

# Creating Pathways to Work

*Community-centred pre-employment training in Indigenous communities*

[www.pathwaytowork.ca](http://www.pathwaytowork.ca)

Creating Pathways to Work: Community-centred pre-employment training in Indigenous communities

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## Acknowledgements

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# Contents

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Project Overview .....	2
P2W Framework .....	3
Work Readiness Training .....	6
Purpose .....	6
Participants .....	6
Components .....	7
Resources to Support Work Readiness .....	8
Work Readiness in Communities .....	10
Tataskweyak Cree Nation .....	11
Swampy Cree Tribal Council .....	12
Pine Creek First Nation .....	13
Dakota Tipi First Nation .....	14
Winnipeg .....	15
Tseshaht First Nation .....	16
Snaw-naw-as and Snuneymuxw First Nations .....	17
Success Factors .....	18
Conclusion .....	18

# Project Overview

Pathway to Work (P2W) was a five-year, multi-phase pilot project funded by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program. The project was delivered through PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs (PTP), a community-based agency that empowers adults to find work they value.

P2W project efforts were guided by the following goals:

1. Work collaboratively with Indigenous communities to design and implement pilot training initiatives that connect Indigenous job seekers to local jobs on large-scale construction projects in two provinces.
2. Develop capacity within communities to design, deliver and refine initiatives.
3. Learn from pilot training experiences to develop a framework.

To realize the project's goals, a team with expertise in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of Indigenous training programs was assembled.

Partnerships played a key role in ensuring that effective, culturally appropriate training programs were implemented. The community-centred programs benefited from the guidance and support of First Nations, Tribal Councils, Indigenous-led support organizations, as well as from the participation and contributions of employers and other training institutions. Futureworx Society in Truro, Nova Scotia was a founding project partner, making Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT) training and tools available to community and support organization staff members and contributing to program design efforts. Manitoba Building Trades Institute (MBTI) was instrumental in engaging stakeholder organizations in that province, including Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. MBTI also identified and liaised with Indigenous communities whose members could benefit from training.

The training offered through P2W came to be known as Work Readiness. The experience of offering Work Readiness in a variety of communities informed the development of a framework that reflects how the work was carried out.

Despite almost two years of COVID-related disruptions, P2W implemented a total of seven Work Readiness training cohorts in two provinces.

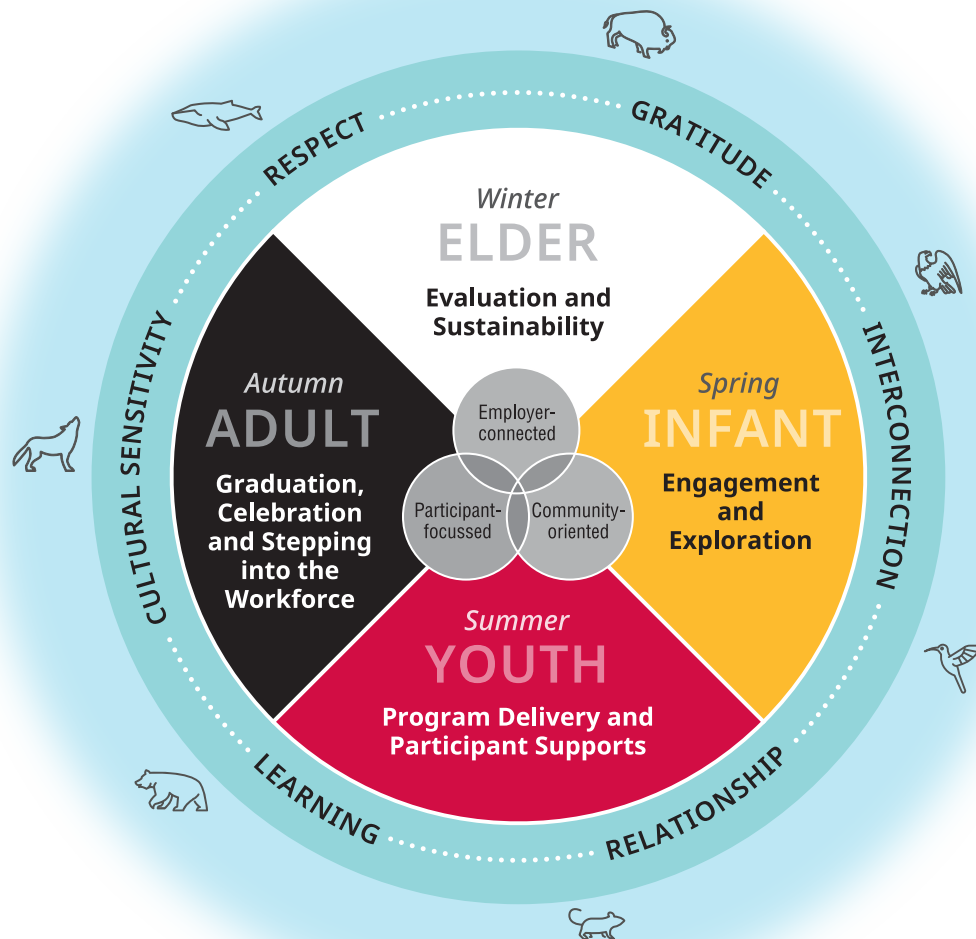
**This report is an effort to share what we learned through Pathway to Work, by telling the story of Work Readiness in the seven Indigenous communities where the program was delivered. In doing so, we present the processes and resources that both informed and resulted from the work with these communities. It is our hope that others can draw from these experiences and tools to build their own pathways to work.**

