

Study to Investigate a Nonprofit Temporary Employment Agency Model for Peterborough Now Underway

The Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) has recently embarked on a research project that is investigating barriers to employment for vulnerable population groups as well as the prospects of establishing a non-profit temporary staffing agency to serve the Peterborough City and County. In this scenario the temporary employment model is seen as an alternative employment solution that would gradually yield to full-time employment for job-seekers.

More specifically the project is exploring opportunities to bringing to Peterborough an agency similar to the successful Vancouver based [EMBERS Staffing Solutions](#) model, the only socially responsible temporary staffing service in Canada. EMBERS Staffing Solutions is an inspiring success story. The model has been very successful in their marketplace and has provided numerous training programs and additional supports to their workers, including first aid, and an annual boot drive. Most recently EMBERS started giving long-term workers extended medical and dental benefits. Since 2008 they have employed over 2200 people and helped over 1100 transition to full time work.

In the United States there are roughly 60 agencies operating as non-profit temporary services, known as alternate staffing organizations. These agencies operate under various mandates, some focusing on particular sectors (i.e. construction or manufacturing only) and target population of their community (i.e. youth only), while others operate across all sectors and work with different profiles of job seekers. Often these operations are part of larger charities, which allows the flow of profits from the temporary agency to be spread amongst the various programs the larger charities are operating.

The idea for the creation of a non-profit temporary employment agency sprung from the desire to address the needs of the temporary employment market and barriers to full-time employment for our local job seekers. In the fall of 2015 the Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) submitted an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) seeking seed funding to perform a feasibility study based on EMBERS's concept of a non-profit temporary employment/staffing agency. PSPC was successful in securing funding and the feasibility study is currently underway.

For the purposes of this study the PSPC is conducting a series of research activities including an environmental scan of successful and viable staffing agency models, a [survey](#) aimed at job

seekers in Peterborough City and County, focus groups with various population groups of job-seekers and information interviews with industry representatives to understand both the demand and supply side for temporary jobs in our local context.

Want to help with the study?

As a community member there are many ways to get involved and help with this study:

➤ *Job seekers survey*

One way to help is by taking yourself or encouraging others to take the job seekers survey. The survey will help us understand the employment needs of job seekers in the Peterborough City and County and assess potential gaps in temporary employment service delivery. The survey is open and available online through the [PSPC website](#). You can also access the survey through the following icon.



The paper version of the survey is available at a number of social service agencies in town. We thank the members of the feasibility study working group and our community partners for helping with the survey dissemination. We can drop off survey forms at your agency as well. E-mail [Safo](#) if interested to receive the paper version of the survey.

➤ *Focus groups*

We are also looking to recruit a number of community members with prior temporary employment experience to join the various focus groups we are hosting during May and June. In particular, we are looking to draw in focus group participants from population groups with barriers to employment, including age, income status, immigration status, disability, etc.

➤ *Information interviews*

You can connect with us through one-on-one informal discussions on the scope of the feasibility study. In particular, we are interested to hear from business associations, individual businesses and industry members on their labour needs.

➤ *Comment on the feasibility study*

We are expecting to have the feasibility study finalized in the fall. Prior to that, we will share the preliminary findings among our working group members and community partners for their feedback. Stay tuned for more updates on this study in the early fall!

➤ *Questions about the project?*

For more information on this project or on how to get involved please contact Safo Musta at 705-743-5915 or smusta@pspc.on.ca

About PSPC

Established in 1977 the [Peterborough Social Planning Council](#) (PSPC) is a non-profit organization that facilitates active, broad based citizen participation in shaping healthy communities in Peterborough City and County. The PSPC acts as a catalyst for positive, sustainable social change and promotes the understanding that social justice is in everyone's interest. Our mandate is achieved through research and policy work, community development and engaging in public education initiatives. Our core funders include the City of Peterborough and Peterborough County.

Sources

<http://www.embersvancouver.com/>

<http://www.embersvancouver.com/wp-content/uploads/TCF-13378-Embers-Staffing-Solutions-Report-v3-LowRes.pdf>

http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/temporary_staffing.pdf

https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/centers_institutes/center_social_policy/9_11_FindingRightFit_web.pdf

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