal.

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on and a full listing of the Working Groups, please see Appendix 2.

However, the Working Groups could benefit in using a model similar to HIPC where annual work plans are driven from the ground up and are integrated between and across the various groups in terms of governance, actions, priorities, avoiding duplication and monitoring and evaluating progress, results and success.

**Recommendation #6:  
Integrate Planning and Priority Setting Between the Working Groups**

Working Groups could focus on vertical and horizontal communications and leveraging WIN Hamilton to connect with front line staff.

Chairs of these Working Groups and committees should meet quarterly to share information and planning, brainstorm on guiding the communication process, provide continuous improvement suggestions to WIN Hamilton and set out the path for more detailed planning for continued connectivity and integration in the sector. This would enable the Skills Development Flagship to develop an overarching community workplan without infringing on the autonomy of the Working Groups and Employment and Training organizations within the community.

## Ongoing Evaluation

This project has demonstrated that C3 is alive and well in Hamilton at this specific point in time, and there are recommendations to help the community maintain and sustain C3. However without ongoing evaluation to monitor the health of the C3 community and Employment and Training system, it becomes difficult to measure whether C3 has become an institutionalized practice and therefore a model for other communities.

**Recommendation #7:  
Institute Annual Monitoring and Evaluation of the Continuity and Continuous Improvement of C3 within the Community**

Institute an evaluation process using a variety of ways and means to monitor, measure and evaluate the continuity and continuous improvement steps/initiatives of C3 within the community. Examples have been included below.

### **I. Create Targeted Questioning as Indicators of C3 Continuity and Continuous Improvement**

Six key questions should be asked on an annual basis focusing on:

- awareness and effectiveness of WIN Hamilton;
- awareness and effectiveness of the Working Groups; and
- awareness and effectiveness of connecting, communicating, collaborating between/within the Employment and Training community.

These questions could be distributed as surveys through WIN Hamilton, the Skills Development Flagship and the Working Groups.

Key indicator questions could include:

1. WIN Hamilton connects services and connects people. How is the new landing page working for you? Is it your C3 (Connect, Communicate, Collaborate) Communications Hub/Go-To site for information on the Employment and Training Community in Hamilton?
2. What are other ways we can use WIN Hamilton to play a role in enhancing our information-sharing and the way we connect, communicate and collaborate in the community?
3. How do the Working Groups serve to enhance the community's needs? What is working and what needs to change?
4. The Working Groups are coordinating and collaborating on mutual priorities and undertaking joint planning activities across the Employment and Training system. Are you seeing evidence of greater connectivity, sharing of resources and information, and opportunities for service coordination for your clients? Please elaborate.
5. How do you share information (communicate), connect and collaborate with other community-based service providers about client needs? Are there ways in which we can improve our partnerships and service coordination to improve client outcomes?
6. Connect, communicate, collaborate (C3) sets out to strengthen linkages across the Employment and Training system in Hamilton. From your perspective, how do you see this community/sector and its effectiveness in working together? What is the next C3 evolution for the Employment and Training community?

## **II. Monitor Web Analytics at Regular Intervals**

Use WIN Hamilton analytics to determine usage of the C3 page (monitor traffic patterns) as well as enable targeted broadcasts to drive users to key messages and information on the site.

## **III. Leverage the Working Groups using the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council Model**

Use the Working Groups to contribute to an ongoing C3 evaluation and continuous improvement process through analysing indicators that answer the question: *are we making/do we continue to make a difference in the community?*

## **IV. Obtain Client Feedback**

Continuous improvement also needs to connect to the clients the Employment and Training community serves. In discussions with clients, or when feedback is being requested from clients regarding services, clients also should be asked what improvements could be made so that services remain grounded in a person-centred approach.

## **Examining C3 Outside Hamilton**

C3 is alive and well in Hamilton, but that does not address the question of how Hamilton's model becomes a more broadly recognized model. Partnerships and opportunities do not end at Hamilton's borders and it is important to understand the broader geographic connection and how the community is influenced by other things that are happening in the province. In reaching out beyond Hamilton's borders, the Employment and Training community can extend C3 to a broader audience and network, collaborating on common issues and sharing common practices. Through reaching out, Hamilton will learn and exchange ideas and begin the path towards having the C3 model recognized more broadly which is a small step towards answering the question: *how do we make Hamilton's model become the globally-recognized model/best practice.*

**Recommendation #8:  
Expand the Community Mapping beyond the borders of Hamilton**

The next iteration of the community mapping exercise should be expanded to investigate and understand how well the Employment and Training community is connected outside the geographic boundaries of Hamilton.



