

PARTNERS BUILDING FUTURES PILOT PROJECT

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Prepared for:
Partners Building Futures Steering Committee

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

<i>AOC Act</i>	<i>Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Act</i>
CAAT	Canadian Academic Achievement Test
ESA	Essential Skills Assessment
ETPP	Employment and Trades Preparation Program
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
NBCC	New Brunswick Community College
PBF	Partners Building Futures Project
PCII	Pan-Canadian Innovations Initiative
PETL	Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
SD	Social Development
WPT	Workplace Training

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Partners Building Futures pilot project. The evaluation was conducted over the 2007-2009 period.

Overview of Partners Building Futures

Partners Building Futures (PBF) was a three-year pilot project designed to test *whether women receiving Social Assistance with the right supports could achieve self-sufficiency through a career in the non-traditional skilled trades*. PBF was implemented from October 2006 to October 2009.

PBF was managed by Skills/Compétences Canada New Brunswick and carried out in partnership with the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL); the New Brunswick Department of Social Development (SD); the federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC); and the New Brunswick Region of Service Canada. A total of \$2.7 M was expended for PBF, comprised of HRSDC funding through the Pan-Canadian Innovations Initiative and in-kind resources from the New Brunswick government.

PBF was based on a recognition that women continue to face barriers to labour market participation and advancement and are particularly under-represented in trades occupations. At the start of PBF, women represented only 1% of all apprentices in New Brunswick in the 'non-traditional' trades.¹ Yet the trades offer comparatively good wages and are considered to be experiencing increasing skill shortages. The apprenticeship model used in PBF allowed participants to move directly into employment as registered apprentices and earn an income while they learned, thus minimizing the financial risks in moving from dependency on Social Assistance to employment. A number of financial and personal supports were also provided, informed by previous research on effective practices in labour market programming.

PBF Design and Delivery

There were two intakes of participants. The first intake was offered in Bathurst, Moncton and Saint John, while the second intake was offered in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. PBF planned to enrol 66 participants – 33 in each intake. The actual enrolment was 60 participants – 33 in Intake 1 and 27 in intake 2.

Each participant was enrolled in PBF for a maximum of two years. Each took part in 10 weeks of in-school training conducted in a group setting to help participants explore the trades and prepare for trades employment, followed by an *employment phase* of 22

¹ All trade occupations other than cook

months during which they were assisted in finding employment in a trade, registering in the Apprenticeship Program, or finding trades-related employment. Mentors provided supports throughout the project period, complemented by supports from SD case managers and PETL apprenticeship coordinators. Financial benefits included a top up of the SD child care benefits, a transportation allowance, a wage top up to the second year apprentice rate, and funds for start up tools and tutoring. Job shadowing and a Workplace Training (WPT) subsidy were added during intake 2.

Evaluation Objectives and Questions

The evaluation of PBF was designed to support learning during the pilot project by assessing the implementation of the project and identifying aspects that needed modification. The evaluation also assessed the results achieved by PBF (including a cost-benefit analysis) and identified lessons that might be transferable to other labour market initiatives.

Information was primarily gathered from interviews with participants, various service providers and employers at several points in the project, complemented by data and information provided by PBF, SD and PETL. Focus groups and case studies of individual participants were also carried out. Five interim reports and this final report were produced.

Findings

Relevance of PBF

Relevance to Participants

The profile of participants was consistent with the intended target group for this pilot project. All were receiving Social Assistance, had a high school education or equivalent, were interested in the trades and considered ready to make the transition to employment. Almost all were single parents.

The design of PBF was largely relevant to the needs of participants and provided most of the supports they needed to make the transition to work, and, more specifically, work in the trades. The PBF design and delivery was developed and fine-tuned during intake 1 and modified to include a job shadowing placement for intake 2, a Workplace Training (WPT) subsidy for both intake groups, and to expand the eligible occupations to include entry-level trade position. As a result, the relevance of the project to participants strengthened over time and in particular for the second intake group.

The selection process proved to be key to ensuring the participants were well suited for this type of intensive program. Intake 1 provided lessons on how the selection process could be improved and the selection process for intake 2 was changed accordingly. The

project enrolled the planned 33 participants for intake 1, but only 27 of the 33 planned for intake 2. The lower enrolment in intake 2 was influenced by an improved selection process and a lower level of demand than anticipated. The enrolment results suggest the need to lengthen the timeframe between intakes and to expand the target group for any future offerings of this kind of initiative.

The various financial and personal supports provided were highly relevant to participants in their transition to work. At least a third of participants used each of the main financial benefits provided PBF. The child care top up and WPT subsidy were considered to be the most important to the success of participants.

The majority of participants felt the content of the pre-employment phase of the project was very useful to them overall. However, most participants identified aspects that could have been improved to better meet their needs. In particular they wanted more time exploring the trades and in doing academic upgrading. There was some variation in delivery of the pre-employment phase across NBCC sites which resulted in the needs of participants being met to varied extents. PBF participants chose a diverse range of 14 different trades to pursue as careers. This indicates that PBF appropriately provided opportunities for exploration of a broad range of trade opportunities and also that women are a potential source of workers for many 'non-traditional' trades.

Assistance in making connections with employers and the offering of the wage subsidy also met a key need of most participants, as none had previous trades training and almost all lacked informal networks or contacts in the trades that could open doors for them to apprenticeship opportunities.

Thirty participants (61% of those who completed the pre-employment phase) held trades or trades-related jobs during their participation in PBF. A majority of the participants interviewed felt that the experience they gained while in PBF was key to their finding trades employment. This experience increased their knowledge, helped them develop basic skills, increased their understanding of the requirements of the trades, including the physical challenges, and helped them integrate into male-dominated workplaces.

The supports provided by the mentors proved to be important to a majority of participants. They established a trust relationship with participants and provided the guidance and support they needed during a challenging period in their lives as they adjusted to job search, working in the trades and balancing work-family commitments.

Relevance to Employers

As designed originally, PBF did not fully meet the needs of employers. In particular, employers had less need for new apprentices than anticipated. They were also reluctant to hire women with no trades training and experience without financial assistance to offset the costs of the additional supervision required. The PBF design was changed to better meet their needs by offering a Workplace Training (WPT) subsidy and expanding the range of occupations eligible for PBF support to entry-level (non-apprenticeable) positions. These improvements in the PBF design significantly increased the level of employers' engagement in the project.

Most participating employers hired women as apprentices for the first time, and most found that the participants had a positive impact on their workplaces. However, some felt that participants needed more exposure to the trades through PBF or the college pre-employment trades program in order to prepare them for apprenticeship.

PBF highlighted the importance of employers understanding the issues faced by women moving into the trades and being supportive of their needs. PBF empowered participants to deal with any workplace issues they faced through the support of their mentors. However, there is still a need for broader education on workplace diversity.

Relevance for Apprenticeship Program

PBF has had a significant positive impact on the number of female apprentices enrolled in the Apprenticeship Program – these apprentices represent a greater critical mass that will help raise the profile of women in the trades. The project has also enhanced the understanding of case managers and apprenticeship staff about the potential for further involvement of women in the trades.

Relevance of the PBF Partnership Model

The PBF partnership of industry and government resulted in a collaborative effort in designing and delivering the pilot project which capitalized on the expertise and resources of the project partners. However, the partnership could have been enhanced by inclusion of employer and union representatives on the Steering Committee to ensure PBF was informed by their perspectives on the needs of industry.

PBF management and the Working Group spent considerable effort in monitoring the progress of the project and effectively modified policies and procedures as needed to ensure its relevance and success. The design of PBF provided the flexibility to make changes quickly.

PBF Results

PBF has had a significant impact on participants' entry to the trades. The project has also positively impacted their transition to the labour market in other ways.

Eighty-two percent of participants completed the pre-employment phase of PBF, which slightly exceeded the 80% target. This pre-employment phase enabled participants to improve their readiness for transition to employment in the trades and their understanding of the academic requirements of the Apprenticeship Program.

Ten PBF participants (20% of those who completed the pre-employment phase) registered as apprentices and seven of the 10 (70%) progressed to their second year in the Apprenticeship Program within their time in PBF. In February 2010, there were 73 female apprentices in the non-traditional trades in New Brunswick, comprising 1.8% of the total. This is more than double the 34 female apprentices in the non-traditional trades when PBF began in 2007. The ten PBF participants' who registered as apprentices account for 25% of this increase.

Combined with six other participants who went on to other trades employment or training, 32% of PBF participants made a transition to the trades as a career. The PBF target set for entry to the Apprenticeship Program (90%) was much higher and, in retrospect, too ambitious given the initial design of PBF and the labour market conditions in which the project was implemented.

Fourteen PBF participants (29%) made the transition to the labour market outside of the trades. Combined with those who entered the trades, 61% of PBF participants made some form of transition to work. The majority of participants interviewed who had not yet made the transition to employment had made a plan to do so and credited PBF with helping them with this.

A significant proportion of PBF participants have reduced their dependency on Social Assistance and improved their financial security. At the conclusion of PBF in October 2009, 15 participants (25%) were no longer receiving Social Assistance benefits because they had returned to work. Comparatively, in 2008-09, only 6.4% of all Social Assistance recipients who were female heads of households stopped receiving benefits because they found employment. Also, only 35% of PBF participants were receiving basic Financial Assistance at the conclusion of PBF. Participants interviewed at the end of PBF who were working were earning an average of \$372 a week, compared to receiving an average of \$200 to \$250 a week range for Social Assistance benefits for recipients with children. Almost all participants interviewed who were working were satisfied with their employment and their improved financial security. However, those who were not working in a trade and one who was working in a trade were still finding it hard to make ends meet.

PBF has had positive – often life-changing – impacts on a majority of participants. Most participants who were working at the time of interviews were satisfied with their work situation, quality of life (including their work-life balance) and future outlook. A number still faced challenges in making the transition to work but they felt more empowered to deal with these challenges as a result of their participation in PBF. Participants who had moved on to employment in the trades spoke of the positive impacts on their families - they are better able to provide for their children and their children are proud of what they have accomplished – an indication of the positive inter-generational impacts of PBF.

PBF Cost-Benefit

The cost-benefit analysis of PBF concluded that the average cost per participant was \$24,341 (excluding costs associated with this being a pilot project). When the savings in payment of Social Assistance benefits are considered, the net cost per participant (based on the mature PBF model used for intake 2) falls – at most – in the range of \$5,000 - \$10,000 per participant. Based on qualitative evidence on the impacts of PBF on the lives of the participants and their families and the economic benefits of the project, the investment in PBF seems modest and worthwhile.

Lessons Learned

PBF provided a number of lessons on what worked well in the targeting and selection of participants, the array of supports provided, and project monitoring and management. The evaluation also identified aspects that could be modified in similar initiatives to improve on results.

The evaluation also concluded that the participant-centered approach used in PBF model is transferable to similar labour market initiatives for other groups that are under-represented in the labour market – in particular the trades. The report also identified a number of actions that could be taken to incorporate individual features of PBF in other labour market initiatives.

Conclusions

The PBF pilot project set out to test whether women receiving Social Assistance with the right supports can achieve self-sufficiency through a career in the non-traditional skilled trades. The project has proven that this is achievable.

PBF has generated considerable learning about what the right supports are for women moving from Social Assistance to trades employment, and has demonstrated that this career choice can result in economic self-sufficiency.

PBF has also shown that the process of exploring the trades can help individuals make informed decisions to choose other more suitable career options that also lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The partnership of industry and government in PBF strengthened both the design and delivery of this pilot project.

PBF had positive results in terms of the number of participants who found employment in the trades, registered as apprentices and advanced to the second year of their apprenticeship. Some participants moved on to other employment and training opportunities.

The net cost of PBF is considered modest and worthwhile, given the impacts of the project in reducing the dependency on Social Assistance and increasing the self-sufficiency of participants.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Partners Building Futures pilot project. The evaluation was conducted over the 2007-2009 period.

1.1 Overview of Partners Building Futures

1.1.1 PBF Partners

Partners Building Futures (PBF) was a three-year pilot project designed to assist women receiving Social Assistance in New Brunswick to transition to employment that would be personally and financially rewarding through an apprenticeship model. PBF was implemented from October 2006 to October 2009.

PBF was managed by Skills/Compétences Canada New Brunswick and carried out in partnership with the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL); the New Brunswick Department of Social Development (SD); the federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC); and the New Brunswick Region of Service Canada.

PBF was funded through the federal Pan-Canadian Innovations Initiative (PCII). PCII is a mechanism for government and its partners to improve on current ways of helping people prepare for, obtain or maintain employment, and to be productive participants in the labour force. The PCII has a number of priorities, including the removal of barriers faced by various groups that are under-represented in the labour market and supporting workplace training and apprenticeship. PBF is relevant to these priorities.

1.1.2 Rationale for Partners Building Futures

PBF was based on research and experience that shows that women continue to face barriers to labour market participation and advancement. Women are particularly under-represented in the trades. At the start of PBF in February 2007, there were 3,324 apprentices registered in the trades in New Brunswick that considered to be non-traditional for women (i.e. other than cooks).² Of this total, 34 (1%) were women. The trades offer comparatively good wages and are increasingly experiencing skills shortages, thus these occupations are a potential source of employment that will lead to economic self-sufficiency for women.

