

## **Thirteen thousand training spots still left in Second Career Program**

**Learning Curves talks to the Honorable John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.**

***Second Career*, a signature program for the Ontario government, introduced last June, has had its share of criticism. This week Learning Curves interviewed the minister responsible for the *Second Career* initiative, the Honorable John Milloy to discuss the opportunity that this program offers and also to find out his take on the criticism lobbed at this program.**

### **What is *Second Career*?**

**Sponsored by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the goal of *Second Career* is, in the next three years, to re-tool 20,000 laid off workers for the jobs of the future. Of the 20,000, so far a little over 7,000 are in *Second Career* programs or in the process of being accepted.**

**The money available to those accepted into the program—up to \$28,000—is for books, living expenses, help caring for dependents, travel, transportation, disability supports and other living and training costs. That is a generous grant of up to \$14,000 a year to help people help themselves.**

### **Who is eligible?**

**On the whole, only those who receive or have received Employment Insurance as far back as January of 2005 are eligible for *Second Career* although there are short-term training options (less than six months) for laid-off workers who are not eligible for Employment Insurance.**

**Minister Milloy pointed out that *Second Career* is not the only training program sponsored by his Ministry. People looking for retraining, help with a resume or interview skills or encouragement in their job search can find out what is available to them by visiting by visiting the Employment Ontario website or phoning the Employment Ontario hotline, 1-800-387-5656.**

***Second Career* is unique in the amount of individual attention given to each applicant and the amount of time and money available to them for their training as well as the program's flexibility. For example, if an applicant needs upgrading before starting training he or she can receive up to another year of support.**

#### **What is the process?**

**If you are interested in Second Career, the first thing to do is go to one of the Employment Ontario Assessment Centre. All applicants receive intensive employment counselling. With the help of the employment counsellor, the applicants carry out a number of tasks, which are all part of the process of being accepted into Second Career. They have to decide on the career that suits their background, interests and abilities, to identify the demand in the labour market for that career, to find out where the training is available and finally to get accepted into that program. Then they return to their employment counsellor who forwards their application with all its parts to the Ministry for final approval. It is a daunting process.**

**Critics have said this red tape prevents easy access to the program; however Minister Milloy is satisfied with the numbers who are now in various stages of the program. As he explained to Learning Curves, "While my Ministry monitors the program closely and is working to streamline the process, yet the individual responsibility built into the program will never be removed entirely. The applicant must do some of the work for themselves. The worst thing would be for someone to start and then drop out."**

**In a sense this "red tape" is there to make sure the applicants are truly motivated to be retrained. After all, it is a large sum of money that the government is handing over. Indeed access should not be easy. Where the jobs are and aren't**

**People participating in Second Career are taking programs in bookkeeping, computer network repair, community and social services, welding, practical nursing. They have been laid off from the following sectors: manufacturing, administration, construction and forestry.**

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