## C3 Transferability to Other Communities

One of the key questions from the findings is what lessons and recommendations can this project make to other Employment and Training communities in Ontario?

There are a number of key lessons from this project which can be translated into recommendations for other communities to explore and determine transferability and/or applicability.

At the outset we should note that we recognize every community is at a different stage of evolution. The lessons and key learnings from Hamilton may be at various stages of development in other communities and therefore not all of these recommendations may be applicable in any one given community. Our recommendations are presented in what we believe is a logical order of evolution.

1. Connect, communicate, collaborate will only work if there is an environment of trust. We have heard that people relationships and process relationships have to be developed on a foundation of trust, honesty and openness. In order for this to occur, the community in its broadest lens needs to actively explore ways and opportunities to come together (virtually or in-person) to discuss common goals and create shared agendas and objectives. Participants should reflect all employment service delivery agencies (regardless of Ministry/funding source), educators and representatives from all levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal, Aboriginal Council, etc). This model, as used in Hamilton through the Skills Development Flagship, enables and encourages members to have freedom from an authoritative structure which then allows for a great exchange of information and enables collaborative thinking that is cutting-edge. Partners and funders see this collaboration in practice within the community and are more apt to support organizations because of tangible evidence of collaboration.
2. True power lies in informal networks because they have the credibility, and you cannot force networks to happen or to be sustained. In Hamilton the Working Groups are good examples of both informal and formal networks. At the informal level, individuals self-select to belong to or associate with a Working Group for connection and communication and information. At the formal level, having a common purpose manifested through deliberate planning and priority setting that is connected through all Working Groups enables collaboration and service coordination which ultimately benefits the client. If your community does not have Working Groups that bring together organizations with same/similar mandates and client groups, then it becomes difficult to have an integrated client-centred approach that accesses all available resources ensuring the most effective service coordination across the sector. If you are considering creating Employment and Training Working Groups, we recommend that you ensure they are inter-connected and that their mandates or Terms of Reference have common goals and objectives.
3. We also have learned that not only within the Employment and Training community but the broader social services community, there is a need for integrated planning tables to ensure cross-pollination and identify issues from a cross-cutting perspective so that plans of action can be developed on behalf of the community as a whole. We believe this is one of the contributing factors to approaching issues holistically (e.g. “what’s in it for us”?) rather than through an individual organizational lens (e.g. “what’s in it for me”?).
4. C3 only works if there is ongoing monitoring and evaluation. It is a good practice to regularly “check-in” with the community to determine whether organizations, priorities, services, programs and client outcomes are aligned to a common purpose.
5. Hamilton has the benefit of being in a defined geographic area which makes it easier to communicate mandates, roll-out new programs and coordinate service delivery. But the Community Mapping exercise did illustrate the need to make sure that (a) all service providers within the community feel connected to the centre of

the starburst; and (b) it is necessary to have dedicated connection plans to those organizations or points of service that fall on the edges or boundaries. It is important to understand the urban/rural divide or a geographic divide where a community or territory spans hundreds of miles and distance becomes a barrier for effective C3 (for example in Northern Ontario). An urban/rural divide or a large geographic territory can present competing points of view and competing stakeholder interests. However, if all organizations within a community or sector are aligned to a common purpose, common understanding and common goals then it becomes easier to break down those natural barriers and step into a C3 mindset. Working Groups, accessed virtually, can help with building trust, integrating planning and service coordination and demonstrating that a more comprehensive as opposed to isolated approach benefits clients, staff, the organization and the broader community. We highly recommend all communities conduct a Community Mapping exercise to see the linkages and identify and address gaps.

6. It is important to understand limitations. Connecting, communicating, collaborating and creating a networked approach cannot be forced. According to research conducted by Flowork<sup>4</sup> and presented at the C3 Professional Development session on March 4, 2015, seventy per cent (70%) of individuals are not comfortable connecting with others outside the first degree, and this presents limitations for network building and by extension a C3 approach. Individuals, like organizations, require common goals to feel comfortable networking and see the value that collaboration brings. To mitigate these limitations, communities should create opportunities to bring together front line staff to raise their awareness of the breadth and depth of their sector/community and strengthen linkages, connectivity and confidence.

