



## BACKGROUND

### OVERVIEW: CANADA'S ABORIGINAL LABOUR MARKET

#### Introduction

The scope and scale of unemployment among Canada's Aboriginal Peoples is staggering, and matched only by the skilled labour shortage within Canadian businesses. Although Stats Canada recently reported that Aboriginal people with post secondary training have labour market participation rates approaching the Canadian average, the unemployment rate among Aboriginal Canadians is still 19.1 per cent.

#### Unlocking Canada's Economic Potential

Canada is currently enjoying a period of unprecedented wealth and prosperity. A strong international economy is hungry for what Canada has in abundance. While our economy may be the fastest growing in the G8, there are troubling signs ahead that threaten to put the brakes on this rapid growth.

In very fast growing economies, a primary constraint on growth and productivity is often the availability of a trained workforce. Over the past few years we have seen such constraints appearing with increasing frequency in diverse sectors of the economy. By 2020, there is estimated to be a shortfall of one million workers in the country, mostly in high skilled and knowledge-oriented occupations. The current labour shortfall has skewed the operations of businesses, impeded their level of productivity, and distorted labour markets. It is anticipated that by 2020, the impact, if left unchecked, will be debilitating.

Canada is experiencing an Aboriginal baby boom. Aboriginal people are the nation's youngest and fastest growing human resource. This young upwardly mobile labour force wants and needs workplace opportunities for training, skills development and employment.

#### The Aboriginal Human Resource Solution

To increase Aboriginal participation in the economy more business leaders in Canada need to develop a better appreciation of the business case for hiring Aboriginal people. They must encourage and adopt new policies and strategies. Business investment is needed for the short and long-term development of an Aboriginal workforce.

Aboriginal organizations and communities also need to consider new ways to work with employers to prepare their people for the future workforce. *Unlocking Aboriginal Potential in the Workplace* will build important understandings at the grassroots levels to develop strategies that help facilitate the entry and advancement of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's labour market.

To read more on Aboriginal Labour Market Strategies: Increasing Return and Productivity, visit [http://www.ahrdcc.com/en\\_pdf/AHRDCC\\_Champions06.pdf](http://www.ahrdcc.com/en_pdf/AHRDCC_Champions06.pdf).

UNLOCKING ABORIGINAL POTENTIAL IN THE WORKFORCE...  
National Aboriginal Recruitment, Retention & Advancement Conference



ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA  
CONSEIL POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES AUTOCHONES DU CANADA

Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement