

Algoma Workforce Investment Committee

Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) Report



District of Algoma
January 2007

AWIC

Algoma Workforce
Investment Committee



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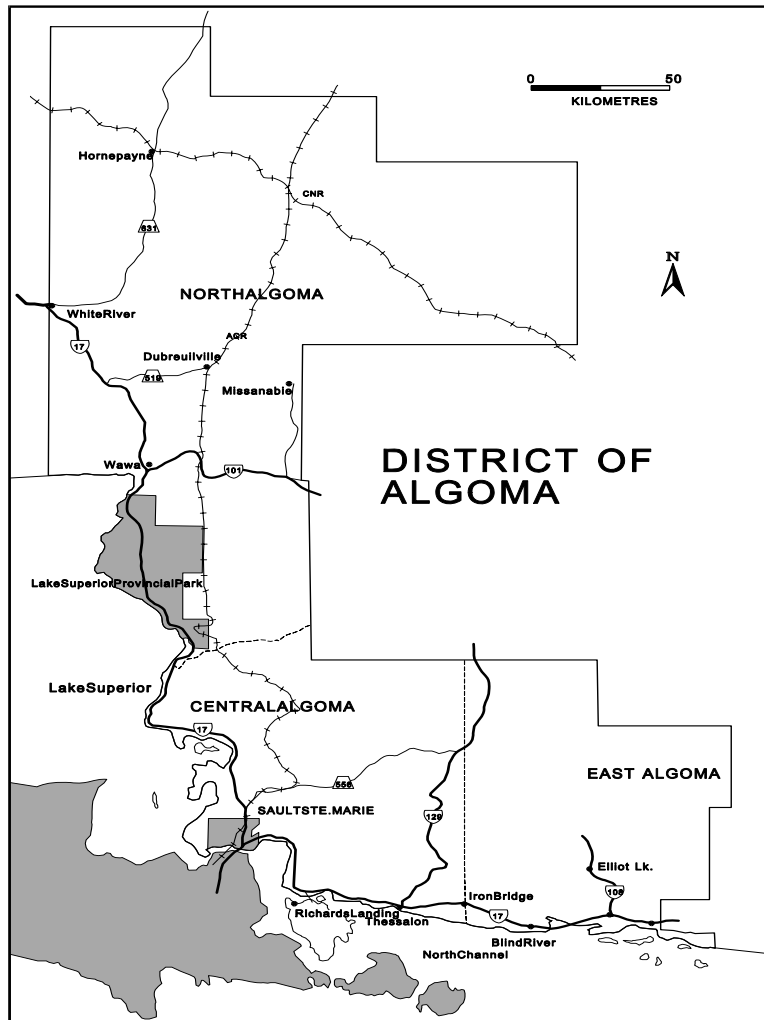
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Section 1: Introduction

The District of Algoma faces a wide variety of workforce development challenges that have direct implications for the district's workforce in terms of both the numbers and their skill requirements. Recent area studies and reports have brought many issues into particularly sharp focus, and contributed to the decision by the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) to participate in the broad based community Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) consultation and action planning process.



Located in Northeastern Ontario and bordering the north shore of Lake Superior and Lake Huron, the District of Algoma covers 48,737 square kilometres from White River in the northwest to Spanish in the east. The district is divided into the following sub-districts: North Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie and Area, Central Algoma and East Algoma. Driving time from Hornepayne in the northwest to Spanish in the east is approximately 7 to 8 hours.

In the fall of 2003 the necessity for a community strategy to address training and recruitment needs was identified as part of the Destiny Sault Ste Marie economic diversification strategy; subsequently, a Workforce Investment Committee was established to address this important area.

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The Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC) is a community-based organization funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities consisting of members who are knowledgeable about the labour force development issues in the District of Algoma. The mandate of AWIC is to act as a catalyst for change in the Algoma District's labour market by partnering with labour market groups in addressing training and adjustment issues.

The objectives of AWIC are to:

- Strengthen the existing workforce, now perceived to be the most valuable resource left to attract new business, without which the district will not get new businesses to create new jobs.
- Match new skills with employer requirements such that we can sustain and grow our communities.
- Build a regional education system that will support and promote our needs.
- Have an industrial community that recognizes, engages and participates in addressing workforce development needs.
- Have a supportive municipal, provincial, federal government that works to build support for these common objectives.
- Have a progressive workforce that recognizes the importance of appropriate training, upgrading and employment.

