

Respondents who are “somewhat” or “quite likely” to move in the next five years also did not rate satisfaction levels considerably different than the overall ratings. These respondents rated work demands and management and supervision slightly lower than the overall (6.62 compared with 7.33 overall for work demands and 6.98 compared with 7.53 overall for management and supervision).

Of the 45 respondents who said that they are looking for a job with a different employer, the average satisfaction with job characteristics is considerably lower than those who are not currently looking for another employer. The highest average satisfaction score for individuals looking for work is for hours of work (6.79 mean score), and the lowest rated job characteristics are training, incentives (i.e., bonuses) and opportunities to advance (mean = 4.44, 4.19, 3.79 consecutively). Both groups rated incentives (i.e., bonuses) lower than other job characteristics. See Table 36.

Table 36: Job satisfaction – Looking for work and not Looking for work, 1 = very unsatisfied, 10 = very satisfied

	Currently looking for work			Not currently looking for work		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Hours of work	43	6.79	3.11	329	8.08	2.22
Work environment	43	6.42	2.73	329	8.02	1.94
Management and Supervision	41	6.17	2.88	271	7.74	2.25
Work demands	42	5.95	2.69	328	7.5	2.18
Wages	43	5.7	2.93	327	7.59	2.28
Benefits	39	5.05	3.58	276	6.69	3.29
Training (Professional Development)	41	4.44	3.12	261	7.05	2.64
Incentives (i.e. Bonuses)	37	4.19	3.01	220	5.44	3.43
Opportunities to advance	38	3.79	2.72	247	7.05	2.77

The job satisfaction scores were lower for those who work in casuals/contract/seasonal positions compared with those who do not work casual/contract/seasonal positions: Hours, wages, benefits, opportunities to advance, and training are less satisfactory for casual/contract/seasonal workers. On average, casual/contract/seasonal workers scored work environment, work demands, management and supervision, and incentives slightly higher than non-casual/contract/seasonal respondents. See Table 37.

Table 37: Job satisfaction – working casual/contract/seasonal and not

	Working casual/contract/seasonal			Not working casual/contract/seasonal		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Hours of work	119	7.75	2.54	252	8.00	2.28
Wages	117	7.16	2.63	252	7.46	2.34
Benefits	92	5.63	3.45	222	6.85	3.26
Work environment	119	7.94	2.06	252	7.77	2.13
Work demands	118	7.41	2.38	251	7.28	2.25
Management and Supervision	91	7.76	2.39	220	7.46	2.38
Opportunities to Advance	85	6.16	3.09	199	6.79	2.92
Training (Professional Development)	93	6.60	2.94	208	6.71	2.83
Incentives (i.e. Bonuses)	73	5.34	3.28	183	5.20	3.45

7.7.4. Conditions to overcome to work more hours or enter the workforce

Respondents who were not working and who had not looked for work in the past five years were asked to identify conditions that would need to be overcome in order for them to work more hours or enter the workforce (Figure 35). The most frequently mentioned condition among all respondents was education and training (27% selected this condition), followed by family commitments (24%), and the need for certification (23%).

Respondents under 50 years old who are unemployed, but not retired, and who plan to upgrade their education and training in the next five years indicated conditions that they need to overcome to work more hours or enter the workforce, as in Figure 35. Eighty-one percent of these respondents said that education or training was a condition they needed to overcome, 72% selected certification, and 44% selected transportation. These percentages are considerably higher than the overall respondents.

Among Aboriginal respondents, the greatest barriers are education or training (47% selected this is a barrier), and certification (40%). Transportation is also a more significant barrier for Aboriginal respondents compared with all respondents. Non-flexible work hours are considered a barrier by a smaller percentage of Aboriginal respondents compared with all respondents, as shown in Figure 36.

Figure 35: Conditions to overcome to work more hours or re-enter the workforce (unemployed respondents under age 50 who plan to upgrade their training and education).

