



Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group Inc.

A Network of First Nation Employment Agencies

2024 - 2025 Annual Operational Update





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Introduction and Executive Summary

Under the Network umbrella of SITAG, Saskatchewan's First Nation communities plan, design and deliver First Nation Labour Market Strategy (FNLMS) programming through a single agreement between SITAG and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). This Network arrangement is unique in Canada and combines the hallmarks of collectivity and local decision-making to advance employment and training for **all** First Nations people living throughout the province.

2024-2025 marked a year of strengthened relationships, enhanced collaboration and synergies, and strong fiscal management.

- The Network mobilized **\$35.6m of labour market and project resources** to produce 2,447 employment results with a **strong growth in new caseload** to 5,298 (5,026 in 2023-2024)
- The Strategic Initiative projects have **synergized collaborations and outreach**:
 - The Indigenous Labour Market Information (ILMI) project delivered on a strong first data collection campaign, with over 7,600 surveys collected at over 150 events organized across the province
 - Strategic Partnerships made great strides in formulating a functional First Nation workforce development ecosystem by bringing Network agencies together with employers, industry associations, post-secondary institutions and levels of government at tables to share experiences, brainstorm and bring forward collective solutions
- Network structure continues to evolve with **more communities moving to a direct agreement** with SITAG and opting out of their Tribal Council arrangement for FNLMS; the number of Independent First Nation agreements increased to 25 for April 2025
- **User functionality** of SITAG's Training Administrative System (TAS) database was improved
- SITAG's Board of Directors began the work to **review the leadership and staffing structure** of the Regional Coordination team, and initiated a search process for a new SITAG President role as the year ended
- There were significant **workforce changes** experienced by the Network for a second year; technician turnover continued in some communities while SITAG Regional Coordination lost several long-time staff members from their team

The SITAG Network is committed to being a leader in delivering FNLMS. The following pages describe the successes and challenges for 2024-2025 in more detail.



2024-2025 Year End Financial Position

The resource flows managed by the SITAG Network during 2024-2025 are summarized in the following chart:

	2024-2025 Allocations	Interest Income	Unspent Funds from 2023-2024	Resources Available for 2024-2025	2024-2025 Claims	Project Completion	Balance to Carryforward
Labour Market Programs	\$34,030,335	\$ 1,090,128	\$ (223,859)	\$34,896,604	\$32,560,618	\$ -	\$ 2,335,986
Projects & Initiatives	7,019,604	-	8,783,286	15,802,890	3,052,242	(369,756)	12,380,892
Total FNLMS Resources	\$41,049,939	\$ 1,090,128	\$ 8,559,427	\$50,699,494	\$35,612,860	\$ (369,756)	\$14,716,878

Labour Market Programs

- New allocations plus interest income available for labour market programs totaled \$35.1m, an 8.2% increase over the prior year's resource pool of \$32.5m.
- The increase reflects new funding of \$3.6m received in March 2025:
 - New Employment Insurance Fund (EI) resources of \$1.6m (all carried over to 2025-2026)
 - New Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) resources of \$2.0m were used to support the 2023-2024 carryforward deficit of \$224k and the 2024-2025 claims, with the balance of \$.7m carried over to 2025-2026
- The net carryforward of \$2.3m will be allocated to Network agencies in the 2025-2026 fiscal year

Projects & Initiatives (two carried over, one ending, and one new)

- Indigenous Labour Market Information & Skills Inventory (ILMI - \$9.1m - continuing)
 - \$5.7m was carried forward from 2023-2024 and \$3.4m of new funding was received in March 2025 for this project to gather and analyze data for First Nation workforce planning
 - \$1.3m was spent and \$7.8m has been carried forward to fuel the second and subsequent campaigns planned over the next two to three years
- Supporting Partnerships (\$4.0m - continuing)
 - \$1.7m was carried forward from 2023-2024 and an additional \$2.3m received for the second year of a three-year agreement
 - \$.7m was spent and \$3.3m carried over to 2025-2026 to further the work of this collaborative project that brings industry, post-secondary, government and labour force development agencies together to create an ecosystem for First Nation employment opportunities
- Community Workforce Development Program (CWDP - \$1.4m - ending)
 - CWDP set out to enhance digital literacy and employment outcomes across 10 First Nation communities
 - \$1.4m was carried forward to fund the final cohorts in 2024-2025
 - \$370k remains unspent from the project and is to be repaid to Canada



- Water Operator Training Initiative (WOT - \$1.3m - new)
 - In March 2025, a \$1.3m agreement was signed with Canada to fund water operator training in fiscal 2025-2026
 - Two cohorts are planned and will be delivered with Saskatchewan First Nations Water Association (SFNWA) as a training partner
 - SFNWA has developed and will pilot an internationally approved curriculum that is specific to on-reserve water systems in Saskatchewan
 - The first cohort is set to begin June 2025, with interested participants from 17 different communities
 - The full \$1.3m is carried forward to 2025-2026



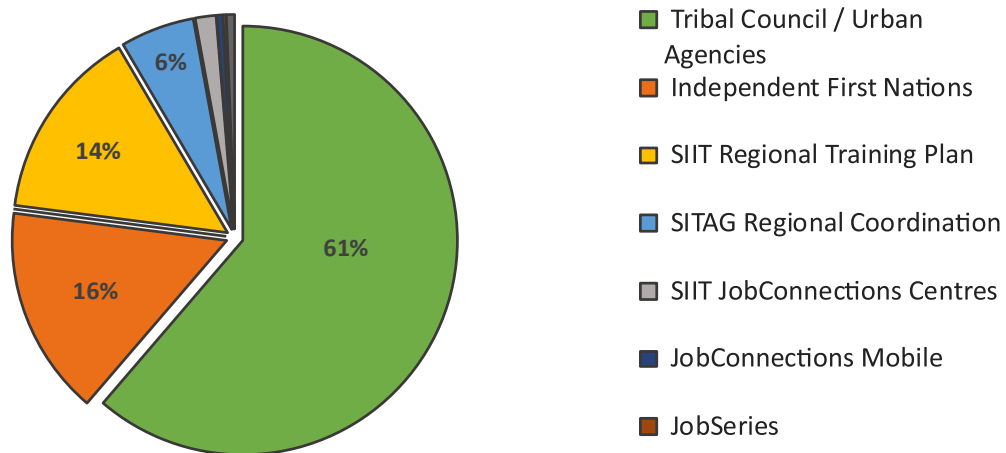


Labour Market Programs

In 2024-2025 the SITAG Network utilized \$32.6m (93% of available resources) for the delivery of Labour Market Programs region wide. This is a slight reduction from the \$33.3m spent last year. The table below identifies the areas of allocation and the respective expenditures for each area; additional details for each line item follow in later sections of this report:

	2024-2025 Resources	2024-2025 Claims	Balance to Carryforward	% Spent	2023-2024 Claims
Labour Market Programs & Services	\$ 34,896,604	\$ 32,560,618	\$ 2,335,986	93%	\$33,272,102
Tribal Council / Urban Agencies	19,020,205	19,955,884	(935,679)	105%	20,800,057
Independent First Nations	4,657,669	5,128,151	(470,482)	110%	5,080,813
Supplement from Canada	3,353,679	-	3,353,679	0%	-
Uncommitted Interest	440,129	-	440,129	0%	-
SIIT Regional Training Plan	4,725,227	4,725,227	-	100%	4,725,227
SITAG Regional Coordination	1,762,620	1,814,281	(51,661)	103%	1,728,930
SIIT JobConnections Centres	510,687	510,687	-	100%	510,687
JobConnections Mobile	150,000	150,000	-	100%	150,000
JobSeries	76,388	76,388	-	100%	76,388
Mental Wellness	200,000	200,000	-	100%	200,000
Total Labour Market Programs	\$ 34,896,604	\$ 32,560,618	\$ 2,335,986	93%	\$33,272,102

Labour Market Programs & Services - Claims





Targets and Results

Target setting is based on a grassroots local approach; each Network agency sets its caseload and employment goals based on planned activities and projects. These are rolled up provincially and presented with SITAG's Annual Operational Plan.

The collective labour market program targets and results for 2024-2025 and the prior fiscal year are summarized below, as captured through the TAS database.

	2024- 2025*	%	2023- 2024	%	Change in Results
Caseload Target	3,778		4,080		
Actual Caseload	5,298		5,026		272
Exceeded Target by (Fell Short)	1,520	40%	946	23%	
Employment Results Target	2,169		2,228		
Actual Employment Results	2,447		2,717		(270)
Exceeded Target by (Fell Short)	278	13%	489	22%	
Return to School Target	499		414		
Return to School/ Stay in School Results	459		529		(70)
Exceeded Target by (Fell Short)	(40)	-8%	115	28%	
Ready for Career Development Target	376		419		
Ready for Career Development Results	694		367		327
Exceeded Target by (Fell Short)	318	85%	(52)	-12%	

* Based on data recorded in TAS at June 18-25

For 2024-2025, the SITAG Network implemented modest target adjustments – projecting a slight increase in employment outcomes while slightly reducing caseload targets. The cumulative inflationary pressures in the past few years have had an impact on client service delivery capacity and strategy. Against the backdrop of these conservative targets, Network agencies delivered strong results:

- **5,298 new Caseloads**, exceeding the target by 40% and surpassing the prior year's caseload of 5,026; membership population increases stemming from Bill S-3's extension of Indian Status are being seen in many communities and are adding pressure to existing demand for service
- **2,447 Employment results**, exceeding the target by 13%
- **459 Return to School results**, 8% short from the target of 499
- **694 Ready for Career Development results**, markedly higher than target at 85%



Tribal Council / Urban Agencies and Independent First Nations

In 2024-2025, \$27.5m of program resources were earmarked for Tribal Council / Urban Agencies and Independent First Nations, representing a 7.1% increase over the prior year. This included interest income earned on funds held regionally and \$3.4m of the new fund injection received in Canada in March 2025.

- \$23.7m was allocated to 24 Independent First Nations and 16 Tribal Councils / Urban Agencies at the beginning of the year
- Agencies were encouraged and supported to plan programming to fully use these allocations
- Total claims amounted to \$25.1m, 106% of the original allocations
- The additional \$1.4m of claims is being supported by tapping into \$440k of uncommitted interest income and \$1.0m of the new resources received from Canada in March 2025

Resources by Agency

This table outlines the allocations and claims experience for each Tribal Council, Urban Agency, and the Independent First Nations as a group:

	EI & CRF Allocation	EI & CRF Claims	% Spent
Agency Chiefs	\$ 31,822	\$ 25,376	80%
Battleford Agency	518,874	598,689	115%
Battleford	203,703	172,385	85%
Battleford Urban	190,917	141,969	74%
PAGC Dene	939,326	655,943	70%
PAGC Eastside	967,352	1,022,943	106%
File Hills Qu'Appelle	774,767	1,100,501	142%
Meadow Lake	2,018,986	2,249,151	111%
Onion Lake	718,461	690,049	96%
Prince Albert Urban	1,569,873	1,853,544	118%
Regina Urban	2,894,841	3,055,899	106%
Saskatoon	506,309	384,296	76%
Saskatoon Urban	3,134,178	3,472,498	111%
Touchwood	403,811	310,177	77%
PAGC Woodland Cree	3,291,967	3,233,108	98%
Yorkton	855,018	989,355	116%
	19,020,205	19,955,884	105%
Independent First Nations	4,657,669	5,128,151	110%
	23,677,874	25,084,035	106%
Additional Uncommitted Interest	440,129	-	0%
Supplement from Canada	3,353,679	-	0%
Totals	\$ 27,471,682	\$ 25,084,035	91%

- Spending against allocations was strong – most agencies spent over 100% of their resource allocations for the year
- The Regional Coordination team continues to provide one-on-one support to help agencies with planning and program delivery strategies



Operational Highlights

Overall, the amount spent by Tribal Councils / Urban Agencies and Independent First Nations was \$25.1m, a decrease of 3% (\$797k) from the prior year:

	Current Year	Prior Year	Change	% Change
Income support - trainees	8,335,420	9,000,406	(664,986)	-7%
Training purchases	8,180,377	8,359,829	(179,452)	-2%
Personnel	4,796,741	4,790,501	6,240	0%
Materials and supplies	1,295,309	1,326,078	(30,769)	-2%
Travel	1,008,128	1,244,136	(236,008)	-19%
Facility	963,159	754,814	208,345	28%
Other	455,097	321,992	133,105	41%
Furnishings and equipment	45,449	65,295	(19,846)	-30%
GST	4,354	17,819	(13,465)	-76%
Totals	\$ 25,084,035	\$ 25,880,870	\$ (796,835)	-3%

Agency strategy is distinct for each community and rooted in providing effective services to clients:

- Income support for trainees and clients in work experience partnerships is the largest expense at \$8.3m, showing a 7% reduction from the prior year
- \$8.2m was spent on training purchases and another \$1.3m on materials & supplies, both decreasing 2% from the previous year
- Personnel costs held steady at \$4.8m while the turnover of Network technicians remained a challenge for many agencies
- Reduced levels of travel were offset by increases in facilities and other costs (communications, contractors, etc.)

Capacity development activities to engage and level up the skills of Network technicians included:

- One-on-one and small group training and support sessions delivered locally
- Technical meetings, group training and virtual sessions organized by the SITAG Regional Coordination team designed to inform as well as provide opportunities to enhance collaboration and networking between technicians and their peers



Claims by Labour Market Activity

Tribal Council / Urban Agencies and Independent First Nations recorded over 7,000 activities with clients over the course of the year. The number of activities reported and the related claim dollars by type of labour market activity are highlighted below.

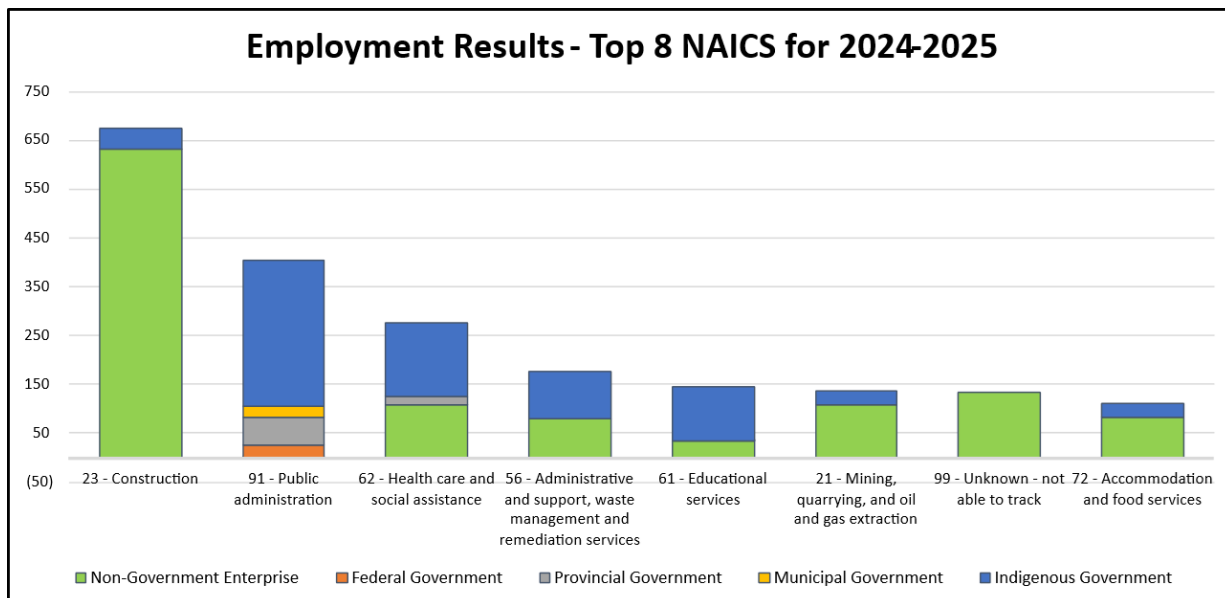
Type of Labour Market Activity	# of Participating Clients	Prior Year	% of Participating Clients	Total Cost	Average Cost Per Client	% of Total Annual Expenditure
Career Decisions						
Career Research & Exploration	237	282		80,154	338	
	237	282	3.37%	80,154	338	0.3%
Career Track Programs						
Apprenticeship Training	166	163		610,811	3,680	
Skill Improvement of Employees	59	79		127,480	2,161	
Specific Career Training - Diploma	203	196		2,708,790	13,344	
Specific Career Training - Certificate	810	863		6,132,667	7,571	
Specific Career Training - Industry Recognition	718	799		2,679,699	3,732	
	1,956	2,100	27.82%	12,259,447	6,268	48.9%
Employment Services						
Job Placement Assistance	1,265	1,151		896,940	709	
Job Search Preparation	1,515	1,445		5,305	4	
Referral Services	138	161		-	-	
	2,918	2,757	41.50%	902,245	309	3.6%
First Nations Youth Programs						
In-School Program	2	-		11,048	5,524	
	2	-	0.03%	11,048	5,524	0.0%
Preparation Programs						
Basic Academic Preparation	185	177		1,165,501	6,300	
Career Academic Preparation	40	73		40,045	1,001	
Pre Employment Prep - Essential Skills	227	155		913,975	4,026	
Pre Employment Prep - Life Skills	65	85		119,620	1,840	
Pre Employment Preparation	1,007	961		1,234,449	1,226	
Specific Career Orientation	86	116		156,597	1,821	
	1,610	1,567	22.90%	3,630,187	2,255	14.5%
Work Experience Programs						
Summer Student Employment	219	193		683,881	3,123	
Work Experience Partnerships	89	114		973,390	10,937	
	308	307	4.38%	1,657,271	5,381	6.6%
Sub Total	7,031	7,013	100.00%	18,540,352	2,637	73.9%
Local Program and Service Delivery				6,543,683		26.1%
Total Claims				\$25,084,035		100.0%

The most costly support is for career track programs (\$12.3m was spent with an average of \$6k per participating client), followed by preparation programs (\$3.6m was spent with an average of \$2k per client). Agencies spent a combined \$6.5m (26.1% of total claims) on providing local programming and service delivery (this includes core services and administrative activities).

Employment Statistics and Relationship Building

Feedback from Tribal Council / Urban Agencies and Independent First Nations provides insight into the relationships that agencies develop with businesses and organizations that hire their clients, the nature of those relationships, and the local industry demand for new hires:

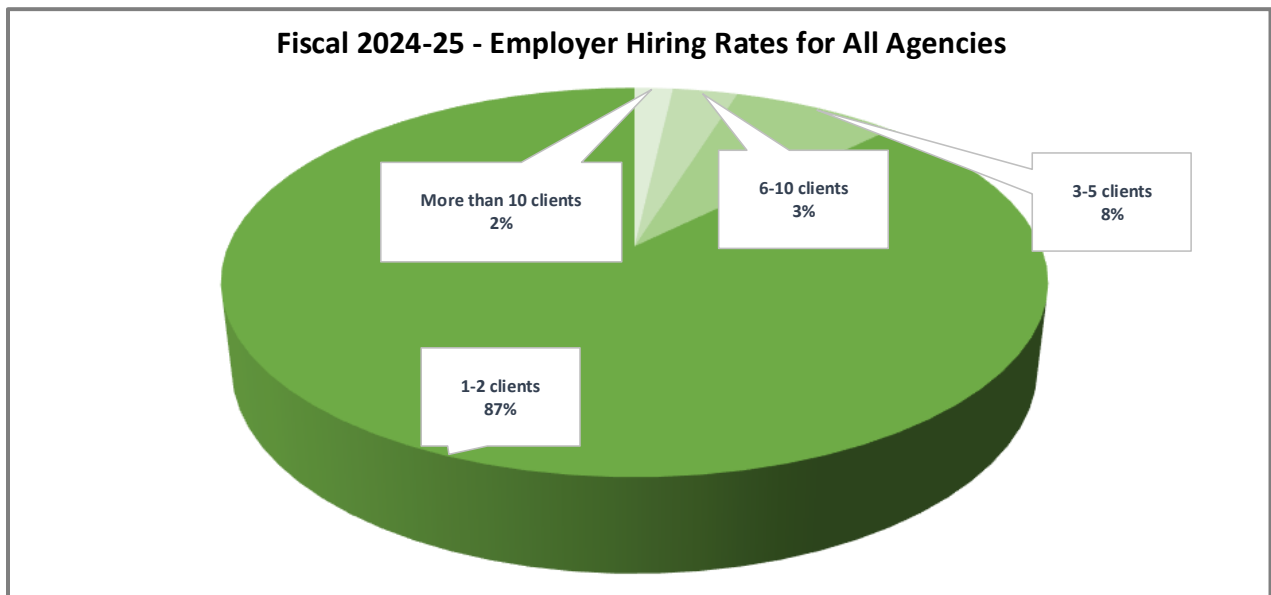
- There were over 2,400 employment results with almost 1,200 different employers reported on the Action Plans active during 2024-2025
- 58% of employment results are with employers that are not owned or managed under a government entity, a slight increase from the 56% rate identified in the previous year
- 37% of employment results are with businesses owned or governed by an Indigenous government entity, a slight decrease from the 39% in 2023-2024
- The balance of 5% related to entities controlled by federal, provincial, or municipal governments is unchanged from last year
- Up 1% from previous year, 83% of the employment results were concentrated across 8 industry classifications using NAICS (North American Industry Classification System)



- Consistent with prior fiscal years, employment in Construction and in Public Administration were the top 2 NAICS, together accounting for a combined 43% of all results (41% in 2023-2024)
 - The ownership / governance structure of the top 2 industry classifications is different though; an estimated 94% of the jobs in Construction were with businesses not controlled or governed by a government agency (that figure may be marginally high as data surrounding private ownership of companies is not always available) while 74% of the jobs in Public Administration were directly or indirectly controlled by Indigenous governments (primarily First Nations or Tribal Councils)



- 11% of the employment results were in the classification of Health Care and Social Assistance (11% as well in 2023-2024); these positions were slightly more weighted to businesses directly or indirectly controlled by Indigenous governments (55%)
- Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services remains in the fourth position with 7% of the employment results, ahead of Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas



- By far, most employment results are with employers that only hire one to two clients per year (87%), which highlights a challenge that Network Agencies have with devoting significant resources of time to building relationships with individual employers



Grassroots Progress

In previous years, SITAG has reported on the modernization of the FNLMS delivery structure in Saskatchewan to elevate community-based authority, decision-making, and flexibility in setting local programming. These shifts have been possible with the co-development work that went into the design of the ISET program.

The SITAG Network continues a forward march to the beat of ‘progress’. Current developments are rooted in authentic Network engagement to ensure harmony between the SITAG Board of Directors’ strategic directions and front-line perspectives. Throughout all efforts, SITAG is committed to ensure the pillars of accountability, reporting, and monitoring that underscore its position as an Optimal Capacity agreement holder with Canada, are maintained.

In recent years, several Nations have shifted their labour force development services from Tribal Councils to local delivery models, reinforcing their commitment to community-driven solutions. A process for First Nations seeking a direct agreement with SITAG was developed and ratified by the Board of Directors in July 2024. This process is responsive and respects the autonomy of Nations and their ability to design approaches that meets local demand.

In 2024-2025, the focus has been on advancing urban strategy directives, strengthening skills, and developing systems that positively impact the Network.

Urban Strategy

At the outset of 2023-2024, SITAG’s Board mandated a review of urban strategy with the objective of improving the existing service delivery model to ensure that:

- **Clients are at the center** – less focus on administrative processes and more on meeting client needs
- **Five hallmarks** guide the work under the model – fair and equitable access for clients, accountability and transparency, collaboration, communication and awareness, and increased resourcing

The Urban Strategy Task Force (established in spring 2023) met twice in 2024-2025 to advance the work and evaluate the impacts of past developments. SITAG’s Dispute Resolution policy was refreshed, approved by the Network, and ratified by the Board of Directors on July 24, 2024. Much of the urban strategy work in this fiscal period focused on the ongoing phased system developments to support the client-centered delivery model.

Network Skill Strengthening

Throughout 2024-2025, several in-person, virtual, and hybrid training opportunities for case management, labour market information inventory, supporting partnerships, and technical skill development were offered. In May and June 2024, the Regional Coordination team planned and hosted training sessions to prepare the Network technicians for system developments rollout. These two-day interactive sessions were designed to connect with staff at all levels. Over the three deliveries, 64 technicians from 31 Agencies attended and feedback was positive.

When analyzing the attendance, data has shown that the preferred method of delivery for skill-strengthening opportunities is the in-person sessions. Virtual and hybrid options, while not as popular, are a quick and more convenient way to reach audiences across the province. Where possible, the Regional Coordination team will record the training sessions and add them to the digital training library, further enhancing accessibility for skill strengthening on demand.



As part of the on-going commitment to building skills and enhancing frontline capacity, external partners have been invited to provide hands-on learning opportunities. Prairie Harm Reduction, a Saskatoon non-profit, provided lifesaving Naloxone training to over 20 frontline workers and Regional Coordination staff in conjunction with the October SITAG Technical Meeting.

System Developments

SITAG Regional Coordination has continued to advance the Training Administrative System (TAS) digital architecture and internal processes for enhanced user functions and improved client services:

- Years of planning, engagement, and development work were realized in September 2024, with the refresh driven by modernization and the Urban Strategy work:
 - New tools were added to streamline data-entry and communicate Employment Insurance eligibility more cohesively
 - Implementation was smooth as the Network skill development sessions had built comfort and familiarity to support the transition
- Next phases were scoped out and focused on development that would promote:
 - Smoothing and finalizing the modernization enhancements
 - Advancing the Urban Strategy with an in-system collaboration and data sharing modification
 - System and security updates to protect data and improve data management processes





Regional Training Plan

An allocation of \$4.7 million was provided to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) to support the delivery of a demand-driven Regional Training Plan. With a province-wide mandate, SIIT delivers basic education, skills training, and post-secondary programs to Indigenous learners, with Indigenous students consistently representing over 90% of program enrollment.

Due to SIIT's academic year running from July to June, some Regional Training Plan programs do not align precisely with SITAG's April-to-March fiscal year. As a result, there are reporting lags for current-year outcomes, while updated results from the previous fiscal year are included for transparency and accuracy.

	# of Programs	Case Load	Employment Results
2023-2024 Academic Year			
Post-Secondary	24	313	72
Apprentice	10	89	57
QuickSkills	27	254	109
	61	656	238
2024-2025 Academic Year			
Post-Secondary	22	314	8
Apprentice	12	76	33
QuickSkills	28	229	32
	62	619	73

- The overall number of programs supported increased by 1 to a total of 62; the number of Post-Sec programs decreased to 22 while both Apprentice and QuickSkills saw increases as infrastructure projects in communities across the province continue to drive demand for trades training.
- Despite the program increase, there were fewer clients registered per program resulting in an overall lower level of caseloads. More of the short-term QuickSkills programs were delivered to smaller cohorts in community while enrolment in the one-year certificate and two-year diploma Post Sec programs was comparable to the prior year despite the reduction in Post Sec programs.
- At the time of writing, SIIT was reporting 73 employment results to date for 2024-2025 while many of the Post-Sec and spring programs were just wrapping up and not yet reporting results. For 2023-2024 there were 238 employment results recorded across all types of programs.

Plan Highlights

The investment of FNLMS funds in the Regional Training Plan is motivated by the partnership between SITAG and SIIT, its First Nations sister institution, to enhance opportunities for member clients and community in terms of:

- **Accessibility** – to align with community and student values, culture, language, customs, and practices



- The clients enrolled in the Regional Training Plan programs come from 67 Saskatchewan First Nations and more than 20 First Nations from other parts of Canada
- Programs were delivered in 13 different centres, including First Nation communities, towns, and cities from Regina in the south to La Loche in the north
- **Responsiveness** – to respond to the needs of First Nation job seekers, labour markets and communities on paths to economic independence and self-determination; to ensure that First Nation people are ready for careers in terms of competency-based skills, critical thinking, and technology across various industries in the province

- Three new programs were included in the 2024-2025 plan – Aircraft Maintenance Engineering (AME) Prep, Hard Rock Mining, and Tiny Home Builder.
- AME Prep focuses on upgrading math and science skills to aid those looking to enter and be successful in the Aircraft Maintenance Engineering program delivered from the Saskatchewan Aviation Learning Centre in Saskatoon.
- Hard Rock Mining delivered at the JobConnection Centre in Creighton, Saskatchewan, is a 10-week program combining classroom, shop, and field work that supports essential skills and industry processes related to jobs in that industry.



- The Tiny Home Builder program on the Flying Dust First Nation is a hands-on program that teaches residential construction skills to help provide solutions to the affordable housing need in communities.
- Clients taking Indigenous Practical Nursing (IPN) benefited from new investment that SIIT made in the IPN Lab technology - including virtual reality and augmented reality headsets that allow students to perform real-life situations, including childbirth.

- **Connection** – to work together to inform planning, delivery, and post-training client support; all FNLMS clients enrolled in SIIT programs (whether part of the Regional Training Plan or not) can access the supports provided by their teams of:
 - Academic Coaches, Advisors, and Learning Specialists – for academic success, disability management and mental wellness solutions
 - Student Counselors and a Student Support Officer - for social and emotional help and links to other services and agencies in the community
 - Elders, Knowledge Keepers and a Cultural Coordinator - for guidance
 - Job Coaches – for employment search and job retention support
 - Joint Training Committee – for clients in apprentice training



SITAG Regional Coordination

SITAG Regional Coordination provides oversight to the work under the FNLMS and Strategic Initiative agreements with Canada, supporting Network collectivity and focus on client-centered community-based solutions. The budgeted and actual expenses were \$1.8m in 2024-2025:

	2024-2025 Resources	2024-2025 Expenses	Variance from Budget	2023-2024 Expenses	Year Over Year Difference	Year Over Year % Change
Personnel	\$ 1,149,833	\$ 1,089,492	\$ 60,341	\$ 1,170,950	\$ (81,458)	-7%
Travel	239,062	241,509	(2,447)	228,812	12,697	6%
Other	200,000	322,382	(122,382)	170,392	151,990	89%
Facility	96,725	87,053	9,672	90,316	(3,263)	-4%
Furnishings and equipment	65,000	66,338	(1,338)	59,427	6,911	12%
Materials and supplies	12,000	7,507	4,493	9,033	(1,526)	-17%
Totals	\$ 1,762,620	\$ 1,814,281	\$ (51,661)	\$ 1,728,930	\$ 85,351	5%

- Salary costs were \$1.1m, \$60k lower than budget and 7% less than the prior year, a result of position and staff transitions
- Travel was \$240k, only \$2k higher than budget and \$12k higher than the prior year, an expected increase given the need to support the field technician turnover and increased number of new independent agreement relationships of the past two years with onboarding and training
- Other expenses of \$322k included a significant investment in database improvements and maintenance (\$115k), external consultants (\$85k), in addition to governance and audit fees
- Furnishings & equipment increased from the previous year as a result of inflationary pressure, while materials & supplies trended lower
- The net overspend of \$51k is supported by the uncommitted interest revenue generated during the year

Operational Highlights

In 2024-2025, SITAG Regional Coordination focused on resource management and Network support activities:

- Strategic planning and opportunities
 - Secured additional funding from Canada for FNLMS activities:
 - \$3.6M for the Network's labour market programming
 - \$1.3M for water operator training
 - Recruitment efforts continue to focus capacity requirements needed to support the Network
 - Following the February 2025 transition of both the Vice President and the Communications, Support & Integration Manager to new roles within SIIT, existing staff took on additional responsibilities to maintain continuity in Regional Coordination functions
 - Advanced work forward on Strategic Initiatives:
 - The ILMI team and Network collected 7,672 surveys for the first campaign
 - Supporting Partnerships wrapped up the year with several new relationships built - 39 employers plus 17 industry associations and government departments were actively engaged in targeted meetings with Network stakeholders over the year
 - Completed the CWDP project and final reporting requirements



- Governance restructuring and executive review
 - In July 2024 the SITAG Board initiated a governance restructuring and position review
 - In March 2025 the Board authorized the recruitment of an external consultant to complete the executive search of a President of SITAG, including job description and compensation package
 - This work will continue into 2025-2026
- Community outreach, policy development and promotion
 - Held one virtual and two in-person technical meetings
 - Trained new field technicians and provided refreshers for existing technicians; the rate of field technician turnover remained high for a second straight year
 - Updated a Dispute Resolution Policy and formalized a Process for First Nations Seeking a Direct Agreement with SITAG
 - Enhanced the SITAG website; added content for Strategic Initiatives, improved directional flow and features, and added labour force delivery agency information
- Progressive changes to SITAG's data management system (TAS)
 - Made further enhancements and system upgrades to TAS to allow for better functionality and improved client management
 - Improvements included workflow enhancement and the addition of tools to guide data entry and manage caseload
 - Development is in line with the Urban Strategy work and supports transparency, information sharing, and collaboration between First Nation & Tribal Council agencies and Urban agencies
- Saskatchewan's FNLMS at the national level
 - Active at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) ISET Agreement Holders tables
 - ISET National Convening planning in conjunction with the Cannexus 2025 Conference in Ottawa in January
 - ISET National Gathering/ Innovative Indigenous Career and Future Skills Symposium planning and facilitation with Jelly Academy
 - Invited by the AFN to join in the planning of the first-ever First Nations ISET agreement holders' awards gala, to be held in conjunction with the national table meeting in September 2025





Strategic Initiatives

The central goal of Strategic Initiatives is to innovate a **First Nation Employment Development Ecosystem** in Saskatchewan that supports the overall objectives of SITAG's FNLMS. It is established through gathering timely data analysis, building local capacity, and creating meaningful partnerships. The vision of the ecosystem addresses economic reconciliation, directly supporting Call to Action 92 on reconciliation with the Canadian business sector.

During the year, two Community Survey Analyst positions were added to the ILMI project while two Partner Engagement Specialists were hired for Supporting Partnerships. The Strategic Initiatives Steering Committee, with representatives from Urban, Tribal Council, and Independent First Nation agencies as well as delegates from SITAG Regional Coordination, met 3 times to advise on projects for the collective interest of the Network.

Three projects were under the umbrella of Strategic Initiatives during 2024-2025. One new project, Water Operator Training, was just in the planning stages.

	2024-2025 Resources	2024-2025 Expenses	2024-2025 Project Completion	Project Carryforward
Indigenous Labour Market Information	9,117,606	1,344,127	-	7,773,479
Supporting Partnerships	1,389,500	1,019,744	369,756	-
Community Workforce Development Project	4,013,594	688,371	-	3,325,223
Water Operator Training	1,282,190	-	-	1,282,190
Totals	\$ 15,802,890	\$ 3,052,242	\$ 369,756	\$ 12,380,892

1. Indigenous Labour Market Information & Skills Inventory (ILMI)

Sub-agreements were signed with 37 Network agencies to collect labour market and skills information through a survey from the Saskatchewan First Nation members living in their respective catchment areas. The project aims to:

- Build capacity throughout the Network in data gathering and analytics
- Provide insight into First Nation workforce demographics in Saskatchewan
- Identify gaps in skills for potential employment opportunities
- Support targeted training & development programs
- Facilitate matching First Nation job seekers with suitable employment opportunities
- Enhance collaboration between employers & First Nation communities
- Balance community preferences, data collection and agreement requirements

Progress and Delivery

By the end of March 2025, 7,672 eligible ILMI surveys were collected and have now been uploaded to the TAS database. This equates to 6% of the First Nation resident population of Saskatchewan ... a meaningful step in collecting vital data to inform future labour market projects and policies.

- **Expenses:** \$1.3m in costs were incurred for ILMI, representing an overall average collection cost of \$175 per survey.



- **Survey Events:** Over 150 survey events were organized by the 36 agencies that collected ILMI data during the year. Most agencies scheduled collections to coincide with local community events, such as Treaty Days or seasonal celebrations, while other agencies captured surveys through online, office walk-in or door-to-door promotions. Survey collection was incentivized by agencies with low denomination gift cards or raffle draws of higher value items such as household electronics, appliances or furnishings.
- **Training:** The training content developed in 2024 has been used to teach local staff throughout the province to collect, clean, analyze, and report on the ILMI data. Training was provided in-person or virtually, depending on the needs of agencies.
- **Reporting:** Each agency has access to reporting templates in TAS so they can produce reports locally. The ILMI project team has also begun work on using Power BI to create an interactive data visualization and reporting tool to leverage even more powerful insights from the data.
- **System Development:** Enhancements have included minor bug repairs and adding an “exclude survey” button to help clean duplicate data within the system. Other updates were made to identify and make it harder for people/bots to submit fake online entries by:
 - Incorporating Google reCAPTCHA software
 - Tracking how long it takes a participant to complete a survey, so agencies can identify possible fake surveys if submitted too quickly
- **Planning for the Next Campaign:** The second ILMI campaign kicked off in April 2025 with a new survey template that was revised for length, clarity and cultural appropriateness with assistance from the Strategic Initiatives Steering Committee. A target of 17,000 surveys is set for 2025-2026 with 4,500 estimated to be participants updating their data from the first campaign and the balance of 12,500 to be new to ILMI.
- **Project Team Structure:** The ILMI team was restructured in early 2025 to maximize efficiency and productivity. The Project Manager role that had been fundamental during the project start-up was discontinued; the current team is led by a shared Senior Director and includes a Survey Analyst, a Community Survey Analyst and shared administrative/technical support. Another Community Survey Analyst will be hired in 2025-2026 as the second campaign gains momentum.

Sustainability

The carry forward of \$7.8m should be sufficient to fund the next two years of ILMI campaigns at the target collection rates anticipated.

The current contract amendment with Canada runs to March 2026. SITAG will continue to advocate for sustainability of that funding into the future as building a meaningful and reliable data foundation that can inform communities and employment and labour planning into the future has value. Data from the first campaign has already been used to support next-step opportunities through the Supporting Partnerships initiative (these are discussed in the next section).



2. Supporting Partnerships

The Supporting Partnerships initiative fosters collaboration and synergy between employers, First Nation workforce development agencies and post-secondary institutions to create a First Nation employment ecosystem that maximizes opportunity and addresses systemic barriers to employment for First Nation people in Saskatchewan.

It is a multi-year initiative; a pathway to build and support the ecosystem was laid out in 2023-2024 while the activities in 2024-2025 focused on building trust, strengthening regional networks and transforming employer engagement discussions into tangible strategies. The cost for 2024-2025 was \$688k and there is a carryforward of \$3.3m to 2025-2026.

Progress and Delivery

Early in 2024-2025, two Partner Engagement Specialists were recruited to drive the initiative forward. They, together with a shared Senior Director lead, have:

- **Trained First Nation agency staff in the art of local partner engagement:** Through multiple virtual and in-person technical meetings the team has:
 - Delivered content related to developing relationship-building strategies, best practices in employer engagement and how to utilize ILMI data to guide training and programming choices
 - Assisted when requested to help strategize or make employer introductions
- **Established the common PROSPER tables (PROSPER = Providing Opportunities through Strategic Planning & Employment Resources):** One provincial and four regional tables were created, each guided by the principles of:



- Regional tables met ten times in 2024-2025: Lloydminster (2), Prince Albert (2), Regina (3), and Saskatoon (3); key discussion points included:
 - Regional project planning and employer collaboration
 - Identifying potential barriers and solutions
 - Sharing available community/employer resources
 - Enhancing partnerships to support local labour force initiatives
- The Provincial PROSPER table met four times to address a broader provincial dialogue and collaboration in support of First Nation employment opportunities. The seats at this table include 17 industry associations and provincial and federal government bodies as well as post-secondary representation and SITAG.
- The team organized and facilitated the meetings to ensure effective communication, collaboration, and resource sharing.

- **Created three focus groups:** In January 2025, three focus groups were formed to explore and advance opportunities that had emerged from discussions during the regional PROSPER table meetings. These groups brought together stakeholders from the regional tables to develop solutions and inform policy recommendations around three themes from a provincial perspective:
 1. **Essential Skills:** In response to widespread concerns about workforce readiness, one group addressed the integration of essential skills into early education. A letter was sent to the Minister of Education, advocating for the inclusion of communication, financial literacy, time management, and digital literacy in school curricula.
 2. **Mentorship in the Workplace:** Stemming from employer identified gaps in workforce retention and support, this group focused on developing a First Nations led mentorship program in partnership with SIIT. This program is grounded in ILMI data, culturally relevant and aims to be accredited to ensure long-term impact and credibility across sectors.
 3. **Road to Licensing for Adult Learners:** Many table participants highlighted driver's licensing as a key barrier to employment. This focus group presented a letter to Minister Eric Schmalz (Minister of Government Relations), urging a review of the nine-month wait period for licensing. Other solutions discussed were community-based ID clinics, access to vehicles for testing, and wraparound case management throughout the licensing process.
- **Plans for the PROSPER Conference:** The inaugural PROSPER Conference is scheduled for October 8, 2025 at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. This conference will showcase regional progress, celebrate success stories, and provide a platform for dialogue on advancing First Nations-led workforce initiatives. A planning committee was formed and an event planner hired. The agenda, MC, keynote speaker and presenting sponsor have since been confirmed and registration through Eventbrite is live.
- **Supported Partnership Connections:** The Supporting Partnership funding has been used by Network Agencies for targeted employer meetings and outreach, site visits and follow-up, strategic planning sessions with employer partners, participation in workforce-related community events, collaborative discussions with industry stakeholders, and job fairs. The activities are proving successful, not only with clients finding employment, but also with employers gaining an understanding of SITAG's Network Agencies and the potential to collaborate. A sample poll of agencies revealed almost a 1:1 relationship of 300 partnerships reported and 226 employment outcomes.



Sustainability

A key takeaway from this year's work is that there are noticeable differences in partnership development expertise across the province. Some regions need increased capacity building (ex. project management, sustaining collaboration) and all agencies can benefit from efforts to integrate practical supports alongside training programs to improve local workforce retention.



3. Community Workforce Development Project (CWDP)

CWDP promoted building information technology (IT) capacity and skill development opportunities in 10 Saskatchewan First Nation communities. It was delivered across a 2-year time frame at a total cost of \$1.5m (\$490k in 2023-2024 and \$1.0m in 2024-2025), with an unspent \$370k set to be refunded to Canada under the project agreement.

Delivery & Wrap Up

The CWDP delivery framework included training community-based cohorts, providing wrap-around support and increasing local technology investment. A total of 90 First Nation participants were registered from the 10 participating communities: Ahtahkakoop, Mistawasis, White Bear, Thunderchild, Ochapowace, Cowessess, Pheasant Rump, Saulteaux, Red Pheasant, and Island Lake First Nation/Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC).

Nine of the 10 communities followed a general formulation, with a 7-week training session provided through a specialized curriculum that was developed and delivered in partnership with the JobSeries unit of SIIT. Network employment agencies recruited trainees, coordinated the classroom settings and supports, and worked with community leadership to determine resource needs. Island Lake/MLTC took a slightly different approach, with a local service provider contracted to train participants on-the-job to become field service technicians.

Some of the key outcomes to highlight include:

- **Participation and Employment Rates:** Targets had been set for participation and employment at the beginning of the program, and these were amended slightly in the fall of 2024. Generally speaking, the outcomes achieved were not significantly different from the targets with the possible exception of employment; only 40 participants reported a positive employment outcome against a target of 60.

	Realized	Amended Target
# of communities	10	10
# of participants with a training intervention	90	94
# of First Nation participants	90	94
# of participants to complete a training intervention	74	60
# of technology companies engaged as potential employers	6	3
# of participant surveys conducted by SITAG	47	50
# of participants with a positive employment outcome	40	60
# of participants who made use of wrap-around supports	90	94
# of participants to develop new technology skills *	86	60
# of participants with increased awareness of tech employment opportunities *	88	94



However, this is still considered a positive outcome as 85 (94%) of the participants were unemployed at the time they registered for the project. Employment varied between communities and was affected by local economic opportunities as well and supports as the motivation and experience levels of participants. Many of the jobs were seasonal, part-time or casual in nature but the training did help to boost the confidence level of those participants to get them out into the work world.

- **Program Findings:** From a project management perspective, this was a challenging venture and there were certain lessons learned that will help to inform future program design:
 - Customized support and locally responsive programming – grounded in community engagement and program flexibility – contributed to higher employment outcomes
 - Stable scheduling helped engagement with both participants and community stakeholders
 - Pre-program assessments and flexibility in terms of program duration and content would benefit trainees coming into a program with relatively low levels of baseline skills and confidence
 - Not every participant was ultimately interested in a career in technology; however, the program did help them gain clarity on their future potential – over 10% of participants have since registered in other education including academic upgrading, business and trade programs





Regional Wrap-Around Supports

The SITAG Network is supported by four wrap-around supports under a partnership with SIIT. Each works to complement FNLMS for the mutual benefit of clients and their communities. All agencies across the Network have access to these supports.

JobConnections Centres

SIIT operates 10 JobConnections Centres across the province - including five full-service employment centres (Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina), four sub-centres (Lloydminster, La Ronge, Creighton, Yorkton), and a pop-up location in La Loche.

Formerly called 'Career Centres', SIIT rebranded with a name change to 'JobConnections Centres' in October 2024. By distinguishing the department's service in the name, there is increased clarity for both job seekers and employer partners that the focus is connecting and supporting individuals to the workforce.

The Centres drew from a combination of industry-led steering committees and job focus groups to source labour market information during 2024-2025 and actively participate in SITAG's PROSPER table meetings. They also use a Corporate Citizenship Model to facilitate partnerships and deepen collaboration with select employers. Network Agencies can lean on these activities to identify regional training needs, employment prospects, and local partnership opportunities.

The Centres operations are primarily funded through agreements with the provincial Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (ICT). In 2024-2025, FNLMS supplemented the JobConnections Centres with an allocation of \$511k (representing approximately 10% of their total annual operational costs).

Operational Highlights

	Registrations	Employment	Employment as a % of Registrations
2021-2022	3,794	1,932	50.9%
2022-2023	4,290	2,380	55.5%
2023-2024	4,142	2,071	50.0%
2024-2025	3,712	1,902	51.2%

The registration and employment figures reported by the JobConnections Centres have returned to the levels experienced 3 years ago in 2021-2022:

- Registrations decreased to 3,712 (lower by 12.3% from 2023-2024)
- Employment was 1,902 (decreased by 8.2% from 2023-2024)
- The conversion rate of employment as a % of registrations rebounded slightly to 51.2%

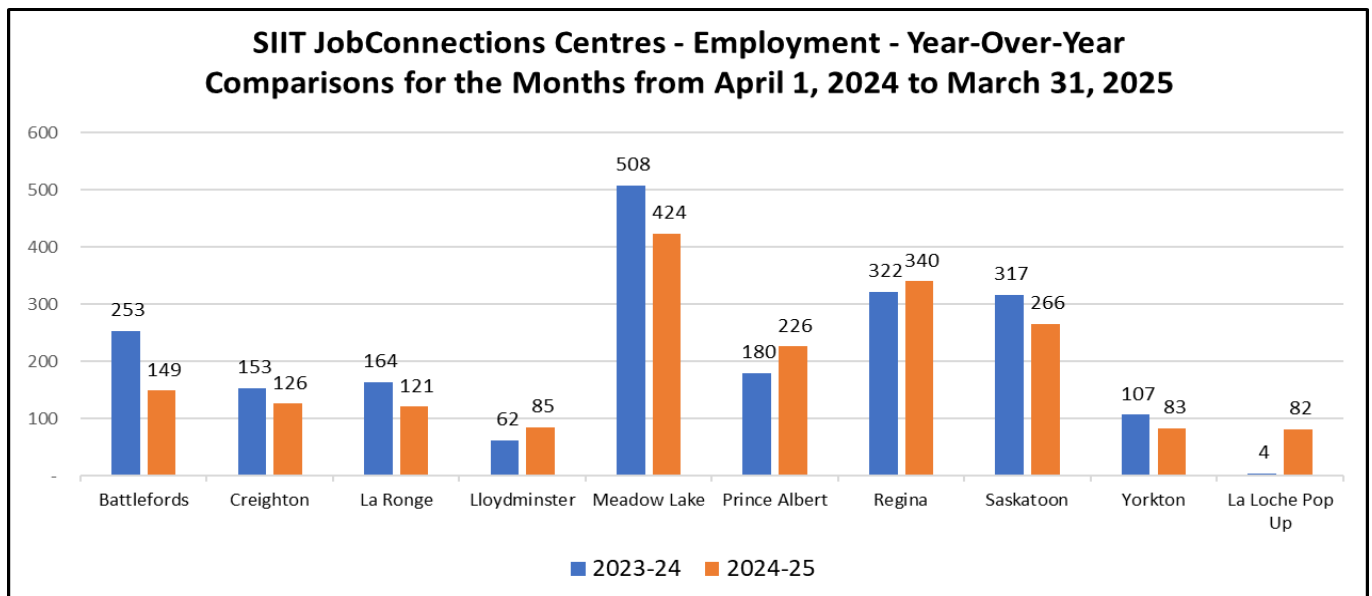
Static funding in combination with persistent inflation, staff turnover and shifting economic opportunities across the province are driving strategy and model changes for the Centres:

- **Pop-up Centres:** Designed to capitalize on the labour demands stemming from unique regional opportunities, La Loche was the location selected for the first JobConnections pop-up centre. It has been estimated that *the NexGen Rook I* project will generate significant jobs in the area - between 2,050 and 2,625 full-time equivalent direct and indirect employment opportunities annually during construction and between 950 and 1,250 during a typical year of operations. The La Loche pop-up is



collaborating with other community partners to prepare that workforce. In its first full year, it produced 82 employment results and site construction has not yet started.

- **Corporate Citizenship Model:** More Centres have used the model to develop direct partnerships with employers to support Indigenous recruitment and 'leave no one behind'. Examples include:
 - Prince Albert - working with PCL Management on the Victoria Hospital expansion
 - South - a new Community Industry Engagement Specialist is building ties with Treaty 4 bands and development companies
 - Creighton – working with Foran Mining Corporation as they work to establish a critical mineral development project in northeast Saskatchewan
 - Meadow Lake – working with Mistik Management on a forestry log-haul step program
- **Simulators:** Centres acquired more simulator sim logs for skid steer, heavy and forestry equipment; simulators allow clients to virtually experience and train on equipment to gauge interest and aptitude.
- **Results by Centre** - The Centres in Prince Albert, Regina, and La Loche saw positive year-over-year gains in employment, driven by partnership building strategies and infrastructure projects.



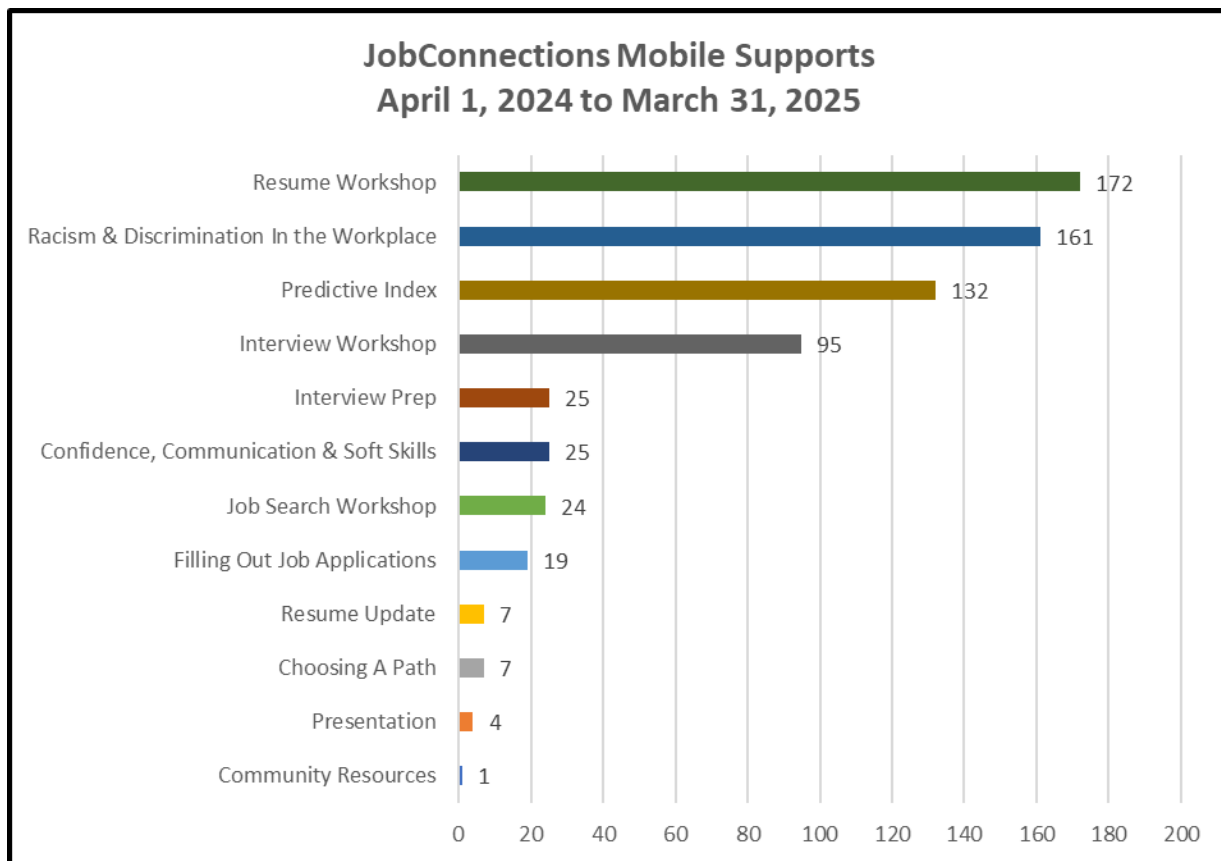
JobConnections Mobile

JobConnections Mobile brings free career services to areas of Saskatchewan that are demographically underserved by provincial employment service offices. Service and visit requests are received from Network Agencies, community organizations and other SIIT programming. The unit receives its funding from the province, as well as from a \$150k FNLMS allocation.



During 2024-2025 there were 55 collaborations for service resulting in:

- Visits to 27 different First Nation communities as well as three urban locations (some locations were visited more than once)
- 32 mobile workshops and presentations of Racism & Discrimination in the Workplace, Job Search, and Choosing a Path (high school students)
- 7 promotional visits to career fairs, symposiums and sports days
- Individuals benefitting from a variety of supports to help them prepare for finding work – 172 attended resume workshops, 132 used the Predictive Index assessment tool, 95 participated in interview workshops





JobSeries

JobSeries is a foundational set of preparatory learning programs designed to support clients in need of personal skill development, career planning guidance, employment search, education advancement, and/or improved work skills for job retention.

The series consists of 6 programs that have each been developed from specific needs expressed by the Network - JobFocus, JobSkills, JobFind, JobQuest, digiTEAM and KinQuest (developed and piloted in 2024-2025). Each program can be delivered alone or in combinations to groups of individuals that are at different pre-employment and pre-training stages. Cultural connections are rolled into programming with each community deciding how they want to incorporate cultural teachings.

During 2024-2025, JobSeries delivered 24 programs in 22 different community locations and 1 urban centre (Saskatoon). The FNLMS allocation remained at \$76k, same as the prior year.

Operational Highlights

- Programming included 208 weeks of community training with 4 programs still in progress at March 31, 2025, including 10 JobFocus, 9 DigiTech (including 7 completed under a contract with SITAG's CWDP initiative), 3 JobSkills and 2 JobSeries programs
- Retention across all programs was 71%
- 397 safety tickets awarded including Service Best, Mental Health First Aid, Food Safe, WHMIS, and CPR/First Aid
- Not all programs are geared to prepare individuals for immediate employment but of the 236 clients registered:
 - 31 were still in active programs at year end
 - 37 secured a job
 - 20 are taking further education or training
 - 33 are looking for work and 39 still need more support
- JobSeries is working on a Northern Facilitator Training Program to train instructors in the North to teach foundational programming like JobSeries – with a September 2025 launch date
- A Client Success Program is also being developed to encourage young people living in First Nation communities to enter school/training or the job market. The toolkits created will connect clients who need extra support with wraparound services. The impetus for this initiative comes from PROSPER table discussions.

Mental Health and Wellness Supports

An FNLMS funding allocation of \$200k helped to support SIIT's Student Wellness Supports (SWS) unit in 2024-2025. The team is dedicated to mental health & wellness, with the unit providing early intervention and focused assistance to SIIT students and labour market clients of the Network who experience academic and wellness struggles. These struggles are often indications of mental health, cognitive disability or learning challenges that require multi-layered solutions.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the SWS team supported 453 FNLMS clients, a slight decrease from the 571 students supported in the prior year. Touchpoints are recorded across five primary service categories:

- Individual: One-on-one student meetings
- Groupwork: Sessions involving two or more students



- Presentation: In-class presentations
- Collaboration: Communication with internal departments and external organizations
- Wraparound: Participation in or communication about case coordination and holistic wraparound meetings

SWS uses a strength-based, stepped-care model to develop tailored plans that support students in achieving success on their own. Through this approach, support is responsive to the evolving needs of students; academically, emotionally, and socially.

This past year, SWS completed individualized plans:

- 128 disability plans
- 110 education plans
- 158 wellness plans
- 102 academic assessments
- 66 mental health checklists
- 66 psycho-educational assessments
- 169 food security, 120 food rescue and 123 transportation related plans

The growing demand for psycho-educational assessments as well as basic needs supports illustrate a growing complexity in student wellness and accessibility needs.



Success Story Vignettes

Strategic Initiatives in Action

ID Clinics (ongoing) - Saskatoon Tribal Council Employment and Training Services

After noticing a lack of ID supported services in Saskatoon, the STC Community ID Clinic was created to support urban and STC members looking to acquire identification - whether health cards, birth certificates, status cards, or SIN numbers. Several clinics were held during 2024-2025 and they also served as ILMI survey events – a double impact. “From the moment the doors open we get the opportunity to positively impact community members’ lives. For some, it might not seem like such a big deal but I can assure you that the positive responses we get back from the participants tell us otherwise, it is a big deal to people who need this support.” says James Woods, Director of Employment and Training Services.



Building Employer Relationships through Collaboration – Supporting Partnerships

Supporting Partnerships coordinated discussions with PCL, SITAG Network Agencies, and the Prince Albert JobConnections Centre, targeting workforce needs for the Prince Albert hospital construction. A customized recruitment process was created with a number of clients hired into entry-level labour positions with PCL.

Program Clients in Training

Security Guard Training (Winter 2025) – Thunderchild First Nation

Just one example of Network Agencies responding to a local need for staff by accessing First Nation training options - Thunderchild First Nation held a security guard training program in March 2025. Indigenous Stone Corporation, an Indigenous owned and operated company with experience in running programs in Saskatchewan, was the contracted trainer. Seven students completed and some have worked close to home for Thunder Security, helping keep the community safe and supporting local events.



Employer Partnerships in Action

Dziret'ái Pilot Training Program – PAGC Dene

The Dziret'ái Pilot Training Program, launched in September 2024, is designed to train candidates from the Athabasca Basin to become professional pilots. The program addresses a critical pilot shortage in the north while acknowledging longstanding barriers for First Nations to enter the aviation industry.



Supported in part by PAGC – Dene, 13 of 15 participants were registered as FNLMs clients and soon began an Elevated Skills Program, a preparatory phase focusing on skills and education upgrading. In January 2025, 12 participants entered the next phase and began the rigorous pilot training phase at Mitchinson Flight Centre in Saskatoon.

It is an intense timeline, but the successful trainees are expected to earn their private and commercial pilot licenses by June 2026 and will be guaranteed First Officer positions with Rise Air, providing an assured transition into the aviation workforce.

PAGC Vice-Chief Joseph Tsannie speaks to the importance of this program: “The success of the Dziret'ái Pilot Training Program is an inspiration for our youth, showing them that Indigenous people and women can thrive in non-traditional roles like aviation. Seeing our own people take flight – both literally and figuratively – proves that there are no limits to what we can achieve with the right support and opportunities.”

Fundamentals of Automotive Service Technician (FAST Training) – North Battleford JobConnections

Clients from the North Battleford JobConnections Centre undertook a 12-week Fundamentals of Automotive Service Technician (FAST) training course. Students gained hands-on, practical experience that helped build their skills and confidence in this demanding field.

The JobConnections Centre partnered with Pattison Agriculture, which delivered a presentation at The Ridge during the program, resulting in 4 practicum placements at their North Battleford dealership location.





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