

Bridge to Better Onboarding

Project information

Background and rationale

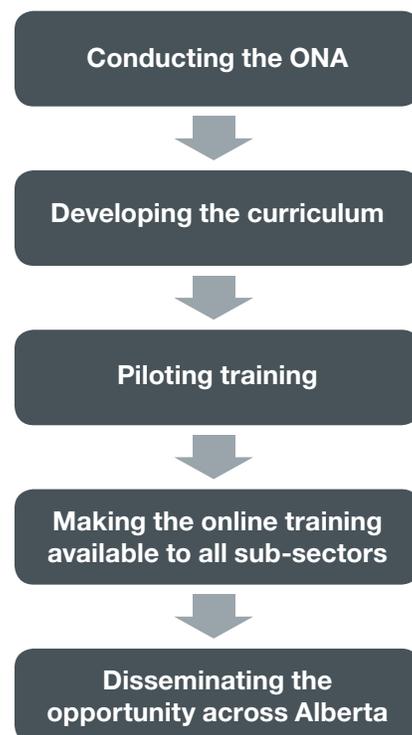
Bridge to Better Onboarding is an innovative workplace-training project funded by the Government of Alberta. It is designed to increase language, intercultural, and workplace essential skills (WES) of the many immigrant workers in the food processing industry in Alberta.

With high worker turnover, reliance on semi-skilled workers, changes to the federal government's Temporary Foreign Worker program, and food safety concerns, the industry is poised well to benefit from targeted training that will improve the integration process of immigrant workers during the new hire and onboarding phases. AWES has been funded by the Government of Alberta and is working with AFPA to bring companies within the sector the opportunity to participate in the Bridge to Better Onboarding pilot project.

Scope

- Employer partners will be located in Calgary, Edmonton, or Red Deer. Preferred location(s) for the two main employer partners is Calgary and surrounding areas or Red Deer and surrounding areas.
- The target number of participants is 100 (40 managers/supervisors, 60 employees who have been with their company for up to 18 months).
- Front-line immigrant workers at participating companies will receive 23.5 hours of blended training at no cost.
- Managers and supervisors can sign up for a 12-hour train-the-trainer workshop series offered at a nominal fee.

Project phases



Course components

- 1. Train-the-trainer workshops**
Provide awareness, strategies, and tools to employers to help them deal with specific language, essential skills, and intercultural gaps of their immigrant workforce.
- 2. “Newcomer Integration: Working in the Food Processing Industry” online course**
Build the language, workplace essential skills, and intercultural communication for immigrants to succeed during the orientation/onboarding time and beyond.
- 3. “Succeeding in the Food Processing Industry: Language and Essential Skills for Newcomers to Canada”**
Incorporate language development, workplace essential skills, and intercultural competence training contextualized to the workplace generally, and the food processing sector specifically, to help immigrants understand orientation materials and thrive during and beyond the onboarding process.
- 4. Deliver Digital Literacy Modules**
3.5 hours of workplace digital skills:
Workshop 1: Communicating with co-workers by email
Workshop 2: Viewing documents online

Opportunity/Commitment

1. Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA)

Designing and delivering effective workplace training programs involves making decisions about learning outcomes that best address the particular needs, interests, and circumstances of the workers and workplace. It requires a clear understanding of benchmarking participants, understanding desired learning outcomes, and comparing these to identify skill gaps. Above all, it clarifies priorities for learning, the ways in which those priorities will be addressed, and how the participants need to progress in training. In order to design and deliver such a program that is an integral part of the workplace, one of the first steps required is to conduct an organizational needs assessment (ONA). The general steps required to conduct an ONA are as follows: Senior Manager/HR Consultation; Supervisor Consultation; Employee Consultation; Data Review; and Training Recommendations.

For this project, AWES will conduct an ONA with several food processors (ideally, at least one meat processor and one dairy/bakery processor). Gaps will be determined by assessing immigrant employees' language and workplace essential skills and measuring those against what is required to engage in and benefit from employer orientation training and onboarding processes. This stage includes:

- Schedule time for AWES to job shadow and conduct interviews.
- Schedule time for AWES to attend safety and orientation meetings and/or other relevant training.
- Allow AWES to collect workplace documents, capture authentic language samples.

2. Pilot site for training

Pilot site companies will work with AWES to create the enabling conditions for successful training implementation including identifying performance issues and ensuring employee participation in training, skill assessments, and surveys. AWES will work with companies to create an efficient and effective training process that aligns to employer production schedules and business needs. The roles and responsibilities will include:

- With AWES, develop and implement an internal marketing and outreach plan to promote training and program objectives to all staff levels.
- Provide release time for training and assessments, and encourage participants to complete all assessments and surveys. Monitor and report on implementation issues to training provider.
- Coordinate project scheduling in-house related to promotion of opportunity, assessments, and training.
- Provide and ensure access to meeting rooms, workplace materials, and training equipment to support training and evaluation activities.

3. Project Advisory Committee

A few sector representatives are needed for this committee. Participating will not be onerous and will only require attendance of three meetings in a central location over a two-year span.

Learner outcomes

It is expected that newcomers will:

- Have an oral and written command of the main onboarding and orientation concepts, terminology, and job-related requirements.
- Function with communicative and cultural competence as part of a workplace team.
- Participate more fully in additional job-specific technical training due to increased workplace essential skills (WES).
- Have a better and broader understanding of safety concepts and practices as they pertain to food processing.

It is expected that employers will:

- Have an increased capacity to deal with language, WES, and intercultural matters more effectively.

