



a women's training community

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) is a charitable provincial network of supporters, trainers, agencies, and organizations delivering employment and training services to women. ACTEW's mission is to promote and support community-based training opportunities for women. ACTEW promotes women's full economic and social participation in the Canadian labour force by supporting community-based training programs through networking, information sharing, and professional development with our members and within the community-based training sector; capacity-building project and sector development; public education and research and publications.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This has been an exciting year of growth for ACTEW, and much change throughout our membership. We've continued to diversify our members as we welcomed more agencies working within and outside the Greater Toronto Area. Through our Putting Women in the Picture project, ACTEW has increased our capacity for policy analysis, ensuring our members stay informed through the changes brought about by the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) implemented on January 1, 2007. We've made numerous presentations and facilitated many workshops throughout communities in Ontario and in major centres across Canada. We launched a successful two-day symposium to focus on supporting women's livelihoods that brought 100 service providers from around the province. We've re-designed and re-named our e-mail bulletin inTouch, and launched a companion monthly policy e-bulletin called inFocus. In 2006, ACTEW became a proud member of the Women's Future Fund, the first and only national women's fundraising federation in Canada.

Your involvement makes ACTEW's work possible and ensures our work meets your needs, ultimately building a strong provincial network of women's employment and training services. We appreciate and value your continued support.

Estelle Amaron, President

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ACTEW gratefully thanks our members, donors, and the following agencies and foundations for their generous support. Their contributions allow us to work on behalf of the women's training community.

Funders and Donors

Women's Program, Status of Women Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), The Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD), The Initiatives in the New Economy Research Alliance Programme, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), The Community Access Program (CAP), Industry Canada through the Toronto District School Board, The Trillium Foundation, Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program, Alterna Savings

2006-2007 PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

- ❖ **Putting Women in the Picture: Labour Market Policy and the Women's Training Sector** — Funded by Status of Women Canada, this 3-year project works to create a strong, coordinated network of women's training and employment service providers in Ontario. Changing federal and provincial policy regarding labour force development, employment insurance, and access to training services are providing unique opportunities and challenges for women's employment and training services. Over the last year, ACTEW has held a two-day symposium in Toronto and partnered with the Employment and Education Centre to hold a two-day conference in Brockville. ACTEW also presented at conferences in Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver. We have launched a blog and a monthly e-bulletin that provides updates, analysis and opportunities as the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities develops Employment Ontario. ACTEW has also released several profiles of unique and innovative programs within member agencies, as well as fact sheets on women's employment, on topics such as women and employment insurance, and on immigrant women. All project deliverables can be accessed through <http://www.actew.org/pwp>
- ❖ **Content-Sharing Constellation** — Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, this 3-year project is expanding the number of agencies sharing their employment and training information online, making resources even more accessible throughout the community-based training sector. The Constellation network now includes ten organizations: the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres (OAYEC), Findhelp Information Services, Ontario Literacy Coalition, CLEONet, Entrewomen.ca, Community Connection, Information Niagara, Ontario Aboriginal Calendar of Services and Events, and the Toronto Training Board. This award-winning project was the basis for a first workshop and manual on partnership development that was launched this year, with the second workshop and manual on collaborative technology development to be launched in the upcoming year.
- ❖ **Women's Alternate and Informal Pathways to Work in the IT Sector** — This 4-year research study looked at women's alternate and informal learning pathways to jobs in the IT (Information Technology) sector. ACTEW worked with Dr. Shauna Butterwick at the University of British Columbia to explore the ways in which women acquire IT skills. This project is one of thirteen sectoral case studies being undertaken by the Research Network on Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL) based at the Centre for Study of Education and Work at OISE/UT. Funding for this project is provided by the Initiatives in the New Economy Program (SSHRC).
- ❖ **Paths to Financial Vibrancy** — ACTEW collaborated with OAYEC on the ONESTEP-led one-year project, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The project compiles existing research, available training opportunities, and indicators of financial vibrancy. It is an innovative, web-based tool at <http://www.financialvibrancy.org> developed to help map out the steps for community-based training agencies to develop and implement their plans to becoming financially vibrant.

