

Strategy #5: To look at how programs in multi-service centres work together and to host a service coordination event in Grey and Bruce counties where multi-service centres don't exist.

QUILL Learning Network (QUILL)

QUILL Learning Network's strategy in this Labour Market Partnership project was to look at how programs in multi-service centres work together. A smaller part of this project was to host a service coordination event in Grey and Bruce counties where multi-service centres don't exist. The outcome of this event was to draw programs together to build solid service coordination practices. Both strategies are summarized in this report as Part A - Multi-Service Centre Strategy and Part B - Social Networking for Social Services.

Part A - Multi-Service Centre Strategy

The QUILL Learning Network region hosts a number of multi-service centres that are made up of a diverse group of programs serving the residents of the area. Most of these centres grew from a 1 or 2 program centre into a multi-program centre as opportunities arose. Because they had a solid foundation in the community other programs were drawn to them, seeing the advantage of serving clients in a one-stop centre. For example, when Contact North was searching out sites for their centres, Conestoga College and the Centres for Employment and Learning recognized the benefit and offered them space. The situation has provided residents the benefit of accessing training both in person and online.

Understanding that programs want to provide the best service for their clients, this strategy proposed to look internally at the processes and procedures of multi-service centres in the QUILL region. Moving clients with less than a grade 12 education efficiently and effectively through the Employment Ontario (EO) system to gain

meaningful employment needs programs to ensure that they are working together to best service clients. This includes agency

- processes
- procedures
- plans to best serve those clients

This strategy included a literature review and research on how multi-service centres in other jurisdictions in the province successfully serve clients without a grade 12 education and help them to gain meaningful employment. Upon completion of the review and research, 3 meetings were hosted with service providers to

- discuss the literature review
- discuss best practices
- examine systemic linkages
- find solutions that are workable within each program's capacity

Partners

The partners who provided expertise in this project included

- Partners in Employment (Employment Services - ES)
- Conestoga College – Stratford Campus (ES & Literacy and Basic Skills -LBS)
- Adult Learning Programs of Perth (LBS)
- Avon Maitland District School Board (Adult Ed, ES & LBS)
- vpi, inc. (ES)
- Adult Learning Centres – Grey, Bruce, Georgian (LBS)
- Contact North, Stratford and Kincardine
- Lake Huron Learning Collaborative, Kincardine

Other partners were invited to attend the focus group meetings but didn't respond. We will give more details in the section, "Lessons Learned".

Invitees included staff from

- Probation and Parole
- Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Ontario Works
- Economic Development

Activities

At the beginning of this strategy, QUILL did a comprehensive literature review and created a list of best practices which was shared with the project participants at the focus groups. More than 107 resources were compiled, and of those, 43 were used for the final report. Personal contact was made with 12 key informants of which 50% responded by one-to-one interviews or emails, sharing best practices for multi-service centres.

Upon completion of the literature review, 3 focus group meetings were hosted.

a. May 21, 2013 Focus Group Meeting

At this first meeting, project participants were asked to “map” the current multi-service centres and other programs and services that serve clients without a grade 12 education to help them gain meaningful employment. Small groups worked on this task and the results of the mapping were captured.

After mapping the current system of programs and services, the group identified the strengths and opportunities for improvement of this system. The responses are noted in the table below.

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very collaborative • variety of venues, resources • convenience for clients • choice, 2 locations to get service from • diversified funding • people working in the agencies are experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessing services is difficult because of rural area (especially transportation) • having limited resources to service areas (rural) • getting the message out • offering limited hours of service • confusing clients - working with more than one agency • determining if 2 agencies provide the same service • dealing with individual agency expectations - we all have our own master and expertise • managing client expectations • making sure we're coordinating, not competing

They were then introduced to the best practices of multi-service centres.

- a. Ensure that appropriate agencies are co-located to match user needs.
- b. Implement effective planning and organization strategies for the centre as a whole.
- c. Look for ways that resources can be shared and/or pooled among all the agencies.
- d. Ensure that there is ease of accessibility of services.
- e. Secure commitments from partnering agencies.
- f. Have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities among partner agencies and their staff.
- g. Encourage communication and information sharing among agencies.

- h. Collaborate on activities and ventures when feasible and appropriate.
- i. Ensure that there is a link to employers and/or employment opportunities.
- j. Implement protocols that enhance referrals and information exchange about shared clients.

b. June 21, 2013 – Focus Group Meeting

The group reviewed the 10 best practices presented at the previous meeting and then talked about what’s happening in our communities in multi-service centres (what we are doing well/best practices) and opportunities for further change.

The group started by reviewing best practices and then identifying what is currently happening and opportunities for further action. See the table below for responses for each of the multi-service centres.