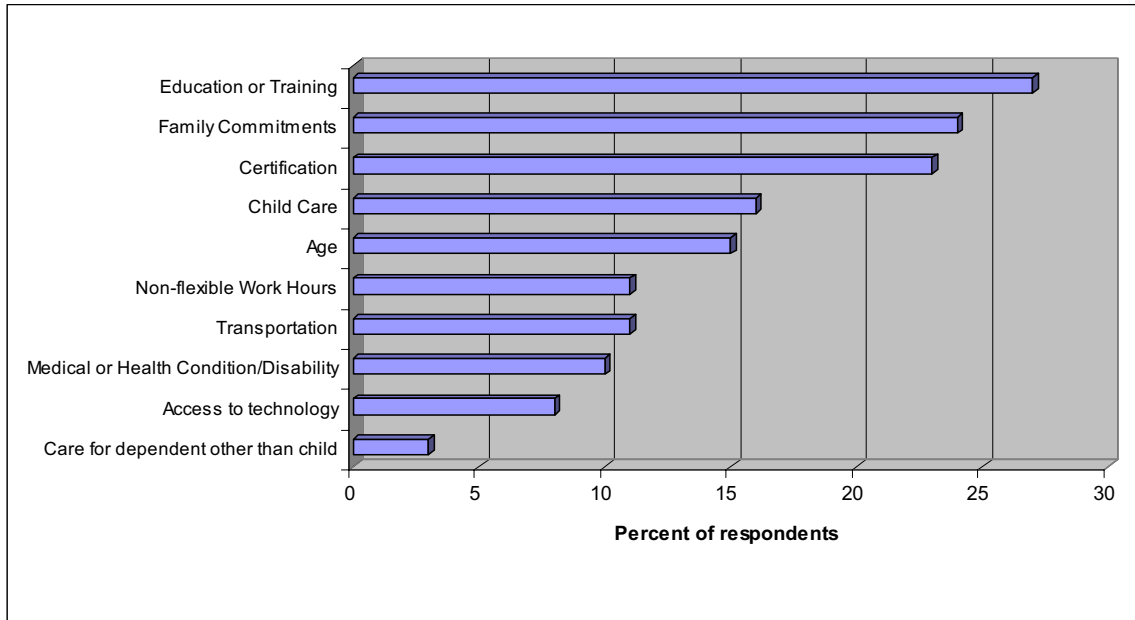
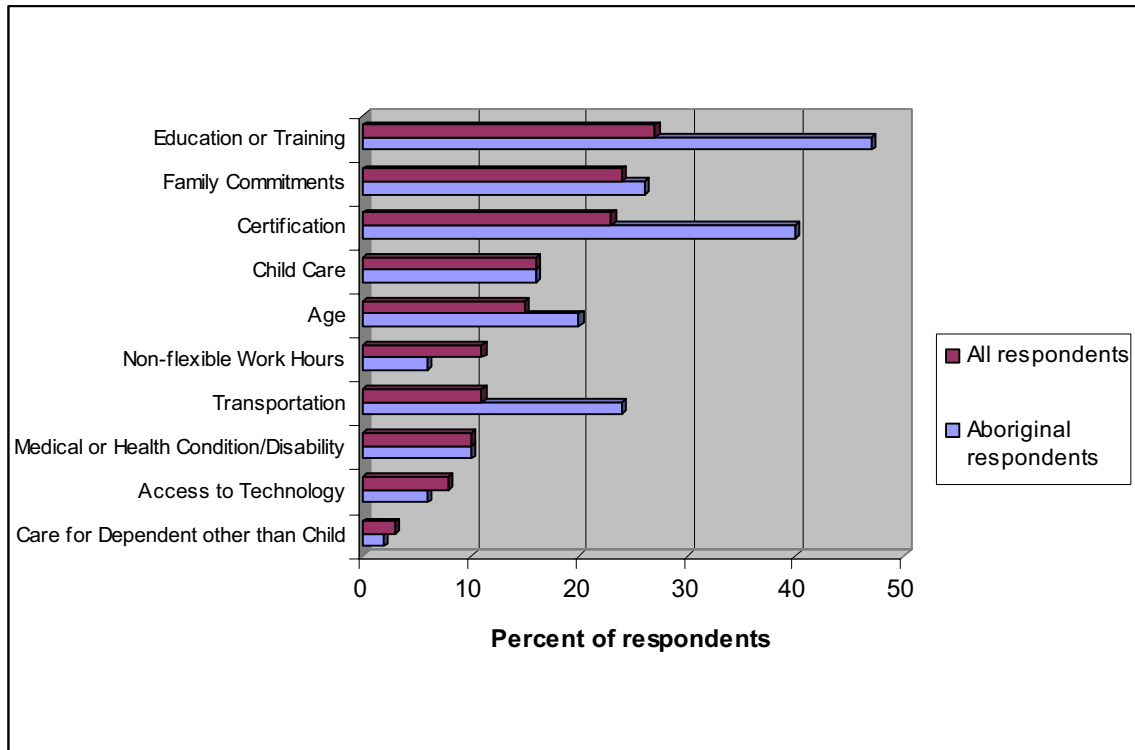


Figure 36: Conditions to overcome to work more hours or re-enter the workforce: Aboriginal respondents and all respondents.



7.7.5. Barriers to upgrading education and training

Respondents were asked to rate 12 potential barriers to upgrading education and training on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “no barrier” and 10 is a “huge barrier.” The highest rated potential barrier overall was “availability of local programs,” (mean of 5.33) followed by financial resources (mean of 3.92) and family commitments (mean 3.77). Compared to all respondents, Aboriginal respondents rated all the barriers except “availability of local programs” and “child care” as higher than the overall mean scores, particularly financial resources. Government funding was considered only a slightly higher barrier for Aboriginal respondents than all respondents. See Table 38.