Review of 2007/08 Trends

The Trends from 2006/07 have not significantly changed in the past year. The following are the Trends identified in 2007/08:

Significant Skilled Trade Shortages: As a key element in Ontario's training system, apprenticeship training contributes towards building a skilled labour force that will help address the District of Algoma's need to attract the investment for economic growth and job creation.

Labour shortages in many occupations in the District of Algoma: Labour shortages have also been identified in "unskilled" labour, including service workers. For example, a labour shortage in Elliot Lake of over 200 positions has been identified with a projection that will increase to 750 within three years.

Lack of Access to Training Providers and Post Secondary Education in the Superior East Region and East Algoma: Recent studies carried out in the Superior East Region, Blind River and Elliot Lake indicate that a common concern expressed by employers was the lack of access to training providers and post secondary education in their areas. This is a major obstacle to providing employee training.

Youth population declining, including out-migration: From 1996 to 2001, Northern Ontario's youth population declined by 19 per cent, triple the rate for the previous five years.

Shortage of Skilled Workers in the Construction Industry: The recently released Human Resource Study of this sector anticipates shortages in the near future of skilled workers for planned projects, with a greater demand for trades associated with residential and non residential construction and permanent dwellings.

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Shortage of Skilled Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry: The recently released Human Resource Study of this sector anticipated that the completion of projects like the Steelback Recreation Centre, the refurbishing of the Agawa Tour Train and the completion of the Borealis Tourist Attraction will place a significant demand on the regional human resource supply and change the current temporary skill shortage to a crisis.

Section 2: Community Profile/Labour Market Information (LMI)

Total Population

As reported in the 2001 Canadian Census and in comparison to Ontarioⁱ, Algoma is sparsely populated with 2.4 persons per square kilometre and a total population of 118,467. The majority of the population is concentrated in a few main centres, with approximately two thirds of the population residing in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie.

A Declining and Aging Population

Main Cities/Towns	2001 Census Population	Change from 1996 Census
Sault Ste Marie	74,566	-6.9%
Elliot Lake	11,956	-12%
Blind River	3,969	-9.3%
Michipicoten (Wawa)	3,668	-11.5%
Thessalon	1,386	-6.7%
Hornepayne	1,362	-8%

Between 1996 and 2001, the population of the Algoma District declined by 5.5 percent and in marked contrast to the provincial experience. The Ontario population grew by six percent over the same five-year period.

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

Age Characteristics

The population of the Algoma District is an aging population with 17 percent of the 2001 population over 65 years as compared to Ontario with 13 percent. With depressed economies in recent years, many communities in the North have seen a loss of their youth as they relocated to seek employment elsewhere.

Male/Female Population Similar to Ontario

Characteristics of the Population	Total	Male	Female
Total All Persons	118,565	57,800	60,770
Ages 0 to 14	21,025	10,945	10,080
Ages 15 to 54	63,900	31,085	32,825
Ages 55 and over	33,640	15,770	17,850
Median age of the population	41.4	40.8	41.9
% of population over age 15	82.3	81.1	83.4

The 2001 Census reported that 48.9 percent of Ontario's population was male and 51.1 percent was female. In the Algoma District, the overall male/female distribution closely resembled that of the province with 48.7 percent male and 51.2 percent female.

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

ⁱ The population density for Ontario is 12.6 persons per square kilometre (2001 Canadian Census).

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Language

Table 3	
Language(s) First Learned and Still Understood	Total
Total – All persons	117,200
English only	95,085
French only	9,290
Both English and French	705
Other languages	12,120

The majority of residents within the Algoma District, responding to the 2001 Census, identified English as their mother tongue (81.7 percent). The remaining population reported either French (8.0 percent) or another language (9.7 percent) as their mother tongue, while 0.6 percent identified their mother tongue as both English & French. Mother tongue is defined as the first language learned as a child and still understood.

