

NADC Bursary Program Employer Survey Summary

Prepared for the Northern Labour Market
Information Clearinghouse

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Introduction

The Northern Alberta Development Council administers a student bursary fund which supports northern students. In exchange the students will return and work in the North upon completion of their program. Student applications for the bursary are ranked, in part, according to the need in the North for graduates of their proposed field of study. To rank the most needed sets of expertise, the bursary program has conducted surveys of northern employers regarding their human resource needs. The following report is a summary of the Professional Workforce Survey Report, as prepared for (and otherwise distributed by) the Bursary Program. For more information please contact: Audrey DeWit, NADC, 624-6342.

Professional Workforce Survey Summary

The Northern Development Branch completed its third and most recent survey of northern employers to assist in the scoring of students applications to the NADC Bursary program. Employers were asked about hiring demands and trends in occupations related to their sectors. Overall, 15 sectors were surveyed. The following notes provide a brief summary of the survey results. Detailed reports for each sector have been written and are available.

Survey Completion Rates

- Out of a survey population of 66 (10 more than in 1995), 56 were completed (an 85% response rate, as compared to the 86% response rate in 1995).
- The 1995 survey was revised in 1997 to allow respondents a choice of answering the survey by phone, mail, or fax. 52% of the respondents (29) returned the survey by fax, 43% (24) were interviewed by phone, and 5% (3) respondents mailed their survey back.
- 36% (20) of respondents (as compared to 35% in 1995) had not heard of the Bursary program, many of whom requested more information.
- Three respondents asked whether the Bursary program funded trades and apprenticeship programs, emphasizing the desirability of supporting this employment population in northern Alberta.

Survey Results

The survey yielded practical information based upon the opinion of northern employers.

Overall, out of the fifteen sectors surveyed, respondents felt that:

- The Aboriginal Government Service, Business Administration/Law, Construction and Trades, Logging, Forestry and Wood Industries, Medical/Health Care, Other Manufacturing, Retail Trade/Tourism and Social Services sectors are **growing** in terms of employment opportunities in northern Alberta.
- Although individual respondents sometimes believed that employment opportunities in a specific sector were decreasing, overall there are **no** sectors in **decline**. For instance, although one key contact in each of the Retail Trade/Tourism, Social Services and Transportation & Utilities sectors thought that their sector was in decline, the majority opinion for the sector was taken as the overall register.
- The Agricultural and Food Processing, Communication, Education, Finance and Insurance, Mining, Oil & Gas and Transportation & Utilities sectors are felt to be **stable** in terms of their professional employment opportunities in northern Alberta.
- In the Municipal Government service sector, the four respondents were split. Two felt that employment opportunities in the sector are increasing; while the other two thought they are declining. Provincial and municipal budgetary constraints mixed with what one respondent termed “more and more rationalization of local government” are contributors to the flux reflected by this sector.

Employment Trends

- In both 1993 and 1995, survey respondents forecast that there would be an increased emphasis on community-based delivery of health care as well as on home care services. In the 1995 survey, it was stated that “the need for institution-based health care professionals has decreased.” This trend has not abated, as reflected by this year’s survey, where one respondent emphasized that the “*move to the community rather than the institution*” would continue to affect employment in the Medical/Health Care sector. Chronic shortage areas also remain identical to those identified in 1995: Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy.
- In both human and non-human service sectors, work is increasingly being “out-sourced.” One key contact in the Municipal Government Service sector describes a “*move to hiring consultants for specialized needs*” while another in the Transportation & Utilities sectors notes that “*the use of contract workers will reduce the staffing of employees.*”
- Virtually every sector indicated that due to widespread technologization of the workplace, employees who are computer literate have far better chances at employment.
- 16 % of survey respondents expressed a pressing need for Tradespeople and Apprentices.

Occupations: High Demand

The following fields of study were consistently indicated to be in high demand:

Bachelor of Social Work	Masters in Clinical Psychology	Computer Science
Computer Programming	Computer Networking	Marketing & Sales
Native Management	Water & Wastewater Treatment	Psychiatric Nursing
Forestry Degree	Building/Heating Inspector	Heavy Duty Mechanic
Millwrights	Truck Drivers	Power Engineers
French Immersion Teachers	Cree Language Teachers	Career & Tech. Studies
Environmental Engineer	Renewable Resource Management	Land Reclamation

Occupations: Low Demand

The following fields of study were consistently indicated to be in low demand:

Social Science Teacher	Music/Band Teacher	Pys.Ed. Teacher
Arts Teacher	Education Admin. (Masters)	Dentistry
Public Health Inspector	Dental Assistant	Dental Hygiene
Nutrition & Food Science	Dietary Technology	Recreation Therapy
X-Ray Technology	Masters of Business Admin.	Economics (General)
Lawyer	Computer Hardware Design	Architecture
Zoology	Secondary Food Processing Research	Entomology
Turfgrass Mngt.	Library & Information Studies	Fine Arts Degree
Pilot	Aircraft Maintenance	Legal Secretary
Photography		

Occupations: Hard to Recruit

The following fields of study were consistently indicated to be hard to recruit to:

Veterinary Medicine	Addictions Counselling	Chemical Engineering
Electrical Engineering/Tech.	Engineers with "8 yrs.experience	Computer Science
Computer Programming	Information Systems Professionals	Instrumentation
Machinists	Heavy Duty Mechanics	Mechanics
Social Workers	Clinical Psychology (MA)	Truck Drivers
Physical Therapist	Speech Therapist	Occupational Therapist