Best Practice: Ensure appropriate agencies are co-located to match user needs	
Currently Happening	Opportunities
Lake Huron Learning Centre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all Employment Ontario (EO) agencies • distance education • speech pathologist • financial literacy • economic development • Service Canada is close by • robotics team • Employment Services (ES) • adult learning • English as a Second Language (ESL) • General Educational Development (GED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding • transportation • clothing closet • personal counselling • library of resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • college programs • guest speakers • art • drop in resource centre • test centre for Bruce Power • Community Living • interagency meetings 	
Centre for Employment and Learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact North • Partners in Employment (PIE) • Adult Education • Employment Services (ES) • legal clinic • probation/parole • English as another Language (ESL) • General Educational Development (GED) • computer courses • Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) • Cooperative Opportunities Providing Education (COPE) • Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) • Reach for Success • Service Canada • space for community groups • workplace training • art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transportation • financial • food • clothing • customer service training (marketing)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special interest classes • Huron Business Development Corporation (HBDC) 	
Conestoga College	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact North • adult learning school • Employment Services (ES) • academic upgrading • General Educational Development (GED) • Choices for Change • Stratford/Perth Shelterlink • school/college work initiatives • Discover your Future • Employment Ontario (EO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal counselling • legal help • health services • financial services
Education and Employment Resource Centre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners in Employment (PIE) - Employment Services (ES) • Adult learning - Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) • small business/ self-employment • Ontario Works (OW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing • probation/ parole • personal counselling • art

The other best practices that multi-service centres are currently doing well include

- having open space
- doing personalities work
- thinking about the whole - joint ownership
- wearing several hats - multi-tasking

- understanding the referral process and who should go to each service and what each of us gets
- coordinating services to benefit clients and ourselves
- providing a continuum of services
- using common referral forms
- having a common website
- marketing all services in one flyer
- linking to other groups on website
- having one voice
- having collaborative funding - one organization got funding that supports all of us
- doing assessments for other agencies
- sharing confidentiality/release of information forms
- having informal shared case management
- collaborating on group events and information sessions
- co-locating with each other at an event (job fair)
- sharing resources such as the computer lab, boardroom
- having in place a Memorandum of Understanding (College)
- covering staff at lunch or when sick
- providing orientation to other services
- being client service representatives
- holding quarterly meetings for the centre as a whole
- allowing suggestions to be shared which leads to action - continuous flow of ideas
- having all staff trained in Bridges out of Poverty - able to address needs

Each of the multi-service centres in attendance at the meeting then met as a small group to talk about each of the best practices opportunities for the centre. A table outlining the responses from each of the centres is attached in the appendix.

c. September 20, 2013 – Focus Group Meeting

The group reviewed the 10 best practices presented at the May 15, 2013 session and then each multi-service centre identified its top 2 best practices to share with others (see chart below).

Multi-Service Centre	Best Practices
Education and Employment Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offers flexible hours of operation – evenings and Saturdays by appointment • links to employers and/or employment opportunities (attend local business meetings, making connections to learn about gaps)
Centre for Employment and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintains physical one-stop multi-service (purpose) centres with in person services • offers virtual services (LBS, ES, ESL) • provides a video orientation/info session (if no staff is present or between workshop dates) • offers evening hours, weekends for exams • has a customer service charter • links to other services • maintains website • takes services off site - mobile (employers, partners, action centres, referral agencies) • is open to new ideas • shares funding - each agency in the centre funds a portion of the reception person (Client Service Representative)
Stratford Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walks people down the hall • uses a common referral form • has joint case conferencing • pools resources • has access to multiple services at different stages of client

	development
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Opportunities for Further Action

As a final step of this phase of the project, the multi-service centres identified what opportunities/actions they will move forward with (see chart below).

Multi-Service Centre	Actions
Education and Employment Resource Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have regular bi-monthly meetings with all agencies working in the building • create a common brochure/ card which outlines all the services in the building • make better use of TV mounted in the centre, promoting community agencies outside of the centre • improve accessibility - resource centre open earlier, evening, weekend or Saturday • improve customer service - provide training to all staff, share front desk duties, share the workload • recruit new agencies to come in, even if just for one day per month
Centre for Employment and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate and improve partnerships (develop evaluation process) • host multi-service site meetings (each physical centre, action plans, prioritize change) • work more with employers (curriculum development, job postings) • use common calendars and communication (communication protocols, newsletter) • host orientation for new staff (employee spotlight - where they talk about their job, what they like about it)
Stratford Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • host formalized meetings between services • develop and use joint marketing tool • hold more inclusive and collaborative open houses • wear nametags

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide video orientation |
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Evaluation

A full evaluation was carried out for this strategy. The report states that

- the participants in the session were satisfied with the session and felt that it enhanced their level of knowledge of multi-agency centres and community programs and services
- the presentation on the Best Practice Guide was well received and was a comprehensive document that provided useful content they can use in their work
- the 10 best practices were noted as a significant learning for many of the participants

In terms of feedback, a few participants noted that they would like to have seen more agencies in attendance, with a wider representation. Page 2 of the evaluation report also provides a list of further information that participants would like about multi-agency centres.

