



# REPORT

NEST **360°** Ts'amiks Event  
Vancouver, BC  
October 21, 2016

# About This Report

Report on NEST's engagement with Nisga'a citizens in Vancouver which includes the wider Nisga'a urban local membership and staff of the Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society.

**Author:** Adam Perry (NLG Data Analyst)

**Event:** Sharing, engagement and information session hosted by Nisga'a Employment Skills & Training (NEST)

**Location:** Event hosted at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS) on East Hastings. VAFCS has been meeting the needs of aboriginal people making a transition to Vancouver community since 1963.



# Introduction

On October 21, Nisga'a Employment Skill & Training (NEST) held a Vancouver based event to communicate the message of how the Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) provides programs and services to their citizens. The event captured roles and responsibilities of NEST, funding arrangements and extent examples of NEST's client successes.

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- » Opening, protocols and program overview by MC, Jacob McKay
- » Introductions of NEST staff by NEST manager, Gary Patsey
- » Request to complete NEST surveys in further refinement of programming to all Nisga'a
- » Dinner was sponsored by Pretium Mine (acknowledges made)
- » Overview of NEST programming, Gary Patsey
- » Overview of emerging industries such as mining and mining careers, Gary Patsey
- » Acknowledges made to the other partners attending. This included agreement holders associated with Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC's funded 'Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy' (ASETS), John Webster and ACCESS<sup>1</sup>.
- » Address from the NLG Executive Director, Cheryl Stephens
- » Overview of NEST's Provincial path to employment program (i.e. the 'Pathways' program), Melissa McKay
- » Question and answer period
- » Sixty-five (65) attendees participated including six (6) staff members

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.accessfutures.com/>

## POINTS OF CLARITY MADE:

- » NEST is committed to communicating its message to all Nisga'a throughout the Province (Gary Patsey)
- » NEST is primarily focused on delivering pre-employment and employment related training (i.e. trades training, upgrading literacy and numeracy, essential skills training and drivers' training). The ultimate focus is to provide employment readiness strategies and opportunities for employment.
- » NEST's was recently established in 2013 and faced jurisdictional conditions placed on it to where it could provide services (Gary Patsey and Cheryl Stephens).
- » NEST has direct funding by ESDC (formerly HRSDC).
- » There are fourteen (14) ASETS agreement holders in the Province with clearly defined regions of operations.
- » NEST has the ability to serve Nisga'a citizens residing in Nisga'a Villages (i.e. Gitlaxt'aamiks, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx), Terrace Local, Kitimat and Prince Rupert/Port Edward Local. At the same time, a renewed relationship with Ottawa and ESDC may open up the mandate and the ability of NEST to serve Nisga'a residing in the lower mainland and throughout the Province in more direct ways.
- » NEST remains committed to connecting any qualified Nisga'a with any one of their industry partners and does provide guidance on skills development and training options available to citizens (i.e. through ASETS partners where Nisga'a reside).
- » NEST is developing unique programming which will develop upon referrals that strengthen relationships within NLG to serve Nisga'a citizens (i.e. acknowledging the need to support higher education interests such as diploma and degree training, Adam Perry, NLG analyst).



## Survey Results:

Twenty-nine (29) attendees participated in the survey administered at the start of the event (or a 45% response). The information provides valuable insights into how NEST can improve and direct its services. The responses were appreciated.

### TRAINING NEEDS

Two (2) respondents (7%) indicated that they desire further trades training and three (3) indicated the need to obtain Red Seal certification in the trades. Seven (7) people require more safety specific training (24%) such as WHIMS, food safe or confined space certification. First aid training persisted as an important aspect to people's careers with sixteen (16) responders keen to either upgrade, continue with more training or take first aid for the first time (55%). Four people were looking to take specific training in home support (14%). Two people were looking for culinary specific training. Of twenty-nine responders, ten (10) people want to obtain their Class 5 driver's licenses (34%). Two (2) people want to acquire their professional drivers' license (Classes 1-4). Six (6) people are looking for specific diploma training (21% of responders) while seven (7) are specially looking for a degree (24%). A few respondents had very specific training needs such as obtaining a faller's ticket or obtaining one's medical office assistant's course. The information provided by those residing in Vancouver is instrumental in evaluating NEST programming and ensuring that more effective services can be provided (see summary).

### BARRIERS

Certain barriers remain important to understand to improve the quality of life of Nisga'a. In the case of the those responding nine (9) of twenty-nine (29), or 31%, noted that funding issues were a barrier for them to either go back for training or school. Six (6) indicated that lacking transportation or having poor access to transportation was a barrier to their further advancement (21%). Another six (6) mentioned that child care and providing care for family or family obligations prevent them from reaching their goals. Three (3) attested to lacking the skills

necessary for their career advancement. Four (4) indicated a health related matter and/or a disability barrier as a concern (14%). One (1) person mentioned an addiction as a barrier to employment. Another person (1) mentioned the direct impact of not having a driver's license as a barrier to securing employment.

