



Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women (ACTEW) is an umbrella group of agencies and programs delivering employment and training services to women in Ontario and beyond. ACTEW distributes information regarding labour force development policy, consults with various levels of government, conducts research projects designed to enhance our understanding of the training and education terrain, and advocates for women's access to quality employment and training services. Our mission is address issues of women's equality in community-based training programs, and in the labour force. We promote and support community-based training opportunities for women.

Message from the Chair & the Executive Director

This has been a year of growth and renewal. Our membership has grown from 49 to 70 members, and there are currently close to 750 subscribers to the ACTEW-L Email bulletin. Our web site attracts 50,000 hits a month and our interactive tools are used frequently; the *Looking for Training?* Directory is the most popular. We have become a CAP network of 13 sites and we are working on becoming a Community Learning Network through the Office of Learning Technologies. Jen Liptrot, our Online Community Animator is an invaluable member of the ACTEW staff. She has been to most of your agencies to deliver workshops and training sessions. The Board of Directors has stabilized, gone through an in-depth strategic planning process, and is committed to seeing ACTEW stay vibrant, current, and actively serving our members.

Our membership has expanded and diversified. We have new members from outside Toronto, from Tamworth, Hamilton, St. Catharine's, and from Ottawa. Thank you all for your support of ACTEW. It is good to know that we are meeting a need by providing quality membership services. Thanks to all of you who were part of our strategic planning process. There is still much to do, we hope to do it with your help and support. Your commitment is what makes this all possible.

Michelle Joseph, Chair Karen Lior, Executive Director

2000-2001 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michelle Joseph

Chair, Community member

Stacey Papernick

past Chair, Community member

TJ Schur

*representing Working Women
Community Centre*

Chris Black

Treasurer, Community member

Maureen Millard

*resigned this year, representing
Choices in Living*

Sarah Knox, Secretary

Community member

Eva Pakyam

representing YWCA/LEAP Program

Estelle Amaron

*representing Accessible Community
Counselling and Employment Services,
ACCES*

Faelyne Templer

Community member

Liz Creal

representing the Fred Victor Centre

ACTEW Staff

Karen Lior

Executive Director

Jen Liptrot

Online Community Animator

Carol van den Kerkhof

Administrative Coordinator

ACTEW gratefully thanks the following agencies and foundations. Their on-going support allows us to work on the behalf of the women's training community.

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation; the Voluntary Action on Line Program, www.gov.on.ca/MCZCR

Status of Women, Canada, www.swc-cfc.gc.ca

The Ontario Women's Directorate, www.gov.on.ca/mczcr/owd

The Trillium Foundation, www.trilliumfoundation.org

The National Literacy Secretariat, www.nald.ca/nls/htm

Office Workers Career Centre/George Brown



WHO WE ARE

Advocates for Community-based Training and Education for Women (ACTEW) began in 1985 as CATEW, the Community of Alternative Training and Education for Women. They identified the need for focus on women's training needs, applied to Status of Women

Canada. The proposal grew out of a (then) growing concern that programs offered by traditional educational institutions "are not providing women with the essential core life and generic skills that will prepare them for long term financial independence." The proposal noted that "there is a broad consensus that the new technology is causing large dislocations in the labour force, particularly in traditionally female occupations and that every effort must be made to ensure that women in and entering the labour force will have equal access to available employment and that the trends which have led to job and economic segregation be reversed." Other issues highlighted in the proposal included:

- A decrease in the number of women participating in Canada Employment and Immigration Commission sponsored training programs due to the "designated Immigration Commission sponsored training programs due to the "designated occupations of national importance" in traditionally male occupations and the stiff entrance requirements in Grade XII math and science.
- The difficulty of community colleges in attracting and retaining young women students in non-traditional occupations
- An increasing number of programs arising to meet the needs of women who are not accessing mainstream programs.

CATEW received a grant leading to the publication of *"The Needs of Community-based Training Programs for Women in Metro Toronto: Some Recommendations."* This was the basis for the establishment of ACTEW. ACTEW was incorporated in 1988 with the objects of enhancing employment opportunities for women by:

- Supporting existing training alternatives in the community, and
- Establishing new training programs.

