



Alberta Labour Systems to Update Alberta's Workforce Strategies



Executive Summary

November 2018

Who

Alberta Labour

What

New Performance Audit

When

We conducted our field work between July and December 2015 and June and December 2017 and substantially completed the audit on August 21, 2018.

Learn more

www.alberta.ca/ministry-labour.aspx

Why we did this audit

Workforce development consists of activities and efforts to help meet the employment needs of employers and those looking for work. These activities include adult skills training, job placement, and developing partnerships with industry designed to help unemployed individuals gain employment and lower-skilled workers improve their skill level. In Alberta, the Department of Labour is responsible for the delivery of programs that support the development of Alberta's workforce.

The objective of our audit was to assess whether the Department of Labour has adequate systems to update Alberta's workforce strategies. This includes systems to:

- demonstrate successful implementation of Alberta's workforce strategy
- report on and evaluate results of performance
- provide reliable and useful labour market information to users

Our work focused on the 10-year *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce Strategy* (BETW), released in 2006, and the department's processes to regularly monitor, report on, and update the strategy. Implementation of the strategy was a shared responsibility by multiple ministries. Our audit focused on the Department of Labour, as over the last three years of the strategy, it had the primary oversight role in monitoring progress of the strategy and the plans going forward.

We did this work because the process design and operating effectiveness of the government's systems to monitor workforce strategies directly impact the success of those strategies. In order to make good decisions on behalf of Albertans regarding current and future workforce needs, the department requires effective processes to guide its efforts and investments.

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What we concluded

We concluded that the department did not, in all significant respects, have adequate systems to update its workforce strategies for 2013 to 2016 to:

- demonstrate successful implementation of its BETW Strategy
- report on and evaluate the results of its performance

The department did not monitor or report progress towards BETW's planned results between 2013 and 2016. When BETW came to an end in 2016, the department decided to proceed without a long-term multi-ministry strategy to guide its workforce development efforts. With no results analysis of the BETW strategy, neither the department nor Albertans know if the long-term planning efforts of the BETW were successful or how lessons learned from that strategy will improve the government's preparation for current and future workforce needs.

Why this is important to Albertans

It is important to all Albertans that the department has a workforce plan that has the flexibility to respond to short-term labour demand fluctuations, and the vision and supporting structures to achieve longer-term objectives.

Good processes to monitor progress and report on results provide Albertans with the information they need to know whether the department is on track with its plan and the value received for the money spent. Without these processes, the department will not achieve its longer-term planned results.

What we examined

At the time we began our audit, the BETW strategy was nearing its end, and the department was working to update the strategy. We examined the department's processes with the objective of understanding how the department:

- monitored and reported on progress in achieving the planned results of the strategy

- evaluated what worked and what did not work with BETW, and how it incorporated learnings from BETW to make changes to its new strategy
- used labour market information to support its workforce strategies

Our work provided an opportunity to examine how the strategy central ministry coordinated the execution of a long-term multi-ministry strategy.

What we found

The department:

- did not monitor and report on the progress in achieving the planned results of the BETW Strategy
- cannot demonstrate if BETW achieved its planned results or whether the resources dedicated to it over the past 10 years were well placed

What needs to be done

We recommend that the Department of Labour regularly measure and report on the results of its current workforce strategies, including lessons learned.

Consequences of not taking action

Without effective processes to monitor progress and report on results of its workforce strategies, the department risks not achieving planned results and not demonstrating value for taxpayer money spent. Long-term planned results will succumb to short-term needs and not support the needs of vulnerable Albertans.

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