PBF was also based on the recognition of the need to minimize the financial risks faced by women moving from Social Assistance to employment (i.e. loss of benefits, risk of earning a low income) and to provide them with the personal supports needed to help

² Source: Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Branch, PETL

them during this transition. The pilot project used the apprenticeship model combined with a number of specific financial and other supports to address these needs.

The apprenticeship model of education combines progressive on-the-job training as well as technical (in-school) training that culminates in recognized certification. About 80 percent of an apprentice's training takes place on the job; the remaining 20 percent involves technical (block) training at a post-secondary institution. PBF used this model to allow participants to move directly into employment as registered apprentices and earn an income while they learned, thus avoiding the debt loads they would face if they first pursued a post-secondary education in order to re-enter the labour market.

In New Brunswick, there are two options for entering the Apprenticeship Program. An individual may first complete a pre-employment trades program (up to 40 weeks) at a post-secondary institution and then find employment in a trade and register as an apprentice. Alternatively, they may find employment in a trade and register as an apprentice without this post-secondary program.

On average over the past five years, 60% of the individuals who registered as apprentices in New Brunswick had not completed a post-secondary pre-employment trades program.³ However, the perception of PETL key informants was that the majority of these new entrants to the program were employed in a trades-related occupation or had some previous trades-related experience. PBF participants did not have this attachment to employers, so a key aspect of the pilot project was to determine what kinds of supports were needed to enable participants to make these connections and enter the Apprenticeship Program directly with employers.

In the context of the PCII which funded the pilot project, the overall objective of PBF was:

“to determine whether women receiving Social Assistance could, with the right supports, achieve self-sufficiency through careers in the non-traditional skilled trades”.

1.1.3 Project Organization

PBF was administered by Skills /Compétences Canada New Brunswick, a not-for-profit organization composed of industry, labour, educators and government devoted to promotion of skilled trades and technology careers.

A 16-member PBF Steering Committee, comprised of the PBF partners, a representative of the New Brunswick Status of Women Council⁴ and the Women’s Issues Branch of the New Brunswick Executive Council, monitored the progress of the project. A four-

³ Source: Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Branch, PETL

⁴ Member of the Steering Committee for only a period of the project.

member Working Group, comprised of the PBF manager and representatives of the Departments of PETL and SD provided ongoing direction for the project including decisions on any changes to policy and oversight of the evaluation process.

The PBF organization included the following:

- A project manager who oversaw the project design and delivery, recruited employers and was the main liaison with the PBF Working Group and Steering Committee and with the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC).
- A senior mentor, who developed the various PBF tools, draft policies and procedures, monitored issues requiring decisions by the Working Group, maintained ongoing liaison with the SD case managers and apprenticeship managers. The senior mentor also supervised the work of two mentors.
- Two mentors who provided ongoing support to individual participants.
- A bookkeeper.

1.1.4 Resources

A total of \$2.7 M in direct financial and ‘in-kind’ resources was expended for PBF over the three-year period of the pilot project. The HRSDC contribution covered the costs of delivering the pilot project and the specific benefits and supports provided to participants as part of this project.

The provincial partner departments made in-kind contributions comprised of the staff resources to deliver existing case management services to SD clients, the continuation of existing Social Assistance benefits to participants during the project, and training supports during block apprenticeship training. The provincial in-kind contribution also included the resources for the PETL and SD staff participation in the Steering Committee and Working Group activities.

Table 1 shows the funds expended for direct benefits to participants and other project costs over the three-year project period.

Table 1: PBF Resources Expended by Source and Cost Category – 2006-09			
Funding Source	Participant Benefits	Other Project Costs	Total \$
HRSDC	\$200,502	\$1,558,280	\$1,758,782
Provincial Partner Departments – PETL and SD (in-kind)	\$630,879	\$317,009	\$947,888
Total	\$831,381	\$1,875,289	\$2,706,670

2.0 EVALUATION OVERVIEW

2.1 Evaluation Objectives and Questions

The evaluation of PBF served two purposes:

- *Process evaluation:* To support learning during the pilot project by assessing the implementation of the project and identifying any areas of design or delivery that needed fine-tuning.
- *Outcome evaluation:* To assess the results achieved by PBF in relation to the intended outcomes and to identify lessons learned that could be applied to other labour market initiatives. The evaluation also included a cost-benefit analysis of the project results.

Based on these objectives, 14 questions were developed to guide the evaluation.

Table 2: Evaluation Questions

Rationale for PBF
1. Overall, to what extent is the PBF pilot project model consistent with the intent of the Pan Canadian Innovations Initiative (PCII)
2. Overall, to what extent was the PBF model design and delivery - mix of activities, timing/sequencing of activities, support and supports/incentives – relevant to the perceived needs of participants, employers and the Apprenticeship Program?
PBF Design, Implementation and Related Outcomes
<i>Goal 1: To introduce women on Social Assistance to the advantages of post-secondary training environment.</i>
3. Did PBF reach the intended target group?
4. How many and what type of participants completed the ten week pre-employment phase? Why and why not?
5. To what extent did pre-employment training increase participant preparation for bridging from Social Assistance to the labour market and to entering an apprenticeship trade/occupation?
6. If anything, what could be improved about the pre-employment phase for the future?
7. Did the supports available to participants facilitate transition from dependence on Social Assistance to self-sufficiency? Did the supports minimize barriers to this transition?
<i>Goal 2: To increase female participation in non-traditional (N-T) trades</i>
8. What was done to educate employers on their role in the project in integrating female apprentices to their workplaces?
9. Did participants obtain the apprenticeship they wanted? Were they satisfied with the job match, location and various supports in order to be able to enter a non-traditional trade in the Apprenticeship Program?
10. At the end of Year One, what was the status of the PBF participants who registered in the Apprenticeship Program and why? How does this compare with other Apprenticeship enrollees?
11. Did the PBF interventions/activities and supports contribute to participants' success in continuing in the Apprenticeship Program or other related work?
<i>Goal 3: To reduce dependency on Social Assistance</i>
12. Did the PBF pilot design and process achieve the desired results/outcomes/impacts?
13. What overall lessons have been learned from the PBF pilot to the end of the funding period?
14. What aspects of the project could be incorporated in ongoing SD and PETL programming?

2.2 Evaluation Methods

The evaluation was based on four lines of evidence: a review of administrative information, key informant interviews, focus groups with participants, and case studies of participants.

2.2.1 Review of Administrative Information

Four types of information were gathered and used in reporting:

- PBF information on the progress of participants, supports provided to participants, and any policy or procedure changes
- PBF information on overall project costs and the financial benefits provided to participants. SD information on the demographics of participants and their previous use of SA benefits
- PETL information on participants' registration in the Apprenticeship Program

2.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were the main source of information for all evaluation questions. The following groups of key informants were interviewed during various periods in the project:

- PBF Participants
- Employers who hired PBF participants
- Members of PBF Steering Committee and Working Group
- PBF manager, senior mentor and mentors
- SD case managers/career consultants
- PETL apprenticeship managers
- NBCC training instructors

In-person or telephone interviews were conducted at a number of points in the project with some or all of these informants:

- at the start of each intake and at the end of the 10 week pre-employment phase
- mid-way and at the end of the employment phase for each intake group
- exit interviews with any participants who left the project early

2.2.3 Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held with participants from Intakes 1 and 2 in October 2008 to discuss their experiences in the employment phase of the project. One group was held

in Saint John and the other in Moncton. A total of 19 of the 25 participants still active in PBF at that time attended these sessions.

2.2.4 Case Studies

Four participants who had enrolled in the Apprenticeship Program were selected and agreed to be case studied. This involved interviews with these participants, their SD case managers, apprenticeship coordinator, mentor and employer. The case studies provided a more in-depth examination of the role of PBF in their transition to employment as apprentices.

2.3 Reporting

2.3.1 Reports

Five interim evaluation reports were produced. These assessed various aspects of the design and delivery of the project, the progress of participants and, where appropriate, recommended modifications to PBF design or delivery as part of the continual improvement process of the pilot project. Table 3 sets out the schedule of information gathering and the reports produced.

Table 3: Evaluation Information Gathering and Reporting			
Period	Timeframe	Total interviews (all groups combined)	Report
Intake 1 – Start of Pre-employment Training	February 2007	84	May 2007
Intake 1 – End of Pre-employment Training	April 2007	79	
Stock taking of employment situation of intake 1 participants			September 2007
Intake 2 – Start of ETPP	October- November 2007	70	March 2008
Intake 2 – End of ETPP	January 2008	58	
Follow up interviews intake 1 participants	January 2008	10	
Follow up interviews (Both intakes)	September 2008	32	November 2008
Focus Groups with Participants	October 2008	19	
Intake 1 conclusion of two year period in PBF	February 2009	5	May 2009
Exit interviews with participants (as these occurred)		10	
Interviews with all groups re: intake 1 and 2 at conclusion of	September 2009	46	Final Report

Table 3: Evaluation Information Gathering and Reporting			
Period	Timeframe	Total interviews (all groups combined)	Report
PBF; Case Studies			
<i>Total</i>		413	

2.3.2 Meetings with PBF Steering Committee

The consultant met with the PBF Steering Committee a total of six times: for an initial methodology design workshop and five meetings to present evaluation reports and discuss the implications of the findings for the project design and delivery.

2.3.3 Response Scale

The evidence for findings is presented by each of the key informant groups. The following qualitative scale is used in the text to indicate the relative weight of the responses for each of the respondent groups:

- All/almost all responses: findings reflect views and opinions of 90% of the key informants in the group
- Large majority: findings reflect the views of at least 70% of the key informants in the group
- Majority/most of responses: findings reflect the views of at least 50% the key informants in the group
- Some responses: findings reflect the views of less than 50% of the key informants in the group
- Few responses: findings reflect views of at least two informants, but less than 33% of all key informants in the group.
- In cases where only one respondent expressed a view, this is noted in the text

3.0 PARTNERS BUILDING FUTURES DESIGN AND DELIVERY

3.1 Overview

PBF involved two phases of activity, with each participant being enrolled for a maximum of two years:

- a 10-week *pre-employment phase* conducted in a group setting to help participants explore the trades and prepare for trades employment
- an *employment phase* of 22 months during which participants were assisted in finding employment in a trade, registering in the Apprenticeship Program, or finding trades-related employment.

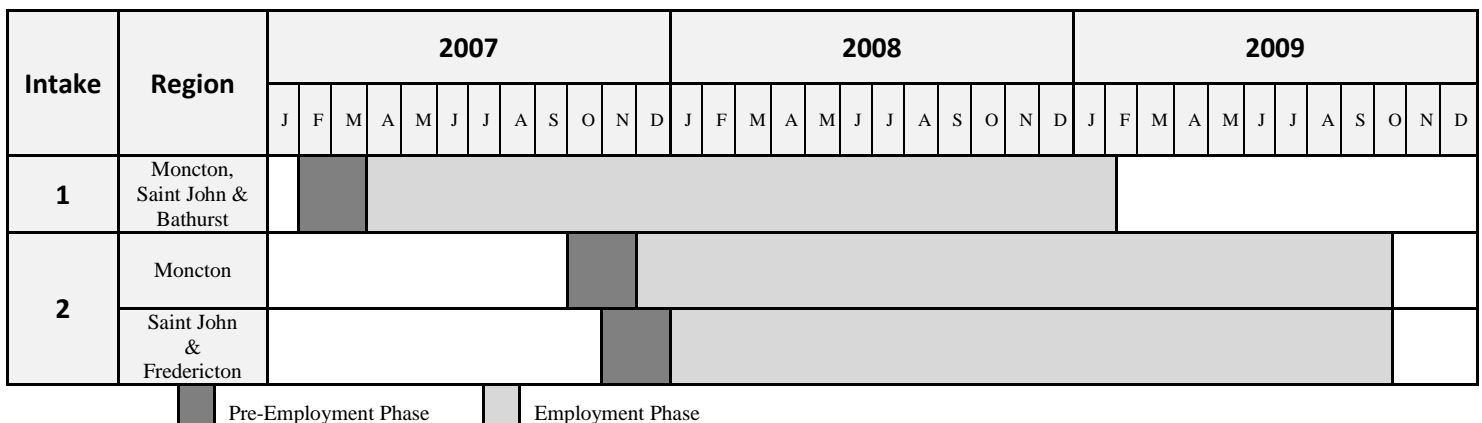
Mentors provided supports throughout the project period, complemented by supports from SD case managers and PETL apprenticeship coordinators. A number of financial benefits were also provided. These are described in section 2.2.2.

There were two intakes of participants in four regions:

- The first intake was offered in Bathurst, Moncton and Saint John. The intake commenced in Moncton and Saint John on February 05, 2007 and the Bathurst group began one week later on February 12, 2007. The two-year period for intake 1 ended on February 5, 2009 in Moncton and Saint John and on February 12, 2009 in Bathurst.
- The second intake was offered in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. The intake commenced in Moncton on October 29, 2007, and the Saint John and Fredericton groups began two weeks later on November 13, 2007. The two-year period for intake 2 concluded on October 16, 2009.

Figure 1 shows the timeline for each intake.