Table 38: Barriers to upgrading education and training – all respondents and Aboriginal respondents (1 = no barrier and 10 = huge barrier)

	Mean–All respondents	SD–All respondents	Mean–Aboriginal respondents	SD–Aboriginal respondents	Difference in means between Aboriginal and all respondents*
Availability of local programs	5.33	3.60	4.79	3.52	-0.54
Financial resources	3.92	3.19	4.23	3.23	0.31
Family commitments	3.77	3.27	3.80	3.28	0.03
Work hours	3.57	3.15	4.00	3.22	0.43
Government funding	2.78	2.91	2.74	3.19	-0.04
Your Age	2.56	2.71	2.71	2.77	0.15
Child care	2.47	2.82	2.17	2.65	-0.3
Access to technology	2.46	2.76	2.65	3.06	0.19
Support from employer	2.28	2.48	2.47	2.79	0.19
Transportation	2.24	2.52	2.53	2.96	0.29
Care for other than dependent child	1.87	2.20	1.93	2.28	0.06
Medical or health condition or disability	1.72	2.09	1.47	1.64	-0.25

*A positive number means that Aboriginal respondents consider it a bigger barrier than all respondents. A negative number means that Aboriginal respondents consider it to be less of a barrier when compared with all respondents.

Female respondents consider the availability of local programs, care for dependent other than child, childcare, and medical or health condition or disability only slightly higher barriers to upgrading than males. Males consider transportation, access to technology, family commitments, work hours, and age

slightly more as barriers to upgrading than did women. The differences between males and females are not dramatic. See Table 39.

Table 39: Barriers to upgrading education and training, male and female respondents (1 = no barrier and 10 = huge barrier)

	Males			Females			Difference in means bet males and females*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Availability of Local Programs	209	5.3	3.7	230	5.4	3.5	0.1
Family commitments	220	3.7	3.3	239	3.8	3.2	-0.2
Financial Resources	225	3.7	3.2	243	4.1	3.1	-0.1
Work Hours	214	3.6	3.2	188	3.5	3.1	-0.1
Your Age	224	2.7	2.7	244	2.4	2.7	-0.2
Government Funding	184	2.6	3.0	193	2.9	2.9	0.0
Support from Employer	199	2.5	2.7	178	2.0	2.2	-0.1
Access to technology	221	2.3	2.6	243	2.6	2.9	-0.6
Childcare	214	2.2	2.5	222	2.8	3.1	0.3
Care for dependent other than child	211	2.1	2.4	214	1.6	1.9	0.6
Transportation	227	2.1	2.5	245	2.4	2.6	-0.6
Medical or Health Condition or Disability	223	1.6	2.0	242	1.8	2.2	0.1

*A positive number means that female respondents consider it a bigger barrier than male respondents. A negative number means that male respondents consider it to be more of a barrier than females.

Respondents who are employed or expect to return to work in the next year indicated that caring for a dependent other than a child, support from employer, and availability of local programs as greater barriers to upgrading education and training than those who are unemployed. In all other areas, unemployed respondents had slightly higher barrier scores than those employed or returning to work in the next year. Childcare and availability of local programs are the two barriers that represent the greatest difference between employed/expecting to return and unemployed respondents (.9 and .3 on a scale of 1–10). Overall, the barrier scores are quite low for both employed, unemployed, and both males and females. See Table 40.

Table 40: Barriers to upgrading for those employed or planning to return to work in the next year compared with unemployed

	Employed or returning to work in next year			Unemployed			Difference in means bet Employed and Unemployed*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Child-care	338	2.27	2.603	98	3.16	3.424	0.9
Care for Dependent Other than Child	332	1.91	2.242	94	1.64	1.894	-0.3
Family Commitments	356	3.75	3.212	104	3.83	3.434	0.1
Access to Technology	358	2.43	2.680	107	2.50	2.954	0.1
Transportation	367	2.21	2.493	106	2.29	2.545	0.1
Your Age	363	2.51	2.619	106	2.77	3.021	0.3
Medical or Health Condition or Disability	361	1.56	1.817	105	2.20	2.733	0.6
Support from Employer	324	2.48	2.610	52	1.08	.555	-1.4
Financial Resources	364	4.00	3.168	106	3.69	3.284	-0.3
Work Hours	351	3.88	3.194	51	1.49	1.736	-2.4
Government Funding	292	2.88	2.942	85	2.45	2.809	-0.4
Availability of Local Programs	337	5.70	3.602	102	4.20	3.357	-1.5

*A positive number means that unemployed respondents consider it a bigger barrier than employed respondents. A negative number means that employed respondents consider it to be more of a barrier than unemployed respondents.

Respondents who work part-time (employed less than 30 hours per week) had lower average barrier scores than those who worked 30 hours or more per week on most areas except “Access to Technology”, “Child care”, “Medical conditions” and “Transportation.” In these three areas, those who part time considered them more of a barrier than those who work more hours. See Table 41.

