

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	2.0	Workforce Development
Sub Program:	2.2	Supporting Employment-Related Training
Template:	2.2.1	Aboriginal Capacity Building Program: Apprenticeship Training
Sponsor(s):	<i>Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.</i>	

1. Objective

To assist Aboriginal people and communities in developing the qualifications needed to participate in skilled job opportunities available in Alberta's resource-based industries.

2. Description

The program was designed by Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. to employ Aboriginal persons at the mill site for a 4-year term, while providing them with training on an identified career path. Eligible candidates are selected through a screening process from Aboriginal residents of the Forest Management Area including Wabasca, Calling Lake, Janvier, Ft. McKay, Heart Lake and Ft. Chipewyan. Minimum academic requirement is a high school certificate.

AI-Pac has partnered with NAIT and Portage College (located at Lac La Biche) to deliver the training which is in three areas: (a) In-house millwright and/or pipefitting apprenticeship, (b) Electrical and Heavy Duty Technician and (c) Power engineer certification. Candidates must have an interest and aptitude in one of these areas to qualify for the program.

Once accepted, the company enters into a 4-year contract with the person to provide training and "hands on" experience. The person completes a series of training modules for their specific career path and basically "job shadows" with identified company staff. The company pays the student a salary and picks up all training-related costs.

The program began in 1999 and at the present time, there are approx. nine Aboriginal people enrolled (5 millwright apprenticeship, 2 power engineering and 2 heavy duty technician).

Beginning in July of 2005 and working with Careers Next Generation as well as the Calling Lake School, AI-Pac initiated a modified Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). The program is similar to a regular RAP program except in timing. Students are encouraged to continue school on a full-time basis and work at AI-Pac in the summer months of July and August, earning High School Credit and also time credit toward the first year of apprenticeship.

3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are set out below:

- AI-Pac does not guarantee employment at the end of the 4-year program. Rather it is

understood that the training and certification received is marketable and will be transferable to other potential employers, industry sectors and communities as opportunities arise;

- a key factor in the program is the willingness of company employees to spend the extra time required with the trainees to ensure success. Sufficient time should be spent to introduce the program to staff prior to bringing the trainees on board;
- it is important to spend time in the Aboriginal communities as part of the selection process for trainees. The community should have a role in identifying potential candidates. It is also key to have community support for the program to sustain the trainees over the 4-year training period;
- while this program requires academic qualifications at the apprenticeship entry level, the company has recently introduced a new program in partnership with Portage College to help Aboriginal people improve their educational qualifications for entry level employability and further training.
- in the case of aboriginal RAP, AI-Pac worked with the school and the Careers representative to ensure that the students were enrolled in the required courses for apprenticeship, and provided a stipend to the Calling Lake School to assist with transportation of the students to and from the mill-site. The time modification (summer months for 4 summers) was initiated because experience has shown that the risk of dropping out of school increased dramatically after students experienced an entire semester at work and away from regular classes and normal school interactions.

4. Timeframe for Results

This is a 4-year program which commenced in 1999. The first trainees will graduate in 2003. While some trainees have dropped out of the program, these have been quickly replaced and Aboriginal people are continuing to inquire about vacancies in the program.

High School RAP is a four summer commitment and a new intake is planned each year, to a maximum of 8 aboriginal RAP students on site for the two summer months.

5. Measurable Criteria

These include:

- the number of trainees successfully graduating from the program;
- the drop-out rate for trainees; and
- the ability of graduates to find employment in their chosen career path upon completion of the program.

6. Budget

The amount per trainee is \$60,000-\$80,000 per annum including salary and training costs.

7. Partners and Sponsors

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc., NAIT, Portage College, Careers Next Generation and the Calling Lake School

8. Experience with the Program

While it is too early to judge the overall success of the program, the company is generally satisfied with the progress and results to date.

9. General Applicability

This program is generally transferable to other companies and industry sectors interested in capacity building with Aboriginal communities.

10. Additional Information or Support

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