

2015 - 2016 Program Details

Purpose of the Initiative:

The Workforce Development Initiative assists Alberta-based agri-industry clients to:

- A) Assess and adopt technologies and automation to increase worker productivity;
- B) Retain workers and reduce worker turnover;
- B) Recruit workers within Canada and internationally; and
- D) Improve the economic viability of business and the province.

A) Productivity Improvement

Productivity Improvement services provide resources and support to increase worker productivity and operating efficiency on the farm, in agri-processing plants, or within agri-industry associations. Worker productivity improvements can be achieved through facility assessment, planning and implementing new technology, continuous improvement coaching, and coaching on the green side of lean. Through better utilization of the available workforce, businesses can increase their competitiveness and ultimately profitability.

Through initial assessments of the business's operation, opportunities for improved efficiency are identified. The Productivity Improvement grant provides Alberta based agri-industry clients with cost-shared funding to pursue next steps.

Actions to assist industry:

Productivity Improvement services facilitate and support the use of expertise in three key areas:

- Engineering and facility planning to identify and evaluate technology, plant layout, operational processes, etc.;
- Continuous improvement coaching to enable the adoption and application of lean manufacturing principles and tools; and
- Coaching on the green side of lean to implement environmentally sustainable business operations.

These services are designed to increase productivity, reduce costs, improve business planning and decision making, add value to products and services, and improve cash flow and profits. Tools and other resources have been developed that support continuous improvement practices. For more information go to: www.agriculture.alberta.ca/productivity

B) Retention

Retention services provide coaching to educate and inform employers on best practices in human resource management and options to develop or improve programs for worker retention designed to reduce turnover and improve productivity. Our services focus on coaching agri-processing companies in the development and implementation of human resource management systems, supervisory leadership training and human resource management tools.

The Retention Improvement grant provides Alberta based agri-industry clients with cost-shared funding to retain a consultant to review and improve existing human resource and retention programs, develop new human resource programs and assist in implementing retention strategies to reduce worker turnover.

Actions to assist industry:

Retention services provide access to coaching and training to explore best practices in retaining workers. Training provides hands-on application of methods to retain workers. Funding opportunities through the Retention Improvement grant allows clients to partner with a consultant to develop training to improve the skills of front-line supervisors to coach worker performance and improve retention.

For assistance with Productivity Improvement and Retention, please contact: Gerard Bos, Retention Specialist at 780 980 4222 or by email: gerard.bos@gov.ab.ca

C) Recruitment

Recruitment services focus efforts on best practices to recruit qualified workers within Alberta and Canada, as well as internationally. Building collaborative partnerships with provincial offices, immigrant serving societies and network partners provides clients with the potential to address their labour needs within Alberta.

As needed, staff coach clients on foreign recruitment including how to complete the application process for federal approvals (Labour Market Impact Assessment) and preparing the client for the impact of settling foreign workers into the workplace and the community.

Actions to assist industry:

Recruitment services provide support to companies through organizing local job fairs within Alberta, providing options to recruit workers within Canada, and designing international recruiting missions to interview and select qualified workers. Services also include supporting industry programs to promote career opportunities in the agri-industry through promotional campaigns and initiatives.

For assistance with primary agriculture recruitment, please contact: Alan Dooley, Primary Recruitment Specialist at 780 422 0907 or by email: alan.dooley@gov.ab.ca

For assistance with food processing recruitment, please contact: Scott Dundas, Labour Recruitment Manager at 403 556 4245 or email: scott.dundas@gov.ab.ca