



MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL

CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIERE

Resource Guide to Government Programming



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The Resource Guide to Government Programming is a collaborative effort between the Mining Industry Human Resource (MiHR) Council and the Mining Association of Canada (MAC).



Introduction

The Canadian mining industry is both highly cyclical and located in remote areas. These characteristics can make industry susceptible to circumstances in which the demand and supply for appropriately skilled personnel becomes mismatched due to geographical or socioeconomic factors.

The *Resource Guide to Government Programming* serves as an overview of government programming and tools that are available to the mining industry. The *Resource Guide* sets out the parameters for making informed decisions about which government programs and tools can assist in alleviating pressures from difficulties faced by companies during an economic downturn.

The *Resource Guide* is useful for companies that can answer “yes” to the following questions:

- Will your short and/or mid-term activities be negatively affected by low commodity prices and/or an economic downturn?
- Are you currently faced with the challenges of laying-off workers?

The *Resource Guide to Government Programming* is intended for mining human resources (HR) managers. It will also be useful to corporate managers and staff of junior mining and exploration companies, especially if a company does not have a department dedicated to HR planning. The *Resource Guide* will assist managers to become familiar with government programs that support workers affected by lower levels of economic activity and lay-offs. The *Resource Guide* provides information about the pros and cons of making use of certain government programs. An assessment process is outlined to help readers identify how each program can contribute to addressing the HR needs of your company during a downturn.

The *Resource Guide to Government Programming* provides an overview of the process of identifying the type of government programs that exist to help employers and employees that face the prospect of lay-offs and temporary shut downs or closures. Avoiding lay-offs should be the focus of an HR strategy at the onset of an economic downturn. Lay-offs, when warranted,

should be accompanied by assistance to workers in taking advantage of support mechanisms for labour market adjustment and retraining. The *Resource Guide* covers both federal and provincial/territorial government programs but the main focus is on the federal employment insurance (EI) programs that are in place to help workers adjust to labour market challenges.

Once it has been established where to look, the *Resource Guide* focuses your attention on the programs and tools that can assist your company. Further information about the programs and tools mentioned in this guide can be accessed by contacting MiHR. It should be noted that many government programs require periodic reporting from employers and employees. For example, the Government of Canada's work-sharing program requires that employers keep track of and report on the number of hours employees are claiming EI benefits for. There are also lead times that need to be taken into account when applying to government programs. Becoming familiar with government programs will assist your company in making better informed decisions about the various options available for alleviating the HR challenges posed by an economic downturn.

List of Programs and Tools

The *Resource Guide* provides information on the following:

- Work-Sharing Program
- Career Focus Program
- Summer Work Experience Program
- Skills Link Program
- Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program
- Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW)
- Programs Run by Provinces/Territories under the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA)
- Programs Run by Provinces/Territories under the Labour Market Agreements (LMA)

In addition to the above, a number of other tools and programs specific to the mining sector are highlighted:

- Virtual Mine Mentor Program
- Joint Workplace Adjustment Committee Tools
- List of Universities and Colleges

Pros and Cons

The value of keeping the current and future workforce engaged in mining is difficult to measure in terms of direct costs to a company. The easiest way of assessing the impact of lay-offs and decreased investments in talent development strategies is by looking at the opportunity costs. Opportunity costs of not retaining skilled workers during a downturn are found embedded in the loss of corporate memory, the difficulty in transferring knowledge from older workers to new employees, the mixed message that youth and students receive about industries willingness to invest in their talent and future development.

Experience has taught industry that a failure to invest in talent during an economic downturn translates into difficulties in accessing the required skills when the economy eventually rebounds and highly qualified workers are in short supply. There are a number of programs and tools available to assist employers and employees during times of decreased economic activity. However, it should be noted that these programs come with costs of their own in terms of the time required to administering the programs. These costs can be summarized as follows:

- Lead times for various application processes
- On-going reporting requirements of government programs
- Loss of some autonomy and strategic control over HR function

The tools included in this guide do not include any costs related to time involved in generating reports. These resources are quick and easy to use. On the other hand, accessing government programs involves a greater investment of time but government programs are also more likely to directly contribute to reducing the overall opportunity costs associated with turnover and loss of talent during an economic downturn.

Breakdown of Assessment Process

The following assessment process should be viewed as a starting point for identifying the tools and programs that will be most useful under given circumstances. The assessments are based on a planning horizon that takes into account a timeframe of 6 months – 1 year or 1 year – 2 years. Options provided under these timeframes should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. A combination of tools and programs can be utilized. The choice of tools and programs will depend on the capacity and time constraints of the staff in your human resources department.

