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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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Ministry of Advanced Education

### **Okanagan Aboriginal learners building skills for the future**

OLIVER – Seventeen Aboriginal learners in the Okanagan are upgrading their skills and education as they prepare for employment through a community-based education and training partnership between Okanagan College and the Osoyoos Indian Band.

The program will provide Aboriginal learners with upgrading courses, employment readiness and workplace certificates. It is one of five new partnerships worth a total of \$1 million that are enabling Aboriginal people to get skills and education in their communities to prepare for jobs in B.C.'s growing economy. Okanagan College and the Osoyoos Indian Band are receiving \$160,517.

The other communities and organizations that will benefit from the partnership program with public post-secondary institutions are Squamish Nation, Xeni Gwet'in First Nations, Lhtako Dene Nation, and Ooaknane Friendship Centre and En'owkin Centre.

This \$1 million investment is in addition to the \$6.4 million in joint federal and provincial government funding previously announced for 23 projects to create partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and local Aboriginal communities. These projects are expected to deliver education and training that ranges from academic upgrading to skilled qualifications to more than 440 Aboriginal people. Today's announcement builds on that investment, and will provide training for a further 105 participants in five communities.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Boundary-Similkameen MLA Linda Larson on behalf of Advanced Education Minister Amrik Virk –**

"We know B.C.'s job market is expanding, so it just makes sense to ensure we prepare workers with the skills they need for jobs. This partnership between Okanagan College and the Osoyoos Indian Band is good news for our local community."

#### **Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Minister Bernard Valcourt –**

"Through investments in skills training and education, our Government is enabling Aboriginal learners to meet their career aspirations and communities to prosper. Greater participation by Aboriginal peoples in the economy will lead to healthier Aboriginal communities and a stronger Canada."

#### **Employment and Social Development Canada Minister Jason Kenney –**

"Canada's long-term prosperity depends on the labour market participation of all Canadians,

including underrepresented groups such as Aboriginal people. Our government is taking action to help Aboriginal people get the right skills and experience needed for available jobs, through initiatives such as the First Nations Job Fund, the Skills and Partnership Fund and the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy.”

**Background:**

In April 2014, government introduced B.C.’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint and committed to continuing to provide funding for in-community delivery of skills and training programs that meet Aboriginal learners’ needs and help prepare them to enter B.C.’s labour market.

The funding is being provided through the Aboriginal Community-based Delivery Partnerships Program. This year, total funding for the program is up to \$7.4 million, which includes \$3 million from the Ministry of Advanced Education, and up to \$4.4 million from the Government of Canada. Funding includes participant costs for programs to be delivered in First Nations communities.

The Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program also delivers on commitments of the Aboriginal Post-secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future, including:

- Improving partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities.
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal learners in rural and remote communities accessing post-secondary education and training programs.

**Learn More:**

News Release: B.C.'s blueprint helps Aboriginal learners get skills for jobs:  
[www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/bcs-blueprint-helps-aboriginal-learners-get-skills-for-jobs.html](http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/10/bcs-blueprint-helps-aboriginal-learners-get-skills-for-jobs.html)

B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint: [www.workbc.ca/skills](http://www.workbc.ca/skills)

Aboriginal Post-secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan:  
[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/docs/Aboriginal\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/docs/Aboriginal_Action_Plan.pdf)

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