# P2W Framework

The P2W Framework reflects the P2W vision of designing and delivering training that is centred in partnership and mutual learning. It is a supportive conceptual structure with enough openness to foster training that is responsive to participant, community and employer needs.

Taking its organization from the medicine wheel, the framework aligns its four phases with the four seasons, and life stages.

At the centre of the framework are the three pillars that underpin Work Readiness training. The medicine wheel is bordered by the principles that guide this work and the animals that characterize the different qualities and strengths necessary to create a healthy ecosystem.



The following practices are associated with the phases identified in the framework. They exemplify the P2W approach to working alongside Indigenous communities to offer Work Readiness training.

## Engagement and Exploration

Take the time to establish relationships and to build a vision together of what is possible.

Work together to explore roles of community and team members, and to identify potential partners and employers.

Define clear principles and create processes for working together.

Listen carefully to understand community needs and contexts.

Make clear offers that align with community needs.

Make time for collaboration.

Honour the knowledge, capacity, agency and autonomy of the community.

Offer support to fill any gaps.

## Program Delivery and Participant Supports

Formalize roles and supports needed to deliver training.

Empower participants and Indigenous community facilitators.

Create a positive learning environment.

Adapt curriculum to meet participants' needs.

Use storytelling to bring learning to life.

Make sure training addresses adaptability, collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills. Incorporate reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills development.

Relate learning to participants' lives, community and culture to make concepts real.

Focus on growth to help participants move towards their goals.

## **Graduation, Celebration and Stepping into the Workforce**

Pause to honour the learning journey.

Include community members and leaders in the graduation.

Recognize participants' growth.

Rejoice in what is to come.

Promote the benefits of a local, Indigenous workforce.

Partner with supportive employers.

Support collaboration between Indigenous communities and employers.

Appreciate the unique ways in which we work.

## **Evaluation and Sustainability**

Show gratitude by thanking all those involved.

Stay connected with participants.

Focus on sustainability. Continue to nurture partnerships with community and employers.

Reflect on what goes well to build on strengths.

Include stories of challenge and failure; we learn as much from what didn't work as from what did.

Let go of what is not working to allow new ideas to emerge.

Pass down knowledge and wisdom to others.

# Work Readiness Training

## Purpose

Work Readiness is a limited-duration, sector-based training program that helps Indigenous job seekers develop the skills to get and keep employment. It can be customized to meet local community and employer needs.

