



Advancing Work-Based Learning in Toronto: Report of the Youth Employment Action Plan Advisory Committee

Economic Development Committee
November 28, 2016



Work-Based Learning Works: An Action Plan for Youth Employment in Toronto

- **Adopted by City Council in May 2015**
 - Led by Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), Economic Development and Culture (EDC) and Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA)
 - Update report provided in November 2015
- **Report highlighted practical models and practices**
 - Includes innovative ways to connect more unemployed youth with jobs, career pathways and work-based learning opportunities
- **Recommendations focused on three action areas :**
 1. Leveraging the City's role as employer
 2. Capitalizing on existing connections with employer/sector partners
 3. Increasing support to young entrepreneurs

Welcome Guests

Advisory Committee Co-Chairs:

- Mike Yorke, President, Local 27, Carpenters Union
- Peter Leon, Former City Councillor and Retired Businessman

Invited Speakers:

- Julia Blackburn, Executive Director, NPower Canada
- Nation Cheong, Director, Youth Initiatives, United Way

Youth Employment Action Plan Advisory Committee

Mandate

- To provide strategic advice to support the successful implementation of recommendations in the City of Toronto's Youth Employment Action Plan: *Work-Based Learning Works*

Objectives

- Strengthen and expand relevant stakeholder partnerships
- Identify creative ways to advance work-based opportunities for youth
- Work with employers to support their workforce needs in ways that benefit youth

Membership

- Two chairs and 14 members representing a cross-section of leaders including employers, sectors, educational institutions, community organizations and youth

Focus of Meetings

- Total of six in-person meetings throughout 2015-2016 planned around the following sectors and areas of interest: Hospitality, Information Technology, Construction and Trades and the City as an Employer/Anchor Institution

Learning from Successful Partnerships & Models

- **NPower Canada's IT Training Program:** The City is the largest referral source for the program and has hosted a total of 22 paid placements. In 2016, TESS funded the program's fourth cohort, providing access to 10 youth on Ontario Works.
- **netWORKS:** The City is currently partnering with United Way, to implement this innovative youth mentoring initiative. To date, the City has oriented 116 youth to the program and 74 youth have subsequently connected with mentors from various sectors.



What the Committee Did

- ✓ Strengthened existing partnerships and helped build new connections with key players across the city, including:
 - Educational institutions such as George Brown College and Ryerson University
 - Construction and trades organizations such as Crosslinx Transit Solutions
 - Sector-based organizations such as the Hospitality Workers Training Centre

- ✓ Identified new opportunities to engage youth, such as:
 - Creating mentorship opportunities at the City of Toronto
 - Developing a Construction Sector Pathway in Toronto

- ✓ Mobilized the City and its partners to launch new and scale up existing models that work, such as:
 - Expanding the City's Job Incentive Program
 - Launching the City's first Work-Based Learning Pilot Program

- ✓ Shared best practices and lessons learned, for example:
 - Short, targeted, paid and demand-focused models lead to good outcomes
 - Depth of employer partnerships is critical to bringing initiatives to scale

Going Forward - Actions Informed by the Advisory Committee

We will:

- ❑ Develop partnerships to advance career pathways for youth
 - Scale up/support expansion of NPower Canada's IT and Advice Centre programs

- ❑ Increase work-based learning opportunities in the City
 - Come on board as an employer mentor through United Way's netWORKS initiative
 - Explore possibility of hosting large-scale "Take Your Kids to Work Day"
 - Expand City of Toronto WBL pilot in 2017
 - Increase the number of host City Divisions participating in NPower's programs

- ❑ Increase opportunities for youth through City infrastructure projects
 - Launch construction sector pathway to increase access to training, placements and jobs created by the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project

- ❑ Bring together leaders in a call to action
 - Co-host a Work-Based Learning Symposium/Summit in 2017
 - Identify and support innovative work-based learning projects

Final Thoughts and Thank You

- Youth unemployment is a complex problem that cannot be solved by any one order of government or stakeholder
- Sector approaches are critical in ensuring that employers' workforce needs are met and that youth get access to job-relevant skills and meaningful work opportunities
- Work-based learning is a critical component of initiatives to address youth unemployment and to support transitions from school to work and establish pathways into careers
- The City will continue to engage others and work collaboratively to ensure actions are aligned and best support youth