



Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers

Helping persons with disabilities achieve their full employment potential



Local Employment Planning Council
Conseil de planification de l'emploi local

Acknowledgements

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We sincerely hope that it fulfills its goal of helping persons with disabilities achieve their full employment potential and that the compassion and commitment demonstrated by project participants throughout the consultation process is evident in the finished product.

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Introduction



A local perspective, a national concern

As part of the provincial government's Local Employment Planning Council pilot project, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) has completed a report documenting local best practices to help persons with disabilities achieve their full employment potential.

The development of this guide included a comprehensive review of literature, as well as a series of consultations with groups serving persons with disabilities in the communities of Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland and Haliburton.

Participating agencies included:

- [Brain Injury Association Peterborough Region;](#)
- [City of Peterborough \(Accessibility Advisory Committee\);](#)
- [City of Kawartha Lakes \(Accessibility Advisory Committee\);](#)

- [Community Living Trent Highlands;](#)
- [Canadian National Institute for the Blind Peterborough \(CNIB\);](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge \(CMHA HKPR\);](#)
- [Literacy Ontario Central South \(LOCS\);](#)
- [Peterborough Communication Support Systems \(PCSS\);](#)
- [Peterborough Council for Persons with Disabilities;](#) and
- [Fleming College's Accessible Education Services department.](#)

We also reached out to a number of area employment service providers in our catchment area, including:

- [EPC Peterborough;](#)
 - [JobQuest;](#)
 - [Victoria County Career Services \(VCCS\);](#)
- and
- [Watton Employment.](#)

In light of the broad subject matter, consultations – which primarily took place through one-hour interviews – covered an array of related topics. Everything from education and vocational training for students with disabilities to on-the-job supports for employees who acquire a condition later in life.

It quickly became clear that improving the employment prospects of persons with disabilities isn't a challenge that is limited to employers and job-seekers.

"Employers should work to represent their community and accessibility is something we all need to pay more attention to," said Michael Andrews, executive director of LOCS.

"We need to start conversations about removing barriers. If it becomes a part of the discourse, change will happen."

"An accessible community is better for everyone," added Deb Csumrik of VCCS.

Given the number of factors to be considered – as each individual and organization has different needs and requirements – there's no simple solution to overcoming the barriers facing persons with disabilities.

A key step is realizing that being an inclusive employer means far more than including a mandatory statement in a job posting or installing an entry ramp.

"It's all about removing barriers in our community," said Jason King, outreach coordinator of Peterborough Council for Persons with Disabilities.

"When you really think about it, we wouldn't even be considered disabled if those barriers didn't exist."

That includes preconceptions about the limitation of those with a particular disability.

"Never define someone by their disability," said Warren Northcott, an employment service specialist with CNIB Peterborough.

As a whole, project participants had one very simple message for employers. One that was echoed over and over and over again.

"Don't believe the stereotypes – just give people with disabilities an opportunity," said Gloria Clark of JobQuest.

For the purposes of this guide, conversations were broken down into four main themes:

Attitudes

Not surprisingly, nearly all of those that took part in the project cited stigma as the biggest barrier facing persons with disabilities from achieving their full employment potential.

"A lot of people get scared off by misconceptions. And there are a lot of misconceptions out there. In many cases, the reality is the direct opposite," King said.

"We need to change people's perceptions and get them to see the abilities in people with disabilities," added Tanya Duncan of PCSS.

While many of the myths and realities of hiring persons with disabilities have been well documented, project participants wondered whether employers were truly getting the message.

"People's mindsets are sometimes more of a disability than the disability itself," said Northcott.

According to the [2012 Canadian Survey on Disability](#), the employment rate of those aged 25 to 64 with disabilities was just 49 percent, 30 points lower than those without a disability.

'It's all about removing barriers in our community. When you really think about it, we wouldn't even be considered disabled if those barriers didn't exist.'

- JASON KING

Twelve percent of those with a disability responded that they had been refused a job in the previous five years as a result of their condition, while 33 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds with a severe or very severe disability reported the same.

Stigma is a prevalent issue for those that suffer from the so-called 'invisible' disabilities, particularly those related to mental health.

"We definitely have pop culture working against us," said Ryan Luscombe, an employment support worker with CMHA HKPR.

While initiatives like [Bell 'Let's Talk'](#) have helped spark a dialogue, there's still a long way to go.

"We need to keep that conversation going but take more action," said Shannon Staves of CMHA HKPR.

As a result of this stigma, participants noted that many jobseekers and employees struggle with the decision of whether or not they should even disclose a disability.

"Unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to disclosure," said Cayley Rice of EPC Peterborough.

Though persons with disabilities are offered protection from discrimination under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), even subtle, unconscious bias from employers could be the difference between landing a job or remaining unemployed.

"I've heard good, bad and ugly stories," King noted.

Individuals are strongly encouraged to proceed at their own comfort level, though there are several benefits to disclosure, most notably the promotion of an honest relationship with your co-workers and supervisors. Transparency provides an opportunity for an employee to access support and accommodations and also presents an opportunity to educate others.

If you choose to disclose, during a job interview or through the course of employment, do so with confidence and use it as an opportunity to play up your strengths.

"Don't present accommodation needs as a favour or special treatment. You need to



first view them yourself as essential and fair. Also, connect the requests with peak performance, which is what all employers want from the people they hire. Identify what you want to communicate then practice that. When the time comes, it's easier to be assertive if you have committed the message to memory," said Audry Healy of Fleming College's Accessible Education Services department.

"How you speak about your disability is important. Education, awareness and positive examples are key," added Northcott.

As the old saying goes, you are your own biggest advocate.

"It's all about empowerment. People need the confidence to be able to speak up for themselves," said Duncan.

"Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and don't let negative experiences get you down," Northcott added.

Business benefits

More than 1.9 million Ontario residents have a disability – roughly one in seven individuals.

Within the next two decades, 40 per cent of the customer base will be people with disabilities, according to [Ontario's Accessibility Plan](#). The document, released in 2015, notes that improving accessibility can create

up to \$9.6 billion in new retail spending and \$1.6 billion in new tourism spending in Ontario over the course of just five years.

Those numbers should be hard for any business owner to ignore.

“Making your business accessible isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do,” Andrews said.

“Employers need to walk the walk and talk the talk because they’re missing out on billions of dollars,” King added.

While that’s a compelling case in and of itself, the reported business benefits of hiring persons with disabilities extend well beyond the bottom line.

“Most of the companies we consulted have not documented the value but they understand the benefits that come from hiring people with disabilities. Some spoke of the case as it relates to talent, others mentioned its market impact. They told us it improves the culture and reputation of a business through community goodwill and has a ‘feel good’ effect on employees and customers,” reads the [initial report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities](#).

The document also features information from a survey that shows employees with a disability rate average or better in attendance, work safety and job performance compared to their colleagues without disabilities.

“These are people that aren’t going to take a job for granted – you’ll never find a harder worker,” said Teryl Hoefel, executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Peterborough Region, during the local consultations.

“Knowledge is power but unfortunately there’s no ‘Coles Notes’ for employers,” added Dawn McColl, supervisor of employment services at VCCS.

“Accessibility and inclusion needs to be a constant conversation.”

Project participants certainly weren’t surprised by such statistics. In fact, many could cite them off the top of their head.

“When you’re disabled, you’ve got to be a professional problem-solver just to get through the day,” Northcott said.

In addition, more than 40 per cent of Ontarians with disabilities have some type of postsecondary credentials, according to Ontario’s Accessibility Action Plan.

“Yet few business owners even consider persons with disabilities to be a part of the workforce,” Andrews noted.

“Employers often talk about a labour shortage. Persons with disabilities are an untapped market,” added Brenda Roxburgh, assistant executive director of VCCS.

To help tap into that market, employers should take a long, hard look at each aspect of their employment practices.

The tone, project participants agreed, must start at the top.

“Create a culture of caring at your organization or business,” said Alicia Beddoe of CMHA HKPR.

Employers can promote accessibility by reviewing existing policies for job postings, interviews, on-boarding and training opportunities with an eye towards inclusion.

In regards to job postings, eliminate requirements that aren’t a necessity. For example, don’t list a G drivers’ license as mandatory if access to reliable transportation will suffice.

“Prerequisites for employment should be competencies related to the job,” McColl said.

Employers could also consider interview processes that include different options for participants (such as offering a choice

‘These are people that aren’t going to take a job for granted – you’ll never find a harder worker.’

- TERYL HOEFEL

between one-on-one or panel sessions) and developing training packages in a variety of mediums (such as booklet and video).

“There’s a huge value to hiring someone with a disability but training and on-boarding processes are often too rigid,” Duncan said.

“Not everyone learns or understands in the same manner,” King noted.

According to the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#), accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities is one of the most common human rights issues in the workplace.

“The duty to accommodate a disability exists for needs that are known. Organizations and persons responsible for accommodation are not, as a rule, expected to accommodate disabilities they are unaware of,” the organization writes.

“However, some people may not be able to disclose or communicate their needs because of the nature of their disability. In such cases, employers should try to help a person who is clearly unwell or perceived to have a disability by offering help and accommodation. This is very important if an employee is suspected of having a mental illness. On the other hand, employers are not expected to diagnose illness or ‘second-guess’ the health status of an employee.”

With that said, accommodating the needs of an employee with a disability shouldn’t be a scary proposition for business owners or hiring managers.

A [2012 study by BMO](#) shows that, generally speaking, accommodations for persons with disabilities may entail small up-front costs or none at all. The same study reported that 20 percent of employees with a disability required no accommodation at all, with the average cost for those that do being \$500.

“In many cases, accommodations are covered (through the government) so the money isn’t coming out of the owners’ pocket. It’s all about knowing how to access the programs,” Clark said.

“There’s often no cost out of pocket but it’s a matter of knowing where to go and knowing what questions to ask,” King added.



If you need help, don’t be afraid to reach out to community partners.

“Most organizations are more than willing to work with employers,” Clark said.

Employment First

While few project participants were familiar with Employment First, many encouraged practices and policies that fall well within the scope of the philosophy.

At its core, Employment First is predicated on one foundation – employment in the general workforce is ultimately the first and preferred outcome for all residents with disabilities, regardless of the level of their disability.

“Jobs are a lot more than just a paycheque. What we’re talking about here is people being fully included in our society and being connected to their community,” said David Hoff, the program director for the [Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts](#) during his keynote speech at the [Ontario Disability Employment Network’s \(ODEN\)](#) conference in Richmond Hill in October of 2017.

“There is no substitute for real work experience.”

The philosophy notes that the current low participation rate of citizens with disabilities in the workforce is ‘unacceptable’ and that access to ‘real jobs with real wages’ is required to ensure they avoid lives of poverty, dependence and isolation.

It presumes that working age adults and youths with disabilities can work in jobs fully

integrated within the general workforce and earn minimum wage or higher.

"This isn't 1962. We don't need telethons and we don't need pity parties. We need to empower people," said Rich Donovan, CEO of the [Return on Disability Group](#), during the ODEN conference.

As with other employees, those with disabilities require assistance and support to ensure success.

"Without support, it's a hard, uphill battle. One that likely will not be successful," Hoefel said as part of the local consultations.

"Having on-the-job support for employees also improves the comfort level of employers," Clark added.

At the end of the day, the approach should be tailored to the needs of each jobseeker and employer.

"Each job search and support should be individualized to the person's needs and requirements," said Alison Ireland of Community Living Peterborough.

"Everything needs to be based on the person, not the disability," Northcott added.

"There's no cookie-cutter approach. You need the right person for the right job."

Access Talent

Many of the project participants are cautiously optimistic about the adoption of 'Access Talent,' the provincial government's new employment strategy for persons with disabilities.

It aims to create a more supportive, dynamic and inclusive province by recognizing that most people with disabilities want to work and are capable of working.

"We envision a province where people with disabilities are thriving in rewarding jobs and careers, and – together with their employers – are contributing to the province's prosperity and economic growth," reads the strategy.

"Some of the most successful companies in the world today are those that build diversity into all aspects of their workplace, from recruitment to career development. These businesses know that people with disabilities

are an under-represented talent pool and a significant source of new growth," added Tracy MacCharles, the minister responsible for accessibility.

Access Talent aims to build on the foundation of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#), enacted in 2005.

"The legislation sets the bar and helps educate," said Barb Condie, the accessibility coordinator for the City of Kawartha Lakes.

"Attitudes have changed a lot in the last 10 years."

"The AODA has helped start a dialogue on accessibility and inclusion but there's still a long way to go," added Hoefel.

Many participants said that the requirements of the AODA should be viewed only as a starting point for employers.

"A minimum doesn't mean you can't go beyond that minimum," said Andrews.

"There are lots of opportunities to do more than the minimum," added Mark Buffone, the City of Peterborough's accessibility compliance coordinator.

"Accessibility is an ongoing process."

While all would agree that the AODA has helped promote more awareness about inclusion and accessibility, some participants called for the Province to take a more hands-on role in ensuring that business and organizations are complying.

"Education really isn't the issue – it's enforcement," added King.

"The AODA has no teeth," added Northcott.

Others said they were worried that [Bill 148](#), specifically the provisions surrounding the increase of minimum wage, would have a detrimental effect on the hiring prospects of persons with disabilities.

"Small businesses aren't going to be hiring anyone, let alone a person with disabilities," King said.

"It has always been difficult getting employers to offer persons with disability paid work at minimum wage," Ireland added.

For more information, turn to the following chapters on Attitudes, Business Benefits, Employment First and Access Talent.

Attitudes



Stigma remains the biggest barrier

"People with disabilities have long been held back by others' assumptions. However, attitudes are starting to change. People want to be treated with dignity and respect. They want to be present in and contribute to their communities. People with disabilities are increasingly being known in their communities for their roles as fellow citizens, valued employees, co-workers, students and friends."

**Canadian Association of
Community Living**

While roughly 90 per cent of Canadians believe that people with disabilities are not fully included in society (according [The Path to 2025: Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan](#)), stigma remains and barriers persist.

According to the most recent [Canadian Survey on Disability](#), the employment rate

of those aged 25 to 64 with disabilities was 49 percent, compared to 79 percent for Canadians without a disability.

Of those with a disability, 12 percent reported having been refused a job in the previous five years as a result of their condition. That rate jumped to 33 per cent among 25- to 34-year-olds with a severe or very severe disability.

"It is true that some persons have a disability so severe that they cannot hold a job or work in a company. However, many others who would like to have paid employment are unable to reach that goal for reasons unrelated to their condition, such as workplaces that are physically inaccessible or discriminatory hiring practices. As a result, such individuals can become unemployed or give up looking for work," reads a report based on the survey from Statistics Canada.

“Such a situation is problematic both for persons with disabilities, and more generally for society and the economy. Individuals without a job may be deprived of the benefits of labour market participation, a key component of social integration. In addition, society is deprived of their talent and their contribution to the economy, a situation that may represent a large opportunity cost in the context of rising retirements.”

A [2012 report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities](#) noted that while employers may be “hesitant” to hire someone with a disability, most are quite responsive to meet the needs of employees who acquire a disability later in life.

“There is willingness, though at times hesitant, to hire people with disabilities. In almost all cases, great effort is put into accommodating existing employees who acquire disabilities, so the foundation of

experience and understanding is there,” it reads.

The key is extending that foundation to all aspects of the employment process.

While job postings are now required to include the information that accommodations for persons with disabilities are available, that information is not always conveyed to candidates prior to interviews or even an employee’s first day on the job.

Take a more proactive approach by formally – and regularly – asking staff about potential accommodations.

“By asking employees what accommodation they require, the burden and stigma are removed – something that benefits all employees, whether they have an ongoing disability or are suddenly forced to change the way they do their work due to a car accident or sports injury,” it reads.

Promoting a true culture of inclusion starts from the moment a prospective employee walks through the door.

Some guiding principles of supported employment

Representatives from the Ontario Centre of Workforce Innovation presented the following tips at the [Ontario Disability Employment Network’s](#) conference in Richmond Hill in October of 2017.

Stakeholder collaboration

Fostering a positive relationship between job-seekers, service providers and employers and collaboration between stakeholders to facilitate individualized and mutually beneficial supported employment scenarios

Recognizing interests and talents

Nurturing interests and capitalizing on the talents of persons with disabilities, while accommodating their needs

Respecting dignity

The needs of persons with disabilities

must be accommodated in the manner that most respects their dignity, to the point of undue hardship. There is no set formula for accommodation – each person has unique needs and it is important to consult with the person involved.

Supporting full integration

Ongoing and dynamic support for the changing needs of employers and employees

Mutually beneficial

Supporting the use of an underutilized workforce for the benefit of employers and employees

Continuous improvement

Have a long-term vision that allows for continuous improvement in all levels of support.

A focus on training and development

A [2015 report from the Canadian Conference Board](#) highlighted the topic of training and developing persons with disabilities.

“It is well known that training and on-boarding will help ensure successful employment outcomes,” it reads.

“Moreover, opportunities for professional growth and development are known to be a strong driver of employee engagement and retention.”

The six organizations selected for the study were “proactive in their approaches to training and developing people with disabilities” and ranged in size, industrial sector and geography.

“Some have been featured in other disability publications and publicly recognized for their active involvement in employing people with disabilities,” the report reads.

They were Phoenix Group, Dolphin Digital Technologies Inc., Société VIA, Signs Restaurant, Casino New Brunswick and Meticulon.

According to the report, a number of key insights emerged:

- Training provided to people with disabilities differs little from that offered to others. The approaches, areas covered and resources used are very often the same;
- When accommodations are necessary, they are minimal in their extent. Slight accommodations, rather than a complete redesign of training, usually suffice;
- Organizations typically make use of a variety of resources to train and develop employees with disabilities. Both internal and external resources – and often a mix of the two – are used to fulfill different aspects of employee training and development;
- Accommodations yield best results when they are made on an individual employee basis. Allowing for personal adjustments to training is crucial to success;
- An employee’s physical environment can influence the effectiveness of the training. It can play a complimentary or detrimental role; and,



- Jobs requiring a higher degree of knowledge work are more likely to have training that is designed and delivered internally. General labour or customer service roles, on the other hand, can more readily leverage external resources.

In addition, each of the organizations that took part shared what works well when training and developing employees with disabilities:

- Simulating the working environment in a private setting reduces pressure and can help people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues better learn their jobs;
- Offering a mentorship opportunity from more experienced employees is an effective workplace practice;
- Additional time may be required to explain how and why tasks are performed;
- Additional training and onboarding support in the form of a job coach can speed up learning and boost the employee’s comfort level;
- A focus on the needs of the individual, rather than on the group to which they belong, improves training outcomes; and,
- Soliciting the services of external training organizations and community associations can help design and execute training that is more tailored to people with specific types of disabilities.

Dispelling myths with facts

The untapped potential of persons with disabilities has been highlighted by the [Ontario Chamber of Commerce](#), which compiled eight common misconceptions amongst employers.

“Did you know that 15.4 percent of Ontarians aged 15 and over live with a disability?” the organization asked in a blog post.

“Almost 41 percent of this population has postsecondary accreditation. Yet, the unemployment rate among persons with disabilities in Ontario is about eight percent higher than that of the general population, according to data from Statistics Canada’s [2012 Canadian Survey on Disability](#). Accomplishing this will require a shift in the ways that employers think about hiring a person with a disability. Questions and concerns surrounding additional expenses, employee assistance, and absenteeism are just some of the thoughts that can sometimes pass through an employer’s mind when it comes to hiring a person with a disability. Putting these types of negative stereotypes to bed and getting the facts straight is essential to helping close Ontario’s skills gap.”

Referencing a list initially compiled by the University of New Brunswick, the following myths were among those cited:

Myth: Employees with disabilities are less productive than their colleagues.

Fact: Research shows no job performance difference between employees with disabilities and their non-disabled counterparts.

Myth: Employees with disabilities are harder to dismiss for underperformance.

Fact: Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, employees with disabilities fall under the same legislation and provisions as employees without disabilities when it comes to lawful termination, and are therefore no more difficult to dismiss than any other employee group.

Myth: The costs associated with hiring and accommodating employees with disabilities are too high.

Fact: Research demonstrates that cost is a minimal issue, and given high job performance indicators, hiring employees with disabilities makes good business sense. In fact, the average cost for those who require accommodation is \$500.

Myth: Employees with disabilities will be a burden to other employees without disabilities.

Fact: Research shows that inclusive workplaces are better, more energizing places to work and are actually more profitable over the long-run. It has been found that 70 percent of young individuals aged 18 to 26 say a company’s commitment to the community, including the hiring of a diverse workforce, has an influence on their decision to work there.

Myth: Employees with disabilities have a high absentee rate.

Fact: Studies have shown that employees with disabilities do not miss work any more than their colleagues without disabilities. Rather, it has been found that employees with disabilities tend to have a better attendance record than their non-disabled co-workers.

Myth: Candidates with disabilities don’t have the skills, training or education required.

Fact: More than 50 percent of individuals with disabilities have high school diplomas and over one third have completed post-secondary educational programs. In fact, according to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, individuals with disabilities are two thirds as likely to have a post-secondary diploma than adults in Canada without a disability.

Business benefits

Open the door to new opportunities

"Why should businesses make their employment standards more inclusive for people with disabilities? Quite simply, they cannot afford not to."

Conference Board of Canada

The economic benefits of hiring persons with disabilities has long been documented.

According to estimates based on the [2012 Canadian Survey on Disability](#), more than 1.9 million Ontario residents has a disability – roughly one in seven individuals.

"Together with their families and loved ones, people with disabilities represent more than half our population with a buying power that tops \$40 billion in Canada and \$1 trillion globally. Companies that employ people with disabilities can better serve this growing market," reads [Don't Lower the Bar](#), a report by business owner and accessibility advocate Mark Wafer.

And that number will only continue to climb as our population continues to age and grow.

"By 2035, 40 per cent of our consumer base will be people with disabilities," reads [The Path to 2025: Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan](#).

The document, released in 2015, notes that improving accessibility can create up to \$9.6 billion in new retail spending and \$1.6 billion in new tourism spending in Ontario over five years.

The report also cites statistics that underscore an odd dichotomy – while 70 per cent of small businesses have never hired a person with a disability, three-quarters of those that have reported that the employee met or exceeded their expectations.

The [final report from the Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities](#)

[for People with Disabilities](#) put forth the following statistics:

- 86 per cent of persons with disabilities rate average or better on attendance;
- 98 per cent of persons who have a disability rate average or better in work safety than their colleagues without disabilities; and,
- 90 per cent of persons with disabilities rate average or better on job performance compared with their colleagues without disabilities.

As well, the document notes that job turnover among people who have a disability is estimated to be 20 per cent of the rate of other employees.

"Statistics Canada research indicates that in organizations with accessible employment practices, employee retention was 72 per cent higher among people with disabilities," the report reads.

In addition to accessing a new base of potential customers and employees, many businesses have reported a number of intangible benefits as well.

"Most of the companies that we consulted have not documented the value but they understand the benefits that come from hiring people with disabilities. Some spoke of the case as it relates to talent, others mentioned its market impact," reads a [report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities](#).

"They told us it improves the culture and reputation of a business through community goodwill and has a 'feel good' effect on employees and customers."

All of this begs an extremely simple question – if business owners that hire people with disabilities are reporting positive results, why aren't more doing it?

"While most of the companies we heard

from showed a genuine desire to hire people with disabilities, education and training are required to overcome barriers, dispel myths and put theory into practice,” reads the report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

The [Business Benefits of Accessible Workplaces](#), a 2014 report from the Canadian Conference Board, concluded by stating the business case for hiring persons with disabilities is “compelling.”

“People with disabilities are a vital, and often overlooked, pool of talent for employers at a time when skilled labour is becoming increasingly scarce. People with disabilities also represent a major consumer market in Canada whose potential has not yet been fully exploited by business,” the report reads.

“At the same time, an aging Canadian workforce will mean an increase in the number of employees with disabilities. Employers wishing to retain key talent and experience of their older employees will need to look much more closely at employment accessibility as it relates to disability management.”

Too often, the report continued the concepts of accessible workplaces are not understood.

“There is a tendency to focus on costs rather than on the potential returns on investment from making business practices more inclusive for people with disabilities,” the report reads.

While noting that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, like many studies before it, the report suggests some strategies and resources to make employment practices more accessible.

They include:

Ensure leadership commitment

“As is often the case, it takes commitment and direction from the top to make change happen. Leaders play a key role in ensuring that a business truly does change its employment practices to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Leadership

sets the course and determines the level of support and resources available. Furthermore, leaders act as role models for appropriate behaviours, attitudes and beliefs about accessibility. They may make the critical difference between implementing changes that are merely adequate as opposed to those that go beyond the status quo.”

Create an inclusive work environment for all employees

“Creating an inclusive work environment is a key element of accessibility. This means paying attention to culture and the employee experience. Research shows that inclusive organizations have more engaged and thus more productive employees. Organizations need to invest in staff training on accessibility and work to ensure all employees feel valued and engaged. It is important to provide recruiters and hiring managers with disability awareness and sensitivity training. Human resources programs and policies need to be flexible enough to accommodate broad differences in their employees.”

Build accessibility into your business planning

“Planning with an accessibility lens is essential to avoid unnecessary costs and to maximize opportunities. Businesses that build or retrofit with accessibility in mind are able to achieve considerable savings in the long term. They are also in a better position to meet evolving standards and customer needs.”

Dedicate resources

“While the size of their investment in accessibility varies, successful businesses commit resources – both human and financial – to make their workplaces more accessible. As with any other significant business endeavour, there needs to be a realistic assessment of what is required in terms of dedicated resources. When resources are invested, accessibility moves from being an undeveloped business opportunity to being a successful business offering. It requires

no more and no less than any other good business investment.”

Talk to other businesses and share success stories

“Network with other businesses in your community or industry that have experience in making their hiring practices more accessible for people with disabilities. Find out what they did, how they did it, lessons learned, and ways to integrate these ideas into your business operations...By communicating successes, businesses can grow demand for their products and services. At the same time, they demonstrate good corporate citizenship and earn the respect of their community. The more businesses share information on the business benefits of accessibility, the more likely other businesses are to pay attention to this information.”

Reach out to local community partners and agencies

“Many community agencies can support businesses in hiring, training, coaching,

and managing employees with disabilities. They can also provide advice on workplace modifications for both new and existing employees. In many cases, these services are provided at no cost to the employer. These organizations often have an existing database of candidates with disabilities who are searching for employment. In addition, most Ontario universities and colleges have departments that support students with disabilities, helping with accommodations and assistive technologies. They also help with job placement and are a great source of educated and skilled talent for employers.”

Take advantage of online resources and tools

“A variety of online resources are available to assist Ontario employers in creating accessible and inclusive employment practices for people with disabilities.”

The report concludes by urging business owners to take a lead role in promoting accessible employment practices across the province.

Inclusion offers a return on investment

What is the return on investment or benefits to employers for hiring people with disabilities? The following are some of the benefits as reported by employers.

Hiring people with disabilities:

- contributes to a better rate of attendance, punctuality, employee morale, teamwork and safety in the workplace;
- often leads to a reduction in staff turnover; people with disabilities have proven to be skilled and loyal employees;
- shows that the company values diversity and is a tangible example of good corporate citizenship;
- increases the purchasing power for individuals with a disability and their families;

- reflects the demographics of your community, and enhances the community’s understanding of people with disabilities;

- may free up resources to complete other tasks and increase productivity;
- allows the person with a disability to be a role model to staff and the community;
- may include free corporate marketing when your new employee talks about where they work; and,
- may require accommodations for your new employee, but the change may make your company more robust, innovative and adaptive.

[The Canadian Association for Supported Employment](#)

Tips for business owners

[Rethinking Disability in the Private Sector](#), a 2013 report from the Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, concludes with some recommendations for business owners:

Open your mind

Consider how the issues surrounding employing people with disabilities apply to your business.

Determine your track record for hiring and accommodating people with disabilities

How inclusive is your organization? Are you connected with organizations that are linked to this talent pool? What are your own stories, good and bad? Look at the demographics of your organization and customer base; chances are you already employ or serve people with disabilities. This is a great opportunity for you to develop a formal strategy for reaching these important stakeholder groups.

Start with human resources

Does your human resources team include people with disabilities? Are team members sensitive to the issues and trained to hire from this talent pool? Have they reviewed job descriptions with hiring managers to confirm that requirements are genuine?

Check your website

In today's Internet-based world, a vitally important element of your recruiting strategy is your company's website. Ensure you are not screening out people with disabilities by using inaccessible technology, and that you are providing opportunities to give people with disabilities a fair chance to compete.

Engage and educate your people

Consider establishing and having your leaders sponsor employee networks, where



people can feel included as one of many – and where you can learn more about the issues and challenges faced by people with disabilities. Invest in education to dispel myths and give people the facts, tools and language they need to manage and work with people who have disabilities.

Find community partners

Reach out to agencies, non-profits and other organizations focused on training and employing people with disabilities.

Partner with educational institutions

Establish relationships with offices for students with disabilities at colleges and universities – perhaps those where you already have hiring experience – to recruit students with disabilities.

Collaborate within your industry

Develop alliances with external associations and agencies and share resources, tools and best practices you have adopted for workplace accommodations.

Share successes with the world

Share your experiences on your website, in annual reports and in advertising. Not only will you elevate the dialogue, you will benefit from marketplace goodwill and increased access to the massive consumer market of people with disabilities.

Employment First

An integrated, collaborative approach

"Work has often been treated like an 'extra' for persons with disabilities – just one option among many. Work is about making the best use of our talents in our contributions to society and having those contributions valued in the same way as they are for everyone. It is a vital part of our social identity. It no longer makes sense to talk about work as just one of many options for social inclusion."

**Canadian Association for
Community Living**



The Employment First philosophy has been promoted for roughly a decade.

"Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability," reads a statement from the [Association of People Supporting Employment First](#), an American advocacy group. As noted by the organization, the philosophy was developed with the following factors in mind:

- The current low participation rate of citizens with disabilities in the workforce is unacceptable;
- Access to 'real jobs with real wages' is essential if citizens with disabilities are to avoid lives of poverty, dependence, and isolation;
- It is presumed that all working age adults and youths with disabilities can work in jobs fully integrated within the general workforce, working side-by-side with co-workers without disabilities, earning minimum wage or higher;
- As with all other individuals, employees with disabilities require assistance and support to ensure job success and should have access to those supports necessary to succeed in the workplace;

- All citizens, regardless of disability, have the right to pursue the full range of available employment opportunities, and to earn a living wage in a job of their choosing, based on their talents, skills, and interests;
- Implementation of Employment First principles must be based on clear public policies and practices that ensure employment of citizens with disabilities within the general workforce is the priority for public funding and service delivery; and,
- Inclusion or exclusion of the specific term 'employment first' does not determine whether a public system or agency has adopted employment first principles. Such a determination can only be made in examining whether the underlying policies, procedures and infrastructure are designed for and ultimately result in increased integrated employment in the general workforce for citizens with disabilities.

More than 40 U.S. states have adopted policies geared towards the Employment First concept as well as several Canadian provinces, Ontario included.

The provincial government in Alberta has formally adopted a comprehensive [Employment First](#) strategy.

“Employment First is a unique approach to providing employment supports to persons with all types of disabilities, including those with complex and significant disabilities for whom job opportunities in the past may have been limited or not available. It recognizes that the key to success lies in ensuring that both youth and adults with disabilities have the appropriate postsecondary education, training and career development to help them meet their career goals,” the document from the Government of Alberta reads.

“Employment First focuses on finding new ways for partners to create supportive environments and new collaborations that provide the right kind of supports for people whose needs are different and may change over time.”

It underscores the point that employment is about much more than just getting a job.

“Improving the employment prospects for persons with disabilities requires a ‘whole person’ approach, since finding meaningful employment and career development takes more than just a focus on a job and job skills. It starts with developing a career identity early in life; finding a job and gaining experience during school years; pursuing further education; and continuing to develop job skills, including social skills and critical thinking skills for ongoing career development,” it reads.

While the effort has been lauded and supported in some degree by a number of jurisdictional governments, even its supporters would agree that it hasn’t translated into an employment boom for persons with disabilities.

“Despite the strong values supporting employment inclusion, the success of this movement has been primarily in its dissemination, rather than its realization. Employment participation rates have not changed dramatically as a result of this, nor any previous initiatives in the last 20 years. Canada, while competing extremely well with the U.S. in employment inclusion for

people with barriers has not realized significantly better results,” reads a statement from Sean McEwan, a director of the Canadian Association of Supported Employment’s Alberta chapter.

McEwan called for a nationwide dialogue about inclusive employment and additional funding from provincial governments to work towards that goal.

“If most people with intellectual disabilities require support to find and/or retain employment we can reasonably assume that these employment statistics would improve dramatically when all individuals with an intellectual disability who want employment are actually provided with the services they need to achieve employment inclusion,” he wrote.

“As it stands, the provincial departments which fund supports for people with intellectual disabilities are spending much more on segregated and congregate care environments than is spent on normative employment and inclusive environments. Not only is this ‘parallel world’ for people with disabilities more costly, it actually works against inclusion and longer-term reduction in direct support costs.”

He continued by saying that “collaboration, innovation and commitment” are all required for a more inclusive Canada.

“It’s also important for service providers to step out of antiquated, fear-based, segregated service models and focus on becoming equally valuable to employers as well as job seekers. Canadian business is ready for diversity and ready to include people with disabilities. How ready are we as service providers to engage these employers and to help them build their capacity to access talent and diversity?” MacEwan asked.

“There are many facets to the issue of low employment participation – government, service providers, advocates and employers all have a role to play in solving this problem.”

The Employment First concept was the main topic of discussion during David Hoff’s keynote speech during the [Ontario](#)

[Disability Employment Network's](#) annual conference in Richmond Hill in October of 2017.

The program director for [Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts](#), Hoff noted that the presumption of employment that permeates our society does not always extend to persons with disabilities.

"We ask most kids 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' But is that a question we ask kids with disabilities? Frankly, I don't think we always ask that. We being a collective we. Parents, teachers, support workers siblings and friends," he said.

"We need to look at people with disabilities like we look at everyone else."

Competitive integrated employment is the "gold star" of outcomes for persons with disabilities, he said, a target we all should work towards

Hoff defined the term as follows:

- Wages and benefits are similar to those without disabilities performing the same work;
- The position is not created with the sole

intent of employing person with disabilities;

- The employee has the same opportunity for advancement as co-workers and the same conditions of employment; and
- Within the work unit and entire workplace, the employee must interact with customers, co-workers and vendors to the same extent as co-workers in a comparable position.

To get there, Hoff suggests that individuals with disabilities need be engaged and empowered throughout the employment process, with placements tailored to their individual skills/talents, personality and interests.

"Why is it that everything we know about a good job search for people without disabilities, we too often forget when it comes to a job seeker with a disability?" he asked.

"Persons with disabilities succeed on the job and in careers for the same reasons as other individuals."

He noted that many people with disabilities are unemployed for the same reasons as others – a lack of education, a lack of skills, poor personal networks and cultural expectations.

Characteristics of successful implementation

- There are measurable increases in employment of citizens with disabilities within the general workforce, earning minimum wage or higher with benefits.
 - Greater opportunities exist for citizens with disabilities to pursue self-employment and the development of microenterprises.
 - Employment is the first and preferred option when exploring goals and a life path for citizens with disabilities.
 - Citizens with disabilities are employed within the general workforce, regardless of the severity of disability and assistance required.
 - Young people with disabilities have work experiences that are typical of other teenagers and young adults.
- Employers universally value individuals with disabilities as an integral part of their workforce, and include people with disabilities within general recruitment and hiring efforts as standard practice.
 - Individuals with disabilities have increased incomes, financial assets, and economic wealth.
 - Citizens with disabilities have greater opportunities to advance in their careers, by taking full advantage of their individual strengths and talents.
 - Funding is sufficient so that quality services and supports are available as needed for long-term employment success.

[Association of People Supporting Employment First](#)

We all have an important role to play

The [Canadian Association for Community Living](#) has provided a brief summary of the roles we all can play in the implementation of an Employment First philosophy.

Families — The path to employment and careers should begin early in a young person's life. But it is never too late to start. Parents and siblings have the first and greatest impact on the capacity of youth to dream big and have aspirations for a career. It can be as simple as talking about "what you want to do when you grow up" around the dinner table. The same conversations that families have with children who do not have a disability need to take place with children with disabilities. Families need opportunities to connect in order to support and challenge one another in cultivating and pursuing their vision of a good life for their child.

Teachers, administrators, school officials — The path to employment and careers is built on the foundation of a high quality education. An inclusive education system is critical in shaping the opportunities that will be available for youth with disabilities. In a community that puts employment first for youth with disabilities, educators at every level take seriously their responsibility for educating all students. This means that youth with disabilities learn in regular classrooms with their peers and take part in school and extra-curricular activities.

Just like students who do not have disabilities, youth with disabilities need to be included in activities that are focused on career exploration and work experience. Career-oriented educational programming is usually a key component of a high quality education. Youth with disabilities need to have access to this same programming.

The importance of an inclusive education on future career and employment outcomes cannot be overemphasized. Through an

inclusive education, young people are better prepared for their life in the community. It is where friendships and a sense of belonging are developed and it is where children can first be exposed to a range of possibilities for their future.

Youth — When youth with and without disabilities are educated together in an inclusive education setting they are able to forge friendships and relationships that last a lifetime. Many of the most important conversations that youth have about their future take place in the context of peer-to-peer connections. Youth challenge one another to step outside of their comfort zone and try new things.

When youth have the opportunity to connect in positive inclusive settings they can help one another to identify their strengths, talents, goals and dreams. Youth also become strong advocates for one another as they help keep each other 'on the right track.'

Employment service providers — Many people with intellectual disabilities will need some degree of assistance in entering the labour market. That assistance may only take the form of initial job search and career exploration or it may be in the form of getting a foot in the door. Others may require on the job support from a job coach. Employment support providers play a key role in the employment outcomes that are possible for youth with disabilities.

'Supported employment' following a place-and-train or job coach model is recognized as a best practice for employment services for people with disabilities.

Policy Makers — An Employment First approach to policy has been an effective way for bringing together each of the diverse stakeholders that impact the policy environment.

Access Talent



A new direction for Ontarians

"We want children and youth with disabilities to grow up confident in the knowledge that they can put their talents to work in our provincial economy of tomorrow. And we want adults of all ages and abilities to know there is a place for their insights and skills in Ontario businesses today."

Tracy MacCharles

The summer of 2017 marked the passage of [Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities](#).

The comprehensive, collaborative plan serves as not only a call to action to break down employment barriers but also as a formal challenge to employers.

"We are calling employers to join us and take action – if every business in Ontario with 20 or more employees hires at least one

more person with a disability, about 56,000 people with disabilities looking for work will gain employment and have the opportunity to help further build and enrich our businesses and economy," reads a statement from Tracy McCharles, the minister responsible for accessibility.

"With this strategy, our government takes the first of many steps to provide programs and supports focused on increasing employment for people with disabilities. These will help individuals get training tailored to their abilities and aspirations, while helping employers to diversify their workforce and fill talent needs with services adapted to their business goals."

More than 1.8 million people in Ontario have a disability – a figure that will only increase as our population ages and grows.

“By connecting more people with disabilities to job opportunities and businesses to talent, this strategy will help us grow a stronger Ontario economy and a diverse culture of acceptance. Working together, we can make inclusion the new standard for business in Ontario,” the statement from MacCharles reads.

The following principles guided the development of Access Talent:

- all people with disabilities should have opportunities for meaningful and sustained work regardless of their disability, income source and education;
- individuals should be able to make informed choices, supported by person-centred services and guided by their interests, needs, skills, strengths and aspirations;
- people with disabilities and employers should have easy access to integrated, evidence-based resources and services coordinated across government;
- resources and services should be responsive to employers’ business needs, allowing them to build an inclusive workforce and champion the hiring of people with disabilities;
- from an early age through the school years, and throughout their working lives, the career expectations of people with disabilities should be supported;
- all parts of society – government, employers, service providers, schools, families, communities, not-for-profits and people with disabilities – should be involved in ensuring people with disabilities are an integral part of the labour force;
- measurable outcomes should be established and publicly reported on to track progress and impact; and
- the needs and cultural differences of Indigenous peoples and others should be respected and acknowledged.

Noting that the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is approximately 16 per cent, it aims to create a “more supportive, dynamic and inclusive province.”

“Unfortunately, too many people with

disabilities face barriers that prevent them from participating in the workplace. These barriers block them from enjoying the personal benefits of employment. They also limit business growth, affecting employers as well as existing and future employees. That’s why removing these barriers is a social and economic imperative that Ontario must respond to collectively,” the document notes.

It’s based on four pillars:

Start early – inspire and support youth and students with disabilities

“Young people are the decisive force shaping Ontario’s future. Supporting the development and employment goals of all youth is critical to the province’s long-term success,” it reads.

“Young people of all abilities benefit from work experience. Evidence demonstrates that early work experience while in school can lead to increased school completion rates, improved secondary-to- postsecondary and school-to-work transitions, and higher future earnings. This is especially true for youth with disabilities, who often have a harder time connecting with employers. The multiple barriers they face include limited work experience, inadequate support when transitioning away from school, and insufficient career preparation.”

Engage – support and encourage employers as champions and partners

“Access Talent recognizes that making workplaces accessible and educating employers is essential to increasing employment for people with disabilities. Misconceptions and misinformation about employing people with disabilities persist in many workplaces,” reads Access Talent.

“That’s why we want to support leading employers as accessibility champions. We want to empower them to spread the word about how simple – and beneficial – it is to hire people with disabilities. We want to connect them to other businesses to share best practices and raise the bar on what

it means to be accessible to employees and customers. We also want to partner with a diverse range of employers to gain their insights into the needs of businesses today. This will help us develop employment supports that are tailored to both job seekers and employers, helping to address skills gaps and sector shortages, while fueling business growth and job creation.”

Integrate – create seamless, person-centred employment and training services

“Both people with disabilities and employers feel frustration in the face of complex and uncoordinated employment and training services. They want a seamless, easy-to-access system that can meet their specific needs—whether that involves skills upgrading, higher intensity employment help, or straightforward information about available jobs and candidates,” reads the document.

“Access Talent recognizes that employment supports are more effective when they are offered through a person-centered lens—one guided by an individual’s interests and strengths. A better coordinated and more integrated system will help connect people to jobs that match their aspirations and skills. Employers also need to be connected to a streamlined system that takes into account their business goals and staffing challenges. That’s why Ontario’s employment and training services for people with disabilities will be integrated to respond to the full spectrum of abilities and supports required by jobseekers and employers to increase opportunities for everyone involved.”

Trail blaze – establish the Ontario government as a leading employer and change agent

“Government leadership is critical for this strategy to succeed. As a Top 100 Employer in Canada and one of the country’s Best Diversity Employers and Top Employers for Young People, the Ontario government is in an optimal position to counter negative atti-

tudes and shift societal perceptions about people with disabilities. Access Talent seeks to leverage this advantage,” it reads, noting that about 12 per cent of Ontario Public Service (OPS) employees self-identify as having a disability.

“We are on the right path, but we want to do even better. The OPS’s progressive policies and diverse workforce position it to lead others in building more inclusive workplaces. Another way the OPS can be a change agent is through strategic government spending and procurement. The government spends billions of dollars in goods and services each year. This significant purchasing power can be leveraged to generate greater social impact and promote the employment of people with disabilities. The Government of Ontario will lead by example as an employer, taking a proactive role in shifting the culture, attitudes and perceptions of employers and the general public. It will also adopt innovative policies that build inclusion into all aspects of its operations.”

Access Talent builds on the foundation provided by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), enacted in 2005.

“Embracing the business case for accessibility is a win-win proposition for organizations of all sizes and for people with disabilities. The bottom line is that an accessible province means more opportunities for all Ontarians. For Ontario’s 1.8 million people with disabilities, it means being able to actively participate in our communities, workforce and economy. For business, it means tapping into an underused talent pool, creating new products and services based on universal design, and harnessing the buying power of more people, both in-store and online,” reads [The Path to 2025: Ontario’s Accessibility Action Plan](#), released in 2015.

“For our economy, it means up to a \$600 a year per capita increase in the gross domestic product. That makes becoming accessible and promoting accessibility not just the right thing to do but also the smart

thing to do for businesses and organizations of all sizes.”

The legislation has helped position Ontario as a worldwide leader in accessibility and is applicable to more than 400,000 businesses and organizations. The following requirements have been implemented thus far:

Businesses and non-profits with fewer than 50 employees

As of January of 2012, organizations with 1 to 19 employees were required to provide accessible emergency and public safety information to staff and the public, as well as providing accessible customer service by:

- Training staff and volunteers to serve customers of all abilities and keeping a written record of the training;
- welcoming service animals and support persons;
- creating accessible ways for people to provide feedback; and
- putting an accessibility policy in place so employees, volunteers and customers can know what to expect.

As of 2015, organizations of that size were required to create formal accessibility policies and were asked to consider accessibility when purchasing and designing self-service kiosks.

The following year, all staff were expected to be fully trained on Ontario’s accessibility laws and businesses were required to make it easier for people with disabilities to provide feedback (such as surveys or comment cards).

By January of 2017, organizations were required to make public information accessible when asked, as well as ensuring the same for employment practices and career development opportunities. That also includes processes for developing accommodation plans and return-to-work plans for individual employees.

There will also be significant changes in 2018, as all new or redeveloped public spaces (including outdoor paths of travel, play spaces, public use eating areas, parking lots, service counters, fixed waiting lines

and waiting areas with fixed seating) will need to be accessible.

Businesses and non-profits with more than 50 employees

As of January of 2012, organizations with 50 or more employees were required to provide accessible emergency and public safety information to staff and the public, as well as providing accessible customer service by:

- Training staff and volunteers to serve customers of all abilities and keeping a written record of the training;
- welcoming service animals and support persons;
- creating accessible ways for people to provide feedback; and
- putting an accessibility policy in place so employees, volunteers and customers can know what to expect.

In 2014, the development of formal multi-year accessibility plans became mandatory, and organizations of that size were asked to consider accessibility when purchasing and designing self-service kiosks.

As well, new websites and those being significantly updated were required to be fully accessible.

As of January 2015, staff were expected to be fully trained on Ontario’s accessibility laws and businesses were required to make it easier for people with disabilities to provide feedback (such as surveys or comment cards).

The following year, organizations were required to make public information accessible when asked, as well as ensuring the same for employment practices and career development opportunities. That also includes processes for developing accommodation plans and return-to-work plans for individual employees.

At the start of 2017, all new or redeveloped public spaces (including outdoor paths of travel, play spaces, public use eating areas, parking lots, service counters, fixed waiting lines and waiting areas with fixed seating) were required to be accessible.

Suggested reading

Canadian Association for Community Living

[Achieving Social and Economic Inclusion](#)

Canadian Association for Community Living

[Putting Employment First for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Canadian Association of Supported Employment

[Employment First or Employment When?](#)

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters

[Taking Action: An HR Guide to Hiring and Retaining Persons with Disabilities](#)

Conference Board of Canada

[A Business Perspective on Hiring and Integrating Persons with Disabilities](#)

Conference Board of Canada

[Business Benefits of Accessible Workplaces](#)

Conference Board of Canada

[Training and Developing Persons with Disabilities: Six Cases from the Canadian Private Sector](#)

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

[Getting Beyond Being the Population in Waiting](#)

Government of Canada

[Canadian Survey on Disability 2012](#)

Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society/Council of Canadians with Disabilities

[Looking Into Poverty: Income Sources of Poor People with Disabilities in Canada](#)

Institute for Research on Public Policy

[Inclusive Employment for Canadians with Disabilities](#)

Ontario Chamber of Commerce

[Building Bridges: Linking Employers to Post-secondary Graduates with Disabilities](#)

Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association

[EnAbling Hotels and Restaurants for Accessible Employment](#)

Martin Prosperity Institute

[Releasing Constraints: Projecting the Economic Impacts of Improved Accessibility in Ontario](#)

Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

[Rethinking Disability in the Private Sector](#)

Province of Alberta

[Alberta Employment First Strategy](#)

Province of Ontario

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

Province of Ontario

[Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities](#)