## Participants

Work Readiness is designed for Indigenous job seekers. It is not necessary for participants to have a high school diploma or previous work experience; what is important is that participants demonstrate the following interests and abilities:

- Interest in accessing employment in the target occupation(s)
- Ability to commit to full-time training and employment
- Ability to manage personal health and family obligations
- Willingness to develop the skills needed to get and maintain employment

*Building our medicine doesn't happen out of nowhere. It happens with work.*

Nene Kraneveldt, P2W team member

*If we're able to provide skills development that helps community members shape their goals in life and become independent, that's a win for everyone: for the community member, their family, and the broader community.*

Ron Castel, P2W team member

*We ensure that we get what we need in our life journey to flourish... we understand what is needed to make the root stronger.*

Geri-Lynn Fontaine, P2W team member



# Components

Work Readiness is made up of three components.

<b>Intake screening</b>	Provides an opportunity to determine if there is a good match between the interests, goals and needs of potential participants and the training program Identifies participants' needs that can be addressed through training and supports		
<b>Skills training</b>	<b>Skills for Success</b>  Provides classroom-based instruction, practice and assessment  Addresses adaptability, collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills; and provides opportunities to reflect on and address what's keeping participants from achieving their goals  Incorporates reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills development  Offers culturally relevant supports, such as guest speakers and elders for counselling	<b>Occupational health and safety</b>  Addresses workplace health and safety requirements relevant to the target occupation(s)  Results in industry-recognized certifications	<b>Occupational skills (optional)</b>  Addresses occupation- or industry-specific knowledge and skills required on the job  Results in marketable occupation- or industry-specific skills
<b>Work experience</b>	Offers participants opportunities to apply their skills through a job placement or work practicum  Gives participants experience they can include on resumes		

# Work Readiness Resources

These resources were assembled and developed to support the Work Readiness cohorts in each community. As the project progressed, they were refined to better reflect community needs and contexts. The final products are available at [www.pathwaytowork.ca](http://www.pathwaytowork.ca).

## Implementation Tools

These tools help program managers and coordinators implement Work Readiness in Indigenous communities.

- **Roles and Responsibilities** identifies the positions that contribute to implementation, duties associated with each role and reporting structures.
- **Implementation Plan** identifies implementation phases, activities carried out in each phase and the role responsible for each activity.
- **Sample Memorandum of Understanding** outlines the agreement between the training provider and the community.
- **Intake Process** sets out the activities necessary to gather information from candidates to determine whether Work Readiness is a good match for them.
- **Sample Training Agreement** establishes expectations for training participants.

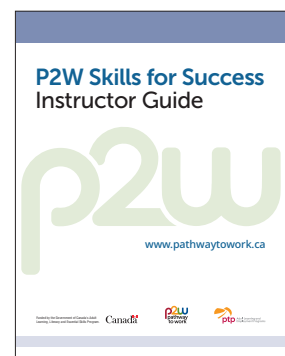
## Facilitation Techniques

These short videos touch on effective techniques for fostering an inclusive and respectful learning environment in Work Readiness training programs.

## Skills for Success Learning Materials

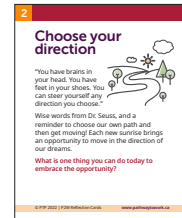
P2W Skills for Success helps Work Readiness participants develop the skills they need to manage the reading, writing, numeracy and digital skill demands of entry-level jobs. The 24 units that make up the resource are organized as an activity set for participants with corresponding pages in an Instructor Guide.

Each activity set is expected to take between two and three hours to work through, depending on participants' abilities. Instructors can pick and choose activities from the activity sets or facilitate all the activities in the order they are listed in the Instructor Guide.



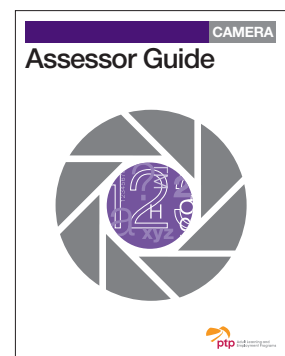
## P2W Reflection Cards

The P2W Reflection Cards help Work Readiness participants explore the Skill for Success of adaptability, and in particular the attitudes and behaviours that help individuals manage change. The 25 activity cards include a brief description of an attitude, behaviour or strategy, followed by a reflection activity.