The participants evaluated the session in 2 ways: Best Practice Guide presentation and the overall session. The results of the evaluation are presented in the appendices.

Lessons Learned

Programs are looking for ways to best serve their clients. This project

- increased the knowledge of the participants on working together in a multi-service centre
- identified opportunities of collaboration between organizations under one roof to increase effective/efficient service to clients
- identified future projects and collaborations that could be added to their services

Challenges

There was 1 major challenge in this project and it was not overcome. As identified under the section on partners, more programs were invited to participate than did. Focus groups were held in a central location in Huron County forcing some programs to travel to participate. In this rural region many programs are offered through itinerant services, with staff working in different communities on a daily or weekly basis. It was difficult for these programs to participate in the focus groups because they just don't have the capacity to allow staff to attend as they might have to defer seeing a client/s. It is felt that if Phase 2 is funded, it would be easier for more programs to participate as the meetings will be held in the centres and not in a central location. This will allow us to set meetings at more convenient times.

Knowledge Transfer

QUILL has shared all the information from this project with the participants. An overview of the project's outcomes and objectives was delivered in the webinar series in December 2013. Project information is on Literacy Link South Central's website and contains the **Best Practices Report**. Upon updating the QUILL website, the information will be housed on it. There is a plan to host another one-day Social Networking for Social Services event in Grey and Bruce counties and this information will be shared at the event.

Achieving Employment Ontario (EO) Mission and Vision

Learners with less than a grade 12 education are the beneficiaries of this project with

program deliverers examining their systems that assist clients in finding and keeping work. This fit perfectly into EO's Vision which is "The integrated training and

MTCU Vision: "Ontario will have the most educated people and highly skilled workforce in the world to build the province's competitive advantage and quality of life."

employment system will strengthen Ontario's economy by providing seamless customer service, removing barriers to training and strengthening links to employment.

The integrated training and employment system will continuously improve Ontario's skilled labour supply to support economic growth and investment. "(Barb Simmons, Service Delivery Branch, October 16, 2013 to LBS Support Services)

This strategy assisted participants in strengthening seamless customer service by looking at the processes and procedures within their organizations as well as part of a multi-service centre. Fine-tuning these processes and procedures will remove barriers for the clients and should assist them in reaching their employment goal sooner.

Conclusion

This strategy benefited all participants and in turn will increase efficient and effective services to clients.

Part B - Social Networking for Social Services

A second part of this strategy was to assist with service coordination in Grey and Bruce counties where multi-service centres don't exist. QUILL hosted a networking event, Social Networking for Social Services.

Organizing partners included

- Owen Sound and area Family YMCA Employment Services
- Bruce County Ontario Works
- Four County Labour Market Planning Board
- Grey County Ontario Works
- vpi, inc.

The event had more than 35 participants from programs across Grey and Bruce counties including

- probation and parole
- housing
- children's services
- 211
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- school boards

Activities

The day was set up in 3 sections

1. Social networking - speed Networking, with participants networking for 5 minutes and then moving to another participant.
2. Information about labour market needs in the region, delivered by Four County Labour Market Planning Board; a presentation on a new crisis response team by CMHA; and an overview of 211 and Bruce Grey United Way services.
3. After lunch, participants broke into teams and did an exercise on case management.

Lessons learned

The event was a great success with participants wanting it to be hosted annually. The next session is scheduled for May 5, 2014.

Participants were very pleased with the networking and the opportunity to meet people and hear about programs that they weren't familiar with and to reacquaint themselves

with those they were familiar with. Participants were asked to list who they wished they had spoken to and those agencies will be sent personal invitations for the next session indicating that they were missed at the event.

Challenges

Challenges were more about the venue than about the event. The speed networking was very loud and needs a larger venue. As participants were moving quickly through the networking session there needs to be more time allowed for that activity.

Achieving Employment Ontario (EO) Mission and Vision

This one-day event fits right into the Vision of EO of providing a seamless customer service experience. The community partners that attended this event increased their knowledge of services that were provided in the community.

MTCU Vision: "Ontario will have the most educated people and highly skilled workforce in the world to build the province's competitive advantage and quality of life."

Conclusion

As stated previously, community partners want to serve their clients effectively and this event supported their work and increased their knowledge of other partners. It was a great success and will be hosted again in 2014.

Appendices