ACTEW is now a coalition with 70 members, primarily in the Greater Toronto area but from as far away as Vancouver Island. Our interactive Online Women's Training Community has raised our profile and expanded our capacity to work in the women's training sector. Our publications and resources are circulated widely through our membership in the two academic training networks, the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Network (NALL) at OISE/UT and the Labour Education and Training Research Network at the York University Centre for Research in Work and Society.

1999/2000 EVENTS

- ❖ Publication of *Shortcuts to Career Development Resources for Girls and Women*, with the Ontario Women's Directorate
- ❖ Publication of *Challenges and Connections*, A Project of the Maytree Foundation
- ❖ Launch of the "Looking for Training" Directory
- ❖ **CAP project.** We are adding additional sites and will be a network of 13 access points across the city of Toronto.
- ❖ **General Members Meetings** this year have been consistently well attended and serve to introduce ACTEW members to a variety of services and resources.
- ❖ **Workshops and Presentations** — ACTEW conducted workshops at the Opportunities Conference, The Going for Gold Conference in BC, the National Conference on Aging in New Orleans, and the Women in Rural Economic Development Conference in Stratford, ON, National Conference of the Labour Education and Research Network, BC.
- ❖ **Training Sessions** — Jen and Karen have facilitated training sessions at the Office

What Members Say

There is always something

"Your e-newsletter"

*"I can't tell you how much I enjoy reading
Working in isolation from my peers, I was
struggling with these lac*

*"Just a quick note to say thank you for all the
I find them incredibly useful and inform*

*"The information disseminated by ACTEW
bulletins is of direct relevance to our ag
training services to*

*"We cannot stress enough the importance of
that promote education, learning and pa*

*"We welcome the collaborative forum they provide
and the excellent resource information they*

"ACTEW's most vital role in our sector"

EVENTS & PROJECTS

Workers Career Centre, Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES), Times Change Women's Employment Service, the Fred Victor Centre, Sistering, JVS, Women in New Roles. She has also developed workshop curriculum for presentations on Marketing, Introduction to the Internet, Job Search Online, and Resume Submission Online.

- ❖ A change of address to www.actew.org, and new promotional materials to match the web site
- ❖ **Mobilizing the Capacity of the Women's Training Sector** — ACTEW conducted focus groups in Newmarket, Peterborough, Oakville and Toronto, reaching 350 women across Ontario. The notes from the focus groups are posted in the discussion forum on www.actew.org.
- ❖ **Advocacy Meetings** with MPs Dr. Carolyn Bennett, and Tony Ianno.
- ❖ **A Public Education forum** organized by the Toronto Training Board

Why About ACTEW

to read in the ACTEW-L.

er is wonderful."

ing the ACTEW events and training...

s beginning to believe that I was the only

k of training dilemmas."

e time and energy you put into this e-bulletins.

ative, you make my job so much easier."

through the mailings, the website and e-mail

ency as a provider of employment and

immigrant women."

f having community agencies like ACTEW

partnership within the local communities."

ide for bringing together women's organizations

collect on training and employment needs."

r is that of trend-spotter and advocate."

WHAT WE DO

The Women's Online Training Community, www.actew.org, has become an important focus of our work. We deliver many services electronically, and are able to connect women and women's programs beyond urban areas. The site includes:

- The Looking for Training? Directory, a comprehensive database, developed collaboratively with ONESTEP, of our members programs and services across Ontario.
- Events and Job Listings including free public postings
- News, press releases and community announcements
- Resources, a comprehensive database with information on women, education and training with over 300 listings
- Member's Discussion Areas, an online forum for working together

In addition our e-mail bulletins, the ACTEW-L and News on the Net now have close to 750 subscribers. The www.actew.org site was funded by The Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation's Voluntary @ction online program.