Figure 1: PBF Timelines



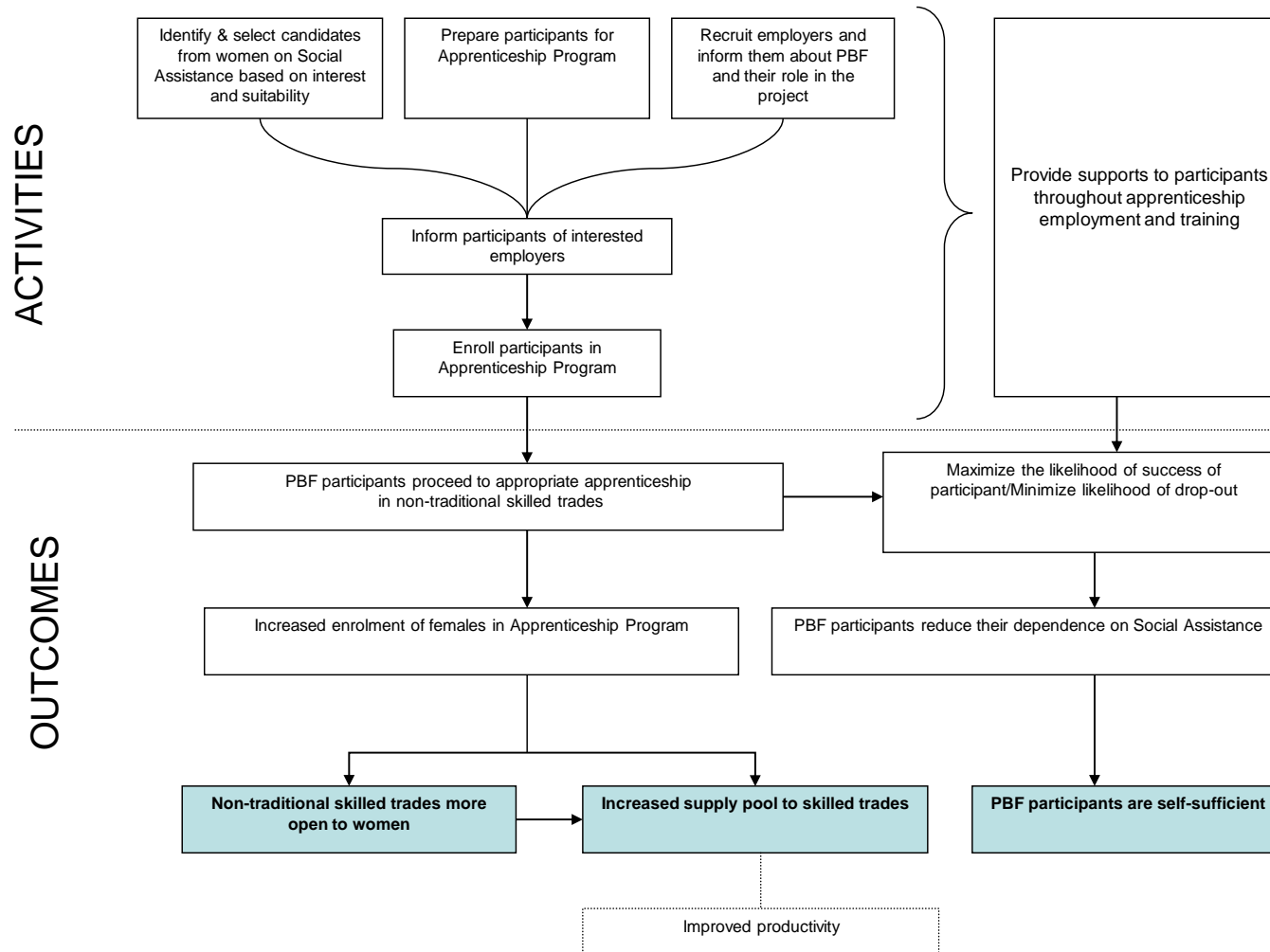
PBF planned to enrol 66 participants – 33 in each intake. The actual enrolment was 60 participants – 33 in Intake 1 and 27 in intake 2. Table 4 sets out the numbers enrolled by intake and site.

Table 4: PBF Participants by Intake and Site		
Location	Intake 1	Intake 2
Bathurst	6	N/A
Moncton	12	10
Saint John	15	10
Fredericton	N/A	7
Total	33	27

3.2 PBF Activities

This section provides a description of the activities carried in the PBF project. The description includes a logic model (figure 2) which sets out the main project activities and the intended outcomes related to each, followed by a narrative description of these activities and intended outcomes.

Figure 2: Partners Building Futures - Logic Model



3.2.1 Identification and Selection of Participants

Because of the intensive nature of PBF – a short pre-employment phase followed by direct entry to trades employment - the identification and selection of participants who were suited to and ready for this kind of transition to employment was a key activity of PBF. Case managers from the department of Family and Community Services (renamed to the department of Social Development [SD] mid-way through the project) identified female clients who had high school graduation or equivalent, and, through the case management process had expressed an interest in trades employment and were considered ready to move into the labour market. SD offices also did some promotion of the project through sending flyers to selected Social Assistance recipients, advertisements and public notices.

Information sessions were held to help candidates decide if PBF was suitable for them. An assessment process followed, that included administration of the Canadian Academic Achievement Test (CAAT)⁵ and the SD Employment Assessment tool. For those candidates who were considered suitable based on this screening, selection interviews followed. SD case managers completed the interviews for intake 1. It was decided to involve PETL apprenticeship managers in the selection interviews for intake 2.

3.2.2 Prepare Participants for Trades Employment

PBF included five activities to facilitate participants' transition to work in the trades. These are described below.

1. Pre-employment training

A 10-week pre-employment training phase (renamed to Employment and Trades Preparation Program [ETPP] for intake 2)⁶ was designed by SD in conjunction with the training deliverer, (NBCC), and delivered at each of the project sites through a contract for service with Skills/Compétences Canada New Brunswick. The training was designed to prepare participants for their transition to employment in the trades and to help them choose a trade. The training consisted of:

- Practical skills and orientation to five trade groups: construction, electrical, pipe, motive/power and metal working trades (30 hours for each trade group)
- Life skills /job search skills (90 hours)
- Practical skills in math and science for the trades (45 hours)
- Occupational health and safety, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and first aid (18 hours)

⁵ The CAAT measures an adult's current functional level in mathematics, reading and language.

⁶ In this report, the pre-employment training is referred to as the pre-employment phase for both intakes.

Apprenticeship managers made presentations to participants on the Apprenticeship Program and labour market information on trade opportunities. The mentors were hired in week eight of the pre-employment phase for intake 1 and remained on staff for the remainder of the project. (There was turnover in one mentor position which meant that both intake groups were without this support for a short period of time.) During the pre-employment phase, mentors began to establish their relationships with each participant and established linkages with SD case managers and the apprenticeship managers.

PBF developed a participants' handbook that provided detailed information on what the project offered in this phase and the employment phase, as well as the expectations of participants.

2. Job Search - Recruitment of Employers/ Matching Participants with Employers

The job search process began in the latter weeks of the pre-employment phase. PBF was designed initially to help participants identify employment opportunities in line with their trade choice. As the project evolved, the apprenticeship managers also sought out potential apprenticeship opportunities in advance of participants making this decision. A PBF employer's handbook was developed to inform them about the project and their responsibilities if they hired participants.

For intake 1, the focus was on identifying potential opportunities for trades employment and helping participants arrange interviews for these opportunities. However, this proved difficult due the lack of apprenticeship opportunities and the reluctance of employers to hire women with no previous experience in - and relatively limited exposure to - the trades. Two additional supports were introduced to facilitate the employment process:

- In August 2007, a two-week job shadowing placement was added to the Employment and Trades Preparation Program (ETPP) for intake 2 to enable participants to further explore their trade choice and to allow employers to observe them at work. (This was added as a component of the NBCC pre-employment training to allow for Workers Compensation coverage for participants through NBCC.)
- In April 2008, a Workplace Training (WPT) subsidy was introduced and offered to employers who were interested in hiring participants as apprentices or in trades-related occupations. The WPT was made available to employers hiring both intake 1 and 2 participants still active in PBF at the time this was introduced.

These job search supports continued through the employment phase of PBF for participants until each found an apprenticeship or trades-related position. In the cases where participants were hired and subsequently laid off or left their employment for reasons beyond their control, these supports resumed.

As well, there were very limited employment opportunities identified for intake 1 participants in the Bathurst region. A decision was made to move intake 2 to the Fredericton region where there were perceived to be more employment opportunities.

Initially, the intent of PBF was to focus on employment in the apprenticeable trades under the *Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification (AOC) Act*. In August 2007, in view of the limited apprenticeship opportunities identified to that point, the Steering Committee approved the expansion of the categories of eligible employment to include non-apprenticeable trades under the *AOC Act* and entry-level positions (e.g. trades helpers) which offered prospects of leading into a trade under the *AOC Act*.

3. Enrolment in Apprenticeship Program

Most participants hired in apprenticeable trades registered in the New Brunswick Apprenticeship Program. This effectively put them on a path towards formal certification as skilled tradespersons. Apprenticeship coordinators monitored their progress and provided the services and supports provided to all apprentices and their employers through the Apprenticeship Program. PBF continued to provide financial and personal supports for participants during their two-year period in PBF.

4. Financial Supports

An array of financial supports were provided to participants, including the extension of existing Social Assistance benefits, access to PETL training funding, and several incremental supports provided by PBF. These are described below.

Extension of Social Assistance Benefits

Table 5: SD Social Assistance Benefits Provided During PBF	
Social Assistance Benefit	Details
Financial Assistance benefits	During the pre-employment phase and in the employment phase until the participant obtained employment as an apprentice or in a trades-related job. If the participant later became unemployed, she could resume SA benefits if she reapplied and was found eligible.
Heath card benefits (if not offered by employer)	For up to one year of participation in project
Child care assistance	For the duration of PBF participation in line with SD policy
Transportation: Assistance to obtain driver's training	As needed

PETL Financial Assistance for Training and Employment

Similar to other eligible individuals pursuing post-secondary education, participants in PBF were provided financial assistance by PETL under the Training and Skills Development Program while

attending the Apprenticeship Program block training. This included assistance for tuition, textbooks, travel and accommodations. Also employers who hired participants could apply for the Wage Subsidy component of the PETL Workforce Expansion Program.

PBF Benefits

PBF included several new benefits to reduce the risk that interested candidates would choose not to participate or that participants would withdraw prematurely. These benefits and their purpose are described in the table 6.

Table 6: PBF Benefits		
PBF Benefit	Duration /Conditions	Purpose
\$10 a day training allowance	During the pre-employment phase	To offset costs of attendance in training and to provide a modest incentive to participate
Child Care Assistance: For those participants eligible for the SD child care assistance, PBF covered the difference in the benefit paid through this assistance and the actual fee charged by a daycare facility. For alternate day care, PBF covered up to a maximum daily rate of \$25 per dependent (based on age)	During the pre-employment phase, for three months of job search period in the employment phase of PBF and while employed during PBF. Also provided for up to three months during a layoff period.	To ensure 100% coverage of child care costs.
Wage top up: To bring the earnings of first year apprentices to a level equal to that of a beginning second year apprentice (the rate is set for each region under Apprenticeship policy)	Until participant successfully completed the first year of their apprenticeship. Top up varied and ranged up to \$2 an hour. This was paid for up to 40 hours a week for up to 52 weeks.	So that earnings would be greater than the Social Assistance benefits
Transportation: One-time lump sum transportation benefit of \$297	Once a participant had obtained employment and had been employed for a period of two weeks.	To offset costs of travel during the employment phase
Basic start up trade tools and equipment	Upon starting work in a trade	To offset this incremental cost to participants starting work in a trade
Tutoring assistance for participants preparing for block	As needed	To help participants prepare for the block exam and Essential

Table 6: PBF Benefits		
PBF Benefit	Duration /Conditions	Purpose
training and Essential Skills Assessment (ESA) ⁷		Skills Assessment (ESA)
Benefits added for Intake 2		
Job shadowing	Up to two weeks as part of the pre-employment phase.	To link participants with employers and provide an opportunity for further exploration of the trade that interested the participant
Workplace Training Subsidy (WPT) (also available for Intake 1 participants)	Wage subsidy (100%) paid to employers hiring participants in a trade position. The subsidy paid up to \$12 an hour, maximum 40 hours a week, for a maximum of 14 weeks	To enable participants to obtain paid employment in an apprenticeable trade or trade-related position

5. Support of Mentors

PBF engaged two mentors to provide support and advice to participants tailored to their needs. They were supported in their work by a senior mentor who coordinated overall project implementation. One mentor was assigned to participants in Moncton, Bathurst and Fredericton, the other to participants in Saint John. The mentors began work in week eight of the pre-employment phase for intake 1 and continued for the remainder of the project.

During the job search period the mentors’ role was to provide support, encouragement and advice to participants in identifying employers and preparing for interviews. For participants who found employment, the mentors helped them deal with any challenges they faced in the workplace or in achieving a work-life balance. They also identified any needs or issues arising that might need a re-examination of PBF policy and forwarded these to the senior mentor for consideration by the Working Group. Mentors liaised with case managers and apprenticeship coordinators in providing this support. Where the participants requested, they also contacted employers to help resolve any workplace issues other than those related to the Apprenticeship Program. Issues involving the Apprenticeship Program were identified and addressed through the participant’s respective apprenticeship coordinator.

