



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PREMIER DEXTER RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS CALL TO MEET RE CANADA JOB GRANT

(Dartmouth, NS) Within 24 hours of being contacted by the Association of Community Living Organizations, Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter had invited representatives from the group to join a roundtable discussion regarding the Canada Job Grant and other skills and training issues.

Now into their second full month of trying to obtain details about the Canada Job Grant roundtable process, The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations (ANSCLLO), led by the Dartmouth Learning Network (DLN) were left with no other alternative than to start a letter writing campaign to Federal and Provincial government officials.

Canada Job Grant consultations are cloaked in a veil of mystery. There is no public website to inform stakeholders or the Canadian public about the progress of the consultations, nor is there any published contact information. Up to 50% of the literacy and essential skills programs offered by community learning organization could cease to exist as of April 1, 2014. "Too many Nova Scotians will be forced to remain on the outside looking in as they will not be able to attach themselves to the labour market if the proposed CJG moves ahead. We have many concerns about Budget 2014 and the CJG. Our number one concern is that literacy and essential skills were not mentioned in Budget 2014, and they certainly do not appear to be part of the CJG consultation process. The call from the Premier's office within 24 hours of our request to meet with him was a welcome boost to our efforts to raise awareness about our concerns," says Lesley Dunn, Executive Director.

Premier Darrell Dexter currently chairs the Council of the Federation of Premiers, and in preparation for the council meeting slated to happen later this month the Premier brought together a variety of stakeholder's from across the province to gather feedback on The Canada Job Grant, Employment Insurance changes, Expression of Interest Model – Immigration Changes, and Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

The upcoming premiers meetings will focus on issues important to Nova Scotians, things like current federal labour market funding, enhancing training and skills, immigration, removing barriers to employment and the impact of recent federal programming on the provincial workforce," said Premier Darrell Dexter. "I want to ensure that I have heard directly from Nova Scotia business, labour, educators and students to get their perspective on the current national approach to skills and training in Canada, so I can take their ideas and input to the table next week in Ontario.

"I want to thank the Dartmouth Learning Network and all the participants from yesterday's roundtable. It was a frank and enlightening discussion and I look forward to another productive session in Stellarton next week with groups from across the province."

The current federal Labour Management Agreement (LMA) ends in March 2014 and will be replaced by the Canada Job Grant program as announced in the 2013 federal budget. The goal of this "short duration training" is to "ensure that skills training funds are being used to help Canadians obtain qualifications they need to get jobs in high-demand fields." Canadians accessing the new Canada Job Grant will now be identified by businesses, and the training will be offered by "eligible training institutions, including community colleges, career colleges, and trade union training centres." Community Learning Organizations have not been identified as "eligible training institutions."

"It is a well-established fact that individuals with low literacy and essential skills levels are more likely to be unemployed, have longer periods of unemployment, have longer periods of unemployment, and have lower earnings. Low literacy and essential skills levels also reduce the likelihood of successful completion of post-secondary education, training programs and apprenticeships," says Annette Hegel, Manager of Communications Canadian Literacy and Learning Network.

Based on a significant body of research that national and international agencies along with all levels of governments have recognized, key essential skills are used in nearly every job. These skills include reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use, thinking, oral communication, working with others, and continuous learning. Programs offered through community learning organizations incorporate these key essential skills into their programs which will lead to new or better jobs for unemployed or underemployed Nova Scotians.

For more information, please contact:

Lesley Dunn, Executive Director
Dartmouth Learning Network
(902) 463-9179 ext. 222

executivedirector@dartmouthlearning.net
www.dartmouthlearning.net

Annette Hegel, Manager Communications
Canadian Literacy and Learning Network
(613) 563-2464 ext. 223

AHegel@literacy.ca
www.literacy.ca

Jennifer Stewart
Office of the Premier
(902) 424-0007

stewartjl@gov.ns.ca
<http://premier.gov.ns.ca>

ABOUT

DARTMOUTH LEARNING NETWORK

Originally founded in 1985 by the former Premier of Nova Scotia Dr. John Savage, The Dartmouth Learning Network offers free literacy and essential skills programming in classroom/small group and one-on-one environments; daytime and evening programs are held on site, and at community partner locations throughout Dartmouth. We offer basic adult literacy programs, math upgrading, computer basics, and employment readiness program in addition to a General Education Development (GED) program.

ANSCLO

The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organization (ANSCLO) is an umbrella organization representing 27 Community Learning Organizations (CLO) in Nova Scotia. CLOs across Nova Scotia use Federal/Provincial Labour Management Agreement (LMA) funds to provide programs that address literacy and other essential skills to help their learners obtain new or better jobs. Many learners attending CLO programs funded under the LMA are either unemployed or under-employed.

CANADIAN LITERACY AND LEARNING NETWORK

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network is the national hub for research, information and knowledge exchange, increasing literacies and essential skills across Canada. CLLN, a non-profit charitable organization, represents literacy coalitions, organizations and individuals in every province and territory in Canada. We share knowledge, engage partners and stakeholders and build awareness to advance literacy and learning across Canada.