

EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS
~ **CONNECTING YOUTH LIVING IN POVERTY**
TO LOCAL EMERGING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ~

EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS:

The Centre for Connected Communities-Tides Canada Initiatives* proposes to prototype **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS, a new skills training centre and approach to employment based in East Scarborough**. The **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** approach will ensure that local youth living in poverty will be, and will be seen to be, prime candidates for local jobs as and when they are created.

WHY A SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE IN EAST SCARBOROUGH:

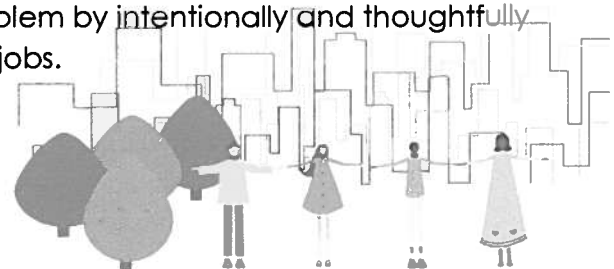
In East Scarborough, approximately 30% of people live in poverty; that is, almost a third survive on incomes below the Low Income Cut Off. Approximately 16% of youth are unemployed. Adults experience a higher than average unemployment rate of more than 8%.

For those who are employed, there are few jobs in this area that are stable and/or pay sustaining wages, a factor that results from a decline in full time local manufacturing jobs and increase in part time retail jobs. To access better paying jobs, as well as the services people seek, public transit connections to the downtown are poor – transit is infrequent and expensive.

And yet, there is significant local investment currently being made in East Scarborough's public institutions and infrastructure projects that will generate employment. Anchor institution investments, such as at the University of Toronto at Scarborough Campus (UTSC) and in the Light Rail Transit (LRT), have the capacity to make a real difference to the economic wellbeing of East Scarborough residents through provision of full-time employment with sustaining pay. The demand for skilled labour being expressed by local manufacturing sector also presents an opportunity for good local employment.

Without improvements to the pathways that lead from poverty to opportunity, however, these jobs might just as well "be on the moon" rather than right next door. This proposal addresses how **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** can overcome the complexity of this problem by intentionally and thoughtfully connecting youth (18-29 years old) to services and ultimately jobs.

*Centre for Connected Communities is a project on Tides Canada's shared platform. Tides Canada is a national charitable organization which holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the work of the Centre for Connected Communities



PROGRAM VERSUS SYSTEMS APPROACH:

The problems associated with moving youth out of poverty and into jobs are complex.

At one end of the scale is the challenge of ensuring that training is actually demand-led. Demand-led training ensures that youth are doing the *right* training for real jobs that *will exist* when their training is complete, avoiding the waste of precious time and resources.

At the other end is the complex array of barriers to succeeding in training. These can include social/health challenges like child/elder care, housing, and mental health, and, or less tangible, but very real barriers, like or negative past experiences with classroom settings or stigma associated with criminal records. Underpinning these challenges is an overwhelming deficit in essential skills like problem solving, literacy proficiency, and teamwork, as well as life skills that are universally applicable to any employment.

Moreover, traditional approaches to training emphasize the *individual's* need to navigate a system. Regrettably, the key players and processes that make up that system are disconnected from one another; for example, employers are disconnected from employment service organizations and wrap-around supports that can help local people prepare for and succeed in jobs (Figure 1).

EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS designed to simultaneously support job seekers while connecting the dots between the players and multiple associated processes so that when an individual *is* ready, they are able to move forwards along a clearly defined pathway towards job success (Figure 2). **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** is a place-based systems approach to solving the problem of poverty and unemployment in East Scarborough. A systems approach rather than a programmatic approach is what is required to make real and sustaining change in the lives of youth.

The risk of taking a programmatic approach rather than a systems approach is that there will continue to be a disconnect between the realities of youth living in poverty, the various complexities of their lives, the supports they need and the employers who need to find appropriately skilled labour in a timely way. Until we have eliminated the unnecessary barriers and filled in the gaps in the system, job seekers will *always* be dependent on others navigating the system for them. This approach of **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS**, to connect the players already in the system, represents the new and emerging trend in effective workforce place-based training centre for the 21st century.

