

# ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

<b>Program Area:</b>	2.0	Workforce Development
<b>Sub Program:</b>	2.3	Supporting Recruitment, Retention and Advancement
<b>Template:</b>	2.3.2	Aboriginal Employment Targets
<b>Sponsor(s)</b>		<i>Suncor Energy Inc.</i>

## 1. Objective

Intended to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees through the use of various employment, training and education initiatives to achieve an Aboriginal employee population that reflects the Wood Buffalo Region demographic.

## 2. Description

With input from the Aboriginal community, Suncor set a business goal in 1998 to increase Aboriginal full-time direct employment on-site (excluding contractors) to about 12 per cent of its workforce by 2002. This percentage reflected the Aboriginal share of the population in the Wood Buffalo Region.

In order to meet this employment target, Suncor adopted a strategy to work with communities, training institutions and government agencies to increase the number of qualified Aboriginal candidates. As well, Suncor became involved with the following initiatives to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal employees:

- ***Mentorship program:*** a Suncor employee will provide guidance to an Aboriginal student in their chosen field of work selected by the student, i.e.: engineering;
- ***Summer employment programs*** for community high schools and post-secondary students that include targets for Aboriginal students;
- ***Mine Operations Training:*** Suncor partnered with Keyano College in 2002 to create the "Aboriginal Mine Operations Program" which trains students as heavy equipment operators. Suncor has hired a number of Aboriginal graduates from this program. In recognition of their unique partnership in developing the program, the Suncor Energy Foundation and Keyano College received a "National Partners in Education Award" in 2001 from the Conference Board of Canada;
- ***Campus Recruitment:*** recruiting and hosting information sessions on post-secondary campuses that have a large population of Aboriginal students;
- ***Career Fairs and site visits for students:*** participate in local, provincial, and national career fairs that focus on providing opportunities to Aboriginal high school students;
- ***Scholarships and bursaries*** specific to Aboriginal students;
- ***Community Co-Op Apprenticeship Program:*** combining paid employment training with

academic instruction through Keyano College (not specific to Aboriginal candidates);

- **High School Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP):** paid employment training with academic achievement. Students successfully completing the high school programs are considered to have completed the first year of the Apprenticeship program (not specific to Aboriginal candidates);
- **Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program):** in cooperation with other employers in the region, Suncor has committed to hiring Aboriginal people in permanent positions as trades apprentices, heavy equipment operators, and process operators;
- **Aboriginal Employment Referral Offices** (also known as Aboriginal Employment Centres): there is at least one in every community including Anzac, Janvier, Chard, Conklin, Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray. There are two in Fort McMurray, one is operated by the Métis Nation of Alberta Association and the other by ATC. Suncor works closely with these Employment Referral Offices in the Wood Buffalo Region to seek referrals of local candidates. The Centres provide screening of candidates to ensure they have a Grade 12 diploma/GED, a cover letter identifying area of work that the candidate is skilled or interested in, and a resume and all other supporting documentation, e.g. tickets.
- **Suncor Energy, Oil Sands Trades Diversity Program.** Suncor Energy, Oil Sands is undertaking an innovative long-term program to secure the supply of qualified trades people for its own workforce. The initiative will supplement the Registered Apprenticeship and Trades Co-op Programs in which the company currently participates, and will involve a partnership with local contractors in a program which combines trades skills development and Suncor's workforce diversity goals. In addition, the partnership arrangement will help to resolve a long-standing inequity between Suncor and many of its contractors in which they bear the cost of apprenticeship training only to see the workers move to Suncor on achieving journey status. This has often created uncertainty for the contractors, diminishing their ability to perform work resulting in fewer opportunities for apprenticeship training. Initially, the program will involve Clearwater Welding & Fabricating Ltd., Aqua Industrial Ltd. and L. Robert - three local contractors, and will be expanded to others in the future. The program will remove the uncertainty for both the trainees and contractors. It will be understood up front that the intent is to recruit and develop trades skills for Suncor's workforce. Suncor and the local companies will jointly recruit and select the candidates for the apprenticeship programs. The selected candidates will apprentice with the contractors, with a "promise of hire" from Suncor in the final year of training. In turn, Suncor will ensure the contractors have the appropriate type and volume of work to provide the most effective apprenticeship training opportunity. The program is focused on local business and employment development.
- **Aboriginal Skills Employability Program.** A partnership between Industry, Alberta, Canada Aboriginal Organizations. The Program upgrades students who are at greater risk for unemployment and prepares them for streaming into Keyano trades, mine operations and power engineering/process operator training courses. It is five year - five million dollar funding arrangement.

### **3. Implementation**

Suncor 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, General

Education Development diploma (GED); and (c) all candidates must write and pass the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES).

The Aboriginal Affairs Manager reports to the Director Communications and Community Relations on a quarterly basis with respect to the results of the Aboriginal Employment Program and progress on meeting targets.

### **4. Timeframe for Results**

Suncor introduced Aboriginal employment targets in 1995. At that time, Aboriginal employees accounted for 2% of Suncor's direct workforce.

### **5. Measurable Criteria**

Success in meeting the Aboriginal employment target and creating a workforce which reflects the diversity of the population in the Wood Buffalo Region.

### **6. Budget**

There is no assigned budget for this program.

### **7. Partners and Sponsors**

Suncor Energy Inc.

### **8. Experience with the Program**

Full-time direct Aboriginal employment at Suncor is now 10% (2005) ( Delete:11% (2003) of its on-site workforce, compared to 2% in 1995, 3% in 1996, and 9% in 2000. Suncor intends to increase full-time employment for Aboriginal workers to a minimum of 12% so as to better reflect regional demographics.

Suncor believes that Aboriginal people are still under-represented in the energy industry workforce and the company is working with stakeholders to help remedy the situation. Suncor will continue to foster partnerships with communities that result in new economic and social opportunities and a stronger relationship with industry.

### **9. General Applicability**

The use of targeted employment measures may be of interest to companies looking for an aggressive strategy to increasing the level of Aboriginal employment in their workforce.

## **10. Additional Information or Support**

Jerry Welsh, Aboriginal Affairs Manager, Suncor Energy Inc., P.O. Box 4001, Fort McMurray, AB

Telephone: (780) 743-6531

Fax: (780) 791-8344

Email: [jwelsh@suncor.com](mailto:jwelsh@suncor.com)

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