



Milestones to Employment

**Presentation to: Pathways to
Prosperity 2021 National Conference**

Presented by: Project Manager, Heather Brothers
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The Land Acknowledgement – Peel and Halton Region

"Achēv acknowledges that the land on which we live, work and gather, even virtually, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. The land on which the Region of Peel and the Regional Municipality of Halton operates is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that from the Anishinabek to the Attawandaron, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and the Métis peoples, these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in indigenous history.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land, and by doing so, give our respect to its first inhabitants. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. We also acknowledge that we are all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as immigrants either in this generation or in generations past and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. We pay tribute to the ancestors of those of African-Indigenous origin and descent.

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Program Overview



- Achēv is a leading charitable organization that delivers employment, newcomer, language and youth services. We also work collaboratively with our employer and community partners to ensure they have the tools and capacity to support others.
- Milestones to Employment is a pilot project funded by IRCC to support visible minority newcomer women with a focus on providing Employment Related Services to unemployed or underemployed (working less than 20 hours) VMNW experiencing multiple barriers. The Research is conducted and evaluated by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC).
- Milestones to Employment, abbreviated as M2E, takes a demand-led approach in preparing VMNW who may be unlikely to make the transition to employment on their own in high-demand sectors such as Retirement and Long-Term Care.

Program Overview - Eligibility Requirements



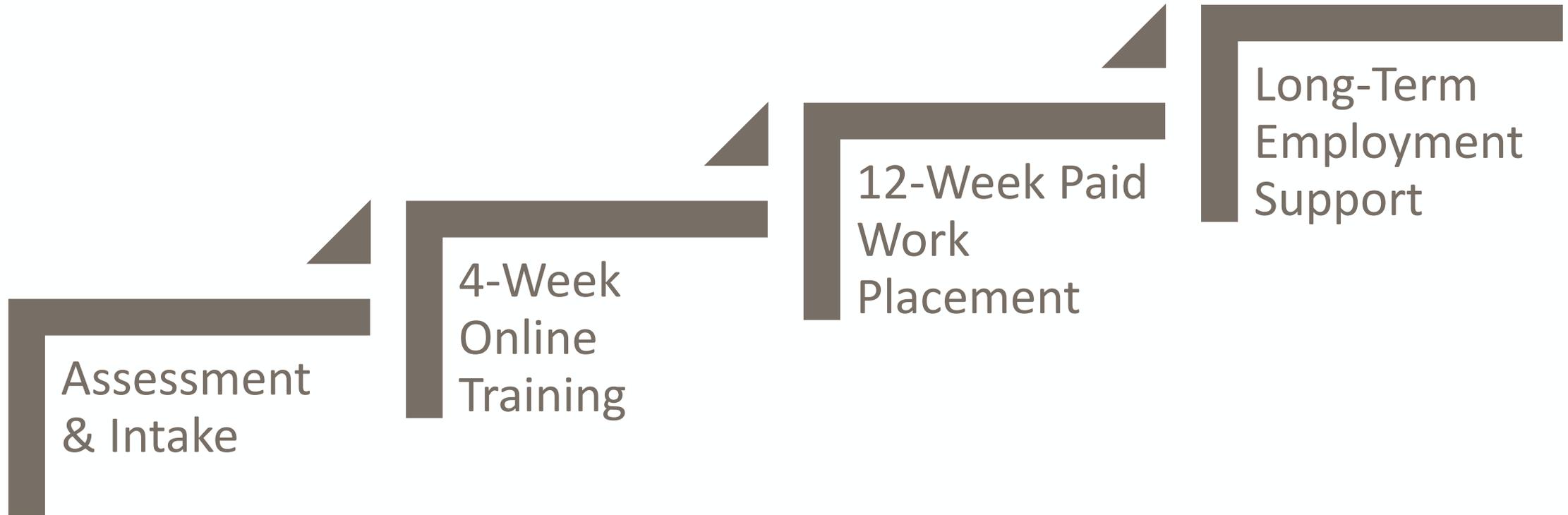
- Identify as a Visible Minority Newcomer Woman
- Permanent Resident or Convention Refugee
- Have a Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Minimum CLBA Level of 4 across Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing

**The CLBA is administered free of cost by Achēv and funded by IRCC.*

Program Overview - Implementation to date

- Completed 6 cohorts from September 2020 to October 2021
- First 2 cohorts focused on Commercial Cleaning Sector. Due to the pandemic, effective March 2021 project staff switched from Cleaning and Food Services stream to Senior Care Sector.
- 4-week training (additional 2-week occupation specific training for Commercial Cleaning)
- 12-week paid job placements
- 2 Cohorts trained in Commercial Cleaning
- 4 Cohorts trained in Senior Care Sector

Program Overview - Components



Program Overview - Online Training



Workplace Preparation:

- Introduction to Canadian Labour Market
- Workplace Culture & Ethics
- Employer Expectations
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Ontario Employment Standards Act
- Essential Skills for the Workplace
- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Networking, and Interview Preparation



Life Skills:

- Personal Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Self-Confidence
- Self-Esteem and Assertiveness
- Work-Life Balance
- Stress Management
- Money Management



Occupation Specific Training:

- Ontario Retirement Communities Association (ORCA)
- Mandatory & Basic Compliance Training
- Food Handler Certification (Level 1)
- SMART Serve Certification

Program Overview – 12 Week Work Placement (Senior Care)



Employers:

- Revera Inc, Lifetimes Living Inc.
- Compass Canada
- Verve Senior Care
- Bayshore Health (Retirement Care and Long Term Care facilities throughout Peel and the GTA)



Job Titles:

- Dietary Aide,
- Dining Service Attendant
- Resident Support Aide
- **Screening Requirements:** Criminal Background Check, TB Test, COVID Test



Job Duties and Other Details:

- Plating and service of food and clean-up
- Supporting seniors with activities of daily living such as grooming, walking and meal assistance
- **Pay:** \$14.35 per hour (minimum wage)
- *Transportation support available during work-placement, if eligible.*

Program Overview - Working as a Dietary Aide

- Flexible hours (Shift work)
- Fast track to entry level jobs in senior care for newcomer women with little to no previous work experience
- Opportunity to gain Canadian work experience
- Employer Partners have “Employee First” policy – career growth!
- Employer Partners encourage professional development – Food Service Worker Diploma, tuition is reimbursed once certification is completed
- Job satisfaction and fulfillment

Testimonial- Camila Bariani de Godoy

(Cohort 5- Senior Care - Working as Dietary Aid at Lifetimes Living Inc, Etobicoke)



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Testimonial- Amtul Mateen

(Cohort 3- Senior Care - Working as Dietary Aid at Compass Group of Canada, Brampton)

“Hello Everyone, my name is Amtul Mateen. To begin with, thanks to the Achēv, who had supported me through the most difficult times and helped me find a job. Thanks to Mona Ali, Solomon Thomas, Elishree and the whole Achēv Team who provided me a lot of good experiences. I got my first job and a certificate as a Food Handler through Achēv. They made sure, I get my training done and gain a lot of experience through it. They kept in touch with me, to make sure I wasn't struggling through my job. I'm glad that I met a great team and great classmates to support me. I really like the organization and the collaboration of the whole team during the whole project. Due to the help of Achēv, I am now working as a Dietary aide in the Compass Group of Canada. One of the experiment is; since my English speaking learning skills weren't good, they made sure to provide me resources to help me improve. Thank You.”

Amtul Mateen



Employer Engagement – How it Started

- Achēv's business development team established initial employer connections in Commercial Cleaning and Food Service sectors who committed to support the project by offering work placements to M2E program participants
- M2E Team had meetings with senior leadership and employer recruitment staff to understand the job sectors, employment opportunities, future trends, recruitment process, performance evaluations including wages and benefits
- When Cohort 2 was delivered during the onset of Covid19 pandemic, it negatively impacted the cleaning and food service industry. Project staff explored other high growth sectors where food service skills would be in demand, that's how the Senior Care stream was developed. Employers such as Compass Canada, Verve and Revera provided samples of job descriptions, recommended key skills and certificates and details about onboarding criteria such as CRC, VSC, TB test, ORCA, and Food Handler Certification

Employer Engagement - What worked well!