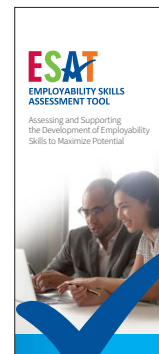
## CAMERA

CAMERA (Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment) is a series of standardized assessments developed by PTP and used in adult education and pre-employment programs across Canada. The assessments employ workplace documents and tasks to test adults' reading, document use, writing and numeracy skills. CAMERA includes a locator test designed to gather preliminary information about individuals' abilities and it also includes tests that provide diagnostic information to plan programming and monitor progress.



## ESAT

ESAT (Employability Skills Assessment Tool) offers a way of assessing and developing nine employability skills: motivation, attitude, accountability, time management, stress management, presentation, teamwork, adaptability and confidence. Developed by Futureworx Society, ESAT provides a framework and processes for observing these skills, giving meaningful feedback in an affirmative manner and quantitatively assessing progress in pre-employment training contexts.



# Work Readiness in Communities

Seven Work Readiness cohorts successfully completed the training during the P2W project. Each initiative started with P2W team members getting to know the community before collaboratively designing and implementing training that built on the learning from earlier cohorts. This included analyzing successes and challenges and working with the community to identify the supports, services and learning materials required to realize each community's vision.

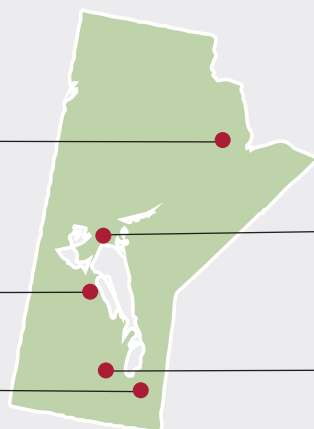
The following pages describe each cohort.

## Manitoba

Tataskweyak Cree Nation,  
Summer 2019

Pine Creek First Nation,  
Spring 2021

Winnipeg,  
Spring 2022



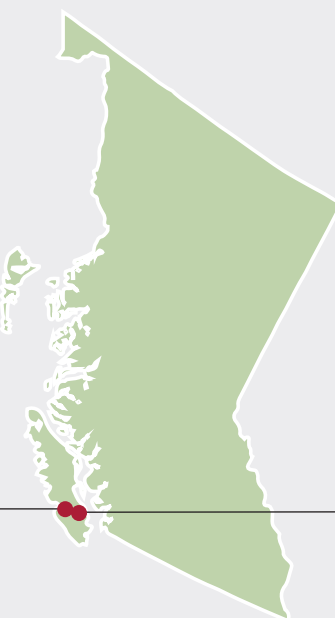
Swampy Cree Tribal Council,  
Fall 2019

Dakota Tipi First Nation,  
Summer 2021

## British Columbia

Tseshaht First Nation,  
Summer 2022

Snaw-naw-as and  
Snuneymuxw First Nations,  
Summer 2022



Community population data on the following pages reflects registered individuals living on reserve as of June 2022. Retrieval from: <https://fnp-ppn.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/SearchFN.aspx?lang=eng>



Population: 2,330

# Tataskweyak Cree Nation

Summer 2019



## Contributors

Manitoba Building Trades Institute provided the Indigenous liaison.



University College of the North provided the training location.



Kanata Indigenous Workplace Skills delivered Skills for Success training and conducted follow-up with participants.



Construction Safety Association of Manitoba delivered the occupational health and safety training.



Iron North Construction Ltd. provided work placements and hired graduates.

Intake screening	P2W team trained community staff on CAMERA as a tool to help select participants. Community staff members carried out intake screening.	
Skills training	Six weeks of Skills for Success training were delivered.	One week of construction-related health and safety certification training was provided. This included Confined Space Awareness and WHMIS.
Work experience	Six weeks of paid work placements were provided with local employers for participants who demonstrated readiness for employment.	

### Participants said:

*"We learned how to set goals and prepare ourselves to focus on the goal."*

*"I feel good about learning. Geri was a great instructor and I came out of my shell."*

*"I am grateful and optimistic about doing more training, getting a good job to be financially secure...just soaking it all up."*

### Participants served:

14





# Swampy Cree Tribal Council

Participants from Chemawawin, Misipawistik, Mosakahiken and Sapotaweyak Cree Nations



Fall 2019

**Population:**  
Chemawawin: 1,272  
Misipawistik : 1,310  
Mosakahiken: 1,614  
Sapotaweyak: 909

## Contributors

Manitoba Building Trades Institute provided the Indigenous liaison.



