

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	2.0	Workforce Development
Sub Program:	2.3	Supporting Recruitment, Retention and Advancement
Template:	2.3.1	Aboriginal Employment Program
Sponsor(s)		<i>Syncrude Canada Ltd.</i>

1. Objective

A recruitment and retention program using targeted employment measures to achieve an Aboriginal employee population that reflects the composition of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

2. Description

Syncrude established a business goal in 1989 to increase the number of Aboriginal employees to 13% of its total workforce including direct and contractor employees at the Syncrude site. This percentage reflected the Aboriginal share of the population in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Syncrude has committed to hiring Aboriginal people into all disciplines and all levels of the Syncrude operation.

Syncrude recognized that special efforts are required to ensure that Aboriginal people obtain fair and appropriate opportunities to overcome barriers and disadvantages to employment and advancement. Special employment/training programs in partnership with appropriate stakeholders were designed in order to meet specific company needs as identified by Syncrude. The company works collaboratively with government agencies, educational institutes, other companies and community leaders to ensure training programs are effective and ultimately lead to permanent employment opportunities.

Syncrude uses the following strategies as part of its Aboriginal Employment Program to assist in meeting its employment targets:

- ***Campus Programs*** - includes hosting information sessions and recruiting on post-secondary campuses that have a large population of Aboriginal students; i.e. Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology
- ***Career Fairs*** - participates in career fairs that focus on providing opportunities to Aboriginal students;
- ***Aboriginal Employment Referral Offices*** - works closely with First Nation and Metis employment referral offices in the Wood Buffalo Region to seek referrals of local candidates. These referral offices identify potential candidates, coordinate pre-employment testing and ensure candidates have Grade 12 or GED;
- ***Community Co-Op Apprenticeship Program and High School Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)*** - both combine paid employment training with academic

achievement;

- *Grade 12 Career Pre-Program* - provides exposure for high school students to careers in the oil sands industry;
- *Aboriginal Accounting Internship Program* - designed to help alleviate a shortage of accountants in the Wood Buffalo Region;
- *ATC Apprenticeship Program* - in cooperation with other employers in the region, Syncrude has committed to hiring Aboriginal people in permanent positions as trades apprentices, heavy equipment operators and process operators;
- *Helping Hands* - intervention programs for at-risk elementary school students
- *Toward Sustainable Mining* - an initiative of the Mining Association of Canada which sets guiding principles in the area of community development

Syncrude applies the same standards for all new hires including: (a) the candidate must be a minimum of 18 years of age; (b) the minimum education requirement is Grade 12, or its equivalent, the General Education Development diploma (GED); and (c) all candidates with only Grade 12 or GED must pass a pre-employment test.

Syncrude will select the best-qualified Aboriginal people who apply for employment, regardless of Aboriginal status. When hiring Aboriginal employees, preference will be given to qualified candidates who meet the definition of "local indigenous" - i.e., Aboriginal candidates who were born in, or whose ancestors were the original inhabitants of, the Municipality of Wood Buffalo. "Aboriginal" means Aboriginal people as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982 [Section 35(2)].

Syncrude requires its contractors and suppliers to provide employment opportunities to local Aboriginal people. In awarding contracts, where all other competitive factors are equal, preference is given to Aboriginal suppliers, then to local businesses, and finally to other contractors and suppliers who maximize the use of local Aboriginal business, local business and employment of local Aboriginal people.

3. Implementation

Syncrude has a team of 4 professional staff dedicated to this function. Their role is to maintain contact with Aboriginal leaders and community members, and connect with people who can assist with local Aboriginal development. These professionals help realize opportunities, foster easy access to key Syncrude resources and quickly resolve issues.

In order to meet employment targets, Syncrude consults extensively with Aboriginal stakeholders to identify issues and prevent misunderstandings, and works in partnership to develop effective, sustainable, community-based programs. Syncrude also reports directly to stakeholders and communities, and maintains personal contact with First Nations and Métis representatives. In some communities, regularly scheduled meetings are held to keep residents updated and informed, and Syncrude will otherwise report to communities in the Wood Buffalo Region when requested. The company annually reports in a publication called "Syncrude's Aboriginal Review" which reviews progress on six commitment areas to the region's Aboriginal stakeholders. The six commitment areas include corporate leadership, employment, business development, education and training, community development and the environment.

4. Timeframe for Results

Implementation and review are ongoing processes, and actual results relative to employment targets are monitored monthly. Annual Stewardship reports are also provided to Syncrude's executive.

5. Measurable Criteria

Percent of Aboriginal employees in the total workforce (direct Syncrude employees and contractors). The target is 13%, a proportion that reflects Aboriginal representation in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo population.

6. Budget

Recruitment and retention costs to maintain this program total approximately \$540,000 a year. This includes salaries, advertising, career fairs, travel, interviews and relocation of new employees.

7. Partners and Sponsors

Syncrude Canada Ltd. is the program sponsor. Syncrude partners with a variety of community, government and educational organizations to develop and deliver the Aboriginal Employment Program.

8. Experience with the Program

Syncrude adopted employment targets in 1989 and became the first major company in Canada to report on Aboriginal relations, with a publication called "Aboriginal Review" in 1994. By 1997, 575 Aboriginal people were employed directly by Syncrude or by its contractors on-site.

Currently, Syncrude is one of Canada's largest industrial employers of Aboriginal people including contractor employees with more than 700 Aboriginal workers. Aboriginal employees now account for about 10% of Syncrude's direct workforce and about 13% of the total workforce including direct employees and contractors at the Syncrude site. This is based on the same recruitment and performance standards applied to the general workforce.

9. General Applicability

This program is part of Syncrude's integrated strategy but is generally applicable as a standalone initiative. The use of targeted employment measures may be of interest to companies looking for an aggressive strategy to increase the level of Aboriginal employment in their workforce.

10. Additional Information or Support

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Date Entered or Updated: July 12, 2005