- A clearly defined onboarding process was established: Coaches identify participants and refer to employer partners by sending copies of the following documents: candidate resume, proof of ORCA training, Food Handler Certificate, TB Test results, Vulnerable Sector check and confirmation of Covid testing / vaccination
- Pertinent training, coaching and wrap around services were implemented
- Employer guest talks and mock interviews sessions by senior care industry recruiters, this built rapport between participants and hiring personnel and increased client preparedness for work placements
- Frequent assessment of client needs/barriers- regular contact and follow up support
- Promptness in follow up with employers, (designated staff for employer engagement) resumes and database updated and ready for immediate candidate referral
- Employers prefer hiring from M2E due to the direct communication with the Coaches, effective training & high level support from staff

Employer Engagement - Feedback

- “The M2E Coaches are amazing. They keep in contact, provide quick responses and just overall are lovely to work with.” **Logan Brown, Talent Management Coordinator, Lifetimes Living Inc.**
- “The experience with M2E candidates has been exceptional! The candidates come in with great energy, a willingness to learn, and are committed to making a difference in the lives of seniors. It has been a great pleasure to see the increase in confidence of the candidates during our mock interviews, and the success they have when they interview with the Hiring Managers. This program is great, and I know as a company, we are proud to be partnering with it. The project really does every step well! From ORCA training, to helping assist candidates getting their Food Handler’s Certificate, as well as providing support with onboarding. It really ensures a smooth transition, and easy transferable skills, to make the move of the candidates into Dietary Aide’s a more seamless transition. Most of the candidates are eager to learn, and commit their time and effort to the Retirement Residence. We are always happy to place M2E candidates at our sites, if the lines are available”. **Jasleen Nagra, Talent Sourcing Associate – GTA Revera Inc.**

Employer Engagement



Employer Engagement – Outcomes

- 69 % of clients found jobs in streams directly related to the training (Commercial Cleaning/ Senior Care).
- 22.2 % found jobs in fields related to the stream & training.
- 8.8 % found employment in their desired /alternative career, after completing the 4-week training and certifications.



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Employer Placement Challenges

- M2E Candidates have language barriers, low digital skills which make virtual training and placement onboarding time consuming.
- Limited childcare options during Covid, online schooling for parents – lack of candidate availability.
- Commercial Cleaning- overnight, early morning and late night shifts, not suitable for M2E candidates who are the primary caregivers.
- Dietary Aide- part time hours, shift work (morning, evening, night-time hours).
- Unprecedented challenges in hiring, covid vaccination policies, and availability of fully vaccinated participants.



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Challenges faced by VMNW



- Conflicting Value System- Type of job, prioritising career over family
- Personal Challenges- Domestic violence, safety concerns, separation, child custody, single parenting, caring for a family member, unstable housing
- Lack of awareness about community resources
- Family schedule and routines, interference from spouse
- Crisis support and counselling
- High COVID cases in Toronto/ Peel Region, fear of working in senior care industry
- Physical (injuries) and mental health illness
- Settlement needs (PR renewal process delays)

Challenges faced by VMNW (Client Example)

- A client from Cohort 3 was interviewed immediately after completing the 4-week training and received a work placement offer from our employer partner, Compass in January 2021.
- The client declined the offer as she was not comfortable putting her 4 kids (ages 4-8) in daycare and requested that we put a hold on the 12-week placement.
- Later in the pandemic, schools closed and with 4 kids attending online classes, the client again requested a further extension and assured staff that she will be ready to participate the work placement in September 2021 when school reopen.
- Project staff recommended several online courses for the client so that she could build her English language skills, stay engaged in learning and professional development to remain competitive in the job market.
- In October 2021, the client contacted staff as she was ready for the work placement as her kids returned to school. With the help of her Coach she completed online job applications and was called for an interview with Compass Canada. Due to her limited availability for work, (9 am - 2 pm) this conflicted with the required work hours for Compass, (7 am – 2:30 pm) therefore the placement wasn't a match.
- Staff supported this client however the challenges remain. Child care is a significant issue for newcomer women who have little or no support – receive job offers, but are unable to meet the employer expectations/requirements.

Lessons Learned

VMNW have complex barriers to employment, multiple interventions are needed and often there is a delay in the work placement component until roadblocks are removed.

Having a designated staff member (Workforce Development Coach) to interface with employers in a timely manner is highly effective in building & maintaining strong employer relations.

Senior Care industry has high recruitment needs, due to vaccination requirements, job openings are available more than ever.

Overall employers in this sector are supportive to the growth & development of VMNW, the majority of their staff are diverse and their commitment to hiring VMNW is strong.

Recruiting VMNW can be a challenge as many are not active on social media therefore having a variety of advertising methods and solid community partnerships, is critical.

Lessons Learned – Client Recruitment

Through extensive outreach, we receive a healthy volume of referrals from community partners

FB leads - interest is generated through FB ad's however typically out of 10 inquires, 1 or 2 are eligible for the M2E project.