Assessment 1: Programs and tools appropriate for a 6 month to 1 year downturn

- Work-Sharing Program
- Summer Work Experience Program
- Skills Link Program
- Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW)
- Programs Run by Provinces/Territories under the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA)
- Virtual Mine Mentor Program
- List of Universities and Colleges

Assessment 2: Programs and tools appropriate for 1 year to 2 year downturn

- Career Focus Program
- Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program
- Programs Run by Provinces/Territories under the Labour Market Agreements (LMA)
- Joint Workplace Adjustment Committee Tools



Description of Programs and Tools

Virtual Mine Mentor Program

The *Virtual Mine Mentor Program*, operated by the Mining Industry Human Resources Council, provides students from post-secondary mining programs with positive, virtual mentoring relationships with exceptional workers from the industry. Students will engage in a virtual relationship with a positive role model to have ready access to advice and guidance that will support them in developing employment opportunities in the Canadian mining sector.

For further information on the *Virtual Mine Mentor Program* contact MiHR or consult the program website:

<http://www.acareerinmining.ca/minementor/>

Joint Workplace Adjustment Committee (JWAC) Tools

The JWAC tools provide simple, flexible, cost-effective answers to many of the toughest workplace adjustment questions. More important, these tools increase the likelihood of people finding new careers.

To learn more about the JWAC tools, please contact MiHR or download the informative brochure:

<http://www.mihr.ca/admin/documents/JWAC%20brochure-web.pdf>

List of Universities and Colleges

MiHR maintains a database of universities and colleges that provide mining related programs of study. This tool can be accessed through the *Explore for More* website. The database is searchable by program of study or by province/territory. This tool is useful to companies when approaching universities and colleges.

For further information please consult the following website:

<http://www.acareerinmining.ca/training.html#byprovince>

Work-Sharing Program

Service Canada's Work-Sharing program is designed to help employers and employees by providing income support over a period of 52 weeks. The program is targeted towards Employment Insurance (EI) eligible workers who are willing to work a reduced work-week to avoid layoffs when the level of business output is negatively affected by factors beyond the control of the employer. Work-Sharing agreements allow employers to stabilize their work force, retain skilled employees and avoid the costly process of recruiting and training new employees when business returns to normal levels. Employees benefit by maintaining their job and receiving EI income benefits for the days without work. In order to be eligible, employees must have accumulated 420-910 hours of insurable employment.

In order to apply companies must complete an application and provide a recovery plan. The recovery plan outlines the measures a company will take to return to pre-application levels of business activity within the 52 week period. If an application is approved, the employer must file a record of employment (ROE) for each of the participating employees and will be required to submit bi-weekly utilization reports to Service Canada. Amendments to a Work-Sharing agreement are required when any of the participating employees are laid off, transferred or return to full-time employment or when new employees are hired during the duration of the agreement. For further information on the Work-Sharing program please contact MiHR or your closest Service Canada centre

http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/gateways/where_you_live/menu.shtml

Career Focus Program

Under the Youth Employment Strategy, Career Focus provides funding for employers to help post-secondary graduates obtain career-related work opportunities in Canada to support their development of advanced skills, to help them make career-related links to the job market, and to assist them in becoming leaders in their field. Career Focus offers youth a range of work experiences, learning and skill-building activities to help them choose careers

and to encourage them to pursue advanced studies. choose careers and to encourage them to pursue advanced studies.

Nationally and regionally career focus programs are available through HRSDC. There are also a number of other federal government departments that administer career focus programs including:

- Natural Resources Canada
- National Research Council of Canada
- Industry Canada
- Environment Canada

For further information on the career focus program contact Service Canada or look on the following website:

<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/career.shtml>

Summer Work Experience Program

Canada Summer Jobs provides wage subsidies to help Canadian employers - not-for-profit organizations, public sector and smaller private sector employers (50 or fewer employees) - create career-related summer jobs for students between the ages of 15 to 30 at the start of employment. The Canada Summer Jobs initiative is specifically designed to assist students experiencing difficulty finding summer jobs as a result of where they live and/or other barriers.

For further information on the summer work experience program contact Service Canada or look on the following website:

<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/youth/summerwork.shtml>

Skills Link Program

The Skills Link program provides funding for organizations to help youth facing barriers to employment develop the broad range of skills, knowledge, and work experience they need to participate and succeed in the job market. Skills Link was developed to assist youth in various circumstances, including those who are

single parents, are of Aboriginal descent, have disabilities, are recent immigrants, live in rural and remote areas, or have not completed high school.

Through Skills Link, youth benefit from a client-centred approach and ongoing support, which helps them complete activities successfully and, ultimately, find and keep a job. In turn, employers may receive financial assistance to cover costs associated with providing employment services and individualized, integrated support to youth.