WHO WE ARE

A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) is a charitable umbrella network of 70 community-based organizations delivering employment and training services to women. A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW) began in 1985 as CATEW, the Community of Alternative Training and Education for Women. Officially incorporated in 1987, ACTEW's membership has grown substantially over the years and now includes agencies in Cobourg, Waterloo, South River, Hamilton, Ganonoque, Oshawa, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Brantford, Sarnia, and Kitchener. In October 2005, ACTEW became a registered charity (registration #10668 3493 RR0001).

WHAT WE DO

ACTEW's Mission:

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 obtain and retain quality employment. The women that our agencies work with, many of whom are older women, recent immigrants, women with disabilities, sole-support mothers, and/or women of colour, face systemic discrimination and remain disadvantaged by years of economic recession and severe employment displacement. We believe that education and training can be the bridge between poverty and economic independence. Our members' unique sensitivity to the access issues women face ensure the provision of holistic and comprehensive employment and training services that enable and empower women to gain and retain quality employment. ACTEW's mission is to promote and support these community-based training opportunities for women.

ACTEW's Core Functions:

ACTEW promotes women's full economic and social participation in the Canadian labour force by supporting community-based training programs through:

1. **Networking, information sharing, and professional development with our members and within the community-based training sector** — ACTEW collects, distributes, and shares information on women's training and employment issues for our member agencies, for women seeking training, for governments and other institutions, and for the general public.

2. Capacity-Building Projects and Sector Development

— Driven by the needs of our members and the women they serve, this work includes:

- Developing resources and tools designed to aid member agencies in serving women needing training and education, and
- Providing professional development opportunities for member agency staff and volunteers.

3. Public Education — ACTEW's research and public education work is designed to enhance our understanding of the training and education terrain by providing information related to the employment and training needs of women, as well as employment training, employment counselling and educational programs for women.

4. Research and Publications — ACTEW engages in research to document, analyze and report on women's training, employment and education needs. From our research activities we also develop accessible publications to disseminate our research findings and further our public education work.

ACTEW's Women's Online Training Community at <http://www.actew.org> continues to be a cornerstone of our public education and membership activities.

The site features:

- A new policy blog examining labour market policy, current research, and reports on meetings and events attended by ACTEW and our members
- ACTEW member profiles
- Fact sheets on key issues related to women's employment
- The Looking for Training provincial directory of community services
- Archives of our e-bulletins, inTouch and inFocus
- Events and job listings including free public postings
- News, press releases and community announcements
- Resources and publications with information on women, education and training
- The Skills and Knowledge Profile Online, an interactive series of modules that allow women to validate their prior skills and experience

Our ACTEW-L email bulletin continues to grow and this past year we gave it a new name, along with a new look: inTouch. ACTEW was also pleased to launch a second monthly email bulletin dedicated to policy analysis: inFocus.