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

While some areas within the district are predominantly English speaking, a higher percentage of those reporting French as their mother tongue reside in Dubreuilville (84.5 percent), Blind River (26.4 percent), Wawa (20.8 percent) and Elliot Lake (18.1 percent).

Immigration Characteristics

Table 4	
Immigration Characteristics	Total
Total - All persons	117,200
Canadian-born population	105,110
Foreign-born population	11,965
Immigrated before 1991	11,335
Immigrated between 1991 and 2001	630
Non-permanent residents	120

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

Visible Minority Status (Top 5 Groups)

Table 5	
Visible Minority Status	Total
Total population by visible minority groups	117,200
Visible minority population	1,400
Chinese	375
South Asian	210
Black	265
Filipino	120
Latin American	110

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

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Aboriginal Populations

With approximately 10,810 persons living on and off-reserve, 9.2 percent of Algoma's population is reported to be Aboriginal. The following First Nations are located within Algoma's boundaries:

Table 6	
Aboriginal Population	Total
Total - All persons	117,200
Aboriginal identity population	10,810
Non-Aboriginal population	106,385

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

- ✓ Michipicoten First Nation
- ✓ Batchewana First Nation
- ✓ Garden River First Nation
- ✓ Thessalon First Nation
- ✓ Mississauga First Nation
- ✓ Serpent River First Nation

Highest Level of Schooling

As compared to Ontario, lower education levels are reported for the Algoma population. A greater percentage of Algoma's population (11.0 percent for Algoma compared to 8.7 percent for Ontario) reported a level of education less than Grade 9. On the other end of the spectrum, a greater percentage of Ontario's population (26.3 percent for Ontario compared to 16.5 percent for Algoma) reported some level of university education. It is of interest to note that a greater number of individuals in Algoma (14.0 percent) were in receipt of a trades certificate or diploma as compared to Ontario (10.2 percent of the reporting population).

Table 7				
Education Levels in 2001, Algoma District				
Total population 20 years and over by highest level of schooling	Ontario	% of Pop.	Algoma	% of Pop.
Less than grade 9	723,360	8.7%	9,610	11.0%
Grades 9 to 13	2,577,275	31.1%	31,585	36.2%
<i>Without high school graduation certificate</i>	1,402,505	16.9%	18,685	21.3%
<i>With high school graduation certificate</i>	1,174,770	14.2%	12,895	14.7%
Trades certificate or diploma	843,480	10.2%	12,245	14.0%
College	1,961,265	23.7%	19,765	22.6%
<i>Without certificate or diploma</i>	545,775	6.6%	5,565	6.3%
<i>With certificate or diploma</i>	1,415,490	17.1%	14,200	16.2%
University	2,176,780	26.3%	14,435	16.5%
<i>Without degree</i>	590,415	7.3%	4,755	5.4%
<i>Without certificate or diploma</i>	403,395	4.9%	3,525	4.0%
<i>With certificate or diploma</i>	187,020	2.3%	1,230	1.4%
<i>With bachelor's degree or higher</i>	1,586,365	19.2%	9,675	11.0%
TOTAL Population for Sample	8,282,160		87,640	

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

Labour Force Indicators

Table 8			
Employment Statistics in 2001, Algoma District			
	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Participation Rate
Algoma	10.3%	51.7%	57.6%
Sault Ste. Marie	9.5%	53.8%	59.4%
Elliot Lake	13%	33.0%	38.0%
Blind River	13.5%	51.5%	59.5%
Michipicoten (Wawa)	9.2%	64.3%	70.8%
Ontario	6.1%	63.2%	67.3%

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

The rates of unemployment in the 2001 Census for some Algoma communities were twice the Ontario rate. Overall, the unemployment rate for Algoma was reported to be 10.3 percent. The unemployment rate for the province stood at 6.1 percent. In the communities reporting a younger overall population (North Algoma), the employment and participation ratesⁱⁱ were higher than for communities such as Elliot Lake that has a higher percentage of retirees.

It is acknowledged that current unemployment rates may differ from the 2001 Census unemployment rates due to the impact of new and expanding business (e.g., establishment of call centres and a robust steel industry).

Education and employment have an impact on personal and family incomes. As would be expected then, Algoma average incomes were reported to be less than Ontario incomes (2001 Census).