Contacts were initiated by both the mentors and participants. In the early stages of job search period, the mentors organized scheduled group and one-on-one meetings with participants to provide this support. This maintained frequent contact with participants in the early stages of their employment. As the project progressed, participants had varied levels of need for the

⁷ The ESA evaluates a candidate’s competency level in the required essential skills (literacy [reading comprehension]), basic science and mathematics) for the occupation in which the client is registered. An apprentice must pass the applicable ESA before progressing into block training.

support of the mentors. The turnover in one mentor position meant that both intake groups were without this support for a short period of time and participants interviewed noted that this was a concern for them. However the new mentor quickly established effective relationships with participants.

The support of mentors was a key component of PBF. Given the relatively small number of PBF participants, they were able to develop relationships with each individual, maintain regular contact as needed, and devote time to addressing specific needs as they arose.

3.2.3 Participant Accountability Measures

Participants were required to be active in PBF in order to continue to be eligible for the various supports provided. This included attendance in the pre-employment training, actively seeking employment in a trade or trade-related position and, once employed, maintaining their employment unless they were laid off or left due to reasons beyond their control. Participants receiving Social Assistance benefits were required to continue to be eligible for these benefits in order to continue in PBF.

PBF included several measures to provide an accountability structure for participants and to support their active participation:

- an attendance policy and monitoring process for the pre-employment phase
- a policy on active and inactive status and conditions for termination
- a case conferencing process held between the participant, SD case manager and PBF mentor/senior mentor to address identified issues or at the request of the participant.

3.3 PBF Goals

The goals of PBF were:

- to introduce women receiving Social Assistance to the advantages of the post-secondary training environment and prepare them for transition to employment in the non-traditional trades
- to increase the number of women in the non-traditional trades through registering as apprentices, and progressing through up to two years of their apprenticeship
- to reduce dependency on Social Assistance.

The following table sets out these three goals and the related success indicators (based on the planned 66 participants).

Table 7: PBF Goals and Success Indicators	
GOALS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
1. To introduce women receiving Social Assistance to the advantages of the post-secondary training environment / help them prepare for transition to the trades	80% of participants complete pre-employment phase (53/66 participants)
2. To increase female participation in non-traditional trades	90% of participants who complete pre-employment phase register in the Apprenticeship Program (48/53 participants) 80% of participants who register in the Apprenticeship Program complete 1 year of apprenticeship (38/48 participants)
3. To reduce dependency on Social Assistance	85% of participants who complete year one of apprenticeship continue on to complete year two of apprenticeship (32/38 participants)

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance of PBF

4.1.1 *Relevance of PBF to Participants*

The profile of participants was consistent with the intended target group for this pilot project. All were receiving Social Assistance, had a high school education or equivalent, were interested in the trades and considered ready to make the transition to employment.

Based on data provided by the department of SD and the interviews conducted with participants and their case managers at the start of each intake, all participants fit the profile of the intended target group for this pilot project. All were receiving Social Assistance benefits and were identified by their case managers as being appropriate for this kind of program based on their case plan. All participants had completed high school or post-secondary education or scored a grade 12 level on the CAAT test. Other highlights of the participant profile include:

Family status: Almost all (95%) were single parents. Participants had from one to four children, with the average number being 1.6 per participant. The majority (82%) had at least one child under age 12, and 23% had children under age five.

Age: The average age of participants was 34 years and the majority (57%) were between 31 and 40 years of age.

Education: All participants met the educational requirement and the majority had attended school within the last 15 years. Most (82%) had completed high school and 16% had completed a post-secondary program; only one participant had less formal education but achieved a Grade 12 level on the CAAT test. Three-quarters (76%) had completed their last education program within the last 15 years or so (i.e. between 1991 and 2006). Sixteen percent had graduated in the five years before the start of PBF (2002-2007).

Attachment to labour force: All participants interviewed indicated that they required help with their transition to work and this was confirmed by their case managers. Most had no recent attachment to the labour force and were re-entering the workforce after an absence for personal or family reasons. SD data indicated that only 40% of participants had worked within the five years before the start of PBF, most in service occupations in a variety of sectors - primarily sales, food service, and child care.

Financial needs: The majority of participants indicated in interviews that they needed financial help with child care and / or transportation during training and employment in order to make this transition economically viable.

Use of Social Assistance: The majority of participants had availed of Social Assistance for an extended period of time. Sixty-nine percent of the participants had been receiving Social Assistance for more than a year prior to starting PBF – on average 2.7 years. The majority (72%) had received Social Assistance before their current claim and 77% had first received Social Assistance in 2000 or earlier.

Exposure to the trades: While only 9% of participants had worked in a trades environment as labourers or trades helpers, the majority felt they had some awareness of what was involved in the trades through their contacts with family members or friends who were tradespeople. All participants interviewed expressed great interest in exploring the trades as a career option because of the potential to earn good wages and an interest in the kinds of work involved.

The design of PBF was largely relevant to the needs of participants and provided most of the supports they needed to make the transition to work, and, more specifically, work in the trades. The PBF design and delivery was developed and fine-tuned during intake 1 and modified for intake 2 based on this learning. As a result, the relevance of the project to participants strengthened over time.

The evidence from all sources indicates that PBF provided most of the supports needed by participants, and that most of these supports were tailored to the needs of individual participants. The project also used a holistic approach of providing both employment and personal supports over the job search and initial employment periods. Previous pilot initiatives for workers making the transition from dependency on social assistance to employment indicate that a multi-faceted approach that provides supports over a longer period is important to a successful transition to employment.⁸ The findings related to each support are discussed below.

- ***Participant selection***

The selection process proved to be key to ensuring the participants were well suited for this type of intensive program. Intake 1 provided lessons on how the selection process could be improved and intake 2 incorporated changes based on these lessons.

During the selection for intake 1, the project was new to all the PBF partners and many aspects were still being developed – including the content of the pre-employment phase and the policies around financial benefits. The liaison between SD and PETL staff was also in the early stages, so information on the labour market for apprentices and the academic and physical requirements for working in the trades, as well as the need to have a driver's license, were not fully communicated to SD case managers and from them to potential candidates.

⁸ For example see Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (June 1998). *Summary of Lessons from Formative Evaluations of Strategic Initiatives Program*. Accessed on <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/hrsdcd/edd/reports/1998-000393/sp-ah073e.pdf>

As intake 1 progressed, it was evident that a number of the participants were not fully ready for the transition to work and not suited to trades employment. This was one factor in the relatively high number of intake 1 participants that did not complete PBF.

The selection process for intake 2 was strengthened based on the experience with the first intake. Case managers were able to share more accurate details with participants on what they could expect in terms of the project activities, benefits and help with finding employment. Apprenticeship managers participated in the selection process to share their perspectives on what is involved in trades employment so that the candidates and case managers could make more informed decisions.

Overall, the majority of participants enrolled through the selection process were ready for this kind of transition to the labour market. However, 18 (30%) exited during the PBF early due to a range of personal and family issues (e.g. unavailability of child care, lack of transportation, personal readiness to return to work). In summary, PBF provided considerable learning on the features of the selection process that are needed to ensure participants are ready to make the transition to work and make an informed decision on entering the trades.

The project enrolled the planned 33 participants for intake 1, but only 27 of the 33 planned for intake 2. The lower enrolment in intake 2 was influenced by an improved selection process and a lower level of demand than anticipated.

A total of 27 participants started in the Intake 2 group, which was 80% of the planned 33 participants. Key informants identified factors that influenced the lower enrolment.

Selection process: The improved selection process for Intake 2 described above was seen to result in a better focus on ensuring a good match of the applicants with the requirements of the program.

Limited applicant pool: There were several factors that influenced the limited pool of applicants. Some informants felt that there were a limited number of potential Social Development clients who would be interested in and ready for this type of program. The offering of the two intakes within six months of each other also left little time for more recent entrants to the Social Assistance program to proceed through the case management process and identify PBF as an option. The poor employment outcomes for intake 1 participants may also have resulted in some potential candidates not applying for intake 2.

The enrolment results suggest the need to lengthen the timeframe between intakes and to expand the target group.

The evidence indicates that it takes time for an innovative program to establish itself and to build a track record. PBF had only two intakes within a short period of time of each other and this did not allow the project model to become fully developed for the second intake. The level of enrolment might have been higher for intake 2 if there was a longer period of time between

intakes. As well the enrolment results suggest that it might be advisable to expand the reach of similar initiatives to all women, with priority being given to those who are receiving Social Assistance or who are under-employed, to ensure an adequate pool.

- **Financial supports**

At least a third of participants used each of the main financial benefits provided PBF. A higher percentage of intake 2 participants used most benefits, due in part to the higher percentage of this group who found trades employment. Table 8 presents a summary by intake of the use of these benefits.

Table 8: Number of Participants Using PBF Financial Benefits – Intake 1 and 2						
Financial Benefit	Intake 1	Intake 1 % who accessed benefit	Intake 2	Intake 2 % who accessed benefit	TOTAL	Total % who accessed benefit
Training Allowance during pre-employment phase	33	100%	27	100%	60	100%
Childcare Top Up	12	36%	10	37%	22	37%
Basic Tools	8	24%	13	48%	21	35%
Transportation	9	27%	12	44%	21	35%
Workplace Training Subsidy	3	9%	12	44%	15	25%
Tutoring	1	3%	4	15%	5	8%
Wage Top Up	-	-	3	11%	3	5%

The array of supports provided met the needs of most participants:

- The **child care top up** was used by 37% of the participants overall. This was considered by participants and service providers as a key benefit in removing financial barriers in both the pre-employment and employment phases of the project. However, the child care top up could not help participants deal with the lack of availability of child care which was a challenge for some participants. This issue is beyond the mandate of PBF but does highlight that the lack of availability of quality, affordable child care is a continuing barrier for women in the labour market. It is a particular barrier for tradeswomen who work extended hours, such as those in the construction trades.
- The **transportation benefit** (one-time payment of \$297) was also considered by participants to be helpful in covering part of their costs. It was learned during the project that most employers required apprentices to have a driver’s license as a

condition of employment. The Department of SD covered the cost of driver's education for several participants to enable them to accept job offers.

- Participants felt the **training allowance** provided during the pre-employment phase (\$10 a day) helped defray some incidental costs of attending school. Case managers felt this also acted as a modest incentive and recognition for their participation.
 - The provision of **basic tools** to those who started work in a trade was also considered helpful by participants. The average cost per participant who received tools was \$715.
 - As discussed later, the **WPT subsidy** proved to be the key support that influenced the employment outcomes of the project.
 - The **wage top up** was only needed by three of the participants who started work in the trades – the others were already paid at the second-year apprentice level by their employers. However those who received it felt it helped ensure their employment was financially viable.
 - **Tutoring** was needed by five participants who were preparing for their first block training and exam. In all cases, they cited this as an important support.
- ***Pre-employment training***

The majority of participants felt the pre-employment phase of the project was very useful to them overall. Most identified aspects that could have been improved to better meet their needs.

Academic refresher: Almost all participants felt the refresher in mathematics was very important in helping them prepare for the Apprenticeship Program. Most participants felt they could have used more time on mathematics. Science was covered to a lesser extent than mathematics at all sites; most participants felt this was somewhat useful and that more time on this topic would have been helpful.

Life skills: There was mixed evidence on the relevance of the life skills component. Most participants had already done life skills sessions as part of other labour market programs. Most felt this component would have been more helpful if it was tailored to job search and workplace topics rather than more generic life skills. However, some participants found this component helpful and some key informants also felt that the focus on more generic personal and social skills was still important for this group as they made the transition from Social Assistance to work.

Life skills was renamed *Tools for Living and Working* for intake 2 and was to have a stronger focus on job search skills as well as preparation for work in a male-dominated workplace. The evidence from participants and NBCC key informants is that this refocusing (and the helpfulness of this component) was better at the Fredericton and Saint John sites than in Moncton.

Exposure to the trades: All participants felt that they benefited most from exposure to the trades. Most felt that more time was needed on this component in order to allow them to choose and begin work with a better knowledge of the work environment, the basic tools, and safety standards. Some employers also felt that the participants needed more exposure to the trades in order to begin their apprenticeship, either through attending the longer college pre-employment trades program or a longer PBF-type project. Some employers did not hire participants for this reason. Those that did hire had to ensure they received the appropriate initial orientation and supervision to cover these topics.

The following are some of the comments of participants on the PBF pre-employment phase:

- *Awesome experience to get women involved in a variety of trades.*
- *Exploring the trades was useful but there should have been a lot more of this.*
- *Gave me a sense of accomplishment to complete the pre-employment training.*
- *Gave me a chance to touch tools in an actual trade environment, learn theory and a lot of the practical aspects of the work.*
- *I learned that choosing a trade is a possibility for me.*

There was some variation in delivery of the pre-employment phase across NBCC sites which resulted in the needs of participants being met to varied extents.

During intake 1, there was some variation in the content and delivery of the pre-employment phase at the three NBCC sites and, as a result, this training met participants' needs to different extents. NBCC key informants indicated that this was due to the short timeframe for developing this training and for ensuring the availability of instructors and other resources. In particular, the Saint John site appeared to have less structure and more downtime (e.g. self-study when no instructor was available) than the Moncton and Bathurst sites.

For intake 2, a training agreement was implemented which set out the PBF curriculum requirements and a process for NBCC to report on progress with delivery. NBCC also appointed a coordinator to liaise across sites and with the PBF manager. These measures improved communications about the progress of implementation of this component and helped identify and resolve issues as they arose. However, based on interviews with participants and instructors, there was still variation across sites in the approach to the job search component and the focus on preparing participants for transition to male-dominated workplaces. The evidence indicates that clearer learning objectives, more collaboration across NBCC sites to share innovative approaches and resources for delivery of this training, and more monitoring of implementation were needed.

