

CASE

Creating a Better Future for Indigenous Employees

Ontario Power Generation

STUDIES



Data on the demographic composition of workers in environmental careers shows that women and immigrants are underrepresented compared to the overall Canadian labour force. This underrepresentation is much higher when considering industries such as mining and quarrying and construction.

With 30 per cent of the workforce expected to retire in the next 10 years, developing a pool of diverse and qualified talent is crucial for the sustainability of environmental careers. The increasing demand for environmental workers is compounding this labour shortage.

To cope with this demand, organizations must look to strengthen their ability to attract, recruit and retain workers through numerous initiatives including engaging and supporting diverse workforces.

The following case study shows an example of how organizations are driving change to support diverse workplaces.

OPG's Indigenous Opportunities Network

The Indigenous Opportunities Network (ION) was created in 2018 and is now part of [Ontario Power Generation's Reconciliation Action Plan](#) in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #92¹, which calls on corporate Canada to help create a better future for Indigenous workers. ION works towards creating an engaged and inclusive workforce that reflects the broad diversity of Indigenous communities and people across OPG and the greater energy sector.

ION is an OPG community-centered program that recruits job-ready Indigenous people for various energy sector occupations including skilled trades, project management and administrative roles. The ION program works with [Kagita Mikam](#), an Indigenous employment and training agency, to recruit and place skilled and qualified members from Indigenous communities across Ontario in jobs within the fast-growing energy industry, including at OPG, union halls and vendor partner organizations



The ION program had five distinct steps for potential applicants, including:

1. Completing an application through Kagita Mikam Aboriginal Employment and Training Inc;
2. A comprehensive skills assessment to determine program eligibility;
3. Online Security Clearance application for site security clearance;
4. Orientation and Training designed to provide a health and safety overview as well as specific occupational training required for the applicant's specific skill set;
5. Placement in an occupation that is aligned to the applicant's skills and interests.

In just three years, ION has created a deep and supportive network of current and past participants eager to remain connected with each other, their mentors, and colleagues and to share their experiences and recommend the program to other Indigenous men and women.

Building Indigenous Capacity in the Energy Sector

Seventy-three Indigenous candidates have successfully transitioned into energy sector occupations through the program since the ION was implemented in 2018. In 2020, the program was expanded to include more industries and now includes OPG's entire operations, building on the success of the initial program and to meet growing interest in hiring Indigenous candidates.

Currently, 30 per cent of ION candidates are women, however, OPG is working towards increasing the participation of women to 50 per cent through various activities and programs designed to recruit, attract and retain both women and Indigenous workers to the energy transmission industry. These activities include working with post-secondary institutions to ensure a future pipeline of skilled and diverse talent, speaking at Indigenous career fairs to attract new workers to the industry and continuing to build relationships with Indigenous associations and businesses.

Ontario Power Generation is one of the largest, most diverse clean power producers in North America.



Women Reclaiming Leadership