Table 9			
Earnings in 2000	Total	Male	Female
All persons with earnings	57,320	29,735	27,585
Average earnings (all persons with earnings (\$))	28,428	35,406	20,908
Worked full year, full time	27,300	16,400	10,900
Average earnings (worked full year, full time (\$))	41,356	47,398	32,264

In Algoma, the average income was \$26,153 as compared to Ontario at \$32,865. Average family incomes for the Algoma District were reported to be \$56,281 and less than the provincial experience (\$73,849).

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

ⁱⁱ Unemployment or employment rates describe the percentage of Algoma's total population who are either unemployed or employed. The participation rate refers to the percentage of Algoma's total population in the labour force.

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Industry - Leading Industries

Table 10			
Industry	Algoma District (CD)		
	Total	Male	Female
Total - Experienced labour force	53,915	28,280	25,635
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	2,440	1,940	510
Manufacturing and construction industries	10,765	9,590	1,175
Wholesale and retail trade	7,865	3,725	4,145
Finance and real estate	2,050	750	1,300
Health and education	10,265	2,175	8,090
Business services	7,335	4,305	3,030
Other services	13,195	5,810	7,380

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

Occupations - Leading Occupations

Table 11			
Occupation	Total	Male	Female
Sales & Service Occupations	15555	5865	9690
Trades & transport	9515	8895	620
Business/Administration	7685	1775	5910
Social science & education	4545	1525	3020
Management	4390	2675	1715
Other	12225	7545	4680

Source: 2001 Canadian Census

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Section 3: TOP Consultation Process - the Local Planning Model

Consultation for this report included meetings with a wide range of individuals, organizations and focus groups from trade unions, education and training, economic development, employers, government and industry organizations representing key sectors of the economy. We asked for input into supply and demand issues, factors affecting recruitment/retention, training and development needs and other gaps in services and/or issues for the District of Algoma workforce.

As well, a regional TOP Consultation forum was held with over seventy five community stakeholders on December 13th, 2006 in Sault Ste. Marie. The Trends and Issues were reviewed by participants who were asked to provide their input into possible strategies that would address the labour market issues that had been identified.

The following Planning Charts set out the results of the consultation with the community and identifies a series of actions to be taken over the next one to two years.

Section 4: TOP Report Planning Chart

Trend: Significant skilled trade shortages

Issue: Employers cannot find skilled trade workers and this will have an impact on their ability to stay competitive.

Action Taken in 2006/07

- Established Local Advisory Committee for Skilled Trades in East Algoma.
- Held Employer meetings to promote the Ontario Apprenticeship Tax Credits
- Published and distributed a brochure, “Making Cents of Apprenticeship” which highlighted the benefits of apprenticeship training.
- Created and distributed a CD-ROM which highlighted the many positive aspects of apprenticeship.
- Undertook a Apprenticeship Works event at Sault College.

Action To Be Taken in 2007/08

- Identify those trades at risk for skill shortages that will require development and/expansion of training programs.
- Form an Industrial Consortium to promote and oversee a region-wide “Apprenticeship/Technician Trades” program that would allow employers to jointly train apprentices.

Partners:

Algoma Industrial Consortium, Sault College, Job Connect, Ministry of Training Colleges & Education, East Algoma Local Advisory Committee, Superior East Community Futures Corporation, East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association, Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board.

Timelines:

Identify skill shortages- short-term- April 2007- March 2008

Industrial Consortium - Long-term September 2007 to April 2010.

Expected Outcomes:

- Research completed in key sectors to identify the skills trades shortages.
- Creation of a “Workforce Development Plan” to address and increase apprenticeships in those trades experiencing shortages.
- Algoma Industrial Consortium will register 30 new apprentices in 2007/08.

Trend: Labour Shortages in Many Occupations in the District of Algoma

Issue: Employers are reporting higher demand for workers than available supply, leading to inability to attract and/or retain workers.

Action Taken in 2006/07:

- Destiny Sault Ste. Marie with representatives from industry, service providers and government representatives began work on an action plan to address these labour shortages, this plan envisioned AWIC creating partnerships to address training and development issues and Labour Development Sault Ste. Marie addressing recruitment & retention issues.
- Career Day and Job Fair was held on January 27, 2007 to bring together employers and job seekers.

Action to be Taken in 2007/08:

Design and implement a “Regional Labour Force Development Strategy” which would analyse and develop strategies to address the labour shortage issues.

Partners: Labour Development Sault Ste. Marie, Elliot Lake BR&E Committee, Wawa Economic Development Corporation, Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, First Nations Communities, Job Connect .

Timelines: 2007-2009

Expected Outcomes

- Creation of a “Regional Labour Force Development Strategy” which will undertake research in the following areas:
 - provide a forecast of human resource requirements, in key sectors, by occupational group, over the next 3-5 years
 - provide an assessment of gaps between forecasted workforce requirements and the current workforce complement in key sectors.
 - provide an assessment of the effectiveness of current human resource practices and skill development activities in bridging these gaps in key sectors..

Trend: Lack of Training Providers and Post Secondary Education in the Superior East Region and East Algoma

Issue: The lack of employee training due to a lack of access to training and education will have a major impact on employers' ability to be competitive.

Issue: Youth out-migration due to a lack of access to post secondary education will have a major impact on the ability of these communities to retain workers.

Action Taken in 2006/07:

- Establishment of the East Algoma Local Advisory Committee for Skilled Trades in East Algoma.

Action to be Taken in 2007/08:

- Discussions will be scheduled with regional training providers and local business in Wawa, Elliot Lake and Blind River to discuss possible strategies to address these issues, including the development of a local learning centre, and the identification of training needs and gaps.

Partners: Algoma University College, Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology, Wawa Economic Development Corporation, East Algoma Local Advisory Committee, East Algoma Community Futures Development Corporation, Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation

Timelines: April 2007 to December 2008

Expected Outcomes:

Establish two regional working committees that will develop a go-forward plan toward establishing two learning centres that would provide access to affordable quality training providers and post secondary education for the residents of the region, support and promote employee training, regional community economic development, lifelong learning and contribute toward reducing the levels of youth out migration

Trend: Declining Youth population, including youth out-migration

Issue: Declining youth population and youth out-migration are major contributing factors to labour shortages experienced by regional employers.

Action Taken 2006/07

- The Northern Development Councils held consultations on proposed strategies to engage youth in their communities. The final report and recommendations will go to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.
- BDO Advisors developed and presented succession planning seminars to audiences in Sault Ste Marie and Blind River.

Action to be Taken in 2007/08:

- Develop and expand the delivery of distance education programs in the District of Algoma and promote the use of the District's information and communication technology infrastructure
- Work with local Boards of Education and local industry to promote regional career opportunities to area youth.
- Develop a long term sustainable youth strategy specific to aboriginal youth throughout the region .
- Request municipal funding for a Youth Strategy Officer.

Partners:

Sault Ste. Marie Youth Council, Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, First Nation Organizations, Wawa EDC, Job Connect, Contact North.

Timelines: 2007-2010

Expected Outcomes

- The number of programs and students accessing distance education will be increased by 5 per cent.
- Three Distance Education programs will be developed and delivered.
- Two regional career fairs will be held.
- Aboriginal Youth Strategy will be developed with one project implemented.
- Funding proposal submitted to municipality and a youth strategy officer hired.

Trend: Shortage of Skilled Workers in the Construction Industry in the District of Algoma.

Issue: Shortage of Workers in the Construction Industry will have a negative impact on the economy of the District of Algoma.

Action Taken in 2006/07:

- Undertook a Human Resources Study of the Construction Industry in the District of Algoma.

Action to be Taken 2007/08:

- Develop a workforce development plan based on the recommendations from the Human Resources Study.
- Apply for funding to offer the Sault College Construction Craft Worker Program in Sault Ste. Marie and East Algoma
- Develop a bridge program for First Nations Aboriginal Construction Workers to upgrade their skills to the level of off-reserve certification
- Develop a communication plan to promote opportunities (supervisors, trades and apprenticeships) in the construction industry to students, parents and educators.

Partners:

Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association, East Algoma Local Advisory Committee, Sault College, Labour Development SSM, First Nations Communities.

