



# **DISABILITY AND WORK IN CANADA**

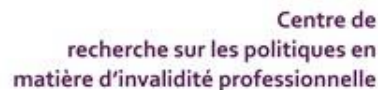
## **Moving Forward Together: A Canadian Strategy for Disability and Work**

**Presentation to:  
Atlantic Consultation  
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## Host Organizations



- DWC has a small steering committee with representatives of the host organizations
- Designed to play a facilitating role



## The Case for a New Strategy

- Progress has been made in Canada on supports for inclusion of people with disabilities in employment. However, the United Nations committee on the Convention of Rights for Persons with Disabilities observed that Canada does not have a comprehensive policy on employment for people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities in Canada continue to be underemployed: employment rates range from 31% among adults with very severe disabilities to 76% among those with mild disabilities, compared to 80% of those who do not report a disability (Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017)
- Recent developments in government and civil society indicate a growing collective desire to improve this situation



## **Goal of the Disability and Work in Canada Initiative**

- To develop a vision and strategy for increasing the employment of people with disabilities that will inform and guide the efforts of governments, employers and other stakeholders



## Purpose of the Strategy Document

- To provide a strategic framework for **collaborative** activities for all stakeholders to increase the employment of people with disabilities in Canada. Stakeholders include:
  - people with disabilities
  - key community stakeholders
  - service providers
  - employers
  - labour
  - all levels of government
  - researchers



## A “Voluntary” Strategy

- The DWC Steering Committee does not have the power to make the strategy mandatory
- We encourage governments to consider legislation/regulation where needed to help realize the objectives of the strategy
- At the 2019 conference, we will be discussing how best to monitor progress on implementation.



## Vision Statement

Employment throughout Canada is inclusive; people with and without disabilities have the same opportunities and choices in careers, jobs and work.



## The Four Pillars

1. Disability-confident and inclusive workplaces
2. Comprehensive supports for Canadians with disabilities
3. Effective partnerships
4. Measurement and accountability





## Key Proposed Initiatives: Disability-Confident and Inclusive Workplaces

Provide supports to employers (tailored to their context—size, sector) for hiring and retention such as:

- Evidence-based financial incentives
- Guide for senior managers on **incorporating inclusion** into performance management and accountability for supervisors
- **Tools for supervisors** to help them identify, respond to and communicate about needs for accommodation
- **Tools for co-workers** to help them understand and support the needs and contributions of people with disabilities
- **Tools for employers** to elaborate and measure the business case for hiring and retaining people with disabilities



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Disability-Confident and Inclusive Workplaces (2)

- Create a centre of expertise on the built environment to foster inclusive design
- Communicate how everyone benefits from universal inclusive design
- **Promote understanding that disability is based on the social/attitudinal and built environments, not on the person**
- Develop case studies of exemplary employers
- **Identify champions** who can help develop and promote best practices and the win-win of inclusive workplaces



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Comprehensive Supports

- Reform the array of support programs so **system is client-friendly**, coherent, easy to navigate, inclusive
- Improve supports for **young people** with disabilities (including supports related to education, employment preparation)
- Unbundle income, benefits and employment supports
  - Provide a portable “passport” of employment supports
  - Provide supports that can be tailored to the employment context and adjusted over time to changing circumstances of the individual



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Comprehensive Supports (2)

- **Ensure income support is sufficient to keep people out of poverty.**
  - Develop an income supplement strategy that protects benefits for people when they can and want to work
  - Avoid high effective marginal tax rates on people who become employed
- **Provide tools for people with disabilities** to help them communicate with their employer (while respecting the right not to disclose diagnosis) so that their needs can be met
- **Address the stigma** associated with disability and the mindset of some program officials that they need to guard against being overly generous to avoid growth in caseload



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Effective Partnerships

- **People with disabilities involved in all key activities**, including these partnerships, to ensure that development and implementation of these changes is informed by their lived experience
- **Federal, provincial and municipal governments working together**, in consultation with all stakeholders, to reform the array of supports so the system is client-friendly, coherent, easy to navigate, flexible and inclusive, and to develop tools for employers
- Employer associations, leading employers and unions working together to promote a culture of inclusion in workplaces



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Effective Partnerships (2)

- Educational institutions working with employers, community organizations and governments to better support the employability of people with disabilities over their life course
- Researchers working collaboratively with representatives of all stakeholders to identify and address evidence gaps, document case studies of success, assist in **evaluation of new/changed programs**, and communicate in plain language research findings that are relevant to the employment of people with disabilities



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Measurement and Accountability

- Develop an **outcomes framework and an outcomes-based tracking system**
- **Identify key indicators of progress** towards the desired outcomes. Possible measures include:
  - % of People with disabilities of working age who are employed
  - Job satisfaction
  - Duration of work
  - % of People with disabilities above the poverty line
  - Marginal effective tax rates
  - Perceptions of People with disabilities about adequacy of income and employment supports
  - Measures of educational attainment and school-to-work transitions



## Key Proposed Initiatives: Measurement and Accountability (2)

- **Collect data in a way that facilitates research**, including baseline data on the indicators
- Identify and address data gaps
- **Create a repository of initiatives that have worked well** under headings such as recruitment, accommodation, workplace design and technology
- Create a guide for the evaluation of initiatives at the program level and the workplace level
- **Tell stories of success** linked to the idea for case studies under the first pillar





# Financial Support



CCRW | CCRT  
Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work | Le Conseil Canadien de la Réadaptation et du Travail

Centre de recherche sur les politiques en matière d'invalidité professionnelle



Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada





## Questions on the Draft Strategy: General Questions, Vision and Pillars

1. General feedback or questions
2. Do you agree with the proposed vision statement?
3. Do you agree with the proposed pillars? Do any of the pillars need rewording? Do you have suggestions for a new pillar?
4. Will the strategy be useful to your work as a professional in the community? What parts do you think will be helpful to you in your work?
5. What areas or initiatives in the strategy can be implemented on regional/provincial levels? What areas are easiest for your organization to support?
6. Are there other important issues that are not addressed?



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**Thank you**

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