- ❖ **Social Purpose Enterprise Feasibility Workshops** — Funded by the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP), with this project ACTEW coordinated a series of workshops for organizations new to the field of social enterprise and interested in assessing the potential for providing skill development and employment opportunities using a social enterprise approach. In the workshops, each organization took their business idea through a feasibility assessment with the goal of producing a realistic, viable social enterprise plan.
- ❖ **Shortcuts for Career Development Resources for Girls and Women, 3rd Edition** — Funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, this guide provides print and online resources that are sensitive to the career development needs of girls and women. Substantively updated last year with new sections on science, technology and the trades, business and entrepreneurship, and French-language resources, Shortcuts continues to fly off our shelves!
- ❖ **Moving on to Success (MOTS)** — YWCA is working in partnership with ACTEW and Springtide Resources to offer women who are survivors of abuse, in abusive situations or at risk of abuse with training and employment supports. In particular, ACTEW is researching needs of employment counsellors and of employers related to women survivors of abuse.
- ❖ **Partnership with Transformative Leadership for Women Certificate Program at York** — ACTEW partnered with the Transformative Leadership for Women certificate program offered through the Division of Continuing Education, Atkinson at York University, and was able to offer subsidized seats in the program for ACTEW members.
- ❖ **It's Your Call Research Project** — Led by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, ACTEW partnered on this collaborative research project to examine the impact of HRSDC's Call for Proposals process on community-based training programs in Toronto. Other partners included ONESTEP, OCASI, OAYEC and Toronto Neighbourhood Centres (TNC). Funding for the project was provided through a United Way of Greater Toronto Social Research Grant.
- ❖ **ACTEW CAP Network** — Now in its seventh year, ACTEW continues to support and coordinate one of the Toronto District School Boards sub-networks of the Community Access Program. Sites are located at 10 of our member agencies in Toronto. The CAP program provides free Internet access for the public at community-based agencies across Canada. Funding to support the network is provided by Industry Canada.
- ❖ **Advocacy and Community Participation** — ACTEW, along with our sister umbrella groups ONESTEP, OCASI, and OAYEC, met quarterly with HRSDC to bring members' concerns and issues to their attention. Staff at ACTEW participated in the newly formed Voluntary Sector Advisory Committee (VSAC) with HRSDC and also represent our members at the Employment Ontario Service Delivery Advisory Group with the provincial Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. This year, ACTEW became a member of the Women's Future Fund, an organization that raises funds for national women's groups. ACTEW members in the Toronto area continued to provide input on women's training issues at the local

level as the ad-hoc Women's Reference Group for the Toronto Training Board; Jen Liptrot served as the Women's Representative for TTB. At the national level, ACTEW continued to be an Ontario representative to the Canadian Coalition for Community-Based Employability Training (CCCBET).

- ❖ **General Members Meetings** — Our members' meetings are well attended and serve to introduce ACTEW members to a wide variety of services and resources, as well as providing networking and information-sharing opportunities. Guest speakers and topics this year included hosting TTB and their Trends, Opportunities and Priorities research, Pam Lahey presenting on her research on the federal

Targeted Wage Subsidy Program and a mid-winter Nia Jam that raised funds for the Women's Future Fund.

- ❖ **Workshops and Presentations** — ACTEW presented workshops at the Opportunities Conference and NATCON. We presented on our policy work at several national conferences, including the 2006 Conference of the Work and Learning Network (WLN) in Edmonton, the Jobs and Justice Conference in Vancouver, the Canadian Economic Development Network 2006 Conference, the Canadian Society for Training and Development National Conference in Vancouver, and an Oxfam/FAFIA symposium on the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Ottawa.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Core Functions: ACTEW will continue to provide a mix of services including public education, information sharing, policy analysis and research, and professional development opportunities at member meetings, capacity-building projects such as Putting Women in the Picture and Social Purpose Enterprise Enterprise Feasibility Workshops, and presentations and workshops related to women's training needs and issues.

Coordination and Planning: ACTEW will continue working on local, provincial and federal partnerships and coalition

efforts in the sector. ACTEW will continue to be involved with the Canadian Coalition for Community-Based Employability Training (CCCBET), as well as the Toronto Training Board.

Membership: ACTEW will continue to outreach to women's training providers across the province. We also continue to network with women's service providers that are providing some career development services in related sectors, for example, housing, settlement, and violence prevention.

What Members Say About ACTEW

Great information, excellent speakers and dynamic colleagues

Keep up the excellent work

They are great! Keep it up!

I love your fact sheet for Putting Women in the Picture. I would love to download it and use it in my teaching.

I love seeing your policy bulletin and can't wait to see more.

Excellent work ACTEW! Thank you

Membership in ACTEW

Membership in ACTEW is open to registered charitable and non-profit organizations that provide employment and training services to women. Other organizations, institutions, or individuals that support our mission are welcome to join ACTEW as associate members.

Copies of ACTEW's audited financial statements are available upon request.

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