## EDUCATION LEVELS

Of the twenty-nine (29) participants, ten (10) people reported to have achieved high school education. Eight (8) people reported to have gained on-the-job training which was key to their employment success (28%). Three (3) reported having specific apprenticeship training (10%). Seventeen (17) respondents had achieved a technical diploma, college certificate and/or diploma with several persons indicating the need to carry on in their education (57%). Four (4) people stated they had achieved an undergraduate degree (14%). No one conveyed the achievement of a post-graduate degree from the group. One person mentioned they were in the process of achieving a Master's degree.

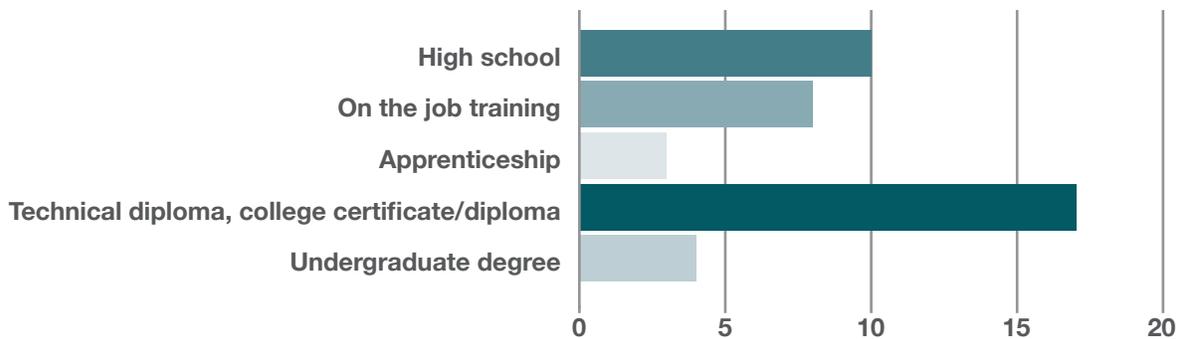


Figure 1 - Current Level of Education from those attending

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

There were eleven (11) people reporting to be unemployed (38%). Two (2) indicated they were retired. Twelve (12) people were working full time (41%) while four (4) were employed on a part-time basis. One person (1) informed the research analyst they were on EI.

If respondents were working they were asked to indicate their occupation. In grouping the findings, six (6) work in related social science fields, two (2) people indicated their occupation as health related and three (3) mentioned they work in sales and service industries. Two (2) people pointed out they had jobs in trades industries. Two (2) were working in business fields or administration and one (1) person was employed in the natural or applied sciences field.

## RESUME SKILLS

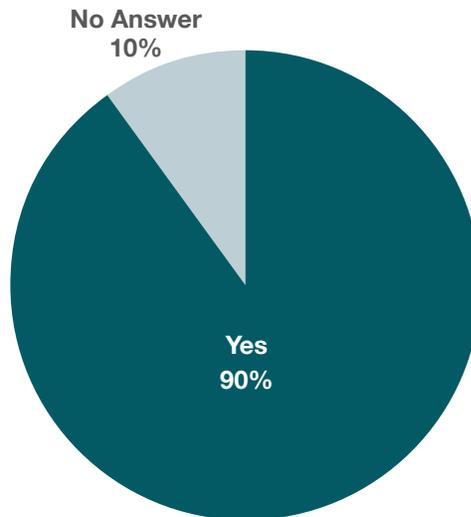
The survey also asked if respondents had resumes. Twenty-three (23) people indicated they had written resumes on hand, while four (4) said they do not have a resume. Two (2) declined to answer. Given NEST's services support access to online resume building tools there will be a follow-up questionnaire and more direction in pursuing NEST's services in Vancouver. It is important to determine whether or not respondents from Vancouver require on-going assistance in developing their written resumes. There was anecdotal evidence provided at the event for the need to have NEST's services available as people navigate for employment and adapt their resumes to suit particular employment opportunities.

## PREFERENCE FOR WORK AND TRAINING LOCATIONS

When asked on one's preference of where to work, fifteen (15) people designated Metro Vancouver as their preferred location (52%). Fifteen (15) people did point out however that they would be willing to travel to another location for work. Eight (8) people indicated that they would like to acquire a job in the Nass Valley, or 28% of the twenty-nine respondents. Three (3) wrote directly on the surveys that there was a possibility of travel to the Nass for a good paying job. Seven (7) directed that they would not travel for work up north (24%). At the same time, seventeen (17) responders denoted they would be willing to travel for training to the Nass Valley and twenty-one (21) specified they would be willing to travel for short-term training.

## AWARENESS OF NEST'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

When asked, 'Are you aware of NEST's programs and services?' thirteen (13) people responded 'yes', or 49% of respondents. Nine (9) people did not respond and seven (7) signified they were not aware of NEST's services, a possible indication of NEST's recent formation and quite possibly for there to be greater presence in the area. No one in this survey responded to having received funding through NEST.



