

# MPP Sorbara announces new program

Skills Development Minister Gregory Sorbara has announced a new program, Futures, to provide training, educational upgrading and work experience for hard-to-employ youth.

In a recent statement to the Legislature, Mr. Sorbara said that the new program meets the commitment of Premier David Peterson made two years ago and repeated in the Legislature 16 weeks ago.

Futures will guarantee work placement for up to one year for unemployed young people who undertake educational upgrading towards Grade 12 equivalency. For other unemployed youth the program will provide counselling and up to 16 weeks of on-the-job training and work experience.

The Minister said \$133-million has been provided for hard-to-employ young people across the province this year.

This is an increase of \$58-million over fiscal '84-85. It is estimated that by the end of the year 56,000 young people will have benefited from this support.

Mr. Sorbara said that the new program provides the greatest support to young people facing the greatest barriers to permanent employment. He said the program, which goes into effect Nov. 4, has been designed to provide on-the-job training, work experience and educational upgrading for young people who face severe disadvantages in seeking and keeping a job.

Future consolidates the service and expands the support provided by six existing programs, while it simplifies delivery and avoids inconsistencies, gaps and duplications. It replaces Youth Works, Youth Corps, Youth Start, Youth Tourism, the Ontario Career Action Program and Residential Centres.

Mr. Sorbara said that the new program will be available through Ontario's 90 campuses of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and 55 Youth Employment Counselling Centres.

"This network has worked effectively on our behalf in the past, and are now taking on this new challenge with enthusiasm and commitment to our young citizens. The Colleges and the Counselling Centres bring unique capacities to this program and now will be able to better serve their respective client groups, ensuring equitable treatment for all," he said.

The Minister said his Ministry will continue to encourage and support the expansion of the delivery organization network.

Their services include an initial interview and assessment, pre-employment preparation for the severely employment disadvantaged, employment counselling, work experience placement, monitoring and post-program follow-up. An individual training plan is set up for each participant.

Futures participants will be paid the provincial minimum wage during on-the-job placement. Severely disadvantaged young people who require pre-employment preparation will be paid a weekly stipend of \$100 while they learn basic social and work skills.

Employers in the private sector will be the central focus of Futures. "It is with expanding private businesses that young people have the best chance of getting off subsidized employment and into productive careers," said Mr. Sorbara. Opportunities created by provincial ministries and Ontario municipalities will also be supported by the new program.

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