



National Conference

DISABILITY AND WORK IN CANADA

A Partnering Strategy for Moving Forward

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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.



Goals of this conference

- To obtain feedback on the draft strategy document.
- To foster broad consensus and collaboration on the key elements of the strategy:
 - Vision
 - Pillars
 - Key proposed initiatives
- To inform plans for the path forward and subsequent consultations



Purpose of the Strategy Document

- To provide a strategic framework for
 - key community stakeholders
 - people with disabilities
 - employers
 - labour
 - researchers
 - all levels of government

that identifies collaborative activities to increase the employment of people with disabilities in Canada.



The Case for a New Strategy

- People with disabilities in Canada continue to be underemployed.
 - ESDC reports that 49% of Canadians with disabilities aged 25-64 are employed, compared to 79% of Canadians without disabilities.
- Recent developments in government and civil society indicate a growing collective desire to improve this situation.



How the draft strategy was developed

- Draft strategy document draws heavily on ideas put forward at the 2017 DWC conference.
- Also reflects input from the June 2018 policy roundtable.
- It is a first draft. The document will be revised based on discussions at this conference and then there will be another round of consultation.



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

Supports to employers for hiring and retention:

- 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
- tools for employers on the business case for hiring and retaining people with disabilities.



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

- Centre of expertise on the built environment to foster inclusive design.
- Promote understanding that disability is based on the social and built environments, not on the person.
- Communicate how everyone benefits from universal inclusive design.
- 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.
- Unbundle income, benefits and employment supports; create “passport” of employment supports
- Provide supports that can be tailored to the employment context and adjusted over time to changing circumstances of the individual.
- Ensure income support is sufficient to keep people out of poverty. Avoid high effective marginal tax rates on people who become employed.



Key Proposed Initiatives: Comprehensive Supports (2)

- Provide tools for people with disabilities to 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

- Federal, provincial and municipal governments work together, in consultation with all stakeholders, to reform the array of supports to individuals so that the system is client-friendly, coherent, easy to navigate, flexible and inclusive.
- Employer associations, leading employers and unions work together to promote a culture of inclusion in workplaces.
- Educational institutions work with employers, community organizations and governments to better support the employability of people with disabilities over their life course.



Key Proposed Initiatives: Effective Partnerships (2)

- Researchers work collaboratively with representatives of all stakeholders to address evidence gaps, document case studies of success, and assist in evaluation of new/changed programs.
- People with disabilities involved in all key activities to ensure that development and implementation of these changes is informed by their lived experience.



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 PWD of working age who are employed
 - job satisfaction
 - duration of work
 - % of PWD above the poverty line
 - marginal effective tax rates
 - perceptions of PWD 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.
- 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.



Ideas for an Implementation Process

- Revise draft strategy in light of ideas at conference.
- Additional round of consultation on draft strategy.
- Implementation on a voluntary basis. Partnerships will be vital.
- Establish baseline data on key indicators.
- Document implementation progress.
- Conference Dec 2019 to take stock of progress and plans.