



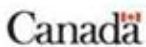
Alberni Valley

EMPLOYMENT CENTRE



Community & Employer Partnership Annual Plan

2016/2017



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I. Community & Employer Partnership Plan Overview

Since the launch of the Employment Program of BC in April of 2012, Island Work Transitions Inc. has been successfully delivering EPBC services in Catchment 5, through the Alberni Valley Employment Centre (AVEC) and our partners. Each year, with this Community & Employer Partnership Annual Plan, we demonstrate how we intend to continue providing services that follow the same priorities as those detailed in the Ministry's Labour Market Development Agreement Annual Plan.

The most recent LMDA Annual Plan was produced by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation for the 2015/2016 year. British Columbia's Labour Market Priorities for this period include:

1. Investing in training to better align British Columbians with sustainable job opportunities and to meet employer demands.
2. Continual development of strategies to engage all British Columbians, including underrepresented groups.
3. Continue partnering with local communities and organizations to further develop and increase community-based partnerships across the province.
4. Continue enhancing EPBC services through continued improvement of research and innovation, measurement, and reporting capabilities.

IWT will support these priorities by aligning our knowledge and experience in our regional labour market with the BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint goal of better matching training and education with industry needs. A thorough understanding of labour market conditions, supported by ongoing research and solid relationships in the community, provides the foundation for informed decision making for our clients. AVEC staff will work toward broadening our association with employer, community and education groups, cultivating partnerships, and promoting EPBC services and other opportunities, such as the Canada-BC Job Fund.

II. Community & Employer Partnership Goals

IWT's Community & Employer Partnership Goals for 2016/2017 include:

1. Develop current labour market information in order to improve our ability to identify and provide skills training opportunities for clients that correspond with employer needs.
2. Establish new relationships, and build on existing ones, in order to facilitate a collaborative, proactive strategy for addressing local labour market needs.
3. Seek partnerships and opportunities with employers and communities to develop solutions and activities that address changing labour market needs.
4. Continue to work with our partners, employers and communities to respond to the needs of underrepresented groups.

III. Alberni-Clayoquot Region Labour Market Profile

Catchment 5, which encompasses the Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot, has a total population of 31,061 spread over an area of 6,596 km², according to the most recent census in 2011. The City of Port Alberni has most of the population of the region, with 17,743 people within the city itself and 25,465 when four rural areas within the Alberni Valley are included. Outside of the Alberni Valley, the Regional District also includes the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet (1,876 and 1,627 people, respectively), the small community of Bamfield (population 275) and the Long Beach Electoral Area (population 1,818). The District is also home to 17 First Nation Reserves with a total population of 2,232 (2011 census).

The most prevalent feature of the regional economy is the ongoing transition from a primary industry-based economy toward a more diverse one. This transition is gradual, having its beginnings in the early 1980s when the forest industry began to downsize and coastal fish stocks began to decline.

For several decades before the 1980s, the region's logging, lumber, and paper manufacturing operations were dominated by a single company employing over 5,000 workers, and operating a Tree Farm Licence that encompassed private and Crown lands from the Alberni Valley to the West Coast. Since the recession of the eighties, sweeping changes have occurred in the industry, including expansions in markets, increased competition, mill closures and consolidations, and accelerated technological changes leading to increased capacity with fewer workers.

Currently, an analysis of our region's highest demand occupations, measured using data from job postings on our website, reveals that occupations in Sales and Service provide 44% of the vacancies (see AVEC Job Postings chart, **Appendix 1**). Of these, positions in food service and hospitality businesses make up the greatest demand. Occupations in Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators is the next largest category, at 13%, and then with 11% each are occupations in Management, and occupations in Education, Law, and Social, Community and Government Services. These numbers have been fairly consistent over the past decade of tracking our job postings, with slight increases of a few percentage points in Management and in Sales and Service, and a similar decrease in Trades & Transport.¹

Last year AVEC staff gathered statistics to learn about factors leading to a high rate of returning clients in our catchment, and found some relevant information in a 2014 Island Health Authority profile on Alberni Health Area (70), which covers the same geographical boundaries as Catchment 5. The profile looked at indicators of health status, and social determinants of health and wellbeing, that are relevant for the region's labour market profile. Some features of this area's health profile include:

- **Income Assistance:** A higher percentage of individuals receiving income assistance (4.0%) than BC (1.7%) or Island Health (1.8%).

¹ It should be noted that our website postings do not include openings by Island Health or Catalyst Paper – we provide these job listings by separate links on our website. Island Health typically has up to 40 postings, mostly in nursing and other medical categories, and nearly all of them are continuous postings with no end date, so actual demand is difficult to determine. Catalyst often lists several openings at its Port Alberni operation, usually in trades and management positions, but these too are often listed without an end date.

- **Employment Insurance:** A higher percentage of individuals on employment insurance (2.5%) than BC (1.5%) or Island Health (1.4%).
- **Unemployment Rate:** A higher unemployment rate (10.0%) than BC (7.8%) or Island Health (7.4%).
- **Reading and Writing Skills:** A higher percentage of children below standard in reading (29.5%) and writing (29.6%) than BC (19.6% and 13.6%) or Island Health (24.3% and 18.8%).
- **Dwellings in Need of Repair:** A higher percentage of dwellings needing major repairs (12.7%) than BC (7.2%) or Island Health (6.9%).
- **Older Dwellings:** A higher percentage of older housing (32.9%) than BC (16.0%) or Island Health (20.2%).
- **Crowded Households:** A higher percentage of crowded households (2.3%) compared to Island Health (1.7%), but a lower percentage compared to BC (3.3%).
- **Lone-parent Family:** A higher percentage of lone-parent families (35.7%) than in BC (26.7%) or Island Health (31.1%).
- **Male Lone-Parent Family:** A higher percentage of male-lone parent families (9.4%) than BC (5.7%) or Island Health (7.0%).
- **Teen Mothers:** A higher rate of births to young mothers (<20 years) in the region (100.6 per 1,000 live births) compared to BC (27.1 per 1,000) or Island Health (39.0 per 1,000).
- **Children in Need of Protection:** A higher rate of children in need of protection (21.5 per 1,000 children aged 0-18) than BC (6.4 per 1,000) or Island Health (12.1 per 1,000).
- **Children on Income Assistance:** A higher rate of children on income assistance (8.5%) than BC (3.1%) or Island Health (3.8%).
- **Infant Mortality Rate:** The infant mortality rate was higher in the region (4.3 per 1,000 live births) than BC (3.7 per 1,000) or Island Health (3.9 per 1,000).
- **Alcohol Sales:** Alcohol sales per capita were higher (175.8L per person aged 19+) than BC (103.2L per person) or Island Health (124.3L per person).
- **Serious Crime Rate:** The serious crime rate was higher in the region (12.7 per 1,000 people) than BC (10.1 per 1,000) or Island Health (7.7 per 1,000).

The current state of the labour market in the entire region reflects a continuing process of transition, but there are some features that are unique to each area:

i) Port Alberni

- The present state of the forest industry is healthy, and it remains important to the local economy; however, this activity is being achieved with a workforce of fewer than 1,800 workers. Changes to forest tenure and other government regulations have increased the focus on second growth log harvesting, but most of this volume is exported as logs rather than being processed in local mills, which still process primarily old growth logs. In the year 2015, for example, 47 ships loaded with raw logs were dispatched from the port, while just 11 carried lumber.
- Port Alberni's largest sawmill, Western Forest Products, is currently in a rate dispute with the company which supplies logs from this region, and this has kept local loggers out of work for months while the mill imports its log supply from outside the region.

- In recent years, paper and wood manufacturers have been hiring more tradespeople, but this is primarily to replace retiring workers, and overall workforce numbers are not increasing. Also, the demand in the trades tends to be for fully certified tradespersons, rather than apprentices.
- Catalyst Paper, whose Port Alberni mill employs 317 people, announced in May 2016 that an India-based company has expressed interest in acquiring a majority of its shares, but it is too early in the process to determine how it will affect local operations or employment.
- Employment opportunities for young people have been in decline since the 1980s, and many of them leave the community after high school. This has contributed to the fact that Port Alberni's median age is 47 years, which is 5 years older than the provincial median.
- The city's population has remained at about the same level since the late 1980s, declining in some years and showing only small growth in others. According to the 2011 census, Port Alberni has a Labour Force Participation Rate of only 49%, compared to the British Columbia rate of 65%.
- New businesses have been appearing in the retail and tourism sectors, from kite boarding to entertainment venues, coffee shops and art galleries. Many of these businesses are started by people who are new to the community, and although the number of people employed by each of them is relatively low, their contribution to the local economy in terms of new energy and resources is invaluable. According to the City of Port Alberni, 16 new businesses opened in the first 5 months of 2016.
- Educational facilities continue to expand in the Alberni Valley. Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences is a statutory, not-for-profit, post-secondary degree granting education and research institution, and it is currently the only university in the world which specializes in workplace health sciences. North Island College continues to add to its calendar of programs and physical facilities, and it has partnerships and collaborations with many secondary and post-secondary institutions. Both of these institutions are becoming more engaged with AVEC and in the community, through their own events and with groups such as the Alberni Valley Learning Council.
- Real estate figures released in May 2016 show that home sales are up 18.4% over the same month last year. The median sale price also increased to \$218,000, from \$208,000 in May 2015. Prices in Port Alberni still remain far below the rest of the province and Vancouver Island, but realtors are reporting that homes are selling faster and there is an increase in demand over the past several years.
- According to the first quarter report of the Vancouver Island Construction Association, the A-C Regional District as a whole is experiencing a recent burst of growth, both in residential and commercial construction. The number of residential permits issued has increased by 79%, and non-residential by 51%, over the last quarter of 2015.
- The Port Alberni Port Authority, which operates Port Alberni Terminals and a number of marinas on the waterfront, has been working on several initiatives to expand its operations and attract new activities to the deep sea port's facilities. These include plans for a trans-shipment hub operation in partnership with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, which would serve as a sorting terminal for mainland-bound containers. The Port is also expanding access and opportunities for more tourism and retail-based

businesses on the waterfront, including the addition of scheduled float plane service, a fuel dock, and a waterfront boardwalk. A 2016 economic impact study shows the Port Authority contributes \$319 million towards the city's GDP. According to the Port, 353 full time equivalent jobs are directly related to operations occurring on Port lands and facilities, in addition to bringing in millions of dollars of funding for projects like the Centennial Pier and Somass Boardwalk.

- Port Alberni typically has a higher unemployment rate than both Ucluelet and Tofino.

ii) Tofino

- With a historical economy based on fishing, forestry, and as a supply hub for coastal communities, Tofino was the first of the two west coast towns to make the adjustment to a new tourism-based economy, which accounts for most of its economic activity now.
- Tofino and Ucluelet, with their proximity to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, were the first communities on Vancouver Island to receive Resort Municipality status in 2008. Since then, Tofino has received \$4.6 million in funding from BC's Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, which they have used for special events, trail improvements, beach access, downtown revitalization and recreation facility upgrades.
- Accessible by paved road (Highway 4), by water (Tofino Harbour Authority) and by air (Tofino Airport), Tofino is also the transportation centre for several Hesquiaht, Ahousaht and Tla-qui-aht First Nation communities which are accessible only by boat or float plane.
- Expansion is challenged due to a limited land base. With its remote location and housing demands from tourism, the cost of living is higher in Tofino than in the larger city of Port Alberni. There is a shortage of affordable housing for seasonal workers, even though most of the larger resorts provide limited staff accommodation.
- There are numerous resorts, restaurants, campgrounds and recreation supports for surfing, windsurfing, cycling, sports fishing, kayaking, camping, hiking, whale watching and wildlife viewing.
- The seasonal economy in Tofino supports many tourism related service and retail businesses, and the community also provides supports such as childcare, hospital, ambulance, RCMP, senior housing, scheduled bus/air transportation services and a post office.
- There are still 2 large fish processing plants in Tofino, which between them operate 20 fish farms in the region, providing over 150 seasonal and year-round jobs.
- Tofino's population grew 13.4% between the 2006 and the 2011 census, and it has now overtaken Ucluelet as the larger of the two west coast communities.
- Tofino's median age is 34 years, 76% of its population is in the labour force, and Tofino typically experiences the lowest unemployment rates in the region.