Kanata Indigenous Workplace Skills delivered Skills for Success training and conducted follow-up with participants.



Construction Safety Association of Manitoba delivered the occupational health and safety training.



E.T. Development provided the training location, participant accommodations and work placements, and hired graduates.



<b>Intake screening</b>	<p>P2W team trained community staff on CAMERA as a tool to help select participants.</p> <p>P2W team developed and discussed participant selection criteria with community staff.</p> <p>Community staff members carried out intake screening, including intake interviews and CAMERA assessments.</p>	
<b>Skills training</b>	<p>Six weeks of Skills for Success training were delivered.</p>	<p>One week of construction-related health and safety certification training was provided. This included Confined Space Awareness and WHMIS.</p>
<b>Work experience</b>	<p>Six weeks of paid work placements were provided with local employers for participants who demonstrated readiness for employment.</p>	

### Participants said:

*"What I like about the program is that it isn't exactly like school and that it is a pretty comfortable environment."*

*"I am learning to get out there, take chances and try new things. "*

*"I am learning a lot in this program on how to manage my time and what to expect when I go out seeking employment."*

### Participants served:

**24**





Population: 720

# Pine Creek First Nation



Spring 2021

## Contributors

Manitoba Building Trades Institute provided the Indigenous liaison and delivered the health and safety and construction skills training.



First Peoples Development Inc. provided funding for construction skills training and building a home in the community.



Kanata Indigenous Workplace Skills delivered community staff orientation and Skills for Success training and conducted follow-up with participants.



Intake screening	P2W team had planned to administer CAMERA assessments and conduct interviews to help community staff select participants. Since the plan could not be carried out due to COVID, community staff carried out intake screening.		
Skills training	Five weeks of Skills for Success training were delivered.	One week of construction-related health and safety certification training was provided. This included Fall Protection and WHMIS. Six weeks of construction skills training were integrated with the work practicum.	Pine Creek First Nation employed a job coach to support participants.
Work experience	Six weeks of a paid work practicum were provided in which participants who demonstrated readiness for employment built a home in the community.		

### Participants said:

*"I would say the trades math was very helpful, it helped me read a measuring tape. Going through the program, that's what I found most intimidating until I actually put it to work. I can do this, it was pretty easy after that."*

*"The program is perfect the way it is."*

*"Work Readiness was well put together and very informative."*

### Participants served:

11





Population: 271

# Dakota Tipi First Nation

Summer 2021



## Contributors

Manitoba Building Trades Institute provided the Indigenous liaison and delivered the health and safety and construction skills training.



First Peoples Development Inc. provided funding for construction skills training and building a home in the community.



Kanata Indigenous Workplace Skills delivered community staff orientation, carried out intake activities, delivered Skills for Success training and conducted follow-up with participants.



Intake screening	P2W team conducted intake interviews and worked with the community to select participants.		
Skills training	Five weeks of Skills for Success training were delivered.	Seven weeks of integrated health and safety certification and construction skills training were provided.	Dakota Tipi First Nation assigned a staff member to support participants.
Work experience	Six weeks of a paid work practicum were provided in which participants who demonstrated readiness for employment built a home in the community.		

### Participants said:

*"I was ready [for the transition to the work practicum], I was quite determined to be able to show off my knowledge on the site, but it was great. It was scary at first, but I got used to it."*

*"I'm thankful for the courses and for the teachings to all MBTI / Dakota Tipi, it was the best and you guys are well respected and welcomed, and I'm grateful to have learned many new things."*

### Participants served:

15







# Winnipeg

Spring 2022

## Contributors

Manitoba Building Trades Institute provided the Indigenous liaison and training space and delivered the occupational health and safety training.



Eagle Urban Transition Centre (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs) identified potential participants from their client base and arranged employment opportunities.



Kanata Indigenous Workplace Skills carried out intake activities, delivered Skills for Success training and conducted follow-up with participants.



<b>Intake screening</b>	P2W team conducted intake interviews and worked with Eagle Urban Transition Centre to select participants.
<b>Skills training</b>	Six weeks of Skills for Success and occupational health and safety training were delivered. This included First Aid and WHMIS.
<b>Work experience</b>	A six- to eight-week employment opportunity with local employers, with the option of longer-term employment, was provided to participants who demonstrated readiness for employment.