- **Choosing a trade**

PBF participants chose a diverse range of trades to pursue as careers – an indication of the potential for women to help address skill shortages in many trades.

In total, 42 participants (70%) chose a trade of interest to them during PBF (see table 9). The diversity of their choices is an indication of the relevance of PBF in providing the opportunity for participants to explore, or otherwise learn about, a range of trade options. Their choices also indicate the potential for women to address diverse skill shortages in the trades sector, which is important information for employers, case managers and apprenticeship staff.

Table 9: Trade Choice of Participants – Intake 1 and 2 combined	
Trade choice of participants	Number interested in trade
Electrical	9
Carpentry	4
Painting	4
Plumbing	4
Automotive repair	3
Machinist	3
Cabinet making	3
Industrial mechanic	3
Refrigeration	1
Welding	2
Power engineering	1
Heavy equipment operator*	1
Landscaping*	1
Insulation	1
Total	40

**Occupation not designated under the AOC Act*

- **Job search and work experience**

Assistance in making connections with employers also met a key need of most participants, as none had previous trades training and almost all lacked informal networks or contacts in the trades that could open doors to apprenticeship opportunities for them.

PBF included assistance with identifying potential apprenticeship opportunities and helping participants prepare for and arrange interviews as well as how to conduct their own job search. It was learned through intake 1 that there were few actual opportunities and that PBF needed to do more to open doors for participants. At the conclusion of the pre-employment phase for intake 1, only three of the 30 who completed this phase had employment offers and four months later (August 2007) only four were employed.

The Working Group determined that the limited number of apprenticeship opportunities and the reluctance of employers to hire women with no trades exposure were factors.⁹ To address these barriers, job shadowing and the WPT subsidy were added in September 2007 and April 2008, respectively. In addition, the range of eligible occupations was expanded to include trades-related occupations. These modifications to the PBF design made a significant difference to the number of participants who gained exposure to trades and their trades employment outcomes in the remaining period of the project – particularly for intake 2 participants. Of the 19 intake 2 participants who completed the pre-employment phase, 18 participated in job shadowing.

Overall, 15 intake 1 participants and 15 intake 2 participants (61% of all those who completed the pre-employment phase) held trades or trades-related jobs during their participation in PBF (see table 9).

Trade choice of participants	Intake 1		Intake 2	
	Number of participants interested in trade	Number of participants who started work in the trade	Number of participants interested in trade	Number of participants who started work in the trade
Electrical	3	2	6	4
Cabinet making	2	1	2	2
Automotive Repair	2	2	1	1
Automotive Technician	0	0	1	1
Carpentry	3	2	1	1
CNC Machinist	2	2	1	1
Insulation	0	0	1	1
Landscaping	0	0	1	1
Painting	3	3	1	1
Plumbing	3	2	1	1
Welding	1	0	1	1
Industrial Mechanic	3	1	0	0
Heavy Equipment Operator	1	0	0	0
Power engineering	1	0	0	0
Refrigeration	1	0	0	0
Total	25	15	17	15

⁹ GGI was asked to do an analysis of the situation to inform the decision making of the PBF Working Group, and a Stocktaking Report on Employment was provided in September 2007.

A majority of the participants interviewed felt that the trades experience they gained while in PBF was key to their finding ongoing employment. This experience increased their knowledge, helped them develop basic skills, increased their understanding of the requirements of the trades, including the physical challenges, and helped them integrate into male-dominated workplaces.

Additional learning activities for participants without employment may have enhanced the relevance of the employment phase.

Most participants had some period of inactivity during the employment phase, including a longer period of job search than anticipated and periods of unemployment for those who had found work. Some participants exited the project because of the delays in finding trades work. The mentors were a source of support and motivation for participants in these periods and at the outset they organized group meetings to facilitate peer support. However, PBF might have been enhanced by additional learning events for participants, such as field trips, additional job shadowing or one-day workshop sessions to bring participants together to share experiences. It is recognized that there are financial and logistical constraints to organizing such sessions, but PBF has shown that there will be these downtime periods and future initiatives might build in ways of helping participants make use of this time for learning.

▪ ***Support of mentors***

The supports provided by the mentors proved to be important to a majority of participants.

Mentors established a trust relationship with participants and provided the guidance and support they needed during a challenging period in their lives as they adjusted to job search, working in the trades and balancing work-family commitments. Participants needed the mentors' support to varied degrees and, as expected, they needed this support less the longer they were employed. However it was also found that the transition to work was not a 'straight-line' process and a number of participants experienced unanticipated personal or work challenges at various times in the employment phase of PBF. Access to the mentors even at the latter stages of the project was important for some participants.

The following are some comments of participants on the mentors:

- *My mentor kept my spirits up, allowed me to vent.*
- *She helped me to get anything I needed for work or home.*
- *My mentor went above and beyond what I expected of her.*
- *I could call her day or night – she was always there for me.*
- *She was a 'go to' person.*
- *My mentor did a lot of leg work for me in finding an apprentice position.*

4.1.2 Relevance of PBF to Employers

As originally designed, PBF did not fully meet employers' needs. In particular, employers had less need for new apprentices than anticipated and were reluctant to hire women with no previous trades training or experience without financial assistance. The PBF design was changed to better meet their needs by offering a Workplace Training (WPT) subsidy and expanding the range of occupations eligible for PBF support. These improvements in the PBF design significantly increased the level of employers' engagement in the project.

One premise of PBF was that there was an increasing demand for apprentices in New Brunswick that project participants would provide sufficient employment opportunities for PBF participants. The experience with both intakes was that the job opportunities were more limited than anticipated, due to factors such as delays in some major New Brunswick construction projects and, more recently, the global economic downturn. Also employers were reluctant to hire participants due to the additional costs of providing supervision and on-the-job training for individuals with no trades training and experience. Some employers felt that participants would be better prepared if they first took a college pre-employment trades program. Indeed, some larger employers (unionized and non-unionized) have this as a condition of employment. Some employers could have used apprentices, but had lost journeymen tradesmen to work out West so they could not provide the supervision required under the AOC Act.

In response to these conditions, WPT was introduced to provide an incentive for employers to hire participants. The occupations eligible for PBF support were also expanded to include entry-level jobs that were related to the trades (e.g. warehouse in an automotive repair business, trades helper) in order to better respond to the kinds of opportunities employers were identifying and to give participants a chance to build credibility with employers and to be 'in view' when a trades vacancy came up.

Most participating employers hired women as apprentices for the first time, and most found that the participants had a positive impact on their workplaces. However, some felt that participants needed more exposure to the trades than was provided through PBF in order to prepare them for apprenticeship.

The employers interviewed throughout the project confirmed that the WPT subsidy was important to their hiring PBF participants. The subsidy allowed them to offset the costs of providing supervision and workplace training for these new employees with no previous experience in the trades. Most employers interviewed had not previously hired women as apprentices and they felt that the WPT, and more generally the marketing done by PBF, influenced their decision to participate in the project. All five of the employers interviewed at the conclusion of PBF still had the participant on staff and intended to continue their employment beyond the project period.

Almost all employers were very satisfied with the work of the participants and with the difference they made for their workplaces. However, as indicated earlier, some employers felt that the participants would have been better prepared for their apprenticeship if they had taken a college pre-employment trades program or had a longer PBF type project. In particular, employers felt those going into the 'higher end' trades such as electrical and industrial mechanics could have benefited from more knowledge of the tools and safety aspects of these trades before starting their apprenticeship. Apprenticeship managers and NBCC instructors also expressed similar concerns. Interestingly, the electrical trade was one of the most popular among participants, and four are still employed in this trade and making progress with their apprenticeship.

The following are some comments from employers:

- *Participant has changed the atmosphere in the shop.*
- *Participant has a strong work ethic, is a quick learner.*
- *One of my senior staff requests her as his apprentice.*
- *Employee is a thinker, has gusto.*
- *She is working in a man's environment and gives it as much as she takes it.*
- *Customers are interested to see a woman in the shop.*

PBF highlighted the importance of employers understanding the issues faced by women moving into the trades and being supportive of their needs.

The apprenticeship managers and PBF manager sought out employers who they felt would provide a supportive work environment for participants and the evidence indicates they were largely successful. Most participants interviewed were very satisfied with the support provided by their employers and co-workers and felt this was critical in their transition to the trades.

Several employers interviewed commented on the challenges faced by participants, such as long commutes to place children in day care and then working a full day, and the need to build up their conditioning to meet the physical demands of the work. All the employers interviewed were supportive of the participants in dealing with these challenges. A few observed that employers in general need to be supportive of women's needs in order to capitalize on what they have to offer the trades sectors.

PBF participants may also have opened some doors for other women. At least two employers have since hired other PBF participants or female apprentices who had not participated in PBF.

PBF empowered participants to deal with workplace issues through the support of their mentors. However, there is still a need for broader education on workplace diversity.

The PBF mandate did not include broader education of employers and their staff on the integration of women into male-dominated workplaces. Rather, the PBF approach was to help empower individual participants to deal with any workplace issues they faced. The pre-employment phase (for intake 2 only) covered the potential issues that might arise and strategies for dealing with these issues. The mentors also provided advice to participants who faced gender-based issues in their workplaces.

The majority of participants were the first women to work in the trades in their workplaces and the majority of those interviewed had encountered varied degrees of difficulties in being accepted by their male supervisors and co-workers. Some felt they were more accepted by younger colleagues, suggesting this is an inter-generational issue. Most participants felt they were accepted as equals once their supervisors and co-workers became accustomed to working with them and observed their capabilities – but that they had to prove themselves. Similarly, a few participants in the focus groups felt that they were sufficiently empowered (in part through their participation in PBF) to set the boundaries and deal with any issues that arose. Mentors advised a few participants who encountered more difficult situations and in most cases the issues were resolved.

Focus group participants also felt that, if PBF had done any gender-based education sessions specifically for their supervisors or co-workers, this would have singled them out and may have made it more difficult for them to be accepted. However, the experience of participants does indicate that some form of workplace diversity education would be helpful in creating a supportive environment for women (and perhaps other underrepresented groups) in moving into male-dominated workplaces. Some employers interviewed observed that employers in general have a role in creating a supportive workplace for women and that there is more work to be done in this area. It is recognized that the delivery of any such workplace education program would be challenging, particularly in sectors such as construction where workers are dispersed across worksites.

Overall, the evidence indicates that PBF appropriately supported participants in dealing with the gender-based issues they faced in moving into specific workplaces but that broader workplace diversity education is needed.

The following are some of the participants' comments on their workplace experiences:

- *It is very good, I only ever had one person say a rude comment and it was resolved.*
- *There were no issues with my co-workers but from another other subcontractor, who didn't think a woman should be on site. My supervisor and I had to talk to him about it. It's all about how you deal with it.*
- *I had a disagreement with my supervisor early on but it turns out he is a great mentor.*
- *It was hard and a daily task trying to prove myself. The younger guys were better than the older men.*

- *My employer is supportive and the guys are great to work with. They have been a big support to me in doing by block training.*
- *Older men would watch me closely at first but after a couple of months they knew I was actually interested and capable. So now they teach things to me. Young guys have always been great and accepting.*

4.1.3 Relevance to the Apprenticeship Program

PBF has had a significant positive impact on the number of female apprentices enrolled in the Apprenticeship Program. The project has also enhanced the understanding of case managers and apprenticeship staff about the potential for further involvement of women in the trades.

Evidence from interviews with apprenticeship managers is that PBF has helped bring a few new employers into the Apprenticeship Program. PBF has also resulted in ten new female apprentices and there is some evidence of a spin off effect in a few PBF employers hiring additional female apprentices who did not participate in PBF.

As of January 15, 2010, there were a total of 3,998 apprentices registered in New Brunswick (excluding cooks). There were 73 female apprentices in these non-traditional trades, comprising 1.8% of the total. This is more than double the 34 female apprentices in the non-traditional trades when PBF began in 2007. The ten PBF participants' who registered as apprentices account for 25% of this increase. In short, PBF has been a significant factor in this increase and has helped build the 'critical mass' and profile for women in the Apprenticeship Program. PBF has also enabled the SD case managers to gain a better understanding of the Apprenticeship Program as a career option for their clients. Involvement in the project has also enabled apprenticeship managers and coordinators to enhance their understanding of the potential for women with limited trades exposure to enter the trades. The linkages made between SD case managers and apprenticeship staff could be a basis for future collaboration in ensuring the trades are included as a career option in provincial government labour market programs – for both men and women.

4.1.4 Relevance of the PBF Partnership Model

The PBF partnership of industry and government resulted in a collaborative effort in designing and delivering the pilot project which capitalized on the expertise and resources of the project partners. However, the partnership could have been enhanced by inclusion of employer and union representatives on the Steering Committee to ensure PBF was informed by their perspectives on the needs of industry.

PBF management and the Working Group spent considerable effort in monitoring the progress of the project and effectively modified policies and procedures as needed to ensure its relevance and success. The project design provided PBF with the flexibility to make changes quickly.