Table 41: Barriers to upgrading for those employed 30 hours or more per week compared with those employed less than 30 hours per week

	≥30 hrs/ wk			≤30 hrs/wk			Difference in means bet >30hrs or <30 hrs*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Availability of Local Programs	264	5.80	3.62	71	5.41	3.532	-0.4
Financial Resources	286	4.11	3.20	76	3.59	3.034	-0.5
Work Hours	280	4.01	3.25	69	3.30	2.866	-0.7
Family Commitments	278	3.77	3.21	76	3.54	3.17	-0.2
Government Funding	227	2.97	3.02	63	2.51	2.60	-0.5
Support from Employer	255	2.59	2.74	67	2.12	2.04	-0.5
Your Age	284	2.54	2.61	77	2.42	2.67	-0.1
Access to Technology	280	2.34	2.62	76	2.75	2.85	0.4
Child Care	267	2.15	2.43	69	2.65	3.05	0.5
Transportation	288	2.02	2.32	77	2.97	2.94	1.0
Care for Dependent Other than Child	261	1.99	2.32	69	1.62	1.91	-0.4
Medical or Health Condition or Disability	282	1.50	1.72	77	1.79	2.13	0.3

*A positive number means that respondents employed fewer than 30 hours/week consider it a bigger barrier than those working 30 hours or more. A negative number means that respondents working 30 hours or more per week consider it to be more of a barrier than those working less than 30 hours/week.

Employees who are employed or plan to return to work find access to technology, age, child care, transportation and medical condition or disability slightly greater barriers than those who don't work casual/contract seasonal jobs: See Table 42.

Table 42: Barriers to upgrading for those working casual/contract/seasonal positions compare with those who don't work casual/contract/seasonal

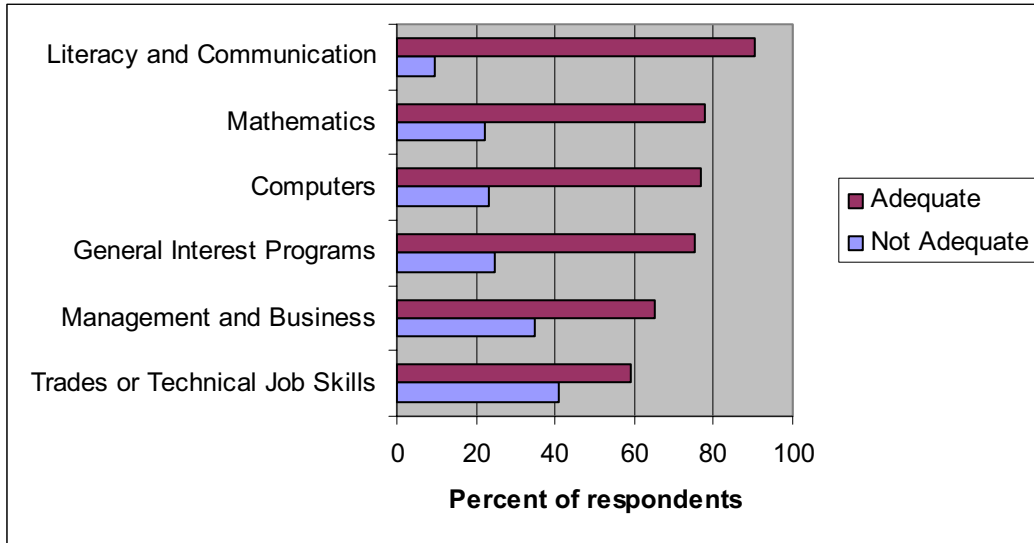
	Work casual/contract/seasonal			Don't work casual/contract/seasonal			Difference in means bet. casual/contract/seasonal and those who don't work casual/contract/seasonal*
	N	Mean	DD	N	Mean	SD	
Availability of Local Programs	109	5.13	3.598	227	5.99	3.581	0.9
Financial Resources	118	3.92	3.305	244	4.03	3.102	0.1
Work Hours	114	3.84	3.244	235	3.88	3.159	0.0
Family Commitments	117	3.50	3.098	237	3.83	3.249	0.3
Government Funding	93	2.72	2.712	198	2.93	3.034	0.2
Access to Technology	118	2.62	2.879	238	2.35	2.586	-0.3
Your Age	117	2.61	2.691	244	2.47	2.595	-0.1
Support from Employer	101	2.48	2.614	221	2.50	2.623	0.0
Child Care	111	2.40	2.741	225	2.22	2.545	-0.2
Transportation	119	2.31	2.544	246	2.15	2.462	-0.2
Medical or Health Condition or Disability	117	1.78	2.256	242	1.46	1.565	-0.3
Care for Dependent Other than Child	111	1.74	1.999	219	1.99	2.355	0.3

*A positive number means that respondents employed as casual/contract/seasonal consider it a less of a barrier than those who are not employed as a casual/contract/seasonal employee. A negative number means that respondents employed as a casual/contract/seasonal consider it to be more of a barrier than those not working casual/contract/seasonal.

