

Community & Social Service Workers Comprise Largest Workforce Supporting Nonprofits in Manitoba

Opportunity for Community & Social Service Work Training at an all Time High with LINKS Institute Specialty Programs

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- While summer is on the minds of students in Canada, many prospective students are considering their educational options for the fall, with [LINKS Institute](#), a Brandon based private vocational institute. Founded in 2021, the school which offers both in-person and online learning options now has three different programs for students interested in support roles in mental health, addictions, and more. "Our purpose is to provide targeted training that helps students support service-users", says Jackson, President & CEO of LINKS Institute. "We believe that through offering shorter term, robust programs, we can continue to add to the workforce of people supporting those who are vulnerable in Manitoba and beyond".

LINKS' first programs were certificate based and focused on preparing students in either mental health or harm reduction. "When we got rolling, the feedback we received was that students found both how quickly they could complete their programming, and the nature of our content to be quite appealing to their learning and career needs", says Jackson. "In time, we realized that students were hungry for more learning and longer programs, leading to our diploma offerings". LINKS Institute currently offers 3 different diploma programs that are focused on preparing students to work in community and social services as unregulated professionals. The programs are the mental wellness and harm reduction worker diploma, the child and youth care worker diploma, and the recently announced intensive applied counselling diploma.

Community & Social Service Workers

Making up the largest workforce of people who work in non-profit and other settings,



John Jackson, President & CEO

community and social service workers provide day to day emotional and physical support to folks accessing services such as shelters, drop-in and rehabilitation centers. Although community and social service workers are not currently regulated in Manitoba, Jackson envisions a time where workers may belong to some kind of registry as a step towards further professionalization. "By being part of a registry, community and social service workers would begin the process of having their important work recognized, and help reduce the risk that is associated with working with vulnerable populations", says Jackson. Risk management is a key component of professionalization. "While unregulated service work is lower risk from a regulatory perspective, it is not entirely risk free. Risk mitigation strategies such as prospective employees taking training such as that offered by LINKS Institute is one way of helping lower such risk".



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John Jackson, RPN

Hiring community and social service workers, instead of higher credentialed regulated employees, is part of the financial reality for nonprofits in Canada. Many mental health, substance use disorder, and supportive residential services are run by non-profit organizations with limited financial budgets. The volume of service users for organizations such as drop-in centers, food banks and other supportive services is continuing to grow exponentially. "It simply isn't feasible for non-profit organizations to be hiring folks with higher credentials such as bachelor or master degrees," says Jackson. "We

envision that shorter term credentials such as those offered by LINKS Institute is one way we can meet that need of having workers possess some training, without becoming a burdensome cost to the non-profit field”.

LINKS Institute was founded and is led by [John Jackson](#), who is a registered psychiatric nurse (Manitoba & Saskatchewan), holds a master of psychiatric nursing degree, and is a PhD in Nursing student at the University of Manitoba. John's interest in training students to work in

health & social service settings stems from his extensive experience in clinical practice, leadership, education, and community advocacy.

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