As indicated from the above findings, there was significant learning throughout the PBF project, in particular during implementation for the intake 1 group, about aspects that worked well and those that needed fine-tuning to ensure the relevance and success of the pilot project. The partnership approach of the Working Group, as well as that of the PBF staff, case managers and the apprenticeship managers, resulted in a collaborative effort to addressing issues as they arose and to making policy decisions and changes where appropriate.

One example of this collaboration concerned three intake 1 participants who did not qualify for Employment Insurance when they were ready for their block training and therefore were not eligible for support from the PETL under the Training and Skills Development program. This is the typical mechanism to provide income and other supports to apprentices during this training. PBF, the Department of SD and PETL collaborated to ensure the participants were able to attend this training. Two of the three participants successfully completed the training, and all three returned to their previous employer.

One gap in the model concerned the lack of employer and union representation on the PBF Steering Committee. The premise was that Skills/Compétences Canada New Brunswick, which has both groups represented on their board of directors, would bring their perspectives to the committee. While the board of directors was kept informed about PBF, they did not play a hands-on role in its direction. Some key informants felt that, in hindsight, having employer and union representatives on the committee might have helped ensure that employers' needs were addressed in the design and contributed to a greater buy-in from employers.

PETL contracted an individual to document the issues encountered, the modifications made to project policies, design and delivery and the lessons learned through each of these in a comprehensive summary document, which proved to be an effective practice for tracking changes in the pilot project.

4.2 PBF Results

The goals of PBF were:

- to introduce women receiving Social Assistance to the advantages of the post-secondary training environment and prepare them for transition to employment in the non-traditional trades
- to increase the number of women in the non-traditional trades through registering as apprentices, and progressing through up to two years of their apprenticeship
- to reduce dependency on Social Assistance.

The results of PBF for each of these goals are discussed below.

- **Preparation for transition to the trades**

Eighty-two percent of participants completed the pre-employment phase of PBF, which slightly exceeded the 80% target. This pre-employment phase enabled participants to improve their readiness for transition to employment in the trades and their understanding of the academic requirements of the Apprenticeship Program.

PBF established a target of 80% of participants completing the pre-employment phase. Tables 11 and 12 show the completion rate by intake and site.

Table 11: Intake 1 Pre-employment Phase Completion

Participant Status	<i>Bathurst</i>	<i>Moncton</i>	<i>Saint John</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	%
Enrolled in pre-employment phase	6	12	15	33	
Exited pre-employment phase	1	2	-	3	9%
Completed pre-employment phase	5	10	15	30	91%

Table 12: Intake 2 Pre-employment Phase Completion

Participant Status	<i>Fredericton</i>	<i>Moncton</i>	<i>Saint John</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	%
Enrolled in pre-employment phase	7	10	10	27	
Exited pre-employment phase	3	3	2	8	30%
Completed pre-employment phase	4	7	8	19	70%

The data shows that 49 (82%) of participants overall completed this first phase. The completion rate was better for intake 1 (91%), even though the other evidence indicates that the selection process was less focused for this intake than for the second group. One factor influencing the lower completion rate for intake 2 (70%) was the stronger monitoring and follow up with participants who were having difficulties. This led to some Intake 2 participants deciding that they were not ready for the project.

The interviews with participants and NBCC instructors at the end of the pre-employment phase indicates that the majority of participants improved their knowledge of the trades and of the Apprenticeship Program, improved their knowledge of math, and felt more prepared to work in a trade. They were also more aware of the requirements of the block training and exams they would have to complete in the Apprenticeship Program and of the additional upgrading and self-study they would have to do to prepare for this component of the Apprenticeship Program.

Almost all participants interviewed at the conclusion of the pre-employment phase felt their level of self-confidence about returning to the labour market had increased. The majority also showed improvement in their self-assessment of the skills and personal attributes they offered to employers (e.g. they had more focus on their capacity and willingness to learn, more focus on the skills they brought to the trades, and more understanding of their work ethics).

- ***Increase the number of women in the non-traditional trades***

Ten PBF participants (20% of those who completed the pre-employment phase) registered as apprentices. Combined with those who went on to other trades employment or training, 32% of PBF participants made a transition to the trades as a career. The PBF target set for entry to the Apprenticeship Program (90%) was much higher and, in retrospect, too ambitious given the design of PBF and the labour market conditions in which the project was implemented.

Registration in Apprenticeship Program

The PBF design was based on an assumption that 90% of participants who completed the pre-employment training would register as apprentices. At the conclusion of their two-year period in PBF:

- 20% (10 of the 49) who completed the pre-employment program were registered as apprentices
- Two of these were from intake 1 and eight from intake 2
- Six were in Saint John, two in Fredericton and two in Moncton
- Six were working, two were unemployed (laid off due to issues with the journeyman/apprentice ratio) and two were on sick leave when their two-year period in PBF concluded.

Table 13 provides the profile of participants by trade.

Table 13: PBF participants registered as apprentices by trade and employment status at end of two-year PBF period.			
Trade	Total Registered Apprentices	Number employed at conclusion of PBF	Number unemployed /on leave at conclusion of PBF
Electrical	4	2	2 (both laid off due to issues with the journeymen-apprentice ratio)
Carpenter	2	1	1 (on sick leave)
Cabinet maker	1	1	
Painter	2	1	1 (on sick leave)
Plumber	1	1	
Total	10	6	4

The above results were influenced by the labour market conditions and the PBF design. The job search process took longer than anticipated and the actual number of apprenticeship

opportunities was much lower than assumed. The results were significantly improved for intake 2 in part because of the introduction of WPT. While the overall result is much lower than the target, it is quite positive given the limited participation of women in the apprenticeable trades in the province.

Advancement in Apprenticeship Program

Seven of the 10 apprentices (70%) progressed to their second year in the Apprenticeship Program.

The PBF design also assumed that 85% of those who registered as apprentices would have completed their second year of apprenticeship by the end of their two years of PBF participation. By the conclusion of PBF, seven of the 10 (70%) registered apprentices had completed their first block training and advanced to their second year of apprenticeship. One participant had attended block training and not passed the exam, the other two had not yet attended block training.

While lower than the target percentage, this is considered to be a very positive result given that most of this group found work and registered in the Apprenticeship Program later than anticipated so some had not worked the required hours to do the first block training prior to the conclusion of PBF. The high proportion of apprentices (7/8) who wrote and passed the first block exam and advanced through to their second year is also significant, given that most participants had not recently participated in a post-secondary program prior to PBF. Participants interviewed were optimistic about their potential to complete their apprenticeship and achieve journeyman certification. Some spoke more specifically about their goals of training other apprentices or one day owning their own businesses.

Other transitions to the trades

Six other participants made transitions to the trades but did not register as apprentices. At the conclusion of their period in PBF:

- 5 participants were either employed or on seasonal lay off from a trade (but not registered apprentices)
- 1 had returned to school to attend a pre-employment trades program

When combined with the 10 registered apprentices, the data indicates that 16 of the 49 (32%) who completed the pre-employment phase of PBF had made the transition to the trades as a career.

Other labour market transitions

Fourteen PBF participants (29%) made the transition to the labour market outside of the trades. Combined with those who entered the trades, 30 PBF participants (61%) made some form of transition to work.

By the conclusion of PBF, 11 participants had left PBF for non-trades employment and three had entered post-secondary programs in other fields. This group represents 29% (14 of 49) of those that completed the pre-employment phase.

Overall, 61% (30/49) of the participants who completed the pre-employment phase went on to pursue the trades or non-trades employment/training in line with their interests. Comparative figures for success rates in other labour market programs offered to SD clients were not available but, anecdotally, SD representatives indicate PBF had very good labour market outcomes.

Table 14 summarizes the progression of the 60 participants through PBF and their status at the conclusion of their period in the project.

Table 14: PBF Participants progression and status at conclusion of PBF				
Participant Status	Intake 1	Intake 2	TOTAL	% of Pre-employment completers
<i>Pre-employment phase</i>				
Enrolled in PBF	33	27	60	
Exited	3	8	11	
Completed Pre-employment phase	30	19	49	82%
<i>Employment Phase</i>				
Exited – returned to school (trades related)	-	1	1	
Exited – returned to school (non trades related)	3	-	3	
Exited – trades employment (non-apprenticeable)	-	1	1	
Exited – non-trades employment	8	2	10	
Total exited for employment /training	11	4	15	31%
Exited – SD case closure	8	-	8	
Exited – other reasons	3	4	7	
Total exited for non-employment reasons	11	4	15	31%
<i>Participants enrolled at end of two years PBF period</i>				
Registered Apprentice (employed)	-	6	6	25%
Registered Apprentice (unemployed)	2	2	4	
Employed in a trade (not apprenticed)	-	2	2	
Unemployed – seeking trade work	5	1	6	14%
Employed outside of trades	1	-	1	
TOTAL	8	11	19	39%

Figures 3 and 4 provide a profile of each intake group by their status at the conclusion of each phase of PBF.

Figure 3: Intake 1 Profile by PBF phase

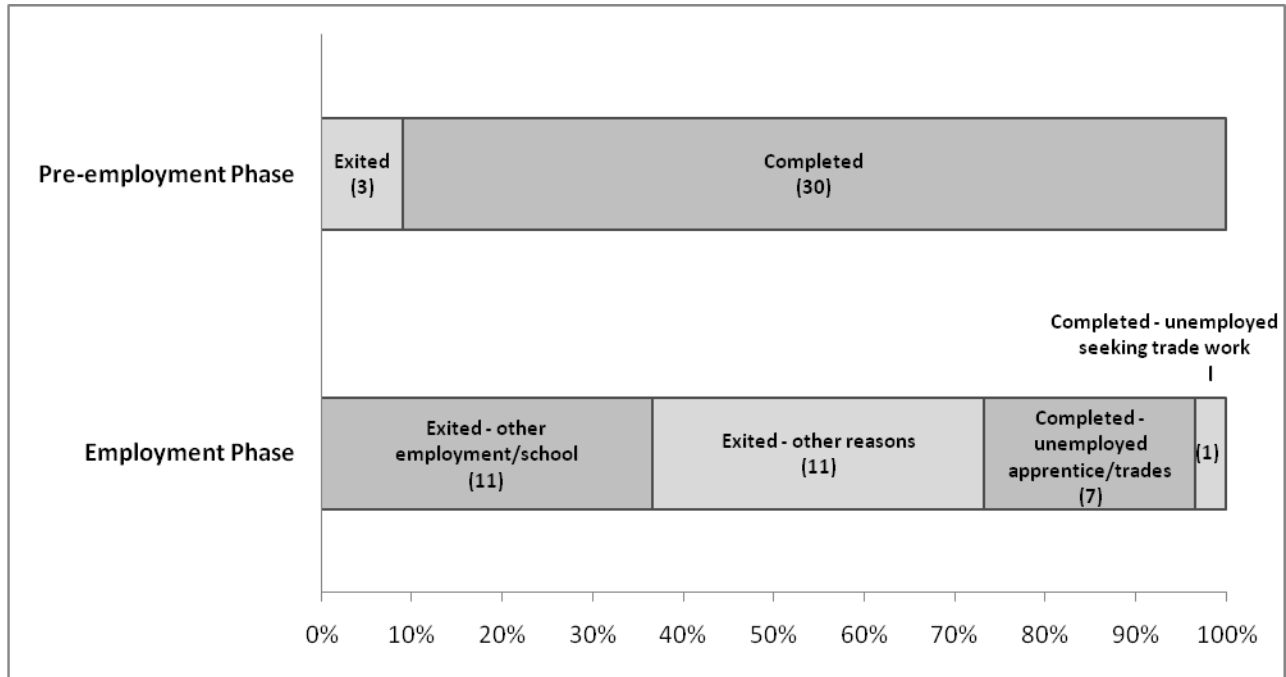
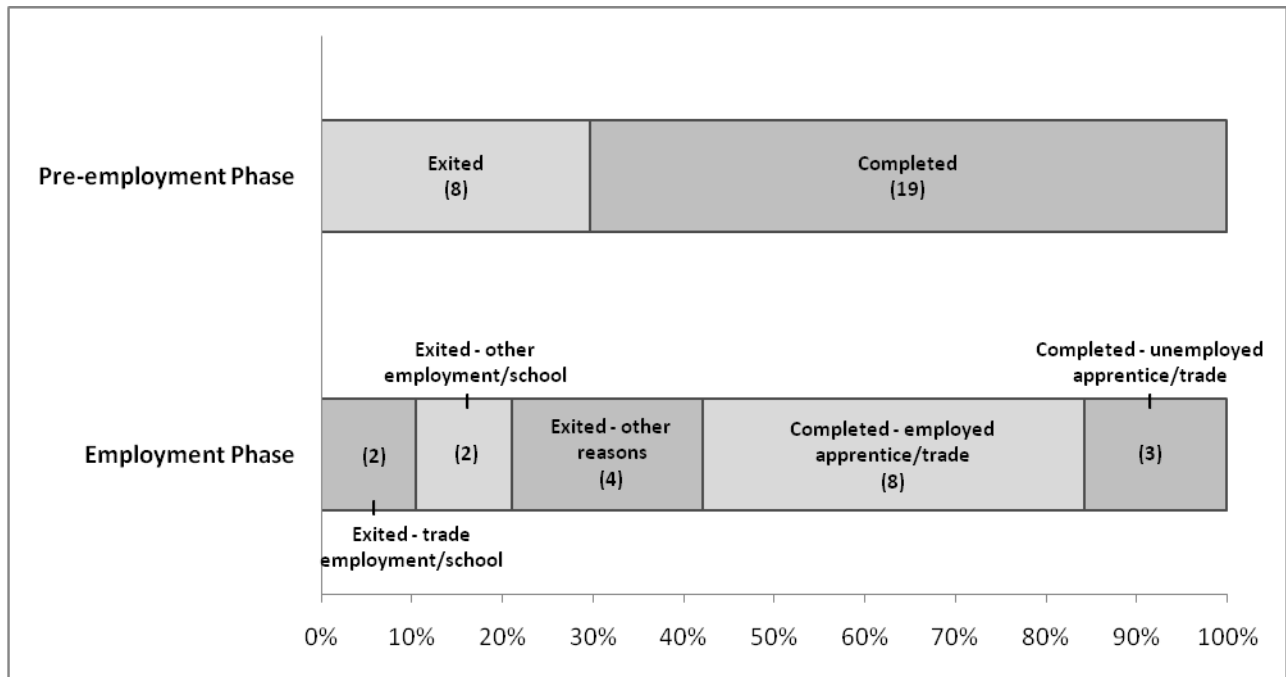


Figure 4: Intake 2 Profile by PBF Phase



The majority of participants who have not yet made the transition to employment have a plan to do so.

