



Media Release

Chatham-Kent to Government: Get Employer-Driven Training Programs Right

CHATHAM-KENT, September 4, 2014: The Government of Ontario must ensure that upcoming changes to the province's training and employment programs reflect the needs of employers, according to a new report released by the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Essential Skills Ontario.

The call comes as the government works to reinvent the way that many training and employment programs are delivered in the province by giving employers a more direct role in the type of training their workers receive. The bulk of these programs will be supported through the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, which will cover two-thirds of the cost of training a current or prospective worker, with government chipping in up to \$10,000.

"By encouraging businesses to invest more in their employees, these new employer-driven programs could be an important step toward improving Ontario's economic competitiveness," says Allan O'Dette, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. "But they'll only succeed if they are designed with the needs of employers in mind."

The report, *Moving Forward Together*, makes the case that programs should be easy to access for employers. "We recognize that measures are required to maintain the integrity of these programs and minimize fraud," adds O'Dette. "But government needs to be conscious that onerous red tape and paperwork will only deter employers from participating in the program."

It also calls on government to foster collaboration among companies in the design of training programs to minimize the risk of poaching and to lower the costs associated with training. This will require government to develop a close relationship with sector associations that are already providing workforce training.

In addition, the report drives home the importance of increasing engagement between government and the business community as most employers are unaware of current training and employment provisions available to them.

"Ontario's employers are interested and willing to participate in revamped training programs," says O'Dette. "They recognize that they cannot rely solely on government and external- training

sources to meet their workforce needs, and that now is the time to get more engaged in building the skills of their employees.”

“Chatham-Kent employers are looking to provide their staff opportunity for enhanced training to meet their growing needs. Companies know that in order to succeed in the global market their employees, and the knowledge that they bring, are their largest asset. Whether providing internal employees, or in attracting new, the skill set of their workforce is a priority.” states Gail Bishop, President and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce. ‘They are willing to contribute to such investment, looking for ease of access and training sources that are manageable and within their resources.”

Moving Forward Together: An Employer Perspective on the Design of Skills Training Programs in Ontario is based on extensive consultations with employers and training providers from across the province.

Read the report: http://www.occ.ca/Publications/Moving_Forward_Together.pdf

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