7.7.6. Adequacy of local training and education programs

Nearly 60% of the respondents who plan to take training or education related to their career in the next five years feel that local training and education programs have adequately met their needs for trades and technical job skills, management and business, general interest, computers, mathematics, and literacy and communications during the past three years. A strong majority (more than 70%) of respondents feel that literacy and communications, mathematics, computers, and general interest training and education programs in the Vanderhoof area are adequate. A smaller percentage of respondents feel that management and business and trades or technical job skill programs are adequate (still no less than 60% however).

Figure 37: Adequacy of local training and education programs for meeting needs in the past three years.



There was little variation in responses between those who said they expected to upgrade their education and training in the next five years and those who did not expect to take any training or education related to their career regarding the adequacy of local training and education programs. However, there are differences in perception in respondents working in different sectors as shown in Figure 37. For computer training and education, 75% or more of accommodation and food service, education services, health care and social assistance, high tech, logging, and manufacturing employees thought it was adequate.

There was much variation in responses regarding the adequacy of local training and education in mathematics in the past three years. Sixty-seven percent of respondents in the logging sector considering it adequate and five other sectors identified mathematics as 100% adequate. Construction, and business, building and other support services respondents all thought it was adequate, while none of the health care and social assistance and professional, scientific and technical services thought it was adequate to meet their needs. The category, literacy and communications, was seen as adequate by all respondents in nine of 16 sectors. Only 17% of manufacturing respondents said management and business was adequate to meet their needs, but general interest training and education rate highly across most sectors.

Local training and education in trades and technical rated lower across most sectors, with fewer than half of respondents in forestry, and in health care and social assistance indicating it did not adequately meet their needs in the past three years, see Table 43.

Table 43: Percent of respondents who think that local training and education was adequate for meeting needs in past three years, by sector and skills

	Computers	Mathematics	Literacy & Commun.
Accom. & Food Service	6/86	7/78	8/100
Agriculture	4/80	3/75	5/100
Bus., Building & Other Support Services	5/71	3/100	4/100
Construction (Res'l & Comm'l)	2/67	4/100	4/100
Education Services	9/75	5/83	13/93
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	2/67	1/100	2/100
Forestry	4/40	6/67	6/67
Health care & Social Assistance	9/82	0/0	7/87
High Tech	1/100	1/100	1/100
Information, Culture and Recreation	3/60	2/67	2/67
Logging	5/100	4/100	7/100
Manufacturing	11/92	5/63	8/80
Professional, Scientific and Technical services	0/0	0	1/100
Public Administration	3/75	2/67	4/100
Retail Trade	11/69	12/85	16/9
Transportation and Warehousing	-	0/0	0/0
Utilities	0/0	-	-
	Mgmt & Business	General Interest	Trades or Technical
Accom. & Food Service	4/80	5/83	6/86
Agriculture	4/80	3/60	5/100
Bus., Building & Other Support Services	2/40	3/43	4/50
Construction (Res'l & Comm'l)	3/100	6/100	4/67
Education Services	6/67	22/76	7/50
Financial, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	2/67	1/50	0/0
Forestry	6/60	10/83	4/26
Health Care & Social Assistance	4/57	12/71	4/44
High Tech	1/100	0/0	0/0
Information, Culture and Recreation	2/50	3/50	2/50
Logging	1/50	12/92	20/87
Manufacturing	1/17	12/80	11/52
Professional, Scientific and Technical services	1/50	2/100	0/0
Public Administration	4/80	5/100	2/67
Retail Trade	11/73	18/78	11/61
Transportation and Warehousing	1/100	1/100	-
Utilities	-	-	-

7.8. COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CFDC-SN conducted a telephone survey of community members' ages 15–64 in August and September 2006 to profile the labour market and to identify the issues and aspirations of community members for future employment. Results of the survey showed the following:

Labour Market Profile

Most Vanderhoof area residents who responded to the survey are relatively long-time residents, and most do not plan to leave in the next five years. However, a quarter of respondents are “somewhat” or “quite likely” to move in the next five years. The younger the worker, the more likely that they expect to leave the area in the next five years. Eleven percent of respondents are Aboriginal; a quarter of the respondents earn less than \$20,000; and 57% of respondents earn \$40,000 or more annually.

While young people (aged 15–24) were only 13% of respondents, they hold 31% of the labour positions. The vast majority of workers work more than 30 hours per week. A third of workers hold casual/contract/seasonal positions. Fifteen percent of working respondents hold more than one job.

Logging is the largest sector, followed closely by education services, manufacturing, and retail trade.

Twelve percent of working respondents are currently looking for work with a different employer. Three percent of these have been looking for more than one year. Word of mouth is the most frequently used source of information about job openings, followed by newspapers. Sixteen percent of respondents said that they are considering starting a business in the next year.