ACTEW is one of six members of an innovative content-sharing constellation. The constellation was initiated as a partnership between ACTEW and ONESTEP. The other members of the constellation are:

- The Possibilities Project
- The Metro Network for Social Justice
- Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI)
- Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (CSPC-T)
- Web Networks

OUR FUTURE

Highlights of the Strategic Planning Process

Background/context

Last spring and summer ACTEW engaged in a strategic planning process that included:

- A literature and website review
- Meetings with the Board
- A survey distributed to ACTEW member agencies and programs that provided input on ACTEW's environment, services, and priorities. The survey had a 39% response rate
- In-depth interviews with 5 key member representatives working in a range of ACTEW member agencies or programs
- Key-informant interviews
- The preparation of an Options Paper that was discussed with the Board and staff in June
- Finalizing the Strategic Plan to present recommendations to the membership at the AGM.

Key findings

- ACTEW members serve an impressive number of people. The 19 members that responded to the survey serve approximately 28,000 clients a year — suggesting that ACTEW members serve close to 70,000 clients yearly.
- ACTEW has a diverse membership. Our members include full agencies and programs within agencies, programs that serve women and men and programs that serve women exclusively, programs focussed on employment and training and programs that include additional services such as counselling, language instruction and housing.
- ACTEW is highly regarded by our member agencies; information sharing, advocacy and networking support were indicated as the leading benefits of being an ACTEW member.
- ACTEW's niche — focussing on women with training and education needs - was seen as strong and needed.
- ACTEW has a solid reputation for effective, informed advocacy, solid research and for connecting the sector; the Networking is strong in Toronto
- There was strong support for ACTEW to bolster our systemic mandate and activities; policy research and analysis; advocacy; system-wide coordination; etc.
- ACTEW's advocacy work such as regular meetings with policy makers, policy analysis and public education activities is seen as crucial.

ACTEW'S VALUES AND CORE FUNCTIONS

We believe that education and training can be the bridge between poverty and economic independence. Our members provide holistic and comprehensive employment and training services that enable and empower women to gain and retain quality employment.

ACTEW's key functions are:

1. Information sharing and distribution — ACTEW facilitates the collection, distribution, and sharing of information on training and education for women and its members, for women seeking training, for governments and other institutions and for the general public.
2. Research Projects and publications — ACTEW engages in research to document, analyze and report on women's training, employment and education needs.
3. Policy research and analysis — Driven by the needs of our members and the women they serve, and grounded in our research and values, this work includes:
 - Providing information, analysis and strategic advice to member agencies.
 - Public education through media, publications, www.actew.org, forums and workshops.
 - Networking with other agencies and umbrella groups to exchange information and develop collaborative strategies.
 - Providing information, analysis and advice to public officials.
4. Developing Resources and Tool — ACTEW develops and distributes resources and tools designed to aid member agencies in serving women needing training and education.
5. Professional development for Member Agency Staff and Volunteers

Strategic Directions to 2004

1. Core Functions: Member agencies said that the core functions ACTEW provides are valuable. Therefore, ACTEW will provide the mix of functions, programs and services developed over the past years and further elaborate its objectives, audiences and activities related to policy research and analysis.
2. Identity: Member agencies and community members commented that since ACTEW services and mission

Membership in ACTEW

Membership in ACTEW is encouraged for all groups offering women a community-based training approach. Associate memberships are available to those supporting the ACTEW mandate.

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have changed and grown, the name no longer accurately reflects our work. ACTEW will change its name to better reflect its expanded mission and review its overall identity.

3. Coordination and planning: In order to ensure that women's needs are addressed, ACTEW will continue and deepen its partnerships with other umbrella agencies, and explore a role in planning and coordination throughout the sector.

4. Membership: ACTEW will review its membership structure and develop a membership and activity structure that accommodates different geographic, programmatic and financial interests. ACTEW will outreach and expand membership in Ontario.

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College/HRDC, www.officeworkers.org

The Maytree Foundation, www.maytree.com

New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Network
(NALL), www.nall.ca

ACTEW gratefully acknowledges the support we receive from two national training networks, the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Network, OISE/UT, and the Training Matters Network, Centre for Research in Work and Society, York University.