# Appendices



# Appendix 1: Survey Instruments

## Survey Instrument #1: Key Informant Interviews

October 2014

1. The name of this project is Connect, Communicate Collaborate: Strengthening the Service Delivery Network in Hamilton.
  - When you hear this, what jumps out at you? What do you visualize?
2. What works well (or not) in Hamilton?
  - What are the best practices?
  - What are the tweaks we need to make to our system?
3. Broadly speaking, one of the objectives of this project is creating awareness that there is a system out there.
  - How do you see us accomplishing this?
4. How do you see the Employment and Training services community and its effectiveness in working together?
5. How do the working groups serve to enhance the community's needs?
  - What's working here and what needs to change?
6. What is the evolution of the Employment & Training community?
  - What are the next steps?
7. What resources can we bring to the Employment & Training community; what partnership opportunities are we not exploring and what are the limitations for this community?
8. How can we leverage WIN Hamilton in this project?
  - How do you see WIN Hamilton playing a role in Connecting, Communicating and Collaborating?
9. We are conducting jurisdictional research for this project including reviewing the Community Mapping exercise, lessons learned from OneClient, materials from Cannexus and any other countries that may have integrated employment and training services. Do you have any suggestions for areas/ groups we should be analysing or consulting as part of our jurisdictional review?

### **Questions specifically for Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council:**

1. What is it about this Partnership Council that works? Why does CIC refer others to Hamilton as a best practice?
2. How do you get things moving forward within the framework of the Council?
3. Elaborate on the evaluation process you are currently working on. We have to set out an evaluation framework for ongoing evaluation (post-project as part of the sustainability model).

# Survey Instrument #2: Hamilton Employment & Training Service Providers

27 October 2014

## Key Message:

This survey is sponsored and supported by **Workforce Planning Hamilton** in support of our SDNDF Funded Project **Connect, Communicate, Collaborate: Strengthening the Service Delivery Network in Hamilton**. The goal of this project is to review the service delivery network structure in Hamilton and identify a model that improves connectivity and strengthens linkages across the Employment & Training system including those agencies that are EO funded and those that are funded through other Ministries.

## Survey Questions:

### 1. Employment and Training Working Groups

Is your organization a member of one of Hamilton's employment and training working groups (such as Skills Development Flagship, Youth Employment Network, EARN, The Hammer JD Network, LBS Front Line Staff/Literacy Community Planning Committee, ODSP Employment Service Providers Group, EO Employment Service Providers Network, HIPC)?

One of the objectives of this project is creating awareness that there is an employment and training system out there. How do you see us accomplishing this?

How do the working groups serve to enhance the community's needs? What's working here and what needs to change?

Is there overlap or duplication in any of the existing working groups in your opinion?

How does your organization receive information from the working groups?

### 2. Communication and Sharing Information

How do you share information with other community-based service providers about client needs?

If you have a working relationship with one contact person at an agency, does this give you enough information to make an appropriate referral?

How do you learn about new employment and training programs available for your clients within Hamilton's E&T community?

Do you use any of the following information sharing sites/services:

- 211
- InformHamilton.ca
- Winhamilton.ca

What works and what does not work about these sites/services?

### 3. Enhancing Client Services

How can we work together to strengthen our commitment to the client so that collectively our programs and

services put the client first using a client-centred holistic approach?

Are there connectivity or partnership opportunities within the employment and training sector that we should be exploring that ultimately will benefit the client?

What is the evolution for the employment and training community? What are the next steps?

#### **4. Professional Development Needs**

Connect, Communicate, Collaborate is what we are trying to foster within the employment and training sector. If we were to design a 1-day professional development workshop/session for front line staff, what should we be focusing on to facilitate Connect, Communicate, Collaborate from a professional development perspective?

# Appendix 2: Connect Communicate Collaborate Literature, Jurisdiction and Best Practice Review

## Introduction

The goal of *Connect, Communicate, Collaborate: Strengthening the Service Delivery Network in Hamilton* is to review the service delivery network structure in Hamilton and identify a model that improves connectivity and strengthens linkages across the Employment and Training system including those agencies that are Employment Ontario (EO) funded and those that are funded through other Ministries.

One of the initial and key elements of this project is to conduct a literature review of best practices in other jurisdictions as well as key informant interviews to determine whether the Hamilton Employment and Training community is aligned and operating with an integrated approach to service delivery.

## Background and Context

In 2005 the Skills Development Flagship was first established and since that time it has been growing, evolving, maturing and transforming to meet the needs of the Employment and Training service sector within Hamilton.

One such example is the *One Client Standards Review*, a service delivery standards evaluation process developed by the Employment Sector Council London Middlesex, which was introduced by the Flagship in 2010. Five employment and training organizations participated in a series of performance and operational evaluations which made recommendations on tools, best practices and ways to effectively measure outcomes for exceeding Employment Ontario and/or other government funded program objectives in terms of consistency and continuous improvement. Findings from this Standards Review, which occurred at the same time as the Employment Ontario Transformation (an initiative designed to create accessible, customer-centred, integrated employment service delivery for Ontarians), indicated that the participating organizations were at differing levels of service maturity (different levels of systems and processes; tools and resources; policies and guidelines) as well as differing levels of defining and delivering client-centred service. The Skills Development Flagship through reviewing key learnings and critical reflection from the *One Client Standards Review* recognized the value in a more integrated Employment and Training community focused on delivering services through a cross-cutting, community-collaborating client-first/client-centred approach and this is the model Hamilton uses and continues to refine/redefine today.

Workforce Planning Hamilton applied for and was successful in receiving funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Service Delivery Network Development Fund for a project that will “*develop a model that strengthens linkages across the employment and training service delivery network in Hamilton by engaging key stakeholders at various levels (from managers to front line) and across multiple ministries to improve opportunities for sharing information; strengthen relationships and improve service coordination as well as exploring a process for improving efficiencies and effectiveness across the system*”.

This project is being advised by the Skills Development Flagship.

# Literature Review

The literature review set out to (a) identify best practices for networks in other jurisdictions or sectors and (b) analyse existing documentation within the Employment and Training community in Hamilton.

To that end, we have reviewed publications about networks, collaborations and collective impact in order to extrapolate methods, trends, practices and frameworks to inform analysis of and application/extension to the Employment and Training community in Hamilton. We also have reviewed published reports, existing Terms of Reference, and other supporting documentation developed for or by the Skills Development Flagship and its ancillary working groups and/or key affiliations including Workforce Planning Hamilton and the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council.

We will present our literature review findings based on (a) and (b) above:

For our jurisdictional research/literature review on best practices for networks in other jurisdictions or sectors, we have used the following publications to inform our findings:

- *A Manager's Guide to Choosing and Using Collaborative Networks*, H. Brinton Milward and Keith Provan, University of Arizona/IBM Centre for The Business of Government (Washington, D.C.), Networks and Partnerships Series, 2006
- *Collective Impact*, John Kania and Mark Kramer, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011
- *Innovation and Progress: The Role of Networks, Consensus Statement of the Fourth Networks Leadership Summit (NLS IV)*, The Networks Leadership Summit Series, Banff Canada, January 14, 2009
- *Inter-Organizational Networks: A Review of the Literature to Inform Practice*, University of Calgary et al/ IBM Centre for The Business of Government (Washington D.C.), Collaborating Across Boundaries Series, 2014
- *Leveraging Networks: A Guide for Public Managers Working across Organizations*, Robert Agranoff, Indiana University/IBM Centre for The Business of Government (Washington, D.C.), New Ways To Manage Series, March 2003

There are several documents or publications worth noting:

## 1. The Networks Leadership Summit Series

The Network Leadership Summit is a series of invitational conversations on networks designed to explore and broaden understanding of networks and how networks can be successfully used to navigate change and take advantage of opportunities presented by a changing environment. The Network Leadership Summit referenced here occurred in Banff, Canada in 2009.

The **Consensus Statement of the Fourth Networks Leadership Summit** in part states that:

*"...Canada is viewed as a world leader in using networks of organizations to integrate services, create and transfer knowledge, and build community capacity.*

*Networks have been established in the public and non-profit sectors to create collective solutions to complex problems through cross-boundary action, whether those boundaries are jurisdictional, organizational, programmatic, geographic, professional or sectoral. Those looking to maximize results on complex social issues will find investment in networks to be particularly useful in a comprehensive strategy, as networks have been demonstrated to facilitate progress by:*

- *Leveraging scarce resources and achieving economies*
- *Strengthening integration, collaboration and coordination across and within programs, funders, organizations and sectors, while maintaining the benefits of diversity*
- *Leveraging change by increasing shared learning, creativity and innovation among individuals and organizations*
- *Addressing needs in a more comprehensive way and improving responsiveness by enhancing the flow of information; and*
- *Empowering communities to respond to change and problems with greater capacity and resilience*

