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Advocacy Bulletin: May 2023 Updates

Hello WRLA members. We've got two updates for you this month, spotlighting some recent developments in Manitoba. First up, it's great to see programs rolling out that are providing real career opportunities for youth in the province.

For our part, WRLA is continuing to work with the provinces and school boards to implement our own program that is helping businesses hire new talent, while giving students on-the-job training and school credit, like our recent work with Calgary Board of Education, and giving students the chance to work at amazing companies like The Cedar Shop and Metrie.

In our second story, the WRLA team had the opportunity to attend a Chamber of Commerce luncheon with official Manitoba Opposition Leader, Wab Kinew.

Manitoba Government Provides \$1.2 Million for Youth to Build Skills, Enter the Workforce

(May 15, 2023) The Manitoba government is providing youth in Manitoba with the opportunity to experience their first jobs in a supportive environment that gives them the confidence and skills needed for work, Economic Development, Investment and Trade Minister Jeff Wharton announced today.

"Our government is committed to supporting young Manitobans so they can build their skills and engage with the workforce through this supportive model," said Wharton. "The programs funded through the First Jobs Fund help youth develop the skills necessary to be successful in the future."



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The First Jobs Fund supports registered non-profit or non-government organizations to implement programming for youth aged 15 to 29 facing barriers to employment, up to a maximum of \$300,000 per organization.

The two programs available include:

- a job readiness program which develops employability skills and provides mentorship, job coaching and life skills to youth participants.; and
- a wage subsidy program which provides a minimum of seven hours of employment per week and at least 150 hours of employment to youth participants.

Last year, more than 300 Manitoba youth had the opportunity to build skills in their first job through the First Jobs Fund. These young people have gained valuable experiences that have supported them in their further education and career paths, the minister noted.

The fund prioritizes projects that support Indigenous youth, include paid work experience, and provide skills and experiences in key economic sectors and for in-demand jobs, said the minister.

Applications for the First Jobs Fund are open until July 31. For more information and the application form, visit https://gov.mb.ca/wd/ites/youth/first_jobs_fund.html.

"The Economic Horse pulls the Social Cart": Manitoba NDP promise a fiscal responsibility first in the run-up to the election

Manitoba's official Leader of the Opposition, Wab Kinew, spoke this week at a luncheon hosted by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. His twenty-minute speech resonated with the gathered business and community leaders as he promised that an NDP-led government would balance the budget within their first term.



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Promising to be a leader for the entire province, and not just those who align with the NDP, Kinew outlined several strong policy points and opportunities that the party has identified to grow the province's economy.

Some of these plans included the development of essential minerals - critical in the manufacture of technology, which includes everything from consumer electronics to green power projects - in Manitoba's north. Leveraging these resources, said Kinew, would position the province as a trusted domestic trading partner at a time when countries like the United States are seeing the existing sources of these materials being bought up by countries and regimes that are much more politically complicated to deal with.

Kinew also outlined the opportunity to convert some of Manitoba's abundant hydroelectric power into raw hydrogen, which could become a lucrative global export. At each step of the way, the government promises to design these programs in consultation with business leaders, community leaders, and indigenous peoples, many of whom live in the areas being studied for development.

Bringing attention back locally, the social "cart" that this economy is going to power includes a comprehensive overhaul of the health system in the province, as well as a commitment to providing reliable, accessible health care. Here, too, the NDP leader presented these investments as a business case - a healthier populace that doesn't have to struggle to find care for their children - can engage more fully in the economy and the workforce, driving the growth even more.

Will these promises come to fruition? Manitobans will have their opportunity to weigh in on that as they head to the polls this fall. WRLA will continue to work with the government, whichever party takes power, to bring our members' needs to the forefront.