Interviews were attempted with all participants who left the project early shortly after their departure. In some cases, participants had left to take non-trades employment due to delays in finding trades positions. In some cases, participants had left for personal or family needs, and thus were not ready for the labour market. The majority in this latter category had a good understanding of their situation. Some of these had gone on to other work. Most of those who were not working had either a short or longer term plan to prepare themselves for a return to the labour market (e.g. academic upgrading) and felt that PBF had helped them make this plan.

- **Reduce dependency on Social Assistance**

A significant proportion of PBF participants have reduced their dependency on Social Assistance and improved their financial security.

Another measure of the impact of PBF is the number of participants who no longer receive Social Assistance. The department of SD indicates that 28 of the 60 participants (46%) were not receiving Social Assistance at the conclusion of PBF. Fifteen PBF participants (25%) had their cases closed because they had returned to work. Comparatively, SD data indicates that 6.4% of the total New Brunswick Social Assistance recipients who were female heads of households had their cases closed in 2008-09 because they found employment. So the employment impacts of PBF were quite positive in comparison.

Of the 31 PBF participants still receiving Social Assistance at the end of PBF in October 2009, 21 (35% of all participants) were receiving Financial Assistance and 10 (17%) were receiving only the health card or child care assistance.¹⁰ Given that the majority of participants (70%) had been receiving Financial Assistance for more than one year at the start of PBF and had been repeat recipients of this support, the data suggests that PBF has helped a significant proportion of PBF participants to reduce their dependency on Social Assistance.

Interviews were conducted with 23 of the participants from both intakes at the conclusion of the PBF project in October 2009. Fifteen of this group were working – 11 in a trade or trade-related job. The income for those who were working ranged from \$206 to \$562 a week, for an average of \$372. Comparatively, SD advises that weekly Social Assistance benefits for recipients with dependents are in the \$200 to \$250 a week range. In short, almost all the PBF participants interviewed who had moved on to employment had increased their income significantly. Almost all participants interviewed who were working were satisfied with their employment and their improved financial security. However, those who were not working in a trade and one who was working in a trade were still finding it hard to make ends meet.

¹⁰ Child care assistance is available to all low income earners and not just those receiving Social Assistance.

PBF has had positive – often life-changing - impacts on a majority of participants. Their resilience and perseverance were also key factors in their moving from dependency towards self-sufficiency.

The majority of participants interviewed throughout the pilot project and at its conclusion (even those who had not yet found employment) felt PBF had made a difference for them in their transition to employment. Often they described their PBF experience as life changing. Most who had moved on to employment in the trades spoke of the positive impacts on their families – they are better able to provide for their children and their children are proud of what they have accomplished.

Most participants who were working at the time of interviews were satisfied with their work situation, quality of life (including their work-life balance) and future outlook. A number still faced challenges in making the transition to work but they felt more empowered to deal with these challenges as a result of their participation in PBF. Those who participated in case studies also spoke about their increased confidence, satisfaction with their work, and their ability to make a better life for their families. They took pride in being role models for their children.

Throughout the project it has been evident that participants faced a wide range of challenges in taking part in PBF and then moving on to employment. PBF offered them a unique opportunity but also presented risks. The interviews with participants and their service providers highlighted that their resilience, perseverance and determination to pursue a career and make a better life for themselves and their families were key to their success. Their participation in PBF has also highlighted that women who have had to depend on Social Assistance due to personal circumstances can make the transition towards self-sufficiency if given the chance and right supports.

The following are comments from some of the participants on what they have achieved through PBF:

- *I went from nothing to having a career ahead. My kids see this as well so it's great.*
- *It set me on the right path. I'm happy, having fun at work, not stressed when I get home, and I can give my kids a home and steady income.*
- *PBF helped me realize I am more intelligent and capable than I realized.*
- *My priority was being able to afford better housing for my kids and I have done that.*
- *I'm looking forward to purchasing my own home next year.*
- *I got financing for a car.*
- *I can see a future for myself in the trades. I had nothing but dead end jobs before.*
- *I do not have to work weekends, so the trade is great in terms of my family life.*
- *I have a whole new outlook on life, am happier than I've ever been.*

5.0 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF PBF

5.1 Overview of Cost-Benefit Analysis

Cost-benefit analysis has long been an important part of program evaluation. Cost-benefit analysis mainly refers to the comparison of a program's monetary cost and benefits in order to determine its efficiency i.e. to determine if its benefits are greater than its costs or to compare it to other alternative use of resources.

It is important to keep in mind the general limitations inherent in estimating costs and benefits. These include unknown experimental methods (no comparison or control groups) and a lack of adequate financial data, attempting to account for all costs and benefits, converting cost and benefits to dollar measures etc. As well, our analysis incorporates several assumptions. We have strived to be conservative in these assumptions.

5.1.1 Challenges to cost-benefit analysis in relation to government-funded initiatives

While cost-benefit analysis has much to recommend it in theory, it can be very difficult to implement in practice especially when the funder is government. Three particular difficulties arise:

- **Identification of benefits:** It is often not entirely clear what should be considered as benefits. For a program which focuses on the needs of specific individuals, benefits would clearly include any revenues (or savings) to government if the program's objectives are met. In the case of PBF which seeks to assist women on social assistance to enter the labour market, first-order benefits of this nature would include reduced social assistance payments and additional taxation revenues accruing from the employment earnings of the women. However, there are many other potential benefits – both to society as a whole – and to government directly which may result from the greater productivity of the participants in PBF.
- **Measurement of benefits:** Measuring those benefits which are selected can also be very difficult or impossible. For example, in the case of PBF, a reduced social assistance payment is an expected benefit and one that should clearly be included in a cost-benefit analysis. However, while any short-term savings can be precisely determined, it is necessary to make several assumptions in order to estimate future savings. Taxation revenues resulting from higher employment earnings also is clearly appropriate to include but is difficult to estimate in the absence of information on earnings.
- **Incrementality of benefits:** While it may be possible to estimate, for example, the reduction in social assistance payments to participants, it is quite a bit more challenging to assess the extent to which these savings are attributable to the program since it is difficult to say what would have happened in the absence of the program. A common

approach –adopted here - is to use the experience of an otherwise similar population to estimate what would have happened to the participants in the absence of the program.

5.1.2 *The adjusted net cost approach*

The adjusted net cost approach can be used to mitigate some of these challenges. With this approach, those benefits which can be estimated are subtracted from the cost to obtain the adjusted net cost. The unmeasurable benefits can then be considered in relation to the adjusted net cost by policy makers.

5.2 **Costs of PBF Project**

The expenditures for PBF were approximately \$2.7 million. However, some of these expenditures cannot be seen as investments to achieve the goals of the pilot project. In particular, the following have been excluded from the costs for the purpose of the cost-benefit analysis:

- \$630,000 relating to paying basic Social Assistance for participants during periods of the project when they were not employed. These are excluded on the assumption that participants would likely have received at least as much Social Assistance during that time period if they had not been in the project;
- Approximately \$410,000 for professional services including \$310,000 for the evaluation. Most of these expenses related to the fact that the intervention was implemented as a pilot project. It is not reasonable to include these costs as part of the investment in the participants; and,
- Budgeted expenditures which did not actually occur. In particular, training allowances¹¹ and staff wages were lower than expected.

Eligible costs of the PBF program for the purpose of the cost-benefit analysis were determined to be:

Category	Cost \$
Training Allowances /Wage Subsidy/Wage Top up	\$154,250
Child Care Top Up	\$31,191
Start up tools	\$15,061
NBCC – design/delivery of pre-employment training	\$400,103
Project staff wages	\$529,882
Project staff benefits	\$48,922
Office furniture, computers	\$3,981

¹¹ PBF paid participants \$10 a day as a training allowance who attended the 10 weeks of Employment and Trades Preparation Program (ETPP) at the New Brunswick Community College. 49 participants completed this program and received \$24,500 as training allowances in total. 11 participants exited during ETPP training and received \$1450. A total \$25,950 was spent on training allowances.

Table 15: Costs of PBF Project	
Travel costs (project staff, steering committee)	\$108,147
Travel costs (participants)	\$6,980
General project costs (rent, utilities, supplies)	\$161,928
<i>Total Costs</i>	<i>\$1,460,445</i>
Total cost for intake 1 (33 participants)	\$803,245
Total cost for intake 2 (27 participants)	\$657,200
Average cost per participant	\$24,341

Total expenditures of the PBF program which can be considered as an investment in the participants is thus estimated at \$1,460,445. Total expenditures for intake 1 (33 participants) are estimated at \$803,245. Total expenditure for intake 2 (27 participants) are estimated at \$657,200. The average expenditure per client was \$24,341 for both intakes.

5.3 Benefits of PBF Project

The measurable benefits of PBF program include the reduction in basic Social Assistance payments, gains in earnings from employment and increased tax contributions. For this analysis, only the benefits from a reduction in social assistance payments were calculated since earnings data was not available. The method used to calculate the reduction in basic Social Assistance payments to PBF participants is described below.

5.3.1 Calculation of reduction in Social Assistance benefits for Intake 1

The basic Social Assistance paid to intake 1 participants was estimated in three different time periods.

- Period 1: Total basic Social Assistance received by the participants in the 12 months prior to enrolment in PBF
- Period 2: Total basic Social Assistance received in the 24 months during the PBF project.
- Period 3: Total basic Social Assistance received in the 12 months after participation in PBF.

To allow comparison of the amounts paid in different time periods, we adjusted the data to annual equivalents. Specifically,

- we calculated 50% of the period 2 payments to obtain an annual average pertaining to the two year length of the program; and,
- Because available data relating to period 3 pertained to only nine months, we adjusted it upward to estimate payments for 12 months.

Table 16a provides the estimates of total basic Social Assistance paid to the intake 1 participants in these three periods.

Table 16: Total basic Social Assistance received by intake 1 participants (N=26)		
Period	Basic Social Assistance Paid (annual equivalents)	Ratio of Payment to Pre-program Period
Total basic Social Assistance in 12 months prior to PBF	\$166,867	100%
Total basic Social Assistance in 12 months during PBF	\$ 144,459	86.6%
Total basic Social Assistance in 12 months after PBF	\$59, 531	35.7%

The total basic Social Assistance received by intake 1 participants before enrolling in PBF was \$166,867. During the project, total basic social assistance received by intake 1 participants was \$144,459 per year (86.6% of the amount paid in the year before the program). Based on payments in the nine months after PBF, intake 1 participants will receive an estimated \$59,531 in the 12 months after completing the project. This latter amount is 35.7% of what they received in the year before PBF – a drop of \$107,336.

However, this reduction in Social Assistance payments is not entirely due to PBF. In order to estimate how much of this drop in Social Assistance is attributable to PBF, we requested the Department of Social Development to select a random sample of 30 of the 2006 SA recipients and provide us with data on their aggregate payments for basic Social Assistance in 2006 and 2009. The results of that analysis are as follows:

Table 16b: Total basic Social Assistance received by Comparison Sample and Projection of this Pattern to Intake 1 participants				
Period	Basic Social Assistance Paid Comparison Sample	Ratio of Payment to Pre-program Period	Basic Social Assistance Paid Intake 1	Ratio of Payment to Pre-program Period
Total basic Social Assistance in 2006	\$197,771	100%	\$166,867	100%
Total basic Social Assistance in 2009	\$191,870	97%	\$59, 531 ¹²	35.7%
Projected payments without PBF	N/A		\$161,888	97%

As can be seen, the comparison sample continued to rely heavily on SA. In aggregate, basic Social Assistance in 2009 was 97% of that paid in 2006. The results for Intake 1 of PBF were markedly different with aggregate social assistance payments in 2009 falling to 35.7% of payments made in 2006. If we assume that without PBF, the participants would have had a

¹² Estimated based on data for the first nine months of the year

similar experience to that of the comparison sample, than we estimate that 2009 payments to PBF participants – if they had not been in the program – may have been as high as \$161,888. Based on this assumption, PBF reduced 2009 Social Assistance to Intake 1 participants by an estimated \$102,357. Stated another way, as much as 95.4% of the observed reduction in Social Assistance payments may be due to PBF.