VISION FOR EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS:

The vision for **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** is that the following will all work seamlessly together:

- All **curriculum** is aligned with accurate and timely labour market forecasting so that training leads to real jobs;
- **Training and trainers** vary according to the specific types of jobs being created in Scarborough;
- **Candidates** (job seekers) **are found** by going deeply into the community and connecting with youth who may or may not typically access employment services;
- **Coordinated pre- and post-employment supports:** The Centre for Connected Communities will demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach by coordinating multiple service organizations to provide customized pre- and post-employment supports that are based on the individual needs of the participants; and, very importantly; and
- Establish a **pool of candidates**, ready to enter into unionized and other workplace settings, in essence creating a one-stop recruitment source associated with a network of employment organizations.

ESTABLISHING THE PROTOTYPE (2019):

To prove the concept, over one year, a prototype will be established to connect local youth in need of employment with local jobs. In Year 1 of **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS**, the Centre for Connected Communities will coordinate a seamless pathway for training of Scarborough youth, along with wrap-around support services. The prototype would be carried out through partnership of the Centre for Connected Communities, as outlined in Figure 3.

A. Intake – Centre for Connected Communities and its Employment Partners. This phase of work would involve:

- Identifying up to 20 youth to participate in the prototype
- Resumé and interview training for youth
- Interviews of youth by prospective employers
- Matching of youth to jobs

B. Essential Employment Skills Training – Centre for Connected Communities Partner. Research over the past 2.5 years has revealed that essential skills and job readiness together comprise the *number one* requirement for the majority of jobs being created in East Scarborough. As such, all youth will partake in common training with a Centre for Connected Communities partner, such as Centennial College, Pathways to Possibilities (PTP) or ACCES Employment, that will include:

- Literacy and numeracy proficiency
- Communication skills

- Employability skills training (such as attitude, accountability, time management, working with others and presentation)
- Basic health and safety training

C. **Job-Specific Training.** Trainers will be recruited to teach specific skills to prepare job seekers for the local employment forecast. Training providers may be local colleges offering relevant apprenticeships or unions offering pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training in specific skilled trades and/or other organizations with evidence-based programming for specific skills. For prototyping, two employment pathways are proposed:

1. *Manufacturing Stream.* During this phase of the program, the youth will take courses at Centennial College that will teach them the essential skills required for the job needs identified in the manufacturing sector.
2. *Construction Stream.* A cohort of youth will attend the LiUNA Local 506 Construction Craft Worker Apprentice or other appropriate entry-level training programs.

D. **Co-op/Field Placement followed by Employment.** Youth will undergo a field placement at their prospective employers to receive on-site training and transition to full-time employment.

E. **Wrap around supports - Centre for Connected Communities.** Throughout the entire program, and for 8-12 months after the start of employment, the Centre for Connected Communities will coordinate existing services to provide wrap-around supports such as mental health, housing, child/elder care etc.

BUDGET (2019):

To prototype **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS**, the Centre for Connected Communities is seeking \$300K from the City of Toronto in 2019. Budget breakdown is outlined below.

Intake and Wrap-Around Services - Items A&E- \$140K (\$7K per student based on 20 students)

➤ **Breakdown**

\$100K – Outreach, training facilitation, coordination of wrap-around supports

\$40K – Research on Scarborough labour forecasts, outreach to potential employers and partners, and establishment of a governance structure to prepare grants and proposals for Year 2 and beyond (1 FTE from July to December 2019 (e.g. ½ year))

Skills Training – Items B&C - \$100K (\$5K per student based on 20 students)

➤ **Breakdown**

\$2K for 4 weeks essential employability skills

\$3K for 8 weeks technical training

Facilities and General Office Set-up - \$60K

➤ Breakdown

- \$ 45K rent at 4218 Lawrence Avenue East (funding is being sought for a larger, permanent centre beyond the one-year prototype)
- \$ 15K office equipment and office setup

Field-Placements – Funded by Employer

➤ Breakdown

- Youth will participate in on-site training funded by employer prior to starting full-time employment.

BEYOND 2019:

The long-term goal is for **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** to scale up after 12 months to 50 or more candidates, while working toward establishing a new dedicated training facility that accommodates all of the relevant services in an accessible facility.