iii) Ucluelet

- With a historically larger resource and manufacturing base than Tofino, Ucluelet has been slower to shift its economy, but has also adopted a strategic 5-year growth plan to ensure that infrastructure and housing grows with the new tourism economy.

- There are fewer resorts, restaurants and recreation businesses in Ucluelet than Tofino, but these are now expanding. The district continues to encourage resource based and processing industries as part of a mixed economy.
- Like Tofino, Ucluelet has benefited from the province's Resort Municipality Initiative funding, which is designed to help resort-based communities deal with seasonally dependent economies and expand their tourism reach. Ucluelet has received \$1.1 million in funding since 2008, and has focused this money on building its natural assets to attract visitors.
- Ucluelet Harbour is equipped with wharves and offloading facilities for fishing vessels, and Ucluelet Harbour Seafoods operates a large processing plant which employs several hundred workers seasonally. One of the challenges for the seafood industry is finding and hiring an experienced workforce every year in such a small community. The company operates a bus to Port Alberni to bring workers to the plant daily.
- The community has support services such as a food bank, senior housing, transition house and a government agent office.
- Ucluelet has a median age of 36 years, and 82% of its population is in the labour force.
- Ucluelet's population declined by 4.6% from 2001 to 2006, but showed an increase of 9.4% by the 2011 census.

iv) Bamfield

- Located 100 km south of Port Alberni along an unpaved logging road, Bamfield has a population of 275 people, or just over 400 if the nearby Huu-ay-aht First Nations community of Ana'cla is included.
- With an economy historically driven by logging and fishing, Bamfield residents now rely mainly on tourism for employment. According to the 2006 census, 185 of the 275 residents in Bamfield are employed, 155 as employees, and 30 self-employed.
- A central feature affecting Bamfield's economy for many years has been that 11 properties and business were owned by one investor, who did little to develop their potential. In early 2016, Huu-ay-aht First Nations purchased these properties from an asset company, including a lodge, marina, motel, airport and other properties. The Huu-ay-aht will be developing plans for bringing these businesses into operation, with a focus on tourism.

v) First Nations Communities

Most of the population of the 14-Nation Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council is located within our catchment area, living either in the towns of the region, or within the First Nations reserves. There are 17 designated Indian Reserves in the A-CRD, with a total population of 2,232 people living on reserve, according to the 2011 census.

- In the Regional District catchment area as a whole, 16% of the population is First Nations, compared to BC's average of 5%, and 13% within the City of Port Alberni.
- Isolated, with a lack of an economic base, some of these communities are nonetheless experiencing a rapid growth rate. The Marktosia reserve of the Ahousaht first Nation, near Tofino and accessible only by sea and air, grew by 18% from 2001 to 2006, and another 5% to 2011; it now has a median age of 22 years. Major new housing projects

have been completed at Marktosis, and also on the Esowista Reserve of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation.

- Employment in traditional areas, such as fishing, fish processing and logging, has declined, and many First Nations youth are moving to larger centres for employment and education opportunities.
- The Huu-ay-aht, Toquaht, Ucluelet, Uchucklesaht and Kyuquot/checlesseht First Nations have recently achieved self-government as part of the Maa-nulth treaty process. Achieving this status allows these communities to become more economically self-sufficient, and to explore initiatives such as the business expansion plans that the Huu-ay-aht First Nations have undertaken in Bamfield.
- First Nations economic initiatives, ranging from power generation, hotel & resort operations, logging, construction, and mining to retail businesses, have opened up future opportunities, not only for their own growing populations, but for the surrounding region as a whole. For example, the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, in a partnership with Steelhead LNG, are exploring the feasibility of a large export facility near Port Alberni, and the Uchucklesaht Tribe is nearing completion of their new 4-story, \$6 million cultural centre and central administrative office on the waterfront in downtown Port Alberni. Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in Tofino has invested \$50 million in 3 run-of-the-river hydro power projects since 2007, and is currently in the process of developing 4 more projects worth another \$96 million within the TFN territory.
- Census unemployment rates in coastal First Nations communities generally range between 14% and 19%.

IV. Specialized Populations

- **Survivors of violence and/or abuse** can access EPBC services through AVEC or our partner, INEO Employment Services, Ltd. (Satellite Office/Itinerant Services); we also refer clients to outside service and support agencies, such as the Alberni Community and Women's Services Society, which has a long history of helping victims of violence and abuse.
- **Persons with disabilities** and **persons with persistent multiple barriers** can access the full range of EPBC services for BCEA clients and clients with disabilities through our partnership with INEO Employment Services.
- **Aboriginal** clients make up about 16% of the population in the catchment area, but about 26% of our client base. We have had a long relationship with the Port Alberni Friendship Center, which delivers the Aboriginal Training and Employment Program, and the Nuuchahnulth Employment & Training Program, which delivers the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy and Bladerunners program. Our contacts and collaboration with these agencies ensures that clients will be referred to the appropriate program supports.
- **Immigrants** seeking employment assistance are being served through EPBC services, and AVEC also works in collaboration with Literacy Alberni to provide support for new immigrants.
- **Rural and Remote populations**, including isolated First Nations communities and coastal communities such as Bamfield, can be served by remote access (website,

email, Skype or telephone), or in person through Outreach Services provided by AVEC and its partners from Port Alberni, Ucluelet or Tofino. The provision of Financial Supports to attend meetings and workshops is also being used.

