

Employment Options Kit

Produced by
The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre

With funding from
The Public Health Agency of Canada

March 2007

Employment Options Kit

- an information resource for people considering and comparing their career options

What is the purpose of this kit?

The Employment Options Kit is not a substitute for career counselling. Proper career planning takes time and focused work. The Kit simply allows for some quick comparisons between different career options and it shows the investments required to prepare for various jobs and the rewards those jobs ultimately deliver.

Be sure to talk to a qualified career counselor as part of your career planning process. Please keep in mind that the Kit is about jobs, not people. Understanding the job and the labour market is only half the picture. Understanding yourself is the other half.

Who made this kit?

The Kit came out of a project at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre that began in 2005 and is called *Face to Face: Building Intersectoral Collaboration to Improve Policy Responses to Single Mothers' Education and Training Needs*. It ends in January 2008. The project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Where did this information come from?

Most of the information in the kit came from the Nova Scotia Department of Education's "Career Options" website:
www.novascotiacaereoptions.ca

We also consulted the Nova Scotia Community College website, www.nsc.ca and websites of several Nova Scotia universities.

Where to go for help

For career counselling call your Service Canada office for information about career resource centres, or contact a community college or university if you want to see their career counsellor.

For women's support, information, and advocacy, look for a women's centre in your community.

If you have a disability, or if you are Aboriginal or African-Canadian, ask your worker or counsellor if there are additional programs to support your education and career development.

For Web-based career information try:

www.novascotiacaereoptions.ca

www.careercruising.ca (by subscription, or access through a college or career centre)

www.nsc.ca Nova Scotia Community College

All universities have websites.

For information on social assistance "employment supports":

www.gov.ns.ca/coms

For information on student loans: www.canlearn.ca

For information on apprenticeships:

<http://apprenticeship.ednet.ns.ca/trades.shtml>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: My friend told me that I need certain courses or a diploma in order to get accepted into the program I want to take, and the school's website says that too. So I guess there is no point in applying.... right?

A: Schools are often flexible about these things, especially for adults (over 18 and no longer in high school). They will take into account your work and life experience and informal learning if it's relevant to their program. They want you to succeed. Don't make assumptions, or just accept what someone tells you about what you can or cannot do. Call the college or university and ask to speak to an instructor in the program you're interested in. Talk to a qualified career counsellor. Get it from the horse's mouth!

Q: How can I go to school if I can't get a student loan because my credit rating is no good?

A: Many people make the mistake of assuming that they can't get a student loan, so they rule out going to school. The only problem with this is they might be completely wrong! The only time you should conclude that you won't be able to get a student loan is when you have applied and been refused, and you've appealed the decision, with help from an advocate. If, after all that, you are still refused, it's safe to conclude that you won't be getting the loan. Then you can try to get a loan somewhere else (e.g. a credit union or bank). Ask questions! Get help!

Q: I asked someone who works for a government department if I could go to school and they said no. What do I do now?

A: Don't take "No" for an answer. Sometimes people will stand in your way and tell you that you are not allowed to have something or do something because of your circumstances. Always check this out!

Ask one or two other people who work in career resource centres, women's centres, colleges, etc. for their help and advice. Often it's worthwhile to appeal decisions that block you. Get help! Be persistent!

Q: My worker said I could take the program that I want and they'll support me to go. So I don't have to do anything else, right?

A: Wrong. You need to keep checking on things. If someone is confirming your place in the school, you should phone the school and make sure that your registration is complete. You'll need to arrange and confirm transportation and the money to pay for it, and likewise for child care, etc. Don't assume that advocates, caseworkers, and other support people are going to do everything that must be done, on time, and with no mistakes or misunderstandings. Everyone makes mistakes and forgets things sometimes. It's best to be sure.

Q: Are there other costs involved in going to school, or does this Kit show all the costs in a sort of "package"?

A: The figures given in this kit for tuition and fees are just part of the picture. You will have to pay for books, and possibly special workshops, immunizations, your graduation exercises, and all sorts of things. Also, costs rise each year due to inflation.

Q: But with all these costs, how will I be able to afford it?

A: Don't be discouraged. There are also bursaries, scholarships, flexibilities, and all kinds of supports that can help you manage those costs. Once you get going on your application and you get talking to people, you start to learn about the help that is available.

Bear in mind that the costs can change over time (usually, they increase). Always ask the school for accurate and up-to-date costs and speak to a student services staff person or financial aid officer about financial supports.

Key to the symbols in the tables

↑ improving (or at least, stable) job opportunities

✓ educational programs are available in more than two NS locations

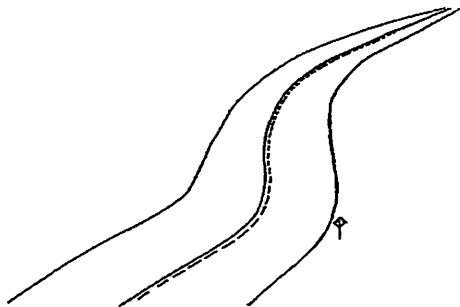
C co-op program available

⊖ job usually involves shift work and/or weekend work

✱ job usually involves working outdoors

A= average wage

T = top wage



Acknowledgements: The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre would like to thank the members of the Face to Face Project Advisory Committee: Barbara Moreton, Nancy O'Regan, Pat Skinner, Norine Verberg, Jennifer Steylen, Verlie Wile, Lucille Harper.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the assistance of the many first voice women and human service staff who reviewed the first draft and made insightful suggestions for improving it.