

Employers' Council Update

December 2011

Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to provide you with this update on the progress of the Non-profit Sector Labour Market Partnership (LMP). With support from the Province of BC, the LMP is addressing human resource issues in the non-profit sector. Learn more about the LMP on our [website](#).

The Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council Gets Underway!

The Non-profit Sector Employers' Council held their first meeting on July 7. The role of the Employers' Council is to build the capacity of all non-profit employers to work together to achieve significant growth and development of the sector's workforce. The ultimate goal is for the Employers' Council to become BC's non-profit labour market sectoral council within five years. The Employers' Council members are:

Judy Rogers, Chair

Shabna Ali, BC Yukon Society of Transition Houses

Joan Andersen, MOSAIC

Jeannette Anderson, BC Association of Substance Abuse Program Addiction Specialist & Allied Professionals of BC

Rebecca Ataya, Federation of Community Social Services of BC (FCSS)

Faith Bodnar, BC Association for Community Living

Anne Campbell, Community Social Service Employers' Association

Cindy Dopson, Vancouver Non-Profit Human Resources Roundtable

Marianne Drew-Pennington, BC Association of Family Resource Programs

Liz Dutton, BC Care Providers' Association

Nancy Gale, BC Association of Child Development Interventionists

Barbara Grantham, BC Government Non-Profit Initiative

Manpreet Grewal, Abbotsford Community Services Society

Karin Hunt, Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association

Emily Mliczko, Early Childhood Educators of BC

Lynn Moran, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA)

Tracy Porteous, Ending Violence Association of BC

Karen Stone, BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA)

Norma Strachan, Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT)

Ryan Watmough, Golden and Community Resource Society

Faye Wightman, Vancouver Foundation

Amy Woodruffe, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Leila Hazemi, BC Government LMP Program Manager

The Employers' Council has identified three top priorities for their work over the next two years:

1. Recruitment and Retention
2. Human Resources Management Standards
3. Executive leadership Development

Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council Chair Appointed

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Judy Rogers to the position of Chair of the Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council. Judy served as City Manager for Vancouver for ten years. In 2005 and 2006, Judy was listed by Vancouver Magazine as among the 50 most powerful people in the city, and in 2006 she was honoured as one of the most influential women by Business in Vancouver. Judy was named for five consecutive years as one of the 100 most influential women in Canada. Judy is also a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Excellence in Public Service in BC. Her work at the City has been honoured with two United Nations awards — one for creating Neighbourhood Integrated Services teams, and another for the establishment of the Vancouver Agreement. Judy is currently Chair of the Board of Directors for LIFT Philanthropic Partners, BC Assessment Authority and UBC Alumni Association.

Request for Qualifications Issued: External Evaluation Consultant

The Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council is currently planning numerous projects to improve the human resource and workforce capacity of the non-profit sector over the next two years. The Employers' Council is interested in engaging an external evaluation consultant for each funded project to ensure ongoing strategic alignment and impact of projects. RFQ deadline is March 9, 2012. Please visit [LMP updates](#) for more information.

Current Projects

The Employers' Council currently has three projects underway. The complete results are not expected for release until spring 2012 but some early learnings are beginning to emerge.

Learn more about:

1. [Shared HR Services Pilots](#)
2. [Executive Career Development Program Design](#)

Four Requests for Proposal to be issued in January/February 2012

The Council is in the process of identifying projects in these priority areas and will begin issuing Requests for proposal in January/February 2012.

1. Develop and implement HR Management Practice Roundtables for the non-profit sector
2. Develop a Workforce Portal including HR resources and tools for the non-profit sector
3. Develop and implement a community partnership model to develop HR practices for Aboriginal employees working in non-Aboriginal social service organizations
4. Develop and implement a community partnership model to develop HR practice in diverse populations such as immigrants and persons with disabilities.

Did you know?

The HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector web site has a host of free HR management tools and resources.

The [HR Toolkit](#) is a comprehensive online resource designed to help managers, employees and board members better understand, address and manage issues relating to HR in nonprofits.

Roll up your sleeve and take the [HR Checkup](#). The Checkup Pulse Survey takes less than 10 minutes and is an easy way for executive directors, HR professionals and managers to share information on current HR practices and policies.

*We aim to send these updates via email on a regular basis. **At any time you may ask to be removed from the distribution list. Simply reply to this message and ask to be removed.***

Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council

Early Learning – Shared HR Services Pilots

Based on a Feasibility Study conducted by the United Way of Northern BC in 2010, the Employers' Council is currently testing two models for shared Human Resources (HR) services in northern and rural communities.