- **Francophone** - only 2% of Port Alberni's population identifies French as their mother tongue, and there has never been a demand for services in French, though translation services are available from contacts in the community and through Literacy Alberni.
- **Youth** make up about 44% of Catchment 5's client base, which includes an annual influx of transient youth seeking work in the seasonal tourism and hospitality business in Tofino and Ucluelet. AVEC Resource Room staff has developed youth-specific resource materials for helping self-serve youth and students who are not eligible for funded interventions. We continue to work with School District 70 and North Island College, participating in various events and working with them on new methods of assisting youth in achieving their career goals.

V. Response to Regional Labour Market Issues & Needs

The transition from a resource-based economy to a more diverse and sustainable one involves more than just jobs and economic activity. The history, culture and identity of the people in this region have been defined by the way they have lived since European settlement - extracting and processing the resources of the land and ocean. It may very well take another generation or two before the region is able to thrive and prosper with a more diverse identity. Forestry and fishing will always be important to the economy of this region, but those industries' ability to provide thousands of well-paid stable jobs, as they did in the past, has greatly diminished. (See **Section III** above, for a description of the regional labour market).

AVEC's role is largely one of responding to this ongoing economic transition, but we are increasing our engagement with the employer community so we can work more proactively in response to local Labour Market needs. Relationships exist between AVEC and local businesses through our historical participation in pre-EPBC employment programs, but AVEC staff is building these relationships through networking opportunities, marketing, hosting and participating in hiring fairs and other events, and most importantly by direct contact with employers.

More details of our planned response to labour market issues and needs are in **Sections VI** and **VII** below.

VI. Community Relationships and Activities

AVEC has long-standing relationships with many agencies and organizations in the community, and we are taking steps to increase our involvement with employers, local governments, schools and service providers.

AVEC and its 2 EPBC partners meet for bi-monthly ESC Partner Meetings, to share information and discuss service delivery.

i) EPBC Partners

- **Community Futures Alberni Clayoquot** – CFAC has been delivering self-employment services for over 20 years, and in the past AVEC has liaised with them as the referral agency for clients pursuing self-employment. Under the EPBC, AVEC conducts the Self-Employment Orientation and Assessment workshops and then evaluates the clients in a joint process with CFAC's Self-Employment coordinator. Successful clients are then referred to CFAC for Business Planning and Self-Employment Services.
- **INEO Employment Services** - INEO has been delivering employment programs in the area for 17 years, and AVEC often referred clients to INEO's historical programs and services, such as Triumph, BCEP, CAP, EPPD, and Job Options. As a partner in the EPBC this relationship continues, with INEO serving primarily BCEA, PWD and PPMB clients. Communications between AVEC and INEO take place on a regular basis at the management, case manager and community partnership levels.

ii) Community Agencies

The following list describes many of the agencies we are involved with as part of our community relationships:

- **Alberni Community & Women's Services Society** - ACAWS has a 30 year history providing victim service programs, counselling and Transition House services; clients have informally been referred between AVEC and ACAWS for years.
- **Nuu-chah-nulth Employment & Training Program (NETP)** – AVEC and NETP have collaborated on a number of projects, including the successful hiring fair we co-hosted in 2015, and the 2016 West Coast Job Expo to which they contributed funding. NETP and AVEC Case Managers communicate on a regular basis for possible referrals to one another's services.
- **Chamber of Commerce** - AVEC has long been a member of Chambers of Commerce in the Alberni Valley, Ucluelet and Tofino, and we are continuing this relationship through regular contact on employment and business issues. AVEC staff members currently sit on the Board of Directors of the Alberni and Ucluelet Chambers, and attend board meetings, business luncheons, dinners and other Chamber functions. This involvement is planned to increase local employers' awareness of EPBC services such as Wage Subsidy and Community Employer Partnerships.
- **Alberni Valley Learning Council** – This group grew out of an initiative by the Mayor of Port Alberni and North Island College to identify and address education and training needs in the local economy. AVEC staff was involved in setting out the terms of reference and inviting interest in participation, and the group includes representation from the college, school district, employers, First Nations groups, the ITA, and others. Involvement in this group presents further opportunities to raise awareness of EPBC services.
- **Alberni Valley Social Planning Council** – This group addresses concerns surrounding homelessness, poverty, and wellness of community members, and AVEC has participated as a member since 2009, with past representation on the

Board of Directors. The AVSPC is now moving into a more formal relationship with the City of Port Alberni, acting in an advisory capacity on social issues.

- **Alberni District Secondary School** – AVEC has established a relationship with the director of the high school's Career Centre, we have participated in the school's "Transition Day" graduation and other events, and we have partnered with local business leaders in the high school's Junior Achievement day.
- **North Island College** – AVEC continues to work with NIC's Education Advisors, instructors and administration, focusing on the needs of apprentices and clients pursuing training, as well as collaborating with them on community initiatives such as the Alberni Valley Learning Council. We have helped many clients achieve their education goals to attend NIC by providing EPBC skills training funding.
- **Vancouver Island University** – Periodic meetings and communication with VIU staff ensures that we are up to date on their program offerings and that they are aware of EPBC funding guidelines.
- **Port Alberni Friendship Center** – AVEC has a long-standing relationship with the PAFC. In addition to periodic communications regarding programs and job postings, we participate in their annual Aboriginal Day celebration, which affords us the opportunity to connect with other groups in the First Nations community.
- **Port Alberni Association for Community Living** – Informal referrals have been made with Community Living in the past, as well as tours and meet-and-greet meetings with one another's staff. Our partner INEO works directly with CLBC in their work with clients with disabilities.
- **Literacy Alberni** - AVEC has a long working relationship with Literacy Alberni, with involvement in their Raise a Reader campaign and collaboration on our previous ASPECT Skills Connect program. AVEC Case Managers refer clients to this agency as needed.
- **Bread of Life** - The Bread of Life Centre has been in operation since 1988, providing emergency food and clothing for people in need, and operating a daily drop-in centre and soup kitchen. A portion of AVEC clients are also Bread of Life clients, and there is occasional communication between our groups.
- **STEP BC, Nanaimo Office** – STEP has held information sessions in AVEC facilities for clients pursuing trades training, and we frequently interact with them in the interest of providing options for eligible clients.
- **Industry Training Authority** – AVEC staff has frequent contact with ITA's regional Apprenticeship Advisor, who is always available to consult on apprenticeship issues and has taken a keen interest in promoting apprenticeships in this region.
- **Service Canada** – Our office is located next door to, and in the same building as, Service Canada, and we have a long standing relationship with them which includes regular visits between their staff and ours. Service Canada staff has also used space in our West Coast offices to serve clients in that region.