A small percentage of respondents in any occupation group expect to retire in the next year, but more than a quarter of respondents who are truck/bus/courier/taxi drivers, in electric trades, or in automotive and heavy duty mechanic trades expect to retire in 1–5 years.

The retail sector has experienced the highest percentage of employees who have left a job in the past five years, followed by the accommodation and food service sector.

More than half of respondents said they plan to take some training or education related to their career in the next five years. Half of those who plan to take training or education expect to upgrade their skills, but stay at the same education level. The other half expects to upgrade to a higher level of education.

Over half of those who expect to take training or education plan to do at least part of their training outside of the Vanderhoof area. A quarter of the respondents

who plan to upgrade to a higher education level, with at least part of their training or education taking place outside the Vanderhoof area, don't expect to return to the Vanderhoof area to work. Another 24% are not sure if they will return or not.

More than half of respondents who plan to take training or education want to pursue new occupations. Twenty percent of those who expect to pursue other occupations want to pursue professional positions. Only small numbers of individuals want to pursue jobs in the trades.

Twenty-nine percent of working respondents said that they plan to retire in the next 10 years. Trades are the occupation group with the highest percentage of people who plan to retire sometime over the next 10 years.

Community Member Perspectives about Employment and Training/Education

Lack of career development and advancement opportunities were the most frequently mentioned reasons respondents left their jobs in the past five years. Management and supervision were also significant reasons. Wages were mentioned by many respondents but lack of career advancement opportunities was selected as a reason for leaving jobs more frequently than wages.

Respondents appear generally satisfied about how adequately Vanderhoof's community characteristics meet the needs for their career and their spouses' career. Social and cultural activities, business services, and sport and leisure services were rated lower, but no community characteristic was rated lower than 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Overall, most respondents said that they possess the skills to meet their work requirements. Over 80% said that their skills in literacy and communications, mathematics, professional, trades or technical, business management, and computers are adequate.

A lack of available local programs is the most significant barrier for respondents to upgrading their education and training, followed by financial resources and family commitments, although these barriers are not considered very large (no more than 5 on a scale of 1 to 10). Education and training, including certification, were the most frequently mentioned conditions needed to work more hours or enter the workforce. Family commitments were also frequently mentioned as a condition to overcome to work more hours or re-enter the workforce. Among Aboriginal respondents, transportation was also frequently mentioned as a condition needed to work more hours or re-enter the workforce.

Nearly 60% of respondents who were employed or planning to return to work in the next year think that local training and education has been adequate for meeting their needs in the past three years for trades and technical skills, management and business, general interest, computers, mathematics, and literacy and communications. However, perceptions differed considerably

depending on the sector in which respondents worked. There was more agreement across sectors about the adequacy of training and education for literacy and communications and general interest (generally rated highly) than for computers, mathematics, management and business, and trades or technical, which were more variable across sectors.

Based on vacancy and retirement estimates from employers and responses from community members about what kinds of occupations they want to pursue, there may be vacancies in most occupation groups in the near future except in the professional occupations. This depends on decisions made by youth and others who are interested in coming (or returning) to the Vanderhoof area. These vacancies are likely especially to occur in the labourer, trades, sales/service representative, and equipment operator occupations.

8. COMPARISONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

One of the key aims of conducting both an employer and community survey in the Vanderhoof area was to compare perspectives between the two groups. Comparisons are drawn on:

1. Adequacy of skills needed for the job
2. Adequacy of local training and education for providing skills needed for job requirements
3. Desired occupations by community members in the future compared with estimated vacancies in occupations predicted by employers
4. Perceived reasons employees leave their jobs
5. How community members learn about position vacancies compared with how employers typically advertise position vacancies
6. Whether or not employers conduct exit interviews when employees leave their employ
7. Availability of employees to work seasonally compared with peak seasons for hiring seasonal employees
8. Incentives used by employers for recruitment and retention and the importance of those incentives to employees
9. Difficulty recruiting and retaining occupations

8.1. ADEQUACY OF SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE JOB

Employers were asked to rate the adequacy of job applicant skills and for comparison, community members were asked to rate how adequately they felt that their own skills meet their job requirements. The survey indicated that while community members who are employed or are planning to return to work report that their skills are adequate enough to meet their work requirements, employers generally indicated that job applicants are lacking in key skills. One of the greatest barriers identified by employers in filling vacancies is a lack of qualified applicants.

As discussed in Section 7.7.2, more than 79% of community respondents working or planning to return to work in next year said that their skills in literacy and communications, mathematics, professional skills, trades or technical, business management, and computers are adequate to meet their work requirements. See Table 34. As discussed in Section 6.3.3, no more than 69% of employers feel that job applicants adequately meet 12 skill areas; for some skill areas the percentage is considerably lower (see Figure 11).