For further information on the skills link program contact Service Canada or look on the following website:

<http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/youth/skillslink.shtml>

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) is a nationally managed program geared to providing Aboriginal people with the skills they need to participate in economic opportunities such as northern mining development projects across Canada. ASEP's overall objective is sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in major economic industries, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.

For further information on the ASEP program contact Service Canada or look on the following website:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/aboriginal_training/index.shtml

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW)

This initiative helps unemployed older workers in communities experiencing ongoing high unemployment and/or with a high reliance on a single industry affected by downsizing. Projects will be designed to improve the employability of participants from 55 to 64 years of age, and may assist them through activities such as prior learning assessment, skills upgrading, and experience in new fields of work.

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers is cost-shared between the Government of Canada and provinces and territories. Participating provinces and territories will be responsible for targeting programming and the funding of projects. To find out whether the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers is available in a particular province or territory, and to obtain a contact for further information consult the following website: <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/hrsd/eppd/ptdptiow.shtml>

Labour Market Development Agreements

Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs) are bilateral federal-provincial/territorial agreements.

The Government of Canada has concluded LMDAs with all provinces and territories. The programs developed through the LMDAs are eligible under the Employment Insurance (EI) program. Generally, programs developed through the LMDA funding channel are for individuals who have workplace essential skills, significant attraction to the labour market and are in need of some sort of gap training in order to become employable in a new occupation or sector. A number of programs are available that are relevant to employers and employees experiencing the impact of an economic downturn.

There are two LMDA models. Under co-managed LMDAs, HRSDC delivers Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSMs) but shares responsibility for the design, management and evaluation of these programs with provinces and territories. The following are all co-managed agreements:

- Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador
http://www.intrd.gov.nl.ca/intrd/labourmarket_dev.htm
- Canada-Yukon
<http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/labour/lmda.html>

Under Transfer LMDAs, provinces and territories assumed the responsibility for the design, delivery and management of their own programs that are similar to EBSMs. The following are all transfer agreements:

- Canada-New Brunswick
- Canada-Quebec
- Canada-Manitoba
- Canada-Saskatchewan
- Canada-Alberta
- Canada-Northwest Territories
- Canada-Nunavut
- Canada-Ontario
- Canada-British Columbia
- Canada-Nova Scotia

For further information please consult the following website:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/partnerships/labour_market_development/index.shtml

Labour Market Agreements

Labour Market Agreements are bilateral federal-provincial/territorial agreements that focus on supporting skills development for unemployed individuals who are not eligible for training assistance under the Employment Insurance (EI) program, including groups who are under-represented in the labour market, such as:

- Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, persons with disabilities, youth, women, older workers and other under-represented groups within the labour market; and
- Individuals entering and re-entering into the workforce.

Under these arrangements, the resources will also help to provide training for employed individuals who are low-skilled, in particular, those who do not have a high school diploma or a credential recognized in a particular province, or have low levels of literacy and essential skills. A number of programs are available that are relevant to employers and employees experiencing the impact of an economic downturn. Program priorities are re-evaluated on an annual basis but generally include the following:

- Technical skills training – Increase access to timely, relevant and effective training opportunities to assist eligible clients with specific training that supports labour market participation
- Labour market integration of immigrants – Create opportunities for internationally trained individuals to quickly meet employer and regulatory requirements in professions, trades and other occupations with focused bridge training projects
- Foundation skills training and supports – Provide access to literacy and essential skills training, ensure availability of foundation skills training tailored to specific trades and occupations, and create new opportunities for foundation skills training in the workplace
- Labour market supports for persons with disabilities – Remove barriers to participation in training and employment services



For further information about the programs that are available through the *Labour Market Agreements*, please contact the Service Canada center closest to you. You can also contact the government department responsible for education and training in your province/territory. These departments are as follows:

- Alberta – Ministry of Employment and Immigration: <http://employment.alberta.ca/cps/rde/xchg/hre/hs.xsl/563.html>
- British Columbia – Ministry of Technology, Trade and Economic Development: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/tted/>
- Manitoba – Ministry of Competitiveness, Training and Trade: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ctt/>
- New Brunswick – Ministry of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour: <http://www.gnb.ca/0105/index-e.asp>
- Newfoundland & Labrador – Ministry of Human Resources, Labour and Employment: <http://www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/>
- Northwest Territories – Ministry of Education, Culture and Employment: <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>
- Nova Scotia – Ministry of Labour and Workforce Development: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/>
- Nunavut – Department of Education: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/index.htm>
- Ontario – Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/>
- Prince Edward Island – Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Learning: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index.php3>
- Quebec - Ministre d'État de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité: <http://www.emploi.quebec.net/anglais/index.htm>
- Saskatchewan – Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour: <http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/>
- Yukon – Ministry of Education: <http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/>



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