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**CONNECTOR**

**TOOLKIT**



Western REN Connector Program

**Being a Connector**

The Connector Program puts skilled job seekers in touch with business owners and operators, managers, civil servants, community leaders...People like you.

This Program is a simple formalized networking initiative to help broaden trained professionals’ networks through one-on-one meetings with established business leaders who work in the same field. It is a simple but effective referral process that puts skilled job seekers in touch with people like you so they can connect to our workforce and settle successfully in our community.

**Connectees are not guaranteed a job through this program but are encouraged to treat each connection meeting as an opportunity that may lead to a job interview.**

**Who Are Connectors?**

Connectors are people in our community who know and are in contact with many people and are very comfortable making introductions. Connectors know people through their social, cultural, professional, and economic circles, and have a knack for bringing people together who work or live in different circles.

**What is the time commitment?**

This program requires a minimal time commitment. As a Connector you are expected to meet with a Connectee for a 30 minute meeting. **You only meet with this person once.** If you are interested in re-engaging as a connector with a new Connectee, you could be asked 2-3 times a year to meet different people for a one time meeting.

**How does the Connector Program work?**

The Connector Program is a simple but effective referral process: the Connector provides the participant with 2-3 contacts, and then each of those contacts provides additional referrals. From here, a participant’s basic network is formed and through one-on-one meetings the Connector and participant discover opportunities together.

**How do you ensure participants are employment ready / ready for a Connector meeting?**

Each Connectee is screened by the Program Manager before being matched with a Connector. All Connectees are job ready and are either:

* Skilled newcomers- from across the province, country or around the globe
* Recent local and international graduates
* Post-secondary students who will be graduating next year and want to work in our region
* Skilled “boomerangers” who are returning home and /or
* Local professionals who are not working in the field they were trained for

What Connectees may lack in work experience they make up for in their skill set, education, positivity and willingness to learn. The basic business network created from this program will better connect them to the opportunities available in our region. If you have any doubts that the person is employment-ready, please share your concerns with the Program Manager.

**The Process**

You will be matched with a Connectee who has similar educational background and work experience as yours or who wishes to work in the industry you represent. Once a match has been made, the Program Manager will introduce you to the Connectee via email. The Connectee is instructed to reach out to you asking to set up a time and location to meet.

**Connector Benefits**

By becoming a Connector, you will benefit from:

* Access to local talent
* Knowing you are opening doors for people and helping them succeed in Western NS
* Making Western NS a more welcoming and diverse community and contributing to talent retention

**Connector’s Role**

* Meet with the participant
* Listen, ask questions, and share knowledge of current market demands and the skills required in your field
* After the meeting, we ask that you try to provide the participant with **2-3** other relevant contacts in your network**.** Each of those contacts will be asked for three more referrals, essentially creating a basic business network. We suggest sending an email or phoning your referrals letting them know about the new person you have met.
* Be honest; provide any relevant feedback to the Connectee through the Connector Program Project Manager

**Connectee’s Role**

Connectees are job ready and aware that the goal of the Connector Program is to enhance their networking skills and current job search strategies. **They are aware that there is no guarantee they will find employment through the program.**

Connectees have been asked to:

* Arrive prepared and on time for meetings with Connectors
* Demonstrate professionalism during all meetings
* Respect the time and dedication of the Connector
* Ensure business inquires and concerns align with the goal to find work in their related field
* Be responsible for subsequent contact with the next round of Connectors/other referrals provided
* Track the meetings with Connectors to use as references and referrals into the next round of Connectors

**Questions you may be asked by the Connectee**

* I have done a bit of research on your organization by looking over the website, but I am wondering if you would mind telling me more about your role is within the organization?
* Take me through a typical day for you
* What do you like about your job/career?
* What attracted you to this field?
* How did you get into this career?
* What is the “up side” of this job/career for you?
* What is the “down side” of this job/career for you?
* What do you look for when you are hiring?
* Where do you see this field/industry in five years?
* Could you please provide me with other contacts that I might benefit from meeting with?

**This Isn’t Mentorship**

While we encourage our Connectors to build relationships beyond the first meeting, this is not a mentorship program.

If Connectors feel comfortable after the initial meeting to provide further advice to a Participant, they are free to do so. However, the primary goal of the Connector relationship is to focus on networking opportunities.

If you have any questions or to provide any feedback about the Connector Program, please contact **Miranda MacLean,** Program Manager, Connector Programat **902-340-8136 or** [**mmaclean@westernren.ca**](mailto:mmaclean@westernren.ca)

**Thank you for considering becoming a Connector in the Connector Program!**

**FUNDING FOR EMPLOYERS**

The following two programs are available to employers who hire a recent graduate or hire somebody who is currently unemployed. **This information has also been shared with the Connectees in this program but may be valuable to you as well.**

**Graduate to Opportunity** [**https://novascotia.ca/programs/graduate-to-opportunity/**](https://novascotia.ca/programs/graduate-to-opportunity/)

To help strengthen Nova Scotia’s workforce and retain well-educated young people in the province, the Graduate to Opportunity program (GTO) provides businesses with salary contributions that make it easier to hire recent graduates. **Employers receive 25% of the first year’s salary – 35% if the new grad is a member of designated diversity group – and 12.5% of the second year’s salary.**

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the program, your business must meet one or more of the following criteria:

* A company with fewer than 100 employees.
* A start-up company, incorporated within two years of the application date.
* A social enterprise, not-for-profit organization, or registered charity, with recognized standing.

To be eligible for the program, your business must create a job that meets the following criteria:

* A permanent, full-time position with a minimum annual salary of $30,000.
* A position that requires an individual to live and work in Nova Scotia as a new full-time employee of the organization.
* A position that does not begin until final approval is granted through the program.

Graduates who are eligible to be hired through the program must meet the following criteria:

* An individual who has successfully completed a post-secondary program within a year of the date the employer application is received. (Please see canlearn.ca for a list of the post-secondary institutions this program recognizes.)
* An individual who is not an Apprentice. If your business intends to hire an Apprentice, you will need to apply for the START program at <https://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/>

For more information, please visit: <http://novascotia.ca/programs/graduate-to-opportunity/>

**START Program**

The START Program will encourage employers to hire Nova Scotians requiring work experience.

Financial incentives will be provided to employers with a labour need willing to support ready-to-work Nova Scotians. **Incentives will vary depending on the type of employment offered and the skill level of the employee.**

Individuals may be eligible for participation in the START Program if:

* They are unemployed
* Are Canadian citizens or permanent residents legally entitled to work in Canada and are a Nova Scotia resident; or
* Are an international graduate who meets eligibility requirements.

For more information, please visit: <http://novascotia.ca/employmentnovascotia/programs/start.asp>