*Networks are collaborative structures that rely on trust and reciprocity for exchange and accountability, rather than price systems (markets) or chain of command (hierarchies). Networks create new patterns of relationships that go beyond members' primary affiliations and are thus effective mechanisms to integrate otherwise isolated capacities for a common purpose. They establish the infrastructure of processes, information, people and relationships needed to create synergies across multiple organizations and across wide geographic areas...."<sup>5</sup>*

## **2. Leveraging Networks: A Guide for Public Managers Working Across Organizations**

The premise of this publication, sponsored by the IBM Endowment for the Business of Government, is that non profit and government organizations, in order to execute on an increasingly complex and inter-connected mandate, must be able to deliver through networks, partnerships and the use of collaboration. Findings from this publication include:

- Representatives of public agencies have become partners with other organizations because many stakeholders bring needed knowledge and information to the table and demonstrate that they have the commitment to produce actions and results, not just consensus building relationships
- The demand for knowledge will increase and knowledge capital will continue to need some collective that will bring it together (portable knowledge application allows for more flexibility in program and service implementation) in order to deal with social problems
- What makes networks successful is the existence of decision making/decision process/brokering decisions and results, planning, implementation, organizing, support, broad participation, communication, continuously promoting the network and network power through evidence of results, developing trust (and action builds trust), and enlisting technical expertise (rather than following an authority structure)

## **3. Collective Impact**

This publication, sponsored by Stanford Social Innovation Review, presents the argument that collective impact is the next extension of collaboration. Collective impact is the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors on a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. The publication furthermore argues that:

- Large scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from isolated intervention of individual organizations. Funders and nonprofits alike overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change; and that
- No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it

For our local research and literature review, we have used the following publications to inform our findings:

- **Hamilton Skills Development Flagship Committee** supporting documents:
  - Skills Development Flagship Committee Terms of Reference (2011)
  - Skills Development Flagship Minutes capturing discussions on the Workforce Planning Hamilton Community Mapping report (January 30, 2014)
- **Working Group(s) Terms of Reference**
  - A number of Working Groups have been established to support the Skills Development Flagship and bring together front line staff to discuss programming and service delivery. A number of these Working Groups have specific Terms of Reference which were reviewed for this project including:
    - *Employment Assistance Resource Network (EARN) Terms of Reference (2014)*
    - *Literacy Community Planning Committee Terms of Reference (2014) and LBS Frontline Staff Meetings Terms of Reference (2013)*
    - *The Hammer JD Network Group Vision, Mission and Values Statement (2013)*
    - *Youth Employment Network (YEN) Terms of Reference (2013-2014)*
  - As well, consultations were held with additional Working Groups who do not have published Terms of Reference including the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Service Providers
- **Workforce Planning Hamilton** supporting documents:
  - *Community Mapping: Hamilton's Employment and Training Network (January 2014)*
  - *A Guide to Collaboratives and Planning Initiatives Related to Human Services in the City of Hamilton (September 2009)*
- **Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)** supporting documents:
  - Work Plan Progress (September 2014)
  - *Employment Labour Market Working Group Terms of Reference (September 2013)*
  - Structure 2014 - 2015
  - Annual Work Plan and Working Groups Process Map

There are several documents or publications worth noting, including a best practice at the local level:

#### 1. **Workforce Planning Hamilton Community Mapping: Hamilton's Employment and Training Network**

The goal of this mapping exercise was to identify how relationships between agencies at all levels (front line, management, executive) worked and/or could be strengthened as well as ensure that clients are receiving the services they need. This community mapping is a visual indicator of evidence that the employment and training network is well connected and integrated in Hamilton. For example, between the 119 respondents, there were 1,397 unique connections which demonstrate a healthy and connected network. More strategically, it also enables a dialogue with and about those organizations or entities on the fringes and what their role and place is or should be within the network particularly from a client-centred/holistic service lens (such as mental health and addictions, social services and those agencies not directly related to employment but whose mandate is to help address barriers to employment).

## **2. Working Group(s) Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference for the different Hamilton Employment and Training sector Working Groups note that information and resource sharing, collaborating within the community to improve client and agency outcomes and increased services integration are key to successful client outcomes. Terms of Reference do not suggest a sector that is not aligned in a common direction towards a common goal.

