



## **Submission to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the General Comment on Article 27 - the right to work and employment**

---

The Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) is a national association of community-based service providers and stakeholders working towards employment inclusion of people experiencing disability.<sup>1</sup>

The Association strives to promote full citizenship and personal capacity through the facilitation of increased labour market participation. Through workforce participation, CASE also promotes social inclusion for Canadians who have a disability.

CASE believes that all Canadians living with a disability can work and indeed have the right to earn a living wage. Employment is a valuable part of a meaningful life; it is a pathway to financial independence and an opportunity to contribute to communities, form personal bonds, learn and grow.

CASE has drawn on global research, national surveys, and local public engagement to develop supported employment principles to guide the organization's work.

CASE and their members have committed to these nine guiding principles:

*Choice & Control:* Employment support is guided by the job seeker to achieve their career aspirations.

*Paid Employment:* The job seeker securing employment receives the same rate of pay and benefits as other employees doing the same job. Individuals with competitive positions receive their pay cheques directly from the employer.

*Partnership & Mentoring:* Job seekers, employers, and direct service providers determine the individualized strategies for providing support that will assist in career enhancement. Ultimately, services will facilitate job satisfaction for both the job seeker (now employee) and the employer.

*Full Inclusion:* All employees are socially and economically included in their community.

*Job Search:* Timely and appropriate support is provided to achieve successful employment.

*Individualized:* Negotiations will ensure the unique needs of the employer and specific skills of the job seeker are met, one person at a time.

*Natural Supports:* Employment supports are as unobtrusive as possible and fade or may fade over time by building on community support and social capital.

*Long-Term Support:* The needed support is available to all stakeholders to ensure people maintain employment stability and achieve career enhancement.

*Continuous Quality Improvement:* Stakeholders are involved in the evaluation of services and the service provider implements improvements.

CASE strengthens our member organizations and the supported employment sector in Canada through a variety of offerings including:

- A national mentoring initiative
- An annual supported employment conference (now in its 27th year);
- Professional development and capacity building curricula for supported employment professionals and employers;
- An innovation lab to fund and facilitate innovative approaches to increasing employment inclusion;
- Sector-specific research projects and,
- Outreach and awareness-raising activities on a national scale.

Supported employment starts with the belief that everyone who wants paid employment can attain it if the proper supports are in place. It is a successful, accepted, and flexible model for assisting individuals experiencing disability to obtain meaningful and fairly compensated work. A partnership between job seeker, support person, and employer, supported employment takes a person-centered, individualized approach.

All parties benefit from supported employment: job seekers find competitive employment, businesses hire valuable workers, and workplace culture is improved by a diverse and inclusive environment.

## **The Canadian Context**

According to the 2016 census, Canada has a total population of 35,151,728 people.<sup>2</sup> An estimated 22% of Canadians 15 years and older (about 6.2 million people) had one or more disabilities.<sup>3</sup> 59% of Canadians with disabilities ages 25 - 64 years are employed compared to 80% of those without disabilities. The rate of employment for persons with more severe disabilities was even lower, with employment rates decreasing as the severity of disability increased. In 2016, the employment rate for those with mild disabilities was 76% compared to 31% for those with very severe disabilities. Among those who were employed, more severe disabilities were associated with a greater likelihood of working part-time (less than 30 hours per week). 24% of women reported having a disability compared to 20% of men.<sup>4</sup> Women are more likely than men to report having “severe” or “very severe” disabilities.

Canada is a culturally diverse nation with immigrants coming to Canada from over 175 countries. A total of 341,180 new immigrants were admitted to Canada in 2019, accounting for over 80% of Canada's population growth.<sup>5</sup> Canada resettled the highest number of refugees worldwide in 2018 and 2019. Statistics Canada estimates that visible minorities will represent 34.7% to 39.9% of the population in 2036 compared to 19.6% in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

Indigenous people made up 4.9% of the Canadian population in 2016. Of the Indigenous population in Canada, 58% were First Nations people (living both on and off reserve), 35% were Métis, and 4% were Inuit.<sup>7</sup> The prevalence of disabilities varied between Indigenous groups, with close to a third of both First Nations people living off reserve (32%) and Métis (30%) aged 15 and older having at least one disability in 2017. Among Inuit, that proportion was 19%. In comparison 22% of the non-Indigenous population had a disability.

Canadian youth aged 15 to 30 are less likely to have a job than older Canadians. In 2019, the employment rate of young Canadians was 67.3% compared to 83.7% for Canadians aged 31 to 44 and 83.6% for those 45 to 54. Both young male and female workers were less likely to have full-time permanent jobs in 2019 than in the late 1980s. In 1989, 80.8% of men and 77.1% of women aged 15 to 30 had such jobs; these numbers fell to 73.0% and just over 67.3% in 2019, respectively.<sup>8</sup> As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the Canadian labour market, the employment rates of young men and women fell substantially from 2019 to 2020, more so than those of older Canadians.<sup>9</sup>

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability.<sup>10</sup> People with disabilities are diverse and their identities may intersect with other groups such as visible minorities, women, youth and Indigenous peoples. This intersectionality may put a person with a disability at increased disadvantage, given the potential barriers and prejudice that they may face in society.

### **Legislation in Canada to protect the rights of people with disabilities**

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Canada must ensure that its legislation, policies and practices are consistent with the obligations contained in the convention.<sup>11</sup> This includes Article 3 - General Principles, which are the foundation of all rights within the CRPD:

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy – including the freedom to make one's own choices – and independence of persons
- b) Non-discrimination
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- e) Equality of opportunity
- f) Accessibility
- g) Equality between men and women
- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Canadians are protected from discrimination by the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977) when they are employed by the federal government or receive services from the federal government or private companies regulated by the federal government.<sup>12</sup> People can make a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission if they feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of one or more grounds of discrimination which includes:

- Race, Nationality or Ethnic Origin
- Colour
- Religion
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Disability
- Genetic Characteristics
- A conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspended

Section 7 of the Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the workplace on the basis of these protected characteristics.<sup>13</sup> An employer has a “*Duty to Accommodate*” a person with one or more of the protected characteristics up to the point of “undue hardship.”<sup>14</sup> This is the point where safety concerns or the cost of an accommodation place an undue burden on an employer. According to Section 15 (1) (a) of the Human Rights Act, accommodation may not be possible if an employee is unable to meet “*bona fide occupational requirements*.” These are standards or rules that are integral to carrying out the functions of a specific position, were established in good faith and are reasonably related to the performance of the job.

The federal Employment Equity Act became law in December, 1995 and applies to any organization or business that is regulated by the federal government.<sup>15</sup> Employers are required to remove barriers and make reasonable accommodations in order to increase the representation of the four groups designated by the Act: Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities, persons with disabilities and women.

The Government of Canada consulted with Canadians from July 2016 to February 2017 to find out what an accessible Canada means to them. The Accessible Canada Act came into force on July 11, 2019 to ensure a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040.<sup>16</sup> This involves identifying, removing and preventing barriers in federal jurisdiction in the following priority areas:

- Employment
- The built environment (buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication, other than information and communication technologies
- The procurement of goods, services and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services, and
- Transportation (airlines, as well as rail, road and marine transportation providers that cross provincial or international borders)

Canada is a federation and legislation enacted at the national level does not apply to private businesses or organizations unless they are contracted to work for the federal government. Many legislative powers are delegated to Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories. The provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Quebec and British Columbia have passed accessibility legislation similar to the Accessible Canada Act. This has extended rights and protections to more people with disabilities. However, provincial accessibility legislation does not currently require an employer to meet equity standards in hiring people with disabilities or accommodating existing employees with disabilities. A person with a disability could make a complaint to the federal Human Rights Commission on the basis of discriminatory action on the part of an employer. However, these complaints can take years to be heard and may require costly legal representation.

The lack of enforceable legislation to protect the employment and accessibility rights of people with disabilities at the provincial level has been an ongoing frustration. Provincial disability advocacy groups continue to lobby for change.<sup>17</sup> There is a need to increase opportunities for people who experience disabilities to participate in the decision-making and overall development and implementation of legislation, services and supports. An example of this is the recently formed Provincial Accessibility Committee (PAC) in British Columbia which includes people with disabilities, individuals and organizations that support people with disabilities and Indigenous representatives.<sup>18</sup> Under the Accessible British Columbia Act, the committee's work will include:

- Advising government on the implementation of the act,
- Helping government prioritize accessibility standards and,
- Overseeing the process of developing standards in areas such as employment, education, transportation and customer service.

### **CASE review and analysis of Article 27**

The Canadian Association of Supported Employment (CASE) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the draft General Comment on Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- 1. a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;**

*Reduce discriminatory employment practices by providing education, resources and supports to employers about inclusive employment practices.*

### **Recruitment and hiring**

Providing education, resources, and supports to employers about inclusive employment practices can increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This includes information about how to remove bias from the recruitment and hiring process. For example,

job postings should include only “*bona fide occupation requirements*” so that a person with a disability is not unnecessarily ruled out. Job postings should have a diversity statement encouraging people to apply and offering accommodation during the interview process. This will ensure that people with disabilities are able to demonstrate their strengths and abilities and feel confident that the employer is willing to meet their needs.

### **Disclosure of disability**

People with disabilities may be reluctant to disclose their disability to an employer. They may be concerned about the consequences of disclosure and the stigma associated with having a disability. An employer cannot ask a job applicant or an employee for a medical diagnosis. However, if a person with a disability requires accommodation in the workplace, an employer may inquire about what workplace modifications are needed for them to be successful in their job.<sup>19</sup>

### **Retaining employees with disabilities**

Some people with disabilities prefer a flexible work schedule or the option to work from home some or all of the time. This allows them to manage their health and be more productive. Providing on-site training for employees rather than hiring only fully qualified staff offers people with disabilities the opportunity to learn while they are working. Offering badges and micro-credentials is a way to objectively validate employees’ skills and knowledge. Establishing an advisory council of employees with disabilities creates a vehicle for company-specific recommendations to increase accessibility and inclusion.

- 1. b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;**

*Basic income supports received by people with disabilities should not be jeopardized if they are capable of obtaining paid employment.*

*People with disabilities should be assisted to access mainstream employment and diverse workplaces and be paid the same wage as others doing the same or similar work.*

*Informed consent should be obtained from people with disabilities for all aspects of job search, application and employment activities.*

*People with disabilities should have autonomy and the ability to make choices for their employment based on their preferences, needs and expectations.*

*A person with a disability should be in agreement with the terms and conditions of their employment and understand their employer’s expectations.*

## **Benefit entitlements and tax deductions**

In Canada, people with disabilities may be eligible to receive their government pension allowance or Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) benefits earlier if they meet certain criteria.<sup>20</sup> The minimum number of years of employment required to qualify for CPPD disability benefits should be reduced from the current minimum of 4 out of the past 6 years. People who receive CPPD benefits are allowed to earn a maximum of \$6,100/year in 2021 (before tax) without losing their benefit entitlement.<sup>21</sup> The maximum allowable earning for people who are receiving CPPD benefits should be increased. Greater flexibility is needed in eligibility for Employment Insurance (EI) and welfare benefits to accommodate people with episodic health conditions who want to work but may be unable to sustain steady employment.

Provincial and territorial governments receive federal government funding for the provision of income assistance for individuals who access the disability support program. Provincial and territorial governments should not reduce Income Support payments when the program recipient engages in stable paid employment. Work is a key component of our identity and disincentivizing work through withholding a large percentage of one's pay can be a deterrent to contributing to society in a meaningful way. Rapid re-instatement of income assistance is also essential to ensure financial stability in the case of loss of employment.

## **Mainstream employment / integration of people with disabilities**

People with disabilities should not be limited to low paying or unpaid jobs in sheltered workshops or workplaces where only people with disabilities are employed. They should not be paid less or be expected to perform work for "token" payment, for free or on a voluntary basis.

## **Consent, active participation and autonomy of a job seeker with a disability**

Employment service providers often assist a job seeker with a disability to identify their skills, abilities and employment needs and help match them with an employer and a suitable job. Informed consent is a foundational component of job search activities. The client should actively participate in the planning and job search process to the extent of their abilities and be able to exercise choice, control and preference in employment. The client should have autonomy and the ability to make choices regarding their employment. Agreement should be reached between the client, the employer and the employment service provider, if involved, regarding the terms and conditions of employment when an offer of employment is made. A person with a disability has a right to employment mobility and career growth. Supports from the employer and the service provider can assist the employee to take on new job responsibilities and to identify professional development goals and career aspirations.

### **1. d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;**

*Encourage employers to offer accessible training to support career advancement.*

*Ensure education for people with disabilities of all ages is inclusive and affordable.*

*Provide web accessibility and low or no cost digital literacy training to people with disabilities.*

## **Workplace training programs for skills in demand**

It is rare that employers can recruit employees who possesses 100% of the needed skills for any position upon hiring. Providing orientation and training ensures that new employees have the skills required to perform their job. Offering short term training programs allows existing employees to “upskill” into better paying jobs and employers to meet their staffing needs and address skills shortages. The curriculum and delivery of training should be accessible so that employees with disabilities are able to participate fully.

## **Inclusive education:**

The education system in Canada is not fully inclusive of children, youths and adults who experience disabilities; it is still partly segregated. The ratification of the CRPD did not lead to changing the policy of segregating persons with disabilities. Because Canada does not have a fully inclusive education system, the prerequisites for an inclusive working environment are not being met. Therefore, persons who experience disabilities have fewer prospects in the so called “primary labor market” and generally fewer opportunities to lead their lives independently. The basis for an inclusive labor market and working environment is an inclusive education system, from kindergarten to university.

## **Digital literacy and accessibility**

Job seekers require digital literacy skills to obtain work and achieve success in remote working arrangement. Greater access to low or no cost digital literacy training for people with disabilities will support their active participation in the workforce.

The “Accessible Canada Act” applies to communication and information technologies.<sup>22</sup> Provincial accessibility legislation should require all employers to ensure that their websites and communications are accessible to people with disabilities similar to the “federal Canada’s Standard on Web Accessibility” which requires Government of Canada websites to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.<sup>23</sup>

### **1. e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;**

*Information about the benefits of employment for people with disabilities, accommodation and return to work support services should be more available to health care providers.*

*Promote awareness among people with disabilities of local labour market, and how to access career planning and community supports.*

*Ensure people with disabilities have access to reliable and affordable public transportation.*

*Increase accessibility of the built environment and compliance with accessibility legislation.*



## **Return to work support services and resource information**

Health care providers should receive more training in workplace accommodations for people with disabilities. People who experience disability from birth should be encouraged to view employment as a right. People with acquired disabilities should be supported to return to work as soon as possible to promote recovery, maintain social connections and enhance mental health. Health care providers who work with people with disabilities should be made aware of the benefits of vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services. CASE maintains a data base of supported employment service providers across the country to make it easier for employers, health care practitioners and job seekers to locate employment support services.<sup>24</sup>

## **Labour market, career planning and community resource information**

Accurate and up to date labour market information and career planning resources helps job seekers with disabilities make informed choices about employment and future career goals based on the requirements, potential earnings and availability of employment. The province of Alberta has a website called “alis” which provides on-line employment resource information to job seekers and employment service providers.<sup>25</sup> The Government of Canada “Job Bank” offers on-line employment resource information in French and English for job seekers, employers and employment service providers.<sup>26</sup>

## **Reliable and affordable public transportation for people with disabilities**

Transportation is essential for people with disabilities to be able to find and maintain employment. A free bus pass is available to people with disabilities in some provinces such as British Columbia.<sup>27</sup> However, the provincially funded bus services are often unreliable and wait times can be very long. Uber and Lyft may be more reliable options but also more expensive. Bus service to rural areas, particularly on First Nations reservations, may be limited.

More funding is needed for transportation services for people with disabilities. Grants should be available to cover transportation costs for people with disabilities who live in remote areas where accessible public transportation is not available.

## **Increasing compliance with accessibility guidelines and legislation**

In Canada, people with disabilities who have mobility challenges often report a chronic and persistent lack of physical access to employment settings, particularly in rural communities. Physical barriers such as stairs, narrow hallways or a lack of accessible washroom facilities should not prevent person with a disability from performing a job for which they are qualified. Increasing the physical accessibility of workplaces and enforcing accessibility guidelines would increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Government of Canada and Statistics Canada have created an “Accessibility Statistics” website with information on accessibility in Canada.<sup>28</sup> Accessibility resource information is also available on the websites of several provincial non-profit associations who provide services and supports to people with disabilities.<sup>29</sup> This includes information about universal

access to safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces and the United Nation's "Envision2030" sustainable development goals.<sup>30</sup>

**1. f) Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business;**

*Increase flexibility of minimum income supports for self-employed people with disabilities.*

**Enhance income assistance, tax deductions and benefit supports for people with disabilities who are self employed**

Some people with disabilities may start their own business as a choice or because they are unable to find a job that accommodates their circumstances. People with disabilities who are self-employed may have variable incomes, particularly if the person has an episodic condition that limits their ability to work. Self-employed people with disabilities should be eligible for income assistance to support themselves during cyclical times in their business or during episodic periods of disability.

**1. h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures;**

*Provide services and supports to employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities rather than offering financial incentives.*

*Recognize and encourage employers who hire people with disabilities.*

*Increase understanding and reduce stigma associated with hiring people with disabilities*

*Measure and set goals for the representation of people with disabilities in the workplace.*

**Services and supports to employers that promote the hiring of people with disabilities**

While wage subsidies in some cases are valuable, some employers may take advantage of financial incentives and may not continue to employ a person with a disability after the subsidy ends. Better incentives are those that can be provided to an employer free of charge such as:

- Individualized job matching
- Customized job coaching
- Problem solving and,
- Follow up to ensure job placement is successful

Job Developers build relationships with employers to identify future staffing needs and skills in demand related to upcoming projects, new stores opening, new divisions being created, and new service contracts. However, an employer's needs may go beyond staffing. Supported employment service providers also offer employers:

- Training on disability awareness training, stigma and unconscious bias
- Training orientation and supports for new hires
- Guidance on how to apply for government grants/funding related to accommodations
- Strategies for accommodating employees with disabilities
- Inclusive recruitment, interviewing and employment practices

### **Recognize and encourage employers who hire people with disabilities**

Each year, the Canadian Association of Supported Employment (CASE) honours three outstanding individuals, agencies, or businesses through the presentation of awards at its annual conference. The award winners are recognized for outstanding and substantial contributions to supported employment in Canada. They are considered role models and leaders for their promotion of full citizenship and personal capacity for Canadians with disabilities by facilitating increased labour market participation.<sup>31</sup> National, provincial and regional recognition for employers committed to inclusive hiring practices encourage hiring people with disabilities and uses peer-to-peer relationships among employers to increase diversity in the workplace.

### **Promote understanding, reduce stigma and building relationships with employers**

The Canadian Association of Supported Employment (CASE) has introduced their “MentorAbility” program.<sup>32</sup> MentorAbility Canada is a national supported employment initiative that facilitates unique, short-term mentoring opportunities between employers and people experiencing a disability. Mentorships provide a job seeker with a disability the opportunity to find out more about a job or career path to determine if it would be a good fit for them. Mentorships also offers an employer a chance to get to know a person with a disability and recognize them as a person with skills, interests, strengths and abilities.

### **Measuring the representation of people with disabilities in the workplace**

Hiring quotas or affirmative action can be an effective short-term solution to increasing employment for people with disabilities. Legislation could be introduced setting targets for increased representation of people with disabilities, comparable to their representation in the general population. However, small employers may have difficulty meeting these targets. Some employers may only hire people with mild to moderate disabilities which would limit opportunities for people with more complex disabilities.

In British Columbia, a provincial association of business leaders has challenged its members to measure the number of employees with disabilities as part of a “Make it Count” survey which will include most common barriers faced, lessons learned, and innovative solutions implemented during their measurement initiatives.<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately, change will happen when employers shift their focus to recognizing the skills and talents of people who experience disability rather than focussing on the disability itself.

**1. i) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;**

*Increase awareness and availability of services and supports in the community that can assist employers with accommodating people with disabilities.*

**Services and supports to promote workplace accommodation:**

CASE provides education and on-line resource information to employers about workplace accommodation<sup>34</sup> such as:

- The Supported Employment Resource Hub
- Supported Employment HR Inclusive Policy Toolkit
- Eight Easy Steps Towards Inclusive Employment infographic
- A Self-Assessment Test for employers

CASE resources and engagement with employers increases awareness of customized employment solutions such as job carving, bundling duties, reduced or flexible hours of work, as well as services and supports for people with disabilities offered by the supported employment sector.

There are many non-profit associations in Canada such that provide resources, advice and recommendations on adaptive tools, equipment and technology.<sup>35</sup>

**1. j) Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market;**

*Increase public awareness of people with disabilities who are employed and actively engaged in their communities by sharing their stories.*

*People with disabilities should be hired for their knowledge, skills and abilities.*

**Increasing awareness and acceptance of employment for people with disabilities**

Stories about people with disabilities can inspire others to change their attitudes or beliefs about the capabilities and potential of people with disabilities.<sup>36</sup> CASE has a blog that includes posts from job seekers and employees with disabilities. The Neil Squire Society has “Success Stories” about people with disabilities posted on their website.<sup>37</sup> Spinal Cord Injury BC has “Impact Stories” which offer an opportunity to meet peers, family and volunteers who support people with spinal cord injury.<sup>38</sup>

**Job development strategies for employment service providers**

Some people with disabilities who participate in an unpaid work experience may be hired for paid employment. However, caution should be exercised in relying on unpaid work or financial incentives to secure employment, particularly if the person is performing work of value and contributing to the financial success of their employer.

Building relationships and establishing trust with employers is a more sustainable and effective way to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Successful placements may lead to employer hiring more staff with disabilities. This builds trust with employers based on successful outcomes. Networking and building relationships in the community is another way to identify employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Job seekers should be fully engaged in career planning and job search activities. Active engagement in job search activities enhances self-efficacy and confidence, leads to greater ownership of outcomes and a better job match.

#### **1. k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities.**

*Increase coordination and collaboration between government agencies and community services providers who work with people with disabilities.*

*Increase opportunities for skills development, collaboration and networking for people who provide employment support services to people with disabilities.*

#### **Coordination of programs and services for people with disabilities**

In Canada, disability and employment services and supports are provided by multiple different government departments, community agencies, associations, non-profit societies and for-profit companies at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. Greater coordination and collaboration between community services and supports is of benefit to all Canadians with disabilities, particularly where disability may intersect with race, gender, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, and other individual characteristics.

Accessing funding and grants often involves a lengthy application process, and service providers may have to re-apply for funding on an annual basis. When funding is precarious and dependent on the approval of grant applications, long term planning of programs and services is very difficult. Frequent program changes in response to inconsistent funding, along with little coordination or collaboration between service providers makes it difficult for a person with a disability to navigate needed programs and services

#### **Skills development, collaboration and networking for employment service providers**

In Canada, employment support service for people with disabilities are provided by a wide variety of service providers with a variety of job titles including:

- Job Developers
- Supported Employment Specialists
- Job Placement Providers
- Certified Career Development Practitioners (CCDP)
- Canadian Vocational Rehabilitation Professional (CVRP)
- Registered Rehabilitation Professional (RRP)
- Certified Career Development Practitioner (CCDP)

There should be more opportunities for people who provide employment service and support to people with disabilities to share resources, develop their skills, collaborate and network.

## **Conclusion and summary**

Canadian Association for Supported Employment and our members have an ongoing, 27 year commitment to supporting the full participation of Canadians who experience disability in the workforce. We believe that employment is a fundamental right. Competitive, community-based employment is integral for the achievement of full citizenship, contribution of one's strengths and skills, financial stability, self-expression, and the development of strong and varied interpersonal relationships. We applaud the CRPD Committee on its work to date and appreciate the opportunity to submit a brief on draft General Comment no. 8 to article 27 of the UN convention.

Annette Borrows  
CASE President  
[annette.borrows@southfraser.com](mailto:annette.borrows@southfraser.com)

Joanna Goode  
CASE Executive Director  
[joanna@supportedemployment.ca](mailto:joanna@supportedemployment.ca)

## **References**

---

<sup>1</sup> CASE, *Canadian Association for Supported Employment* (2021, November 15). Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Population and dwelling count highlight tables, 2016 census - Canada, provinces and territories* (2018, February 7). Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved November 30, 2021, from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hltfst/pd-pl/Table.cfm?Lang=Eng&T=101&S=50&O=A>

<sup>3</sup> Morris, S., Fawcett, G., Brisebois, L., & Hughes, J. (2018, November 28). *A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017*. Canadian Survey on Disability Reports. Government of Canada. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-654-X2018002. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Burlock, A., (2017, May 29). *Women in Canada: A gender-based statistical report - Women with Disabilities*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 89-503-X. Retrieved November 26, 2021 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14695-eng.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> *2020 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (page 3, 14 and Table 2, page 33)*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved November 30, 2021 from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/annual-report-2020-en.pdf>

- 
- <sup>6</sup> *Immigration and diversity: Population projections for Canada and its regions, 2011 to 2036 immigration and diversity. Population Projections for Canada and its Regions, 2011 to 2036.* (2017, February 23). Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved November 30, 2021, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2017001-eng.htm>
- <sup>7</sup> Hahmann, T., Badets, N. and Hughes, J. (2019, December 12). *Indigenous people with disabilities in Canada: First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 15 years and older.* Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-653-X2019005. Retrieved November 25, 2021 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2019005-eng.htm>
- <sup>8</sup> Morissette, R. *Portrait of youth in Canada: Data report, Chapter 2: Youth employment in Canada* (2021, July 26). Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 42-28-001. Retrieved November 20, 2021 from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00002-eng.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> *Study: Youth employment in Canada.* (2021, July 26). The Daily. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210726/dq210726b-eng.htm>.
- <sup>10</sup> *Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* (2020, June 8). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved November 30, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html#a2a>
- <sup>11</sup> *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities* Retrieved December 4, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>.
- <sup>12</sup> *Human rights in Canada.* (2021, November 17). Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/about-human-rights/human-rights-canada>.
- <sup>13</sup> *Consolidated federal laws of Canada, Canadian human rights act.* (2021, November 25). Justice Laws Website. Canadian Human Rights Act, Government of Canada,. Retrieved December 4, 2021, from <https://lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/page-1.html#h-256819>.
- <sup>14</sup> *Accommodation, Disability Management in the federal public service.* (2011, September 21). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 4, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/health-wellness-public-servants/disability-management/accommodation.html>.
- <sup>15</sup> *Employment Equity* (2016, September 15). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/jobs/services/gc-jobs/employment-equity.html>
- <sup>16</sup> *Summary of the Accessible Canada Act.* (2020, November 20). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html>.
- <sup>17</sup> *Disability Alliance of BC, DABC.* Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/>.
- <sup>18</sup> *Committee ready to improve accessibility in BC.* (2021, December 3). Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Province of British Columbia. Retrieved December 4, 2021, from <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021SDPR0070-002308>.
- <sup>19</sup> Thomson, G. (2018, November 7). *Disclosure of disability in the Workplace.* Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://www.aoda.ca/disclosure-of-disability-in-the-workplace/>.
- <sup>20</sup> *About the Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits.* (2021, October 26). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/pension-plan-disability-benefits.html>.

- 
- <sup>21</sup> *Canada Pension Plan Benefits: Information for health care professional.* (2021, December 1). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-disability-benefit/medical-professionals.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> *Summary of the Accessible Act.* (2020, November 20). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-people-disabilities/act-summary.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> *Guidance on Implementing the Standard on Web Accessibility.* (2013, April 30). Government of Canada. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/guidance-implementing-standard-web-accessibility.html>
- <sup>24</sup> *Find a service provider.* CASE, Canadian Association for Supported Employment. (2021, March 5). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/find-a-service-provider/>.
- <sup>25</sup> *Alberta careers, learning, and employment information - alis.* (2021, November 29). Government of Alberta. Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://alis.alberta.ca/>.
- <sup>26</sup> *Job profiles - Job Bank.* (2021, October 5). Government of Canada / gouvernement du Canada. Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/search-job-profile>.
- <sup>27</sup> *Transportation Supplement/BC Bus Pass for People Receiving Disability Assistance.* (2021, August 31). Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Province of British Columbia. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/passenger-travel/buses-taxis-limos/bus-pass/people-with-disabilities>.
- <sup>28</sup> *Accessibility statistics.* (2021, November 16). Government of Canada. Statistics Canada. Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/topics-start/accessibility>.
- <sup>29</sup> *Accessibility Resources.* Rick Hansen Foundation. Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible/accessibility-resources>.
- <sup>30</sup> *Accessibility matters.* Rick Hansen Foundation. Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible>.
- <sup>31</sup> *Awards,* CASE, Canadian Association for Supported Employment. (2021, March 30). Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/what-we-do/awards/>.
- <sup>32</sup> *MentorAbility Canada.* CASE, Canadian Association for Supported Employment. (2021, November 4) Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/mentorability/>.
- <sup>33</sup> *Presidents Group announces pledge to measure.* (2021, August 26). AccessibleEmployers.ca. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://accessibleemployers.ca/pg-announces-pledge-to-measure/>.
- <sup>34</sup> *Employers.* CASE, Canadian Association for Supported Employment. (2021, September 23). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/employers/>.
- <sup>35</sup> *Neil Squire Society.* (2021, March 4). Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.neilsquire.ca/>.
- <sup>36</sup> *CASE blog.* CASE, Canadian Association for Supported Employment. (2021, September 16). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://supportedemployment.ca/case-blog/>.
- <sup>37</sup> *Success Stories Archives.* Neil Squire Society. (2021, November 24). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://www.neilsquire.ca/category/success-stories/>.
- <sup>38</sup> *Impact stories.* Spinal Cord Injury BC (2021, January 20). Retrieved December 2, 2021, from <https://sci-bc.ca/support-our-work/impact-stories/>.