Jonathon Dean loved his part time job at the Best Western North Bay: Hotel and Conference Centre and was looking for a way to improve his skills so that he could grow into new roles at the hotel. But with limited previous work experience, finding the training he needed wasn’t easy. That’s when he learned about the Navigating Employment Pathways (NEP) program offered by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) from his wife.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada, NEP is a partnership between the MNO and OTEC that was designed to provide industry specific training to Aboriginal people looking for a career in the tourism and hospitality sector. The 18 week training program was built on emerit National Occupational Standards and offered Jonathon the opportunity to become certified in Service Excellence, Smart Serve, In Good Hands food safety training and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).

Jonathon excelled in the program and in addition to learning new skills, he gained confidence in himself and his abilities. In June 2013, Jonathon became the first NEP participant to secure the workplace experience needed to complete his National Tourism Certified Professional (TCP) designation and is currently a Night Auditor and Front Desk Agent at the Best Western North Bay: Hotel and Conference Centre.

“I’ve got more confidence because of the certification. I’m more confident in what I can bring to employers. It’s given me tons of experience that I can put on my resume.”