

Fact Sheet 5

Best Practices

Since the early 1990s, as workplace learning programs were being successfully introduced in municipal workplaces across Canada, we have gathered a lot of valuable information on the factors that made them work. This fact sheet highlights this knowledge in the form of Best Practices.

We know that successful workplace learning programs:

- Have champions who get corporate support and endorsement. These champions may be the Mayor, City Council, department heads, supervisors, managers, or unions.
- Are joint initiatives of labour and management with a joint planning committee.
- Have a recruitment process that asks unions to present the plan to their membership.
- Feature a needs assessment that gives a snapshot of the skill levels of workers and the skills and training gaps that the corporation needs to address.
- Are based on your workplace's unique needs and are employee-centered (focused on people's needs as workers, parents, citizens, and union members).
- Focus on building workers' existing knowledge and skills so they can succeed in learning new skills.
- Ensure communication among all municipal and external stakeholders.

What are the Best Practices from Canadian municipalities?

When you are getting started:

- Recognize the critical need to create a learning culture that supports a corporate philosophy of lifelong learning. This is the key to sustaining the program over time.
- Make sure the program you create is tailor-made for your workplace.
- Set clear goals and terms of reference, and integrate the needs of both the learners and the employer.
- Make sure you include and uphold the principle of confidentiality.

“Once I completed the sessions I felt a renewed sense of confidence not only with the subject matter but also with learning new challenges. The facilitator was courteous and very helpful, and I found it to be a very positive experience.”

**–Learner, City of Bathurst, NB,
CUPE Local 1282**



- Create a program that is accessible when it comes to location, the cost to learners, and time-sharing for the courses.
- Set up workplace committees that involve all stakeholders; this will allow everyone to develop a long-term commitment to the program.

When you are making it happen:

- Do a needs assessment to find out what the program requirements are and to begin the process of “buy-in” for the new initiative.
- Do an analysis of needs and prepare a report with recommendations for next steps.
- Design a voluntary, employee-centered program that is open to all employees. Make both the process of doing this and the program itself inclusive.
- Write down, get commitments to, and ensure everyone understands the principles that support the program.
- Explore and develop all opportunities for community partnerships.
- Use a multi-faceted communications strategy that focuses on face-to-face communication and makes use of methods such as pay stubs, newsletters, posters, etc. to get the message out.
- Have ongoing discussions about possible barriers that might arise and what to do about them. When a barrier occurs, take prompt action.

As you maintain your course:

- Evaluate programs on an ongoing basis.
- Record impacts and share results.
- Celebrate successes.
- Adapt your programs to meet changing needs.



This series of fact sheets is produced by the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. To learn more about our work in support of Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills programs, visit our website:

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