In the interest of conservatism, we have assumed that 80% of the observed reduction in basic social assistance payments (as opposed to the 95.4% estimated above) is attributable to the PBF program. Thus, the reduction in social assistance payments due to participation in PBF program is estimated at \$85,868 for Intake 1 in the first full year after the program.

5.3.2 Calculation of reduction of Social Assistance benefits for intake 2

Other evidence provided in this report indicated that intake 2 participants were quite a bit more successful in finding employment than intake 1 participants so we would expect a stronger result in regards to the reduction of Social Assistance benefits for the intake 2 group. However, since intake 2 participants had only recently completed PBF, data was not available on their post-program receipt of Social Assistance. Consider, however, what we do know about Intake 2:

- Eight of the 27 participants from intake 2 were employed in the trades at the end of the project. Two additional participants were employed outside of the trades.
- Intake 2 participants received quite a bit less Social Assistance during the project.¹³ As indicated below, they received only 68.7% of the amount paid in the pre-PBF period (versus 86.6% for Intake 1).

Period	Basic Social Assistance Paid (annual equivalents)	Ratio of Payment to Pre-program Period
Total basic social assistance in 12 months prior to PBF	\$187,383	100%
Total basic social assistance in 12 months during PBF	\$ 128,672	68.7%

Considering these two points, it is a reasonable assumption that post-program receipt of Social Assistance will be lower for intake 2 than it was for Intake 1. From intake 1, we observed that post-program receipt of Social Assistance fell to about 35% of the pre-program period. For intake 2, we assumed it would fall to at least 30% of the amount paid in the pre-program period – a reduction of 70%.

¹³ In the interests of conservatism, we did not include any of these ‘during program’ savings as a benefit in the analysis

From the above table we can see that total basic Social Assistance benefits received by intake 2 participants in the 12 months before PBF were \$187,383. Based on the assumption of a 70% reduction, total basic Social Assistance payments in the 12 months after completing PBF will be \$56,214 - a reduction of \$131,169. As with intake 1, we have assumed that 80% of this reduction is attributable to participation in PBF program. Thus, we estimate that PBF will lead to a reduction of \$104,935 in the basic Social Assistance benefits that would otherwise be paid in the 12 months following participation in PBF.

5.4 Cost-Benefit Projection

Since most of the participants in PBF were long term recipients of Social Assistance, these savings can be expected not just in the current year but in each year thereafter. Tables 18a and b presents the present value of the costs and benefits. The two scenarios assume that the estimated reductions in social assistance will continue for 5 years and 10 years respectively. The 5 year scenario in Table 18a is more conservative. We calculated present values using Treasury Board of Canada guidelines which recommend a discount rate of 8%.

Table 18a: Cost-benefit analysis of PBF program – Five Year Projection			
	Discount rate		
	r = 10 %	r = 8%	r = 3%
Present value of cost (intake 1)	\$803,245	\$803,245	\$803,245
Present value of cost (intake 2)	\$657,200	\$657,200	\$657,200
Present value of benefits gained from reduction in Social Assistance (intake 1)	\$325,507	\$342,846	\$393,250
Present value of benefits gained from reduction in Social Assistance (intake2)	\$397,786	\$418,975	\$480,572
Estimated net cost (intake 1)		\$460,399	
Estimated net cost (intake 2)		\$238,225	

Since intake 2 represented an improved model for the pilot project and this model would be used for any future initiatives, we have focused on that. As can be seen from table 18a:

- the net cost of PBF for the 33 intake 1 participants is estimated at \$460,399 – an average of \$13,951 per participant. (This cost is somewhat overstated as fewer intake 1 participants (3) received the WPT subsidy than did intake 2 participants (12), but the total cost of WPT is averaged over the two groups for this analysis.)
- the net cost of PBF for the 27 Intake 2 participants is estimated at \$238,225 – an average of \$8,823 per participant.

These estimates are conservative based on the projection of benefits over a five year time period. Table 18b provides similar data based on a 10-year time horizon.

Table 18b: Cost-benefit analysis of PBF program – Ten Year Projection			
	Discount rate		
	r = 10 %	r = 8%	r = 3%
Present value of cost (intake 1)	\$803,245	\$803,245	\$803,245
Present value of cost (intake 2)	\$657,200	\$657,200	\$657,200
Present value of benefits gained from reduction in Social Assistance (intake 1)	\$527,622	\$576,181	\$732,471
Present value of benefits gained from reduction in Social Assistance (intake2)	\$644,780	\$704,122	\$895,117
Estimated net cost (intake 1)		\$227,064	
Estimated net cost (intake 2)		- \$46,922	

Under that scenario,

- the net cost of PBF for the 33 intake 1 participants is estimated at \$227,064 – an average of only \$6,880 per participant. (This cost is somewhat overstated as fewer intake 1 participants (3) received the WPT subsidy than did intake 2 participants (12), but the total cost of WPT is averaged over the two groups for this analysis.)
- the net cost of PBF for the 27 Intake 2 participants is estimated at - \$46,992. In other words, the present value of savings in social assistance payments would be greater than the cost of the intervention for Intake 2.

The question as to whether PBF represents a worthwhile investment comes down to the expected value of other benefits relative to this net cost. We have not been able to estimate these other benefits but can shed some light on them, as follows:

- **Gain in earnings through employment and increased tax contributions.**
 - 8 intake 2 participants were employed as an apprentice or in a trade at the end of PBF. We can expect that those who were employed at the end of PBF in a trade will gain in earnings by their employment and thus pay higher taxes. In the short term, higher earnings may still be modest but if they succeed in the trades, earnings gains may be substantial
 - 9 participants from intake 1 and 2 from intake 2 were employed outside of the trades at the end of the project. On average, these individuals may not earn as much as those in the trades.

Moreover, the benefits of employment through PBF (especially for those who were employed as an apprentice or in the trades) will accrue for more than a single year.

Participants of both intakes who gained greater earnings will use less public assistance and contribute more taxes as a result of PBF.

- **Indirect benefits:** These include outcomes such as increased consumer spending and resulting increased sales tax contributions and other tax revenues. These benefits are difficult to estimate because there is no reliable data for such information. There are several intangible or non-monetary outcomes that can be seen as benefits to both program participants and taxpayers. Economists describe these types of benefits using the concept of utility, or the measure of participant's happiness or satisfaction. In addition to employment, these benefits can include:
 - Improved self-image and greater self esteem
 - Increased educational attainment
 - Access to equipment or resources needed for independence
 - Improved technical skills
 - Improved communication and interpersonal skills
 - Improved self-sufficiency and decreased dependency upon other forms of support and
 - Overall increased quality of life.

5.5 Conclusions

Overall it is our assessment that the net cost of the investment made by PBF (based on the mature project model of Intake 2) falls – at the most - in the range of \$5,000 - \$10,000 per participant. Based on qualitative evidence as to the impacts on the lives of the participants and their families and the economic benefits which we have outlined above but have not been able to estimate, this investment seems modest and worthwhile.

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

The PBF pilot project provided a range of supports for women making the transition to work in the trades through a partnership approach involving government, industry and project participants. As a pilot project, PBF was designed to address a complex labour market issue: supporting women who were dependent on social assistance to move to economic self-reliance. It addressed this labour market issue through an innovative and somewhat bold approach: supporting women to make connections with employers and enter directly into the trades through the apprenticeship training model.

PBF achieved the objectives of a pilot project by providing considerable learning on what worked in the project design and what did not work – and why. The following are the lessons from PBF that may help inform other similar labour market initiatives.

6.1 Project Design

An understanding of the dynamics of the supply and demand sides of the labour market are key to sound program design and establishing project goals. PBF provided learning on the following:

- *Defining the target group.* The evidence indicates that there was a relatively small pool of Social Assistance recipients suited to this kind of project and that the target group for future initiatives might expand the target group to include women in general.
- *Setting the appropriate numbers to enrol in a program.* While there were positive results for a significant number of participants, the evidence indicates that the numbers enrolled exceeded the demand for apprentices.
- *Scheduling the timing of intakes.* PBF had two intakes within eight months. This required quick refinement of the model based on the learning from the first intake. If such an initiative were offered in future it would be preferable to have a longer period between intakes to allow this evaluation and refinement to take place and to ensure that the numbers of participants entering the labour market are balanced with the potential demand.
- *Importance of understanding employers needs.* The anticipated demand for apprentices and employers' willingness to hire participants were overestimated. Employer input to project design would have helped.

The selection process for participants must reflect the requirements of the project (in this case the requirements for work in the trades) and help both the candidates and those making the selection to make informed choices. There was considerable learning from intake 1 on this process that helped improve the process for intake 2.

Transition from Social Assistance to self-sufficiency is a complex and challenging process for most individuals. Both financial and personal supports are needed, tailored to the needs of

individuals, and provided over both the job search and initial employment period. PBF provided an array of financial and personal supports that were delivered in a holistic manner to ensure that participants were able to move from dependency on social assistance to the labour market.

Labour market programs for adults must maximize the opportunities for participants to ‘learn by doing’ in order to keep them interested and match their learning styles. The strengths of PBF were the relatively short pre-employment phase coupled with job shadowing and work placements. Areas where PBF could have been stronger were more ‘hands on’ trades exposure in the pre-employment phase and more interventions (e.g. short workshops or job shadowing) during the employment phase for participants who had not yet found employment to keep them active and learning.

Wage subsidy assistance can open opportunities in the trades for women who have no natural connections with this sector of the labour market. PBF proved that this was key to helping participants connect with and prove themselves to employers.

Mentors can be an effective resource in empowering individuals to deal with the issues they face in the transition from dependency on social assistance to employment – and more particularly to male-dominated workplaces.

Broader workplace education on diversity issues is needed to help create a supportive environment for projects focused on integrating under-represented groups in the trades sector. PBF illustrated that it is difficult if not impossible for an individual project to effectively do this education. However a broader effort to educate employers and workers on diversity would have helped pave the way for participants as they moved into workplaces where they were under-represented.

Participants themselves are a key factor in the success of pilot initiatives. Their willingness to avail of the supports provided, take risks and tolerate the changes made through the pilot project process are needed and necessary for the process to work.

6.2 Project Management

Ongoing monitoring of progress and identification of issues, coupled with the flexibility to make modifications to project design, are key to the pilot project process. These help ensure that learning occurs about what works and what does not – and why – and that the success of participants is the prime focus. Documenting issues encountered, policy changes made and the lessons learned was an effective practice in PBF.

A project such as PBF requires diverse service providers working collaboratively to find common and innovative solutions to the issues encountered. Shared understanding of roles and mechanisms to support communications are important to this process.

6.3 Transferability of the PBF Model

The participant-centered approach inherent in the PBF model should be transferable to similar labour market initiatives for other groups that are under-represented in the labour market – in particular those focused on the trades. The model was comprised of a number of existing and new supports offered through a partnership approach.

Existing supports: PBF offered a number of existing benefits and supports (i.e. Social Assistance benefits, case managers support, and support through the Apprenticeship Program) that could readily be offered as part of other initiatives.

New supports: PBF offered additional financial supports that proved to be important – in particular top up for SD child care assistance to the going market rate and the WPT subsidy. The inclusion of mentors was also a key support. Existing SD and PETL programs at least partially provide these supports. For example, the recently introduced New Brunswick Transition to Work (T2W) Program which involves both the departments of PETL and SD has some features that are similar to those in PBF. These include the SD employability assessment process, enhanced supports for job search and job retention (including a work services coach) and enhanced financial supports. However, given the larger numbers of clients to be served through T2W, it could be challenging to provide the degree of individualized support to participants that was provided through PBF. At the same time, PBF showed that not all participants needed intensive supports.

Partnership approach: PBF involved a partnership of the PBF manager and staff with PETL and SD staff. This helped ensure that the project availed of the existing supports and expertise of these government departments and provided direction for the project implementation and policy development. Similar partnerships, perhaps on a less structured basis, would also be helpful in guiding other initiatives.

Building on PBF: There are a number of specific actions that could be taken to build on the PBF experience in other labour market initiatives:

- include a focus on the trades in T2W (for both men and women)
- provide service providers (SD case managers and community-based contractors) with orientation to the trades as a career option, based on what was learned in PBF
- maintain the connections between SD, PETL and the Apprenticeship Branch that were developed through PBF
- have PBF participants and employers brief SD and PETL staff on their PBF experience
- seek out opportunities for PBF participants and employers to promote women in the trades to industry associations

6.4 Conclusions

The PBF pilot project set out to test whether women receiving Social Assistance with the right supports could achieve self-sufficiency through a career in the non-traditional skilled trades. The project has proven that this is achievable.

PBF has generated considerable learning about what the right supports are for women moving from Social Assistance to trades employment, and has demonstrated that this career choice can result in economic self-sufficiency.

PBF has also shown that the process of exploring the trades can help individuals make informed decisions to choose other more suitable career options that also lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The partnership of industry and government in PBF strengthened both the design and delivery of this pilot project.

PBF had positive results in terms of the number of participants who found employment in the trades, registered as apprentices and advanced to the second year of their apprenticeship. Some have also moved on to other employment and training opportunities.

A significant proportion of participants have reduced their dependency on Social Assistance. The net cost of PBF is considered modest and worthwhile, given the impacts on the lives of the participants and their families and the economic benefits of participation.