



DISABILITY AND WORK IN CANADA

Strategy-in-Action

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Wi-fi

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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 persons with disabilities that will inform and guide the efforts of governments, employers and other stakeholders.



Objectives for this conference

- To build overall engagement and momentum for implementation of the Pan-Canadian strategy on Disability and Work (DWC)
- To identify the most important early steps in implementation
- To facilitate collaboration on specific initiatives by conference participants and others
- To identify important gaps or challenges that need to be addressed



Purpose of the Strategy Document

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

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



Consultations

- **The DWC Steering Committee held 18 group and 26 individual sessions across Canada.**
 - **Approximately 370 people attended consultation sessions.**
 - **2 of the consultation sessions were held in French.**
- **There were:**
 - **19 group and individual consultations held in Atlantic Canada (Newfoundland and New Brunswick)**
 - **four group and individual consultations held in Quebec**
 - **12 group and individual consultations held in Ontario**
 - **one group consultation in Manitoba**
 - **five individual consultations in Saskatchewan, and**
 - **three group consultations held in British Columbia.**



Online Survey

- A total of 442 survey respondents provided their input on the draft strategy
 - There were 12 respondents to the French version of the survey
- This means that the DWC committee engaged in total approximately 800 key informants and partners across Canada.



Vision statement

Employment throughout Canada is inclusive. Persons with and without disabilities have equality of opportunity and choice in careers, jobs and work.



Pillars, Foundation, Principles





Pillars/objectives: two broad areas of activity

1. Disability-confident and inclusive workplaces

Businesses and employers will understand the value of, and be committed to, hiring, managing, accommodating, supporting and retaining persons with disabilities. And they will be confident in their ability to successfully do so.

2. Comprehensive supports for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities will be supported in their pursuit of meaningful employment, while assured of income and benefits that provide a life with dignity above the poverty line.



Overarching principles

- Adhere to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)
- Respect the rights of persons with disabilities as individuals, as well as the vital role of collective commitment to their inclusion and support
- Adhere to “nothing about us without us”
- Adhere to federal and provincial/territorial legislation dealing with human rights, accessibility, and employment
- Develop effective partnerships
- Apply an intersectional lens and life-course perspective.



Key Proposed Initiatives:

Disability-Confident and Inclusive Workplaces (1)

- Provide supports to businesses and employers for recruiting, hiring, onboarding and accommodating workers with disabilities
- Design these supports so that they can be tailored to the context (e.g., size, sector) of the employer.
Supports may include:
 - Tools for senior managers, supervisors and co-workers
 - Tools for building the business case
 - Case studies of success
 - Evidence-informed financial incentives



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

- Provide a “one-stop-shop” for businesses to access supports on employing persons with disabilities
- Promote the understanding that disability is based on social/attitudinal and built environments
- Create a centre of expertise on accessible and inclusive design
- Communicate how everyone benefits from inclusive design
- Identify champions who can promote best practices
- Create flexible supports for persons with disabilities who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs.



Key Proposed Initiatives: Comprehensive Supports (1)

- Ensure income support is adequate to avoid poverty
- Ensure earnings exemptions are sufficient to encourage pursuit of employment
- Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to affordable housing
- Unbundle income benefits and employment supports
- Provide better transit services for persons with disabilities
- Provide affordable childcare.
- Provide a universal pharmacare program



Comprehensive Supports (2)

- Reform government programs for persons with disabilities so the system is user-friendly, coherent, easy to navigate and inclusive
- Ensure programs support an intersectional view of persons with disabilities
- Provide resources that move with young persons with disabilities into adulthood
- Provide resources to help persons with disabilities communicate with their employer about how their needs can be met
- Address stigma among program officials so that providing adequate benefits is prioritized over caseload reduction.



Effective Partnerships (1) **(a cross-cutting foundation to the strategy)**

- Persons with disabilities are fully involved and integrated in all key activities
- Federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments and First Nations communities work together, in partnership with all other stakeholders
- Employer associations, business champions, and unions work together to promote a culture of inclusion in workplaces. Governments set an example as employers
- Educational institutions work with stakeholders to better support the employability of persons with disabilities over their life course



Effective Partnerships (2)

- Researchers work with all stakeholders to address evidence gaps, document case studies of success, assist in the evaluation of new or changed programs
- Partners connect with each other through a support hub.
- Key partnerships are reviewed on an ongoing basis to support maximum engagement. A mechanism is in place to identify exemplary partnerships that have moved beyond routine interactions



Measurement and Accountability (cross-cutting/ foundational)

- **Develop an outcomes framework and an outcomes-based tracking system.**
- **Identify key indicators of progress towards the desired outcomes. Possible measures include:**
 - % employed (overall and by gender, age, race, sexual orientation, citizenship status, Indigenous status)
 - earnings; % above poverty line
 - job satisfaction
 - duration of work/job retention
 - wellness
 - progress towards inclusive workplace culture
 - marginal effective tax rates
 - perceptions of PWD about adequacy of income and supports
 - measures of educational attainment and school-to-work transition



Key Proposed Initiatives: Measurement and Accountability (2)

- Collect data in ways that facilitate research, e.g., by linking different data sources, establishing baseline
- Develop measures of employers' disability confidence
- Identify gains to public and private sectors from improved employment of PWD
- Develop a reporting plan to promote accountability
- Create a repository of initiatives and resources that have worked well
- Create a guide for evaluation of initiatives at the system and workplace levels
- Tell stories of success



Implementation Framework (1)

- Implementation on voluntary basis, though it may involve legislation at different levels of government
- Critical to ensure that persons with disabilities with diverse lived experiences are represented/engaged (requires funding)
- Possible role for DWC Steering Committee in monitoring and reporting on progress, and organizing annual conferences/roundtables
- Key partnerships will need to be established and/or strengthened



Implementation Framework (2)

- Ideally, create a centre for expertise with full involvement of persons with lived experience and frontline employers. Activities could include:
 - Portal with links to existing evidence-informed tools, resources and services
 - Research to develop and evaluate new tools/resources
 - Promotion of inclusive design
 - Monitoring progress on the strategy
 - Repository of case studies + resources for business case
- Connect with other related strategies to ensure that a disability lens is applied
- Ongoing efforts needed to ensure funding for the various elements of implementation