**Figure 2 - Do you believe NEST should be operating from a Vancouver based office?**

## FUNDING

Of those twenty-nine (29) respondents, sixteen (16) were offered funding via Nisga'a village governments. Twelve (12) indicated they utilized their funding to complete training, and seven (7) mentioned that from this funding and training they obtained employment (24%).

## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

When asked, eighteen (18) people pointed out that they learned of new training programs and services offered by NLG and NEST. Eight (8) declined to answer. When asked about whether NEST should operate from a Vancouver based location, twenty-six (26) people answered 'yes'.



## Summary

The results of the survey point out some interesting facts. There is a need for NEST's services to carry out both shorter term and longer term training as outlined by its mandate. There were indicators for example that suggested interest for trades training (7% of respondents), safety courses (24% of respondents) and first aid (55% of respondents). Driver's training remains paramount to provide and fund given the high number of survey respondents (41%) indicated this need. Having enough funding was noted as a concern and barrier to training services and obtaining employment. Lacking appropriate and reliable transportation was indicated as a barrier to people, even in the lower mainland where public transport is available. Support for child care and child care services remained as an issue and barrier for people returning to work (21%). A significant number indicated they were unemployed (38%).



Figure 3 - Indicators

There was evidence at the meeting and in analyzing the survey that NEST's services are required in Vancouver. Twenty-six (26) people mentioned the need to have NEST's services represented in Vancouver. There was equal evidence that people would be willing to travel to where NEST services are currently provided. There was also evidence that people would relocate for work to northwestern British Columbia (38%). 52% suggested they would consider traveling north for work. Of 29 people, 18 (62%) felt they had learned something new about NEST's programs, services and industry partners. Northern development is currently experiencing employment opportunity because of mining. This was highlighted at the meeting through presentations and because Pretium's sponsorship of a meal and appreciations for Nisga'a who attended, the event added an awareness to the potential of employment in mining.

Other important points to make about the meeting is the extent to which NEST's ASETS' partner, ACCESS, was in attendance. Communicating NEST's message to Nisga'a about employment training programming and services is equally about communicating to other ASETS agreement holders, or those who provide similar employment training in the lower mainland, that NEST is committed to partnership and does not desire to duplicate services. Rather as NLG and NEST are able to provide wider services under their federal mandate (hopefully as the next funding cycle under the Liberals will enable), it is the hope that NEST facilitates a strong partnership with ACCESS. This partnership will build on the current services NEST provides such as building on the Provincial program developed, 'Pathways', which Melissa McKay outlined at the meeting.

There was wide applause and support for Melissa to continue on with her work. Other Pathways coordinators included in the various service areas in the Nass Valley were also given acknowledgment for their service to pre-employment counselling and employment training. The message from NEST is that staff members are committed to communicating the diversity of programs and services offered by NEST and in order to facilitate direct services to Nisga'a residing in Vancouver. At the same time, NEST is available to coordinate and communicate where there are opportunities in the northwest given NEST has a direct relationships with many industry partners. It was conveyed that it is important to connect with NEST if there is an interest in industry training related to mining and the trades. Village governments can also provide some direct support.

## NEXT STEPS (Q + A FROM THE MEETING)

1. NEST acknowledges that there are needs for those desiring to move from diploma to professional degree training. NEST/NLG is committed to improving the quality of life and for Nisga'a to access education in all respects. It was acknowledged that there would be serious efforts made to support applications for higher learning either via village government supports, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (WWNI), via NEST staff or other NLG managers and employees who can support written applications to colleges and universities (also coordinate via Adam Perry, NLG data analyst, for ideas on achieving opportunities for higher learning).
2. NEST will continue to work with and instill pressure on ESDC to open the funding envelope to serve all Nisga'a in the Province under the mandate of providing pre-employment and employment training to all citizens. Currently NEST is available to communicate what it can do for citizens but must serve clients in the ASETS agreement locations in the northwest.
3. In planning forward, NEST will continue to lead conversations with other ASETS agreement holders, such as ACCESS, who may be in a position to support office space and training partnerships when the opportunity arises for more engaged action in Vancouver. It remains a responsibility of NEST to communicate opportunities in the northwest for Nisga'a citizens living in Vancouver just as there are plans to support effective services for those living in the Vancouver area. It is important to remember that NEST's industry partners work all over the world; a partnership with a mining or oil and gas company could mean a job overseas and not just the northwest, BC.
4. NEST commits its focus to connect and communicate its message with Nisga'a citizens residing in Vancouver in order that programs and services remain viable and responsive to a fast paced and changing Canadian society. NEST is committed to pre-employment and employment training that will meet the needs of youth and the future working Nisga'a generation.

From the entire NEST team and NLG staff in attendance:

**Thank you to all those who attended  
the event in Vancouver!**

