

ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

WOMEN MOVING TOWARDS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Final Project Report to Office of Economic Development

June 12, 2006

Period of activity covered by report: November 1, 2005 - March 31, 2006

Key Activities

Social and Economic Literacy Education and Support Provision to Individual Women

- met with and provided social and economic literacy information, support and skills development consultation sessions to 30 women on an individual basis. Staff met with each of the women at least three times and as many as 10 times over the reporting period. The total number of sessions for the period was 150. Staff explored with women their existing social and economic skill sets, assessed their social and economic literacy needs, identified opportunities for increasing skills and education levels, and provided them with information in order to increase their knowledge and skills.

Specifically staff worked with the women in the following ways:

1. Helped women identify skill deficits and available services and supports they could access
2. Provided information about services available in the community (i.e. subsidized daycare, poverty relief organizations, subsidized housing programs, education and training opportunities, personal financial management)
3. Provided referrals and helped women access to community organizations and programs such as the Antigonish Career Resource Centre and the Antigonish County Adult Learning Association
4. Assisted women with negotiating systems (i.e. Employment Support and Income Assistance-ESIA, Employment Insurance, student loan systems, educational institutions)
5. Provided advocacy and advocacy skills training through role modeling, discussion and encouragement of women's autonomy
6. Helped identify financial resources (i.e. student loans, ESIA)
7. Helped women identify, access and prepare for and educational and employment opportunities

During the reporting period, November 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, we saw women for the following issues:

Issue	November	December	January	February	March	Total
Business/ Entrepreneurship	2	2	1	2	7	14
Education/Training	8	22	12	9	19	70
Employment	7	6	10	16	22	61
Personal Financial Management	1				4	5
Total	18	30	23	27	52	150

Community Networking and Capacity Building

Over the reporting period, AWRC staff met with, provided information to and networked with agencies and institutions in the community for the purpose of increasing our common understanding of the social and economic literacy needs of low-income women. This included the following activities:

- attended a breakfast meeting in Pictou County where women from Northern Nova Scotia met with **Minister Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Privy Council**. The issues the AWRC E.D. brought forward were the need to for standards and conditions to be attached to the CST and the need to support transition to employment programs for women.
- participated in the **Antigonish/Guysborough Community Advisory Committee for the Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF)** one day workshop entitled ***Bridging the Gap***. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together groups and organizations involved in the design and/or delivery of employment programs and services to identify potential gaps in employment programs and services. Along with the need for a transition to employment program for older workers, the need for a program for single mothers was identified. The program components identified were those offered through the AWRC On the Road to Employment Program.
- participated on the **Antigonish Area Partnership (AAP) Antigonish 2020 Foresight Concept Committee**. The Antigonish 2020 Foresight initiative proposes to engage “businesses, institutions, planners, developers, public administrators and the community at large to work together towards developing a community development plan with a set of principles built on community values, and achievable options for action, and the processes to get us there.”
- presented to the **Standing Committee on the Department of Community Services Forum on Poverty**. The AWRC Executive Director emphasized that poverty is policy created, that women’s poverty is an equality issue because women, that social programs need to be a key equalizing force for women, and that the Canada Social Transfer could be a mechanism for redressing aspects of women’s poverty.
- presented information on women, poverty, and social assistance policy to a St. FXU Women’s Studies class as well as to a Gender and Health class.