During the first year of prototyping, new program partners and funding will be sought to complement those already participating. Research will be conducted to forecast the jobs opening up in Scarborough, in addition to those we are aware of where major public infrastructure improvements or expansions are taking place or through growing needs of the manufacturing sector. Identifying the requisite skills for future employment is essential to ensuring **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** is continually meeting the needs of both our local employers and job seekers simultaneously.

In particular, the potential for partnerships with the University of Toronto Scarborough, the City of Toronto and the Scarborough Hospital (now the Scarborough Health Network) will be examined since these anchor organizations have all communicated that there will be significant infrastructure investments in the near future.

CONCLUSION:

Again, the problems associated with moving youth out of poverty and into jobs are complex but **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** addresses this challenge head on by proposing an elegant solution: **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** connects and engages *existing* community partners, and removes barriers to accessing jobs, by aligning existing programs, services, supports and training with jobs that are actually being created in the east Scarborough community.

What make the **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** approach unique compared to existing employment 'programs' are these factors:

1. *Jobs are identified first.* Training programs are designed to meet the actual hiring needs of employers and ensure the placement of youth in the workplace.
2. *Partnerships and training pathways continually evolve.* While in the Year 1 prototype we are demonstrating only two pathways to employment, in future years, we will call upon different partners as needed to ensure the right training is provided for the employer.
3. *Provision of wrap-around services.* Once employed, support will continue to be offered to youth, which evidence shows gives them the best probability of success.

Overall, the greatest strength of **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** will be the networked approach to providing jobs for youth and youth for jobs through collaboration. In short, **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS** builds on what already exists by better leveraging partnerships and connectivity among employers, residents and the local economy for vastly improved outcomes for all parties.

Through **EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS**, when good local jobs are created, local youth will benefit.

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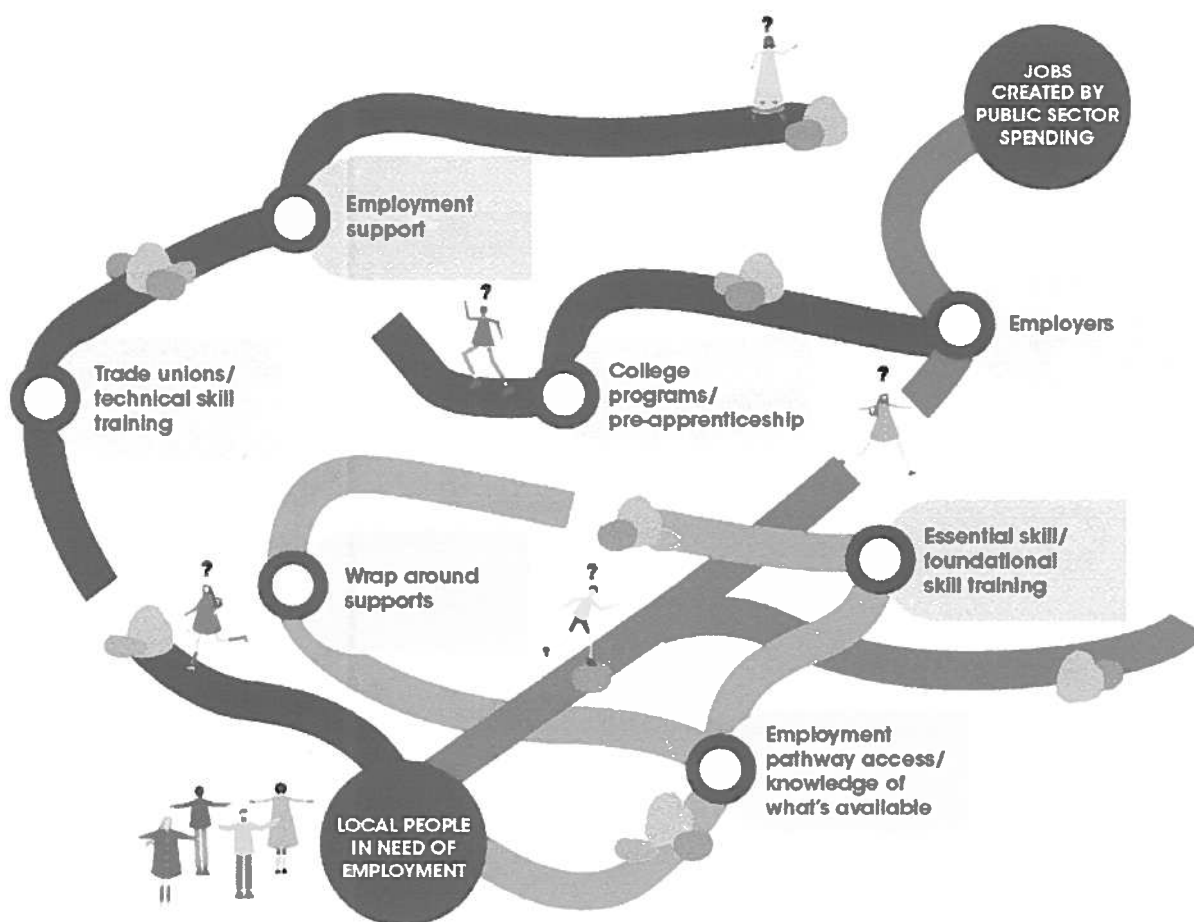


Figure 1. Conventional approaches to training leave key players and processes disconnected from one another; resulting in sub-optimal outcomes. For example, employers are disconnected from employment service organizations and wrap-around supports, and labour demand is separated from supply.

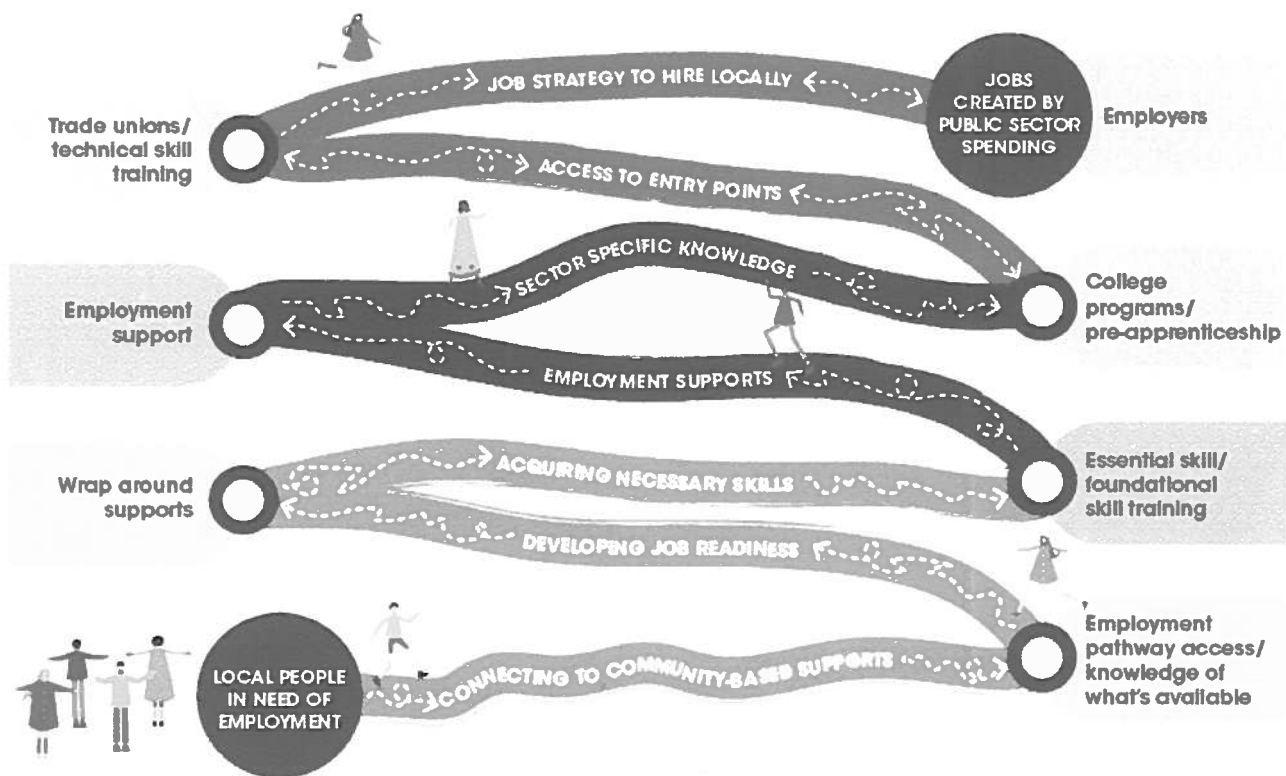


Figure 2. By connecting the players between jobs and local youth in need of employment, and smoothing the resulting pathway EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS offers an effective new place-based workforce development strategy.