The first pilot, being conducted by the **United Way of Northern BC**, employs an HR professional to provide advice and guidance to Executive Directors (ED) and Agency Managers in 11 small non-profit organizations serving a large geographic area operating out of Prince George. The second pilot, being conducted by the **South Okanagan Similkameen Volunteer Centre**, is testing a train-the-trainer model in very small communities that do not have a critical mass of agencies in a single location to warrant a shared HR professional.

United Way of Northern BC: Shared HR Professional

The pilot began with a diagnostic assessment of HR practices in each participating agency to facilitate learning about the value of HR metrics and to identify the highest priority issues for each organization. The HR professional meets on an on-going basis with each agency to provide support and advice on the priority areas identified in the assessment; all agencies involved meet quarterly to work on HR issues common to all agencies.

The diagnostic assessments have uncovered some interesting trends regarding the status of HR management practices in nonprofit organizations. The following were observed:

- Almost universally, salaries and benefits are below the private sector rates. This appears to be especially true amongst professionals. It appears that this may soon significantly impede the capacity to recruit and retain a skilled workforce.
- Due to the small staff size, succession planning is felt to be out of the agencies' reach.
- Only a few of the Boards of Directors review the EDs' performance on a regular basis.
- Boards may not fully comprehend the workload or stresses facing their EDs.
- Consistency in interpreting and administering Policies may be an area of concern. And interpretation and execution of the policies may lack consistency. Keeping a file of precedential decisions and/or the rationale for them will assist in alleviating these perceptions.
- With few exceptions, the EDs are alone shouldering the responsibility for management and decision-making and perhaps missing an opportunity to develop staff through mentoring.

Final results will be released in spring 2012, but early learning is emerging from the pilot that may be helpful for organizations considering a shared HR services model:

- Getting the most out of a model like this takes time to build trusting relationships between EDs and the HR professional providing advice and guidance. The pilot has a 10-month timeline which is proving tight for the participants to develop relationships as well as to benefit from sharing, mentoring, coaching and educating.
- The EDs participating are committed to the project, but they feel stretched thin and concerned about the time the project is taking. In spite of these misgivings, they are concluding that the investment will be worth it if they can bring their HR knowledge and practice up to speed and have a more pro-active approach to HR issues.
- The project team believes it may be helpful to articulate the professional role of an HR specialist working with non-profits and the limitations of that role. For example, the role of the HR Specialist is to support effective organizational HR practices whereas the role of the Board is to set HR policy.
- Upon reflection, the project team has realized it would have been beneficial to more directly involve a Board Member for each organization in the pilot and to have had the opportunity to present the project to the Boards as a whole (note: we did in that the assessment involved a Director interview). The pilot reveals that Boards of Directors are not always modeling HR best practices. For example, some organizations are not completing regular ED Performance Reviews and appear to lack an understanding of the risks inherent in poor HR practices.
- Often, small non-profit agencies are unable to access (hire or find) needed and/or mandated expertise and Board members may fill up the gap. This can cloud issues of leadership, responsibility and lines of reporting for staff and the Board members.
- For the most part, agencies are reactive overall in their HR practices and there are challenges in trying to shift to a proactive approach.

South Okanagan Similkameen Volunteer Centre: Train-the-Trainer

The second pilot provides training support to ten small organizations operating in small distributed locations in the South Okanagan. The pilot also began with an assessment of high priority HR management areas and develops training materials and tools to help EDs of very small organizations to improve HR management practices.

Many of the agencies participating in this pilot identified areas for shared learning:

- Establishing Performance standards and evaluation: Most participants undertake annual job reviews but few have established performance standards.
- While the majority of participants have policies and procedures for employees in place, these are informal and undocumented.
- Eighty per cent of agencies identified needing support to promote a positive image within their community. They need policies and practices to help prevent abuse or unfair destructive comments by disgruntled clients or members, board members, employees or volunteers. Agencies have expressed a need for policies, codes and/or legal agreements signed by all staff, volunteers and board members around conflict of interest, ethics and confidentiality. Reactive protection may also be needed when clients, who may be under emotional duress, react in an unsafe manner towards staff.

