

## *Summary*

### **Political Weather Report: Opportunities and Challenges 2nd Annual Golden Horseshoe / Bi-Regional Networking Day, June 19, 2007**

This exercise asked “What are the key opportunities and challenges associated with the changes undertaken by MTCU?” Participants were to consider the employment and training sector before the changes began, the current situation, and the future landscape.

#### *The Uncertainty of Change*

Participants recognize that this change is difficult, largely because *change* itself is difficult. There is a general sense of uncertainty, although some feel “change is good”. More specifically, agencies and individuals are unclear about their new role in *Employment Ontario*, which makes it difficult for organizations to “plan for the future” and has led to “territorial fear” regarding funding. Participants also report that there have been interruption of services and delays in funding, contrary to the seamless plan put forward by MTCU, and this has, or will, cause confusion and frustration among clients. Much of the uneasiness indicated by participants appears linked to the lack of information reported by many.

#### *Community Partnerships*

An increase in community partnerships is a key benefit that has emerged. Before the changes, “no one was networking”. Currently, however, service providers are interacting more with their colleagues, such as at EARN meetings, and are beginning to enjoy the positive outcome of these relationships.

#### *Services for Clients*

Participants see many benefits in the design of *Employment Ontario* for most clients, such as giving clients more choice and more flexibility, in a less complicated, more accessible route to services. Participants also see the changes as a time of opportunity to improve and increase services for groups of clients that have been previously underserved. However, participants are concerned that multi-barriered clients and those without access to technology will be left behind. They also want to ensure that local labour market needs and trends are recognized.

#### *At the Agency Level*

At an agency level there are challenges related to funding and setting agency-wide goals. However, agencies also see opportunities to streamline programming, train staff, improve technology, and increase marketing of services through *Employment Ontario*. There is a strong desire that the definition of client success be clarified and that this definition take into consideration the various barriers individual clients face, as well as regional labour market differences.

This information was collected at the 2nd Annual Golden Horseshoe / Bi-Regional Networking Day on June 19, 2007, by Facilitating Inclusion, St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre, and summarized by ACTEW, A Committee to Training and Employment for Women ([www.actew.org](http://www.actew.org)).