VII. Employer Activities - Addressing Regional Labour Market Changes

Our approach to changes in the local Labour Market is to identify issues as early as possible, and work with the key players to provide the best possible outcomes for job seekers. This means establishing relationships before-hand and educating employers about the available options provided by the EPBC to assist with labour market needs in a transitioning economy.

One of our goals in working with employers, and in the community, is to look for opportunities to employ some of the Community Employer Partnership program components like Job Creation Partnerships, Labour Market Partnerships and Project Based Labour Market Training. In 2016/17 we will be working to increase our knowledge of the local labour market by contacting employers directly, through a planned employer survey and also through our involvement with groups like Chambers of Commerce and the Alberni Valley Learning Council (AVLC).

Our early involvement in the AVLC places us at the table with schools, local government, employers, the ITA, First Nations and others, in an environment focused specifically on the education and employment needs of the community. Planning sessions with the AVLC over the past year have resulted in the creation of action teams, and AVEC staff is involved in teams that are tasked with assessing community labour market and education needs. These teams will meet over the summer, and the next group meeting will be in October. These activities further enhance our ability to increase awareness of EPBC services, and to actively seek projects that may be eligible for CEP opportunities.

Our efforts over the past year to increase the exposure of the Wage Subsidy Work Experience Placement Service have begun to return modest benefits -- the number of employers contacting us for information has grown, and we have 8 clients currently active in wage subsidy placements. We are currently in discussions with an industrial employer who will soon be scaling up operations at a small manufacturing plant requiring workers to learn skills for a new technology, producing activated carbon from wood waste. The plant has taken a year in the development and building phase, but will eventually employ 20 personnel, and there may be an opportunity to employ some wage subsidy eligible clients once operations are underway.

Our West Coast staff has been meeting with employers in Tofino and Ucluelet, both one-on-one and in various venues, in order to determine their needs, and to develop strategies for assisting them. Local organizations like Chambers of Commerce and district governments have also shown an interest in working with us to look for solutions to local labour market challenges, and we will be continuing this work over the next year.

We have learned that the greatest challenge for employers in Tofino and Ucluelet is in attracting and retaining a large number of workers over the busy tourist season. The local labour force cannot supply enough workers, and employers must rely on a seasonal influx of job-seekers to fill their positions. One outcome of our work with employers is that there is considerable interest in, and demand for, hiring fair events early in the tourist season (see **Section VIII-iii (g)** below).

VIII. Marketing

i) Communication Goals

The primary communication goals for AVEC are:

- To ensure potential clients in our catchment area are aware of the services available under the Employment Program of BC and know where to go to access these services.
- To ensure employers in our catchment area are aware of services available to assist in recruiting and retaining skilled employees.
- To ensure other service providers in our catchment area are aware of the services available to clients and employers at the Alberni Valley Employment Centre offices.

ii) Target Group Description

The client base in AVEC's catchment area is diverse, and spread across a large area containing coastal First Nation villages, small tourism oriented towns, rural farming areas, fishing ports, and a small city with a deep sea port and industrial base. The working population of the area is used to going through seasonal shifts in labour market demand, but is also experiencing a longer-term transition to a new economy, requiring a higher level of education and training, more diverse skills sets, increased adaptability, and a more sophisticated set of job search skills.

Marketing employment services to this diverse client base requires an awareness of who the different groups are, and of the challenges they face as they to adapt to the changing economy.

Older, and mostly **male workers** who have been displaced due to changes in resource industries face challenges that include:

- loss of substantial income benefits
- lack of transferable skills
- long attachment to community, combined with a lack of local job opportunities and a reluctance to relocate
- low education levels, and no technical training or certification
- lack of basic job search skills due to long attachment to one employer
- lack of computer skills for job searching
- unrealistic expectations regarding earning levels
- adjustment to change and lack of self-esteem

Many **women** in the region are attempting to re-enter the workforce later in life, as families cope with the loss of a good income coming from a single wage-earner, and face challenges that include:

- extended periods with no labour market engagement
- lack of or limited work experience

- lack of training, with little or no technological skills
- no job search skills
- difficulties coping with abusive situations
- need for daycare
- need for transportation
- reluctant to relocate due to attachment to community
- difficulties adjusting to change along with lack of self-esteem

Increasingly, many **youth** are leaving the area as soon as they finish school, but those who are unable to accomplish this face challenges that include:

- perceived or real lack of employment opportunities in their local communities
- lack of work experience
- lack of skills and training, including technical skills
- lack of job search skills
- unreasonable expectations
- lack of self-esteem

Unemployment among the **First Nations** population of the region is typically higher than the general rate, as this group faces additional challenges such as:

- a legacy of racism and discrimination in workplaces, schools and community
- overcoming the effects of residential school programs
- living in isolated locations
- lower education levels
- lack of job search skills
- loss of traditional earning streams (fishing, logging)
- family and community attachments causing reluctance to relocate
- lower technological skills

Many of the clients in the more **rural and remote** regions of our catchment area face barriers that include:

- resource based industries that were traditionally major employers have downsized considerably in recent years, leaving many trying to “fit” into other types of employment
- no technical training or certification
- lack of basic job search skills due to long attachment to one employer
- lack of job opportunities in the local area
- need for adequate transportation for lengthy commutes
- unwillingness to relocate due to community attachment

People with **disabilities** face challenges that include:

- extended periods with no labour market engagement
- unable to return to previous career due to injury/illness
- limited or no work experience
- lack of skills training
- little or no technological skills
- little or no job search skills

- unable to access transportation
- lack of self-esteem
- employers reluctant to hire disabled persons due to fear of training costs, sick time

iii) Marketing Communication Methods

As the EPBC is being delivered over a wide geographical area, the communication methods used in marketing are important to the effective delivery of the program. We employ the following methods to reach clients and employers in our region:

a. Website

AVEC's website, www.avemployment.ca, is an important marketing tool for us, with job postings, workshop schedules, information about EPBC services, links to WorkBC pages and other resources, information for employers, and labour market information. Since the launch of our current website in October 2014, usage has grown steadily in most of the measurement categories. The month of May 2016 produced the highest numbers of Sessions, Users and Page Views in the 20 months since we built the current site (see **Table 1**, below).

Our Job Postings pages are by far the biggest draw on our website, and account for the highest traffic numbers to the site. Our Home page accounts for less than 20% of page landing sessions, and over 80% of the first clicks on the Home page go to one of the job postings pages (individual pages for each location). Individual job postings account for the majority of pages that visitors drill down to and exit from. In the coming year, we will be restructuring our website with the goal of enabling and attracting visitors to other pages, such as services and other information. In addition, we will endeavor to make our site more mobile friendly, as users on phones and tablets now consistently make up over 50% of our site visits. We will continue to use social media to attract traffic to the website.

Table 1

Website Summary October 2014 – May 2016						Facebook Campaigns
Report Period	Sessions	Users	Page Views	Pages / Session	% New Sessions	
Oct 2014	32,220	10,054	89,903	2.79	31.15	2 (page)
Nov 2014	30,421	9,918	75,994	2.5	25.87	1 (website)
Dec 2014	26,018	8,602	58,654	2.25	24.97	none
Jan 2015	35,810	11,782	95,782	2.67	25.88	1 (website)
Feb 2015	34,168	11,334	92,978	2.72	25.18	1 (post)
Mar 2015	38,027	12,618	111,509	2.93	25.51	3 (post/page)
Apr 2015	37,705	12,993	115,240	3.06	26.14	1 (post)
May 2015	33,964	11,908	102,250	3.01	26.30	1 (post)
Jun 2015	34,891	11,952	115,709	3.32	25.51	2(post/page)
Jul 2015	34,729	11,862	95,516	2.75	26.04	1 (website)

Aug 2015	33,832	10,926	100,825	2.98	24.03	2 (post)
Sept. 2015	34,061	10,789	95,709	2.81	23.34	1 (post)
Oct 2015	34,342	10,976	87,299	2.54	23.69	2(post/page)
Nov 2015	34,067	10,444	79,712	2.34	22.70	none
Dec 2015	29,428	9,423	62,368	2.12	23.65	2(posts)
Jan 2016	38,743	12,123	86,275	2.23	23.93	none
Feb 2016	38,446	12,611	95,105	2.47	24.91	2(website, post)
Mar 2016	38,591	12,142	102,905	2.67	23.52	1 post
Apr 2016	40,814	13,241	116,728	2.86	24.64	2(post, website)
May 2016	41,926	13,739	121,252	2.89	24.61	1 post
AVERAGE	35,110	11,472	95,086	2.70	25.08%	

b. Facebook

AVEC has operated a Facebook page since September 2012, and we add new posts daily as part of our marketing strategy to direct traffic to our website, spread the word about EPBC services, and add further reach to advertising of special events and job postings. We have increased the number of page “Likes” from 750 to 1,300 in the past year, as well as achieving a “Reach” of up to 11,200 on a single post, usually by adding a paid “boost” to a post. Facebook posts linking to job postings typically achieve the highest ratings, but by boosting selected posts we have attracted moderately high attention to other topics such as self-employment and wage subsidy.

Our goal for the coming year is to continue to use Facebook as a means of exposure to potential clients who might not be reached by other methods, and to increase user engagement by exploring the use of surveys, draws and questions that solicit responses.

c. My Alberni App

AVEC has a listing under Employment Services on the My Alberni app for mobiles, and the developers have provided a link to our job postings page from the main menu of the app, as a free community service.

d. Print

During the past year there was a consolidation of ownership of the local print media, so that now a single owner publishes a free paper twice weekly in Port Alberni, and another once per week newspaper in Ucluelet/Tofino; there is also an additional once monthly First Nations newspaper that covers the region. These papers are distributed free, and while there is a potential circulation number that is the same as the former daily paper, the advertising opportunities have been greatly reduced. Our print advertising is now focused mostly on special events, topic-focused supplements or sections, business publications and telephone directories. Examples of some of AVEC’s print advertisements are available in **Appendix 2**.

e. Radio

There is one radio station in Port Alberni, and another which recently launched in Tofino. AVEC experimented with a series of ads in Port Alberni a number of years ago, but the results didn't seem to warrant the relatively high rates. In Tofino, we developed a relationship with the owner of Tuff City Radio for publicizing the 2016 West Coast Job Expo, and produced a number of short ads and interview segments. The results were favourable, and the relationship continues with the station playing periodic "public service" announcements about our services and location at no charge.

f. Events & Functions

As members of Chambers of Commerce in Port Alberni, Tofino and Ucluelet, we attend Chamber networking functions as often as possible, usually monthly luncheons, dinner or breakfast meetings, where there are opportunities to meet with community leaders and employers. Last fall in Port Alberni, we hosted our own Business-After-Business event, and also participated as a presenter at the Chamber's Business Expo event, where we presented information on Wage Subsidy and other EPBC services. In the coming year we will continue this strategy of increasing our exposure to the employer community.