Final results will be released in spring 2012, but early learning is emerging from the pilot that may be helpful for organizations considering a shared services model:

- Additional funds would allow agencies to hire needed staff.
- With additional funds, EDs would be able to focus all their time on running the organization including establishing and documenting policies and procedures, rather than splitting their focus between management and frontline work of running programs.
- Most staff are permanent part-time who work more hours than they are paid for. Additional funds would enable organizations to pay staff for the hours they work.
- With more money agencies could pay more competitive wages. Currently wages are low, especially for the level of expertise required of the work. The employees are predominantly women and the lack of pay equity in non-profits is certainly an issue.

Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council

Early Learning – Executive Career Development Program Design

The **Federation of Community Social Services of BC** (FCSSBC) has been contracted to design an executive career development program for community social service employees.

While a number of non-profit management and leadership skills training courses and programs are offered around the province there are some barriers to engagement. The sum of these offerings does not as yet present a reliable roadmap of short and long term educational steps, clear channels to formal and informal coaching, mentorship and peer networking, and networks in which individuals can signal leadership aspirations and find opportunities for advancement.

The objective of the Executive Career Development Program Design is to leverage existing high-quality development resources to design an executive career development program that provides a roadmap for current and potential non-profit sector management and leaders. The project used an evidence-informed, co-creative and generative curriculum design approach that brought together emergent and legacy leaders. Participants thus both utilized the learning and tools identified and available, and also contributed to the design process through their participation.

The **Federation of Community Social Services of BC** (FCSSBC) is working on four fronts to build both knowledge and resources in support of leadership development in the sector:

1. *Document what is currently available in BC:* A publicly accessible, searchable database of leadership development programs and courses that are suitable for people working within the BC social service sector will be available in early 2012. Included will be courses and programs offered in the publicly funded colleges, institutes and universities.
2. *Identify what is called for in leadership practice into the future:* An online consultation process has engaged over a hundred leading thinkers and strategists from around the world with the simple question, "What leadership knowledge, skills and qualities will be needed by the leaders of the future?" This information will help the sector determine what else might be needed to prepare current and future leaders for success.
3. *Identify and develop self-assessment tools:* The tools assess leadership strengths and talents and areas for further leadership development. The results may be used to inform the development of an individual learning plan.
4. *Propose key elements to be incorporated into leadership development offerings for the sector, and test different delivery approaches:* The findings from the thought-leaders' survey and contemporary research have been shared with a group of BC advisors and educational designers, who have worked together to build a framework and design for leadership development in the BC sector. The prototype design is being tested and evaluated with a group of emergent and legacy leaders from FCSSBC agencies. Through this 'action research' approach, more is being learned about what emergent leaders are looking for and how best to deliver the learning material. Online and face-to-face approaches are being applied.

All of the findings from the project will be available in early 2012. However, the following early learnings may be of interest to organizations and departments that are interested in leadership development:

- There is a high level of interest in leadership development amongst mid-career professionals in the non-profit sector. Leaders described efforts to access other leadership development opportunities and found what is available to either be not relevant or too costly to attend.
- Some prospective participants have noted that their supervisors/directors have not been able to support their participation due to terms of their contracts for service delivery. Many funding contracts stipulate minimum direct service hours and do not allow for staff/professional development time. As a result, agencies are unable to cover wages or expenses for those staff who are delivering direct services under some service contracts.
- The current fiscal context for non-profits within the social services sector is tenuous and funding for professional development is limited or non-existent, therefore employees are often unable to participate in the available programs. As such, we are collectively challenged to achieve two things: promote the value of and essential need for leadership/executive development to funders and boards; and develop non-traditional delivery and engagement strategies that make leadership learning more accessible across the province.
- Thought leaders and contemporary researchers suggest that leadership capacity needs to be developed throughout organizations, and not just in those with senior positions. The most effective leaders will be self aware and able to discern what leadership is called for in diverse situations, and adapt accordingly. They will be skilled in coaching (to support their staff and build on strengths); collaborative practice and community engagement; and adaptive organizational/systems learning. They will be knowledgeable about social innovation and entrepreneurship and will be culturally attuned and competent.
- The design project has brought together emergent and legacy leaders in one program. This is greatly appreciated by the participants and their agencies as well as the thought leaders consulted. This opportunity for co-learning and mentoring is one of the most promising aspects of an executive leadership development program
- The design project action research component extends for nine months. A longer time frame, and mixed delivery model is appreciated by participants because it allows for sustained learning over time, builds a 'community of practice' amongst the participants so that they can support each other's learning and development. The mixed online/face-to-face model is also more affordable and feasible within the context of limited time and resources.