



**FIRST NATIONS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
VERNON BC**
Okanagan Training Development Council Annual Report
2005/06

The First Nations Employment Services (FNES) is committed to provide, through OTDC funding, opportunities to assist Aboriginal people gain meaningful and sustainable employment. In 2005 – 2006, Vernon experienced growth in every sector such as retail, service, technology, construction, health (care homes) manufacturing, and significant growth in both medium and small businesses.

Although many of our clients secured employment in these industries, many are still earning minimum wages, and are not working full time. We continue to scan these developments with the purpose to respond to employer skill requirements and select interventions appropriate to upgrade client skills, and employability. In doing so, we have recognized gaps in three particular areas. These include:



(1) Educational upgrading/literacy:

We collaborated with Okanagan College for funding to deliver an upgrading program to address the literacy issue facing our clients. The community members, from various organizations, recognized the need to address literacy issues. Since we did not get the funding, Marilyn Evans actively pursued this initiative, and became a member of the initiating committee who participated in launching the “Literacy Now Initiative (2010 Legacies). The committee is now ready to submit proposals to fund programs to be delivered in Vernon B.C.



(2) Opportunities in the trades for aboriginal people:

Lorraine Denommee completed the Apprenticeship and Trades Coordinator Training Certificate. The FNES is licensed to administer and deliver the Transferable Skills Program. In March 2006, both Employment Counsellors attended the Annual Aboriginal Conference on Employment Strategies in Kamloops that focused on trades. The information was useful as were the contacts and the networking. We are developing a trade resource library, and an employer database.

(3) Starting Businesses: Our clients have found that the self-employment program offered in Vernon is not meeting their needs. Although several clients participated in Aboriginal Best in February 2006, none has yet started their business. This situation requires careful reflection, if we are to ensure equitable representation of Aboriginal persons in the business community. The FNES will approach Service Canada to respond to these gaps, and work closely with Laara Mixon, ONA Business Development Program.



Resiliency Training:

Donna Dunstan attended the Resiliency Training, which focused on the needs of high risk clients. This training was beneficial for her because she is more conscious of how she interacts with the clients we serve and how to use communication skills to diffuse situations before they escalate.

Life Skills: We offered two Life Skills training workshops funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation program of the FNFC. The first six-week session ran in April and the second in December 2005. They were well attended, and participants acknowledged many benefits from the programs.

Advocacy: We were active advocating for our clients, again, this year. We advocated for those who were denied wages, holiday pay and out of pocket money. We have worked with the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to help our clients qualify for disability and short-term income support. We have 2 pending cases with WCB and one with BC Human Rights Tribunal.

FNES Year-end Stats April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006

Total Active Clients-Aboriginal (117)	Total Active Clients-Non-aboriginal (4)
New Clients (85)	Employed Clients (106)
Clients returning to school F/T (10)	Short Training (54)
Referrals to Other Agencies (38)	Resume writing/drop ins (1,968)
JCP Agreements (6)	Post Edu./Training Placements (12)
Comm. Networking Contacts (1,037)	

***Thank you!
Karen Abramsen, OTDC & FNES***



Emma Louie

Thank you for all your support and efforts. I wouldn't have been able to have found F/T employment without you. The teamwork your staff puts forth is excellent. The only reason I accessed other Employment Services is because your technology did not equal theirs. Thanks for being available and flexible. I wouldn't have been this successful in Vernon w/o you.



Linda Lee

When I moved to Vernon I had no contacts. I put my name to volunteer at the with FNES. Here I learned about community resources, met new people, updated my first aid and found employment. Volunteering builds self-esteem, adds to your resume, and may lead to a paying position.



Lana Louis

The personnel at FNES are caring, great listeners, and a great source of resources. With their expertise, I was able to harness my skills and experiences and attain a position with the First Nations Friendship Centre.



Cathleen Broman & Paul Matheson

Thanks to the FNES staff for help and support in obtaining employment that I am enjoying. They are also helping me look at my goal of starting my own business. *(We are very pleased that the manager of London Drugs, Paul Matheson, has contacted us as a follow up to the December OTDC meeting.)*



Russell Davis

I wish to convey my most sincere thanks to FNES for all the hard work in capturing my job. I am so happy working where I am working as a First Cook, earning a very good salary for the first time in my life. I am respected and have recognition for my skills and capabilities. I look forward to working with them towards getting my apprenticeship.



Yvonne Lebedoff

A Big Thank You to the women at the FNES for all the encouragement, the support, resume writing, cover letters, the practice interviews and challenging employers who owed me wages and vacation pay. With their help, I secured a position with Interior Health. I thank you for all the help.