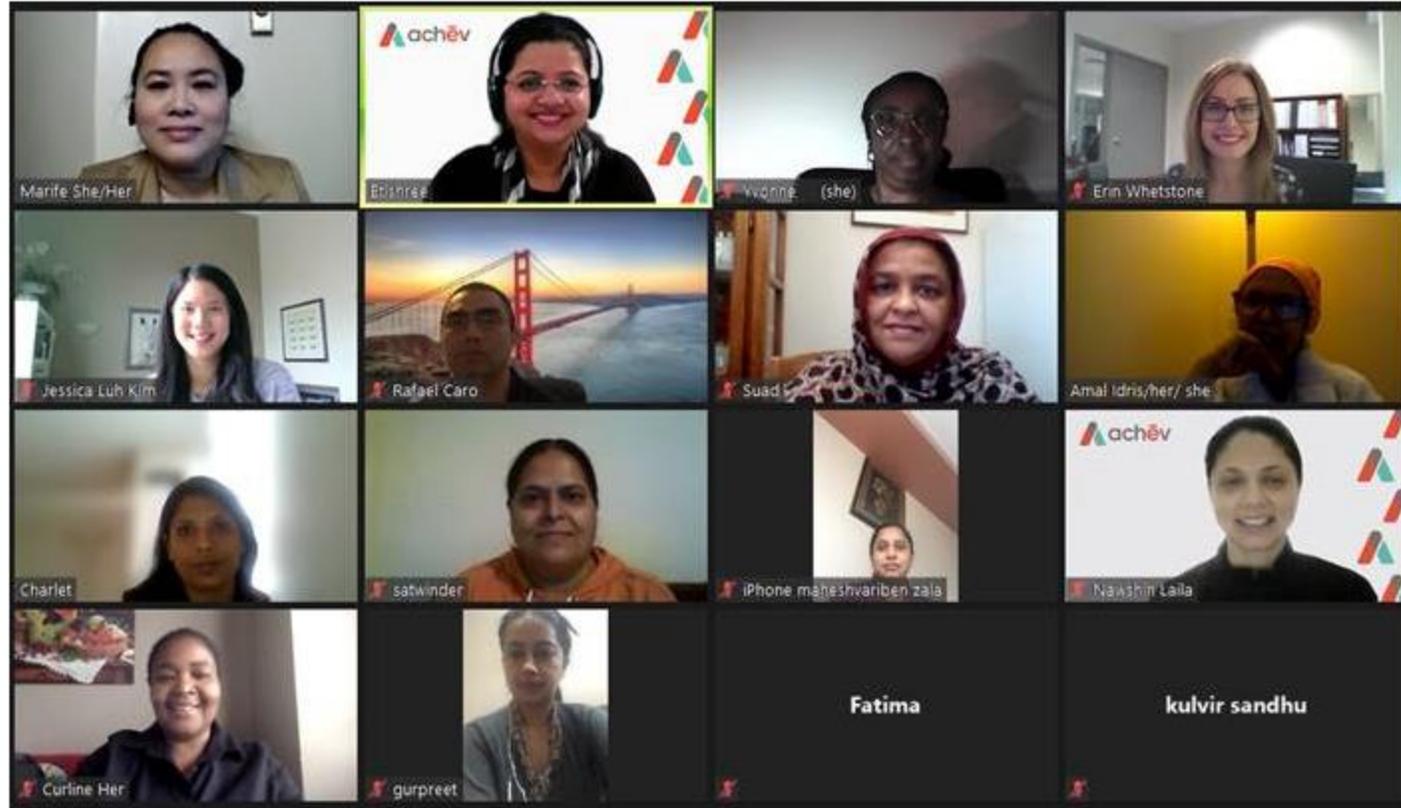
Internal referrals at Achēv including the Newcomer Information Centre (NIC).

Word of mouth - existing program participants, often refer a friend so that they can participate in the program together.

Staff deliver seminars (Want to become a Dietary Aide?) promoted through Achēv's online events page.

Advertise via Achēv's website, flyers are sent through e-blasts and marketing campaigns which result in direct inquiries to the M2E inbox.

Presentation by Jessica Luh Kim and Erin Whetstone from ORCA: Careers in Retirement/ Senior Care



- The research gathered from this project will help provide information to government and settlement agencies about the best ways of supporting visible minority newcomer women in finding and keeping jobs.

Thank You!