While the results of the employer survey reflect the perception of skill levels of job applicants as a group and the community survey reflects perceptions of working individuals, the comparison of this data still shows a discrepancy between employer and community perceptions about skill level adequacy of applicants.

Table 44: Perceived job skill adequacy by community respondents* and employers**

Community member perceptions		Employer perceptions	
	% who say their job skill is adequate		% who say job skill is adequate for the job
Literacy and Comm.s	95	Literacy & Comm.	65
Mathematics	92	Mathematics	54
Professional	90	Life skills	66
Trades or Technical	85	Team work	57
Business Management	82	Writing	56
Computers	79	Computers	47
		Independent work	56
		Problem solving	45
		Project management	41
		Technical	38
		Supervisory	37

* Employed or planning to return to work within one year

** For applicants only

8.2. ADEQUACY OF LOCAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

More employers said that local training and education programs for communications and literacy, math, and computers are adequate, compared with other programs (Figure 12). A high percentage of community members agreed that literacy and communications and mathematics training and education meet their needs while management and business training less adequately meets their needs.

A higher percentage of community members indicated that the computer training available is meeting their needs compared to many employers who said that computer training is not adequate for meeting job skill requirements.

8.3. DESIRED OCCUPATIONS IN THE FUTURE COMPARED WITH ESTIMATED VACANCIES PREDICTED BY EMPLOYERS

Based on the number of vacancies estimated by employers and the number of respondents who want to pursue various occupations (as discussed in Section 7.6.10 and shown in Table 31, there will be a shortage in the trades, sales or service representatives, and labour occupations in the next five years and 6–10 years. Since a high percentage of labour employees are young, new youth entering the market could provide an important source of filling the expected gap for labourers in the future.

8.4. REASONS EMPLOYEES LEAVE THEIR JOBS

Fewer employers said that community infrastructure, work environment, retirement and quality-of-life issues were reasons why employees leave their jobs compared to other reasons such as recruitment by other employers, the temporary nature of work, wages, and career changes. Community members pointed to the following reasons for leaving their current job: lack of career development, lack of incentives and opportunities to advance, and management and supervision. Dissatisfaction with wages was not the most frequent reason mentioned by community members (only 24% of those who left a job selected this reason compared with 33% who left for lack of career development and advancement opportunities).

8.5. HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS LEARN ABOUT JOB OPENINGS COMPARED WITH HOW EMPLOYERS ADVERTISE VACANCIES

Both community members and employers use word of mouth and newspapers as the most frequent methods of exchanging information about job openings, with word of mouth as the leading method for both groups. Most community members rarely or never use job agencies or trade magazines; employers tend to use trade/professional magazines as much as the Internet (30% use them). The Internet is used frequently by about 30% of community members for job hunting.

8.6. USE OF JOB EXIT INTERVIEWS WHEN EMPLOYEES LEAVE THE JOB

Community members and employers generally agreed on the frequency that employers conduct exit interviews when employees leave their jobs. A third of employers (69) that employ 1,247 employees (33% of all employees) reported conducting exit interviews with employees who leave the job to learn why they were leaving. Of 148 community respondents who have left an employer in the past five years, 27% said that employers had conducted exit interviews to determine why they were leaving.

8.7. AVAILABILITY OF EMPLOYEES TO WORK SEASONALLY AND PEAK SEASONS FOR HIRING SEASONAL WORKERS

The most common peak season for hiring casual/contract/seasonal workers is the summer months (52% of employers who hire casual/contract/seasonal workers hire them mainly in the summer months). The vast majority of community members who work in casual/contract/seasonal positions said they are available at any time of year.

8.8. INCENTIVES USED FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The majority of employers said that they use training and professional development as incentives for recruitment and retention more than other incentives. While community members were not asked directly about recruitment and retention methods, a high percentage did indicate that their major reason for leaving their most recent job was related to lack of career and advancement opportunities. This was especially true for those who work in retail trade and accommodation and food service positions.

8.9. DIFFICULTY RECRUITING AND RETAINING OCCUPATIONS

The highest percentage of employers who have difficulty recruiting and retaining employees are those who hire trades and technical staff, truck drivers, and minimal skilled labour positions. When estimated vacancy rates are compared to the number of community members who indicated a desire to move into these occupations, a likely future shortage of employees in these positions is revealed.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The employer and community surveys and literature review showed an aging workforce and an expected shortage of young people available to fill positions that are being vacated by retiring workers.

Many Vanderhoof-area residents have lived in the area a long time and many do not expect to relocate for career advancement or other reasons. As a group, workers are motivated by work environment factors, including supervision and management, slightly more than wages alone. The fear of losing huge numbers of workers to the oil and gas industry outside the area was not substantiated by the surveys. Most community members generally expressed satisfaction with community attributes and did not indicate that lack of amenities was a major factor for leaving the community. However, young people clearly were more likely to leave the community than those in other age groups.