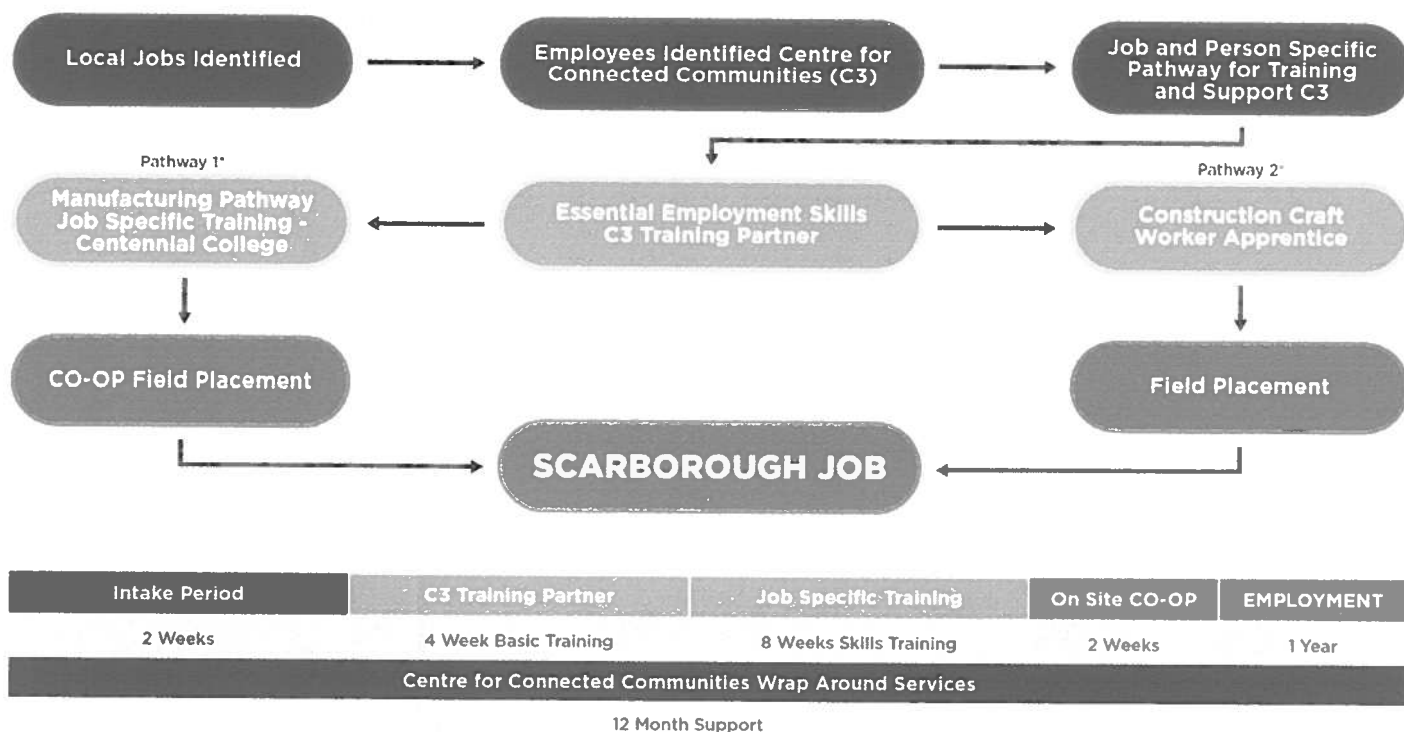


Figure 3. Proposed pathways to employment for EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS Year 1 Prototype. Beyond 2019, pathways to employment will be expanded to ensure the right training is provided to link Scarborough youth with Scarborough jobs.