### Participants said:

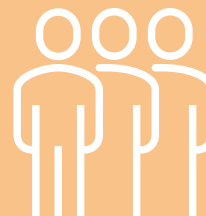
*"My expectations for this program are exactly what it has been. I am learning what all the different types of skills people have that can be useful in a workplace."*

*"I feel ready and prepared for the next steps and I am looking forward to the employment opportunity."*

*"I have a plan for what comes next and that makes me hopeful."*

### Participants served:

9





Population: 458

# Tseshah First Nation

Summer 2022



## Contributors

Floyd Blades delivered Skills for Success training and conducted evaluation activities with participants.

Nuu-chah-nulth Employment & Training Program provided job readiness support and employment counselling.



North Island College delivered its occupational skills training and contributed program materials and tools.



<b>Intake screening</b>	P2W team trained community staff on CAMERA as a tool to help select participants. Community staff members carried out intake screening, including intake interviews and CAMERA assessments.
<b>Skills training</b>	Eight weeks of integrated skills training and work experience were delivered. This included Skills for Success and occupational skills and safety training (Facilities Maintenance Program).
<b>Work experience</b>	Eight weeks of work experience were provided in which participants who demonstrated readiness for employment renovated a building in the community.

### Participants said:

*"This course makes me feel like I'm whole."*

*"I am loving this life skills program because it helps me see the positive traits in me I thought I never had."*

*"This workshop has helped me see myself and understand myself. I am glad I am doing this."*

### Participants served:

**12**





# Snaw-naw-as and Snuneymuxw First Nations

Summer 2022



**Population:**  
Snaw-naw-as: 177  
Snuneymuxw: 578

## Contributors

Joel and Sandi Beaupre supported intake screening, delivered Skills for Success training and supported evaluation activities with participants.

Construction Foundation of British Columbia delivered wood carving classes founded on traditional knowledge and methods.



Coast Salish Employment & Training Society provided health and safety training and employment supports.



Stuart Olson Inc. provided employment placements and helped to pay program delivery costs.



RBC Foundation provided financial support.



<b>Intake screening</b>	P2W team trained community staff on CAMERA as a tool to help select participants. P2W team conducted intake interviews and worked with the communities to select participants.
<b>Skills training</b>	Five weeks of skills training, including Skills for Success, wood carving skills (Paddle Program) and occupational health and safety training were provided.
<b>Work experience</b>	Six weeks of paid work placements were provided with local employers for participants who demonstrated readiness for employment.

### Participants said:

*"The program gave me confidence to do something."*

*"It was good to have both Nations joined together to meet new people coming out of COVID."*

*"Everyone was willing to help. Not used to that. Used to protecting myself."*

### Participants served:

**14**



# Success Factors

Learning was central to the purpose and goals of P2W. The project team built on early successes to refine the design and delivery of subsequent cohorts. Through these experiences, the team was able to identify several factors that contribute to program success.

Success factor	What it looks like
Intake process and tools	Screening to select participants most likely to benefit from the training
Clear expectations	Communities sign a Memorandum of Understanding and participants sign a training agreement
Flexible program design	Work Readiness training that can be adapted to different occupations; program components and duration that can be customized to community needs and context
Adaptable resources	Learning resources that can be used in a variety of program contexts and adapted to participants' needs
Expert facilitation	Experienced Indigenous educators who understand participants' needs and relate to their life experiences
Appealing next steps	Opportunities for further training, work experiences that align with participants' goals

## Conclusion

The P2W project succeeded in using the collaborative approach of the framework described in this report. Indigenous practitioners, designers, writers, trainers, evaluators, employers, colleges and community members all contributed to the learning and success of the participants who took part in Work Readiness programs in seven Indigenous communities in Manitoba and British Columbia.

We hope that the resources developed during the five-year term of the project will prove to be a useful legacy to other organizations who work with Indigenous job seekers and who hope to have a similar impact in their communities. Readers will find the full collection of resources at [www.pathwaytowork.ca](http://www.pathwaytowork.ca).