### **Local Best Practice: Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)**

A number of documents produced by HIPC were reviewed and the Project Manager participated in the key informant interviews. HIPC has a well-defined and forward-moving planning framework which includes workplan integration on governance, priorities, evaluation and duplication between all of the working groups. CIC refers other Immigration Partnership Councils across Canada to the HIPC model as a best practice. Working groups develop their own work plans within the strategic framework of HIPC which creates and supports a sense of ownership, awareness and incentive for implementation. The evaluation model for both activities and initiatives is linked back to the strategic directions and priorities and all evaluations ask the same question: *“Are we making a difference in the community?”*

# Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with senior leaders of various employment and training organizations, chairs of the Skills Development Flagship and its working groups, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council as well as municipal and provincial representatives (City of Hamilton and Ontario Ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities and Citizenship and Immigration).

Feedback from key informant interviews indicates that Hamilton is a community that communicates, connects and collaborates well with participants noting that:

- People relationships and process relationships that have been developed are based on trust, honesty, openness.... *“This is how we move things forward and is the underlying reason for why things work”*;
- Skills Development Flagship provides the leadership and the leaders want to work together.
  - *“We have honest discussions on what works well/does not work well. We make decisions (actionable decisions) on behalf of clients and on behalf of Hamilton as a whole”*
  - *“Senior leaders can come together and talk in a safe environment, can make decisions, address issues and actually do something”*;
- Hamilton is contained within a specific and well-defined geographic boundary and the municipality encourages and supports employment and training collaboration;
- There are different planning tables that are cross-pollinating (HIPC, SDF, HUBS, etc) which allows the sector to identify issues from a cross-cutting perspective and develop plans of action on behalf of Hamilton as a whole;
- It is easy to communicate mandates quickly in Hamilton. It is easy to roll out new programs, services and information as Hamilton is not splintered due to its geography boundaries, leadership within the sector, support between various levels of government, and having employment and training organizations that are well established and which do not operate with a competitive mindset;
- There is no *“What’s in It for Me”* attitude. Hamilton takes a different approach and says *“it’s OUR issue”* and this is how we will deal with it. There is tangible evidence of collaboration;
- Hamilton continues to be used as an example of collaboration or collective impact that works (CIC, ODSP and MCI); and
- The level of leadership and level of involvement is high right now and this allows for immediate action. Organizations are able to focus their mandates to achieve a larger vision (e.g. Poverty Round Table)

## Findings and Recommendations

There is evidence that the Employment and Training community in Hamilton is aligned and operating with an integrated approach to service delivery. For example:

- There is evidence that Hamilton has institutionalized many components present in the Consensus Statement noted above and one of the best visualizations of this is the mapping star from the Community Mapping exercise conducted this past January.
- The Skills Development Flagship reviews itself annually from an inclusiveness/continuous improvement approach to community collaboration and integration.
- The Skills Development Flagship model enables and encourages members to have freedom from an authoritative structure which then allows for a great exchange of information and enables collaborative thinking that is cutting-edge. Partners and funders see this collaboration in practice within the community.
- Employment and Training Working Groups are inter-connected and their mandates and Terms of Reference have common goals and objectives.

Even though Hamilton has well established connections and linkages across the Employment and Training community, the model can be strengthened and improved. For example:

- The Employment and Training Committees and Working Groups from the Skills Development Flagship and down could benefit in using a model similar to HIPC where annual work plans are driven from the ground up and are integrated between and across the various groups in terms of governance, actions, priorities, avoiding duplication and monitoring and evaluating progress/results/success. In addition, one key informant suggested that the Chairs of the Working Groups should meet quarterly to share information and planning.
- While senior leaders may feel and believe there are strong linkages and connectivity through their access to the Skills Development Flagship, this may not necessarily be present at the front line level which then impacts on service delivery to the client. There is an opportunity, through this project, to strengthen (a) management and the service delivery; (b) front line and the service delivery; (c) clients and the service delivery through more effective knowledge transfer between all three levels.
- We know too, based on our key informant interviews, that staff is pressed for time and that there is possibly too much information to sift and filter through. Staff have access to more information than ever and the challenge is distilling what is relevant or important. Emails distributing information are not necessarily being read or absorbed and there should be a concerted effort to understand who needs to know what, at what level, and then targeting the message appropriately through various communication platforms.

One additional outcome of this project is to present and make recommendations regarding transferability and broader applicability to other areas within the province. Several key informant interviewees have indicated that Hamilton has a number of best practices which should be shared and that the *“the real question should be...how do we make Hamilton’s model become the globally recognized model?”* Over the coming months, this project will set out to answer this question and identify ways and means to accomplish this bold objective.