At the same time, many of the assumptions shared at Steering Committee and focus group meetings were confirmed by the employer and community member surveys. There does appear to be a lack of opportunities for career advancement, a lack of supervisory and management skills, difficulty recruiting and retaining certain kinds of employees such as truck drivers and trades people, and frustration among employers about the work ethic of young people. Immigration does not seem to be used as a major strategic solution to labour issues in Vanderhoof.

The surveys show that there is likely to be a shortage of workers, particularly in the trades, sales and service, and general labour occupations in the future, unless factors such as in-migration, immigration and/or a higher percentage of youth decide to stay in the community. Because of the number of community members who claim to aspire for professional credentials, there could be more qualified professionals in the Vanderhoof area than vacancies for them. Fortunately, the level of training and education required for trades and labour positions (two occupations where there is expected to be a shortage of workers) is considerably less than for professional positions; the community should be able to provide local training programs to bring in these workers into the workforce more easily than if there was an expected shortage in other positions that required longer-term training.

As a group, employers sent an important message about the lack of qualified applicants for positions; nearly a third said that they have had to modify job qualifications to fill positions. Yet the majority of employers do not advertise vacancies far outside of the Vanderhoof area and most still rely on word of mouth as their most frequent source of advertising for job openings. This keeps the recruitment relatively local compared with other advertising methods such as trade magazines, newspapers in other regions or the Internet, and makes it less likely that recruitment efforts will lead to a wide pool of suitable applicants.

While many employers thought that job applicants lacked necessary skills for the job, the majority of community members who were working or planning to return to work felt that their skills were adequate for the job in most topical areas. It is possible that this points to a disparity in perceptions between employers and workers about required skills.

Aboriginal respondents expressed many of the same perspectives as respondents overall; however more Aboriginal respondents plan to start businesses (26% compared with 16% overall) in the next five years, and more expect to take training or education in the next five years (67% compared with 56% overall). Many aboriginal respondents who plan to upgrade their training and education aspire to professional positions. They also rated community characteristics for meeting the needs of their spouse's career and lifestyle and recreation opportunities as less adequate than respondents overall.

9.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Forming the Partnership and the Steering Committee and conducting the focus group meetings and literature search were critical first steps in understanding the labour situation in the Vanderhoof area. Conducting the surveys provided a systematic way to verify assumptions about the issues and circumstances in Vanderhoof. Based on these findings, the community can now more confidently build strategies for addressing the issues. Recommendations based on the findings include:

- **Increased targeted training and programs for young people.** The survey clearly pointed out the need for local training in the occupations that are expected to show a shortage in the future, particularly the trades and management and business including sales and service. However the presence of more training and education may not necessarily attract young people to these fields; there needs to be early opportunities for young people to get exposed to these fields in the community and at school. Investments in mentoring programs, youth business, and leadership programs such as School Net Youth²⁵, career fairs, and other mechanisms for exposing local young people to occupations likely to be in high demand would be money well spent. The community would be wise to build on the institutions and strengths for training and education and youth development already in place.
- **Opportunities for advancement within organizations.** As a group, community members said that their jobs lacked opportunities for advancement and career development. Employers should seek ways to support and develop their employees within their organizations so they can advance and learn on the job without leaving the community for more

²⁵ Industry Canada (<http://entrepreneurship.schoolnet.ca/pub/index.html?iin.lang=en>)

training or other jobs. Employers can conduct surveys and interviews with their employees to learn more about their career goals, about what motivates them most and why they have left the job, if they have left.

- **Immigration.** Immigration from other countries has been discussed as a possible remedy for future labour shortages in Canada. The literature shows that immigrants tend to locate where there are support systems and where they are close to others from their own cultural and language groups. A focused effort (such as multicultural associations and cultural centres) to make Vanderhoof more “immigrant friendly” could be one effective labour strategy. Sharing ideas and lessons with other rural communities may be a helpful first step.
- **Supervisory skills.** High numbers of community members and employers indicated that lack of supervisory and management skills are problems in Vanderhoof. Community members said that supervision and management were among the key reasons they have left jobs, and employers feel that supervisory skills are lacking among their employees. The community can seek creative ways to encourage these “soft” skills across all sectors in the community through initiatives such as “boss of the year” awards, breakfast support groups for supervisors to discuss and learn about supervisory issues, and more local and company-supported supervisory training. A key to success is for business and organizational leaders to acknowledge this gap and support supervisory training and other initiatives within their organizations or within the community.
- **Continue to monitor community member and employer perspectives.** The findings of this study represent a snapshot in time. Using this data as a baseline, the community can monitor and assess the effects of interventions to improve the labour situation, attitudes, and aspirations of community members, and changing demographics. Periodic (every five years) surveys such as this can help determine if strategies are being effective and what, if any, change in course needs to take place.

10. REFERENCES

Statistics Canada. North American Industry Classification System. Accessed on August 16, 2006 at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Standard/naics/2002/naics02-menu.htm>