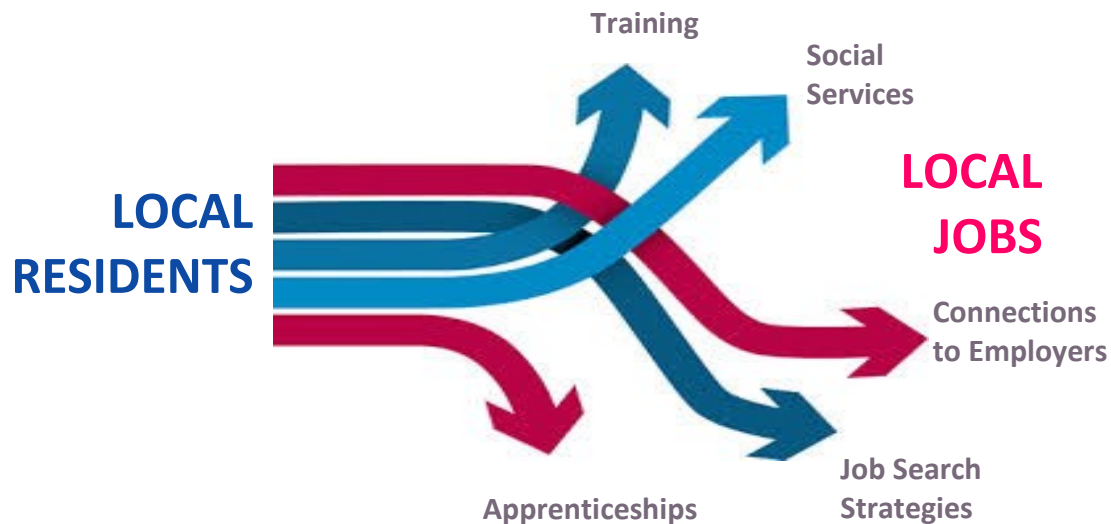


EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS

A PLACE-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

THE ISSUE IN EAST SCARBOROUGH: THE GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY

As the downtown core develops and gentrifies and housing costs rise, people of low income migrate to inner suburbs. These communities were not designed for low income residents, and become places of entrenched poverty with few opportunities due to poor transportation connections, lack of social supports, disinvestment (or lack of initial investment) in services and businesses, and a disconnect between local residents and the stable jobs that do exist.



THE OPPORTUNITY: EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS

THE CREATION OF PLACE-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

East Scarborough Works is an innovative new initiative that leverages local public spending to benefit the community by creating local employment opportunities and building community wealth. East Scarborough Works is simultaneously a top down and bottom up approach: building community benefits agreements into local public institution and government projects to create local jobs, and mobilizing, training and supporting local residents to fill those jobs.

In East Scarborough, public institutions like the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC) are the community's biggest employers. UTSC alone has plans for \$millions of dollars of capital expansion projects over the next 25 years. Together with the East Scarborough Storefront and the Atkinson Foundation, UTSC is exploring ways that this major investment can create employment opportunities and training for local residents.

While local capital projects are being leveraged for local benefit, the East Scarborough Storefront and multiple partners are bringing together residents, employment agencies and training organizations to develop pathways that bridge the gap between the local workforce demand being created by these projects and local employment supply.

HOW EAST SCARBOROUGH WORKS... WORKS

The local workforce development pathways being created in East Scarborough have many branches with multiple simultaneous processes underway to reflect the differences and inter-connections between the various players. Building these pathways means working in complexity - in new and interconnected ways - to meet everyone's aspirations and needs. Each individual job seeker will take a customized route to a career path, each employer will have unique workforce requirements and hiring processes, and each training provider, social service organization or employment agency will have different strengths and specialties.

The Storefront acts as a bridge between and among these diverse players, creating new processes and effectively linking employers to Employment Ontario programs, knitting existing systems and programs together, to connect local residents and local jobs.

The long term goal is that robust processes and relationships will be built so that the pathways between local employer needs and local residents will be strengthened over time, resulting in local hiring becoming the norm.

LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Designing and creating place-based workforce development pathways is a new way of working in East Scarborough. The Storefront and East Scarborough Works are committed to a developmental evaluation approach that will allow us to reflect on successes and challenges at regular points, identify what is working or not and why, and to learn and adjust our process as we go. Over time we will be tracking the number of "good" local jobs being filled by local residents; the strength of resident connections to supports, training and employers; and the inter-connectedness among partners in the pathway. The impact, progress, insights and learnings will be shared broadly in hopes of catalyzing similar initiatives in other communities.

THE BENEFITS: POVERTY REDUCTION AND COMMUNITY WEALTH CREATION

Employing locally builds community wealth. Local hiring for public projects and by local institutions is a significant strategy for reducing poverty in communities. However, to be effective, the strategy needs to be embraced by all the players in the hiring process.

East Scarborough Works is designed so that local employers, whether small businesses, firms contracted to work on local projects, or public institutions themselves, will gain advantages by working in this new way. The primary advantage is that the pathways to employment developed through East Scarborough Works will create efficient processes that connect qualified candidates to the jobs being created.

Local job seekers will benefit through connections to social service supports, training, peer support, connections with trade unions, and direct connections to jobs on local projects as they emerge.



Over time, with the example and leadership of UTSC, we expect that increased numbers of employers will look to their surrounding community to fill their workforce needs; access to training opportunities for skills needed to secure specific local jobs will improve; and workforce development pathways will become a trusted system embedded in the regular practices of public institutions, businesses contracted by them, training organizations, and local job seekers.