Timelines: April 2007- March 2008

Expected Outcomes

- Workforce Development plan will be developed and at least one recommendation implemented.
- Enrol and secure co-op work placements for 12 to 15 student in the Pre-apprenticeship Construction Craft Worker program
- Re-introduce 3 college level courses in East Algoma.
- Undertake a pilot bridging program for 12-15 First Nation Construction Workers

Trend: Shortage of Workers in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Issue: Ongoing shortages will have a negative impact on the economy of the District of Algoma.

Action Taken in 2006/07:

- Undertook a Human Resource Study of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in the District of Algoma.

Action to be Taken in 2007/08

- Establish a Hospitality and Tourism Advisory Committee, to include representation from all affected communities, that would host two meetings by December 2007 to refine the scope, purpose and activities to be taken in 2008, which could include a strategy to communicate industry needs to employment and training agencies with the intent to work with these agencies to formulate action plans to meet projected short and long-term industry and human resource requirements.
- In partnership with the industry prioritize and implement at least three recommendations from the Hospitality and Tourism Human Resource Study.

Partners:

Tourism Sault Ste Marie, Labour De velopment Sault Ste. Marie, Job Connect, Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District Scholl Board, Sault College.

Timelines: April 2007-March 2010

Expected Outcomes

Three recommendations from the Human Resources Study would be implemented each year for the next three years. Implementation of the recommendations would have a significant impact on the community's ability to plan for its current and future hospitality and tourism human resource requirements.

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Section 5: TOP Appendices

Algoma Workforce Investment Committee Members

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Jody Rebek	Destiny Sault Ste Marie
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Christine Kucher	Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
Lucy Longo	Algoma District School Board
Louie Parent	Algoma District School Board
Jason Zachary	Chair, Hotel Restaurant Association, Gran Festa Ristorante
Rick Thomas	Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association
Teresa Vavala	Algoma Region Human Resources Professional Association
Joe Krmpotich	United Steelworkers LU 2251
Judy Montague	Service Canada

Participating Community Stakeholder Groups

- Algoma Workforce Investment Committee
- Team Sault Ste Marie
- Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation
- Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology
- Northern Ontario Contact Centre Association
- Algoma District School Board
- Algoma University
- Sault College Job Connect
- Blind River Chamber of Commerce
- Wawa EDC
- Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
- Destiny Sault Ste Marie
- City of Sault Ste Marie
- Ontario Works
- John Howard Society
- Algoma Steel Inc.
- Cross Country
- NCO
- Dept of Social Services, Ontario Works
- Tony Martin MP
- Ministry of Training Colleges & Universities
- YMCA Employment
- Sault Ste. Marie Enterprise Centre
- Sault Community Career Centre
- Huron Superior Catholic District School Board
- Algoma District Services
- Service Canada
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Tourism Sault Ste. Marie
- Hotel Restaurant Association
- Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association
- United Steel Workers
- Lucidia Studios
- Northern Credit Union
- Algoma Region Human Resources Association
- Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce
- East Algoma CFDC
- Superior East CFDC
- Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie
- RDEE Ontario
- Social Services Sault Ste. Marie
- Sault Ste. Marie CFDC
- Blind River Development Corporation
- Blind River Chamber of Commerce
- North Shore Tribal Council
- Mississauga First Nations, Employment and Training

Description of Consultations

Community consultations for this report included meetings with a wide range of individuals and organizations including focus groups from trade unions, education and training providers, economic development, employers, government, industry organizations, and service providers to solicit opinion regarding supply and demand issues, factors affecting recruitment/retention, training and development needs and other gaps in services and/or issues for the District of Algoma.

A regional TOP Consultation forum was held December 13th, 2006 in Sault Ste. Marie that was attended by over seventy five community stakeholders who were given an opportunity to review the issues and strategies, offer their comments and suggestions as to whether the proposed strategies would positively address the labour market issues identified through the year-long community consultation process.

Description of Methodologies

During 2006, a review of a number of reports and studies completed in the District of Algomaⁱⁱⁱ provided AWIC with an in-depth understanding and insight into workforce development trends, challenges and issues facing the District of Algoma as a whole.

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ⁱⁱⁱ *Human Resource Study of the Hospitality & Tourism Industry, Human Resource Study of the Construction Industry. Superior East Labour Needs Analysis, Blind River BR&E and Elliot Lake BR&E*