

Developing Labour Market Information for the Voluntary and Non-profit Sector

“Do you have any data on?” is a question we hear more and more often from employers. “We need more information on ...” is a recurring lament from researchers and others working to understand and address labour force issues in this sector. And the quest for ways to resolve the sector’s recruitment and retention challenges consistently points to the need for more information that draws people to work in the sector and helps them make career decisions.

These questions and concerns inspire the HR Council’s commitment to build and share information about Canada’s non-profit sector labour force.

Between July 2009 and June 2011, the HR Council is working on the development of Labour Market Information (LMI) for the voluntary and non-profit sector to achieve three particular objectives:

1. Assess LMI sources with respect to their relevance and applicability for this sector and identify priorities for the development of better LMI for the sector.

“In Canada we are fortunate to be blessed with a good LMI system...” This statement is from the national Advisory Panel on Labour Market Information that reported in 2009 to the Forum of Labour Market Ministers. It refers to an LMI system that includes official data sources such as the Census and Statistics Canada’s monthly Labour Force Survey and other sources such as sector-based networks or associations, unions, consultants and research organizations.

For the voluntary and non-profit sector, the blessings of the current LMI system are unclear. This sector is defined by the “non-profit” status of employers and it encompasses many different kinds of work in many areas of activity. This makes it complicated to extract data for this sector from official LMI data sources and it means that common information is at best sketchy for this sector. We believe the sector can benefit more than it does now from official LMI sources.

There are many kinds of **Labour Market Information (LMI)** and it comes from many sources. LMI is used in many different ways. Here are a few examples:

- Knowing how many people are qualified for particular kinds of work helps employers see how easy or difficult it might be to find a new employee;
- Projections of future demand in different occupations helps people planning their careers identify good prospects;
- Statistics about the number of people with certain qualifications and estimates of future demand for them help educational institutions decide what programs to offer;
- Data on salaries and benefits let employers know how much they need to pay and employees know what they can expect to earn;
- Evidence of chronic high unemployment in a geographic area or a particular segment of the population can lead to changes in government policy or programs.

The LMI Advisory Group will come together in December 2009 to provide input for the assessment of key LMI sources for the voluntary non-profit sector. The Advisory Group will consider the findings from this assessment as well as input from stakeholders about their priority LMI needs when they gather again in late 2010 to recommend next steps for improving LMI for this sector.

2. Make sure prospective and current sector employees have information about occupations in the sector.

There are many sources of rich information about occupations based on the National Occupational Classification. (The NOC classifies all jobs in the labour market into more than 500 occupations. It underpins official sources of LMI.) By mapping the jobs in this sector onto the NOC we will identify information resources that are useful for sector employers and employees. Then we will spread the word in the sector about these information resources. The mapping will also identify gaps in information about occupations in the sector.

3. Provide sector employers and employees and other stakeholders with more research-based information on topics of current interest.

Hrcouncil.ca is a well-used source of human resources management tools and information on trends and issues for the sector's labour force. Continuous improvement is our goal and over the next two years, this resource centre will feature 10-12 new research-based information products that examine employment in small organizations, gender differences and other topics.

For more information, contact:

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