We will also continue our participation in a number of other events, such as Aboriginal Day, Social Services Network meetings, graduation ceremonies, Alberni Valley Learning Council meetings, and the Junior Achievement program. AVEC also responds to invitations and initiatives that arise throughout the year, for events and functions that present an opportunity for us to network and market EPBC services.

g. Special Events

Career and hiring fairs provide an excellent opportunity for us to network with the community and to market information about the EPBC to both employers and job seekers. The employer contacts we gain from these events have proven to be a valuable resource for us in delivering services to our clients, and we intend to continue to grow these relationships over the next year.

Over the years AVEC has held several successful career fairs in Port Alberni, and the partnership we established with Nuuchahnulth Employment & Training Program for the large event in 2015 worked very well. We are currently exploring the possibility of working with them on future joint ventures.

Employers responded enthusiastically to our West Coast Job Expo hiring fairs in Tofino in 2015 and 2016, and plans are now underway for a larger, more broadly based event in Ucluelet for 2017. This event is being developed in partnership with local governments and the business communities in Ucluelet and Tofino, and will once again have involvement from First Nations organizations.

h. Community Relationships

AVEC maintains relationships with many organizations across our catchment area (in addition to those agencies listed in **Section VI – ii**, above), and we communicate with them on a regular basis in order to provide service or referrals for our clients. These agencies are listed in **Table 2**, below:

Table 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island Health Mental Health & Addictions • Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation • Ministry of Children & Family Development • First Nations Health Authority • Pacific Coast University • Port Alberni Shelter Society • Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network • Kuu-us Crisis Society • Hupacasath First Nation • Ahousaht First Nation • Tseshah First Nation • Ditidaht First Nation • Huu-ay-aht First Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation • Hesquiaht First Nation • Uchucklesaht First Nation • Toquaht First Nation • Ucluelet First Nation • Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council • Alberni Clayoquot Regional District • Probation Services • Salvation Army • Port Alberni Family Guidance • Coastal Family Resources • West Coast Community Services • City of Port Alberni • Districts of Ucluelet & Tofino • Office of Gord Johns, MP • Office of Scott Fraser, MLA
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i. Word of Mouth

The Alberni Valley and West Coast communities are relatively small, with extensive “word of mouth” networks. Previous surveys have shown that more than 50% of our clients become aware of our services by this method. AVEC staff works very hard to ensure we maintain a reputation of having an open and welcoming centre, with knowledgeable staff that are always willing to assist with any job search needs.

j. In-House Marketing

In the spring of 2016 we installed three video monitors to display our own in-house marketing messages to clients using the self-serve area of our Port Alberni centre. One monitor displays our job postings, and the other two play short animated videos and messages about EPBC services, upcoming workshops and information sessions, and general job search information. The display content is produced and controlled by the RCA staff and the messages can be quickly and easily changed to any topic we choose. The displays are highly visible to everyone coming into the centre, and we have been getting very positive feedback about their effectiveness.

iv) Marketing Strategy

Strategies to achieve our marketing goals include:

- Advertising in various forms of media.
- Maintaining a consistent message regarding services across all forms of media.
- Ensuring that our EPBC partners are sufficiently represented in media communications.
- Informing EI eligible clients of services, through public advertising and our relationship with Service Canada.
- Continuing regular contact with community service providers and organizations.
- Maintaining and improving AVEC website to provide access to information about EPBC services.
- Continuing to build AVEC's presence in Social Media, including Facebook, My Alberni App, and other online advertising.
- Maintaining a visible presence in the communities we serve by attending and hosting community events.
- Conducting regular evaluations as to the effectiveness of the various marketing tools.

Last year we increased our efforts to become involved in employer activities and events in the community, and these initiatives continue to be an important part of our marketing strategy. Our strategy with employers is to increase their awareness of Wage Subsidy services, Labour Market Partnerships, Job Creation Partnerships, Project Based Labour Market Training, and other EPBC employer resources. Another part of the employer strategy is to increase our own awareness of local hiring needs and labour market changes, in order to provide better Labour Market Information to clients.

We also continue to offer other services to employers, such as free job postings, resume collection, use of rooms for interviewing or short term training, and educational information regarding hiring and retaining workers. Our website page for employers is continually updated to provide easier access to information and services for employers.

