



May 24, 2020

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MLA, TU NEDHÉ- WIİLÌDEH

Oral Question 177-19(2) Support for Trades Employment

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on March 11, 2020 regarding supports for trade's employment.

In its Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy 2017-2022, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) committed to develop a communication strategy to build awareness of the apprenticeship and industry training system, promote apprenticeship as first-choice careers for northerners, especially students and youth and raise the perception of professionalism of journeypersons and instill a pride of belonging. The Department is currently working on the development and implementation of that strategy and expects to have new communications products and approaches in place by fall 2020.

The Department also promotes apprenticeship and trades through the work of Career Development Officers (CDOs) who engage with students, jobseekers, and employers, and Career and Education Advisors (CEAs), who provide specialized education and career advice to grade 9–12 students and youth aged 18–24 across the Northwest Territories (NWT). During the pandemic, CDOs have continued to serve clients remotely by phone and email, and CEAs continue to connect with students through video and telephone conferencing.

Also committed in ECE's Apprenticeship, Trades, and Occupations Certification (ATOC) Strategy, the Department is working to develop an "Achievement in Business Competencies", or "Blue Seal" program. Complementing Red Seal certification, which is an indication of skill and competency in a trade, a Blue Seal certification is evidence that a tradesperson not only meets high industry standards, but also has the knowledge and drive to succeed in business and self-employment. Tradespeople who complete the Blue Seal are prepared to move into leadership, supervisory, entrepreneurial or other roles.

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A Blue Seal program is in place in Alberta, and given the linkages between NWT and Alberta apprenticeship training, ECE officials are working closely with their Alberta counterparts on the development and implementation of a Blue Seal program. In doing this, officials are working to ensure that the program will be recognized by employers when hiring Journeypersons set tradespersons up for success and advancement with their employers, and support them in acquiring the skills needed to support their self-employment goals.

Individuals can also be supported in pursuing self-employment through ECE's Self-Employment Program (SEP). The SEP provides support to eligible clients with the opportunity to start a small business. This includes supports for clients in assessing their business idea, their personal suitability, family issues, financial risks, and the resources available or required to be successful. When individuals indicate to a CDO that they want to start a business, ECE refers them to regional and location business development corporations to consult with a Business Expert. Business Experts work with the client to determine their suitability for self-employment, and works with the CDO in supporting the client toward self-employment. Information on the SEP is available throughout the NWT online at <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/career-and-employment>, and through ECE's Regional Service Centres.

Thank you for your questions and interest in this matter.



R.J. Simpson
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs