

For immediate release

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Invest in literacy, create Labour Market Partners' Forums, CUPE urges governments

Ottawa – The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is calling on governments to invest in literacy and create Labour Market Partners' Forums that will give voice to the concerns and interests of labour and employers.

“Government alone cannot adequately respond to the wide range of literacy and basic skills needs,” said Paul Moist, national president of CUPE. “Partners’ forums, where labour is an equal partner with employers, are critical to ensuring that workers across the country can develop their skills, knowledge and potential.”

CUPE says Labour Market Partners' Forums should be permanent advisory bodies at federal as well as provincial/territorial levels. The forums would advise on education and training strategies that enhance literacy and skills development and adjustment strategies for laid-off workers. They would make recommendation on funding options for workplace-based upgrading, literacy and basic skills and include a focus on infrastructure, quality models and programs as well as equity and access.

The new Labour Market Agreements (LMAs) between the federal and provincial/territorial governments transfer funds and move responsibility for delivering training programs to the provinces and territories. Because the LMAs allow for training for employed workers with low literacy skills or without a high school diploma, there are new opportunities for funding literacy in the workplace programs.

“Some provinces are moving ahead and developing partnership models,” said Moist. “But, what is needed is a pan-Canadian training strategy and the federal government to make Partners’ Forums part of the Labour Market Agreements.”

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