IX. Reporting & Evaluation

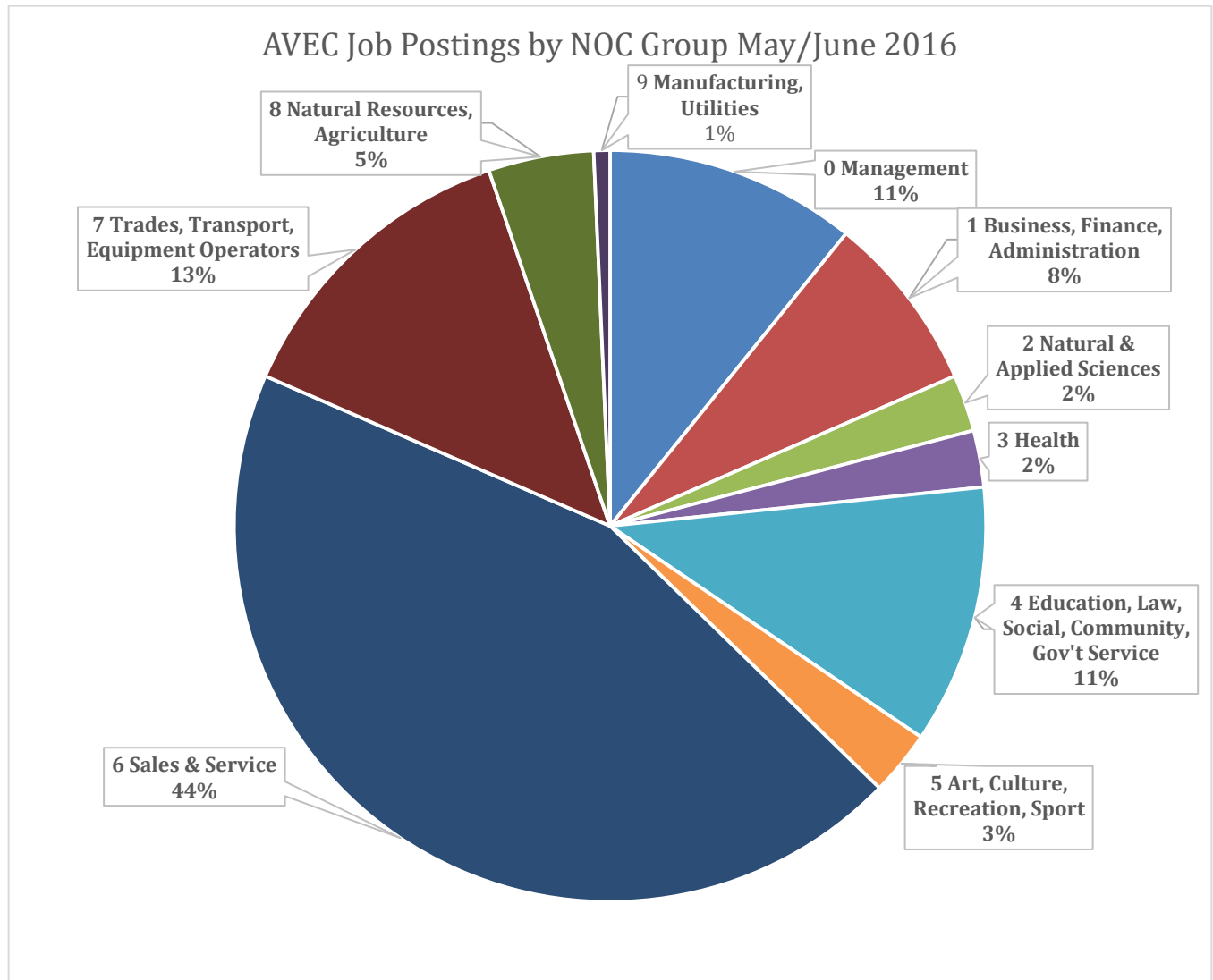
AVEC has several mechanisms in place to ensure that our activities in the community undergo regular evaluation and are reported on internally, to the Ministry, and to the wider community:

1. Monthly reports on CEP and marketing activities are prepared for the Contract Management Committee, along with separate Quarterly Marketing Reports.
2. All-day staff meetings are held regularly to report on and evaluate every aspect of AVEC's participation in the EPBC, including Community and Employer Partnership activities.
3. Bi-monthly meetings with AVEC partners are held to ensure continuous evaluation and reporting of partners' activities.
4. Information on CEP activities and LMI information is kept on a shared network with access by Case Managers, Resource Room staff and IWT Directors. These records are

updated continuously, and staff is informed by email or in weekly Case Management meetings when activities occur.

5. Bi-monthly CEP strategy meetings are now taking place, as are bi-weekly wage subsidy update sessions.
6. The Annual Community and Employer Partnership Plan will be produced in accordance with Ministry requirements.

Appendix 1: AVEC Job Postings by NOC Group May/June 2016



Appendix 2: Examples of Print and Social Media Advertisements



ALBERNI VALLEY EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

Your path to success

Unemployed? Need help looking for work, deciding on a career or upgrading your skills? We can help!

Alberni Valley Employment Centre provides free assistance to job-seekers in Port Alberni, Tofino and Ucluelet, along with our partners, INEO Employment Services and Community Futures.

AVEC is the designated WorkBC Employment Services Centre in this region. Our staff is available to help you with everything related to your job search, including participation in Employment Program of BC services, such as Wage Subsidy or Self-Employment services.

A Wage Subsidy pays for a portion of your wages, with an employer who agrees to hire and provide on-the-job training to an eligible job seeker. The employer benefits too, by gaining a trained employee, and financial assistance to help offset the costs of training.

Self-Employment services can help you on your way to starting your own business, by providing financial support, business skills development workshops, and one-on-one coaching and mentoring.

Contact us, and find out if you are eligible for these or other employment services.

Learn more at www.avemployment.ca, and check out our extensive local job postings!



WorkBC Employment Services Centre

Alberni Valley EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

For ALL Your Employment Needs!

- Job Search Assistance
- Training Opportunities
- Self-Employment
- Career Planning
- Wage Subsidies

Port Alberni
 4805-B Mar Street
 250-724-4560

Tofino
 381 Main Street
 250-725-8805

Ucluelet
 101-1801 Bay Street
 250-726-4243

www.avemployment.ca

Canada The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Alberni Valley Employment Centre
Published by Jynaya Gray (?) · April 15 ·

35+ NEW JOBS FOR THE ALBERNI VALLEY were posted this week!



Job Listings for Port Alberni | Alberni Valley Employment Center

This page is updated daily with local postings from newspapers, the Internet, and direct from employers. Due to the wide range of possible sources, not all jobs...

8,038 people reached [Boost Post](#)

Like Comment Share

Sarah Hoadley, Penelope C Titian and 4 others

54 shares

Write a comment...




Be A Ruralpreneur
The Big Fish in the Small Pond

www.workbc.ca Self-Employment Services

www.cf.ca Small Business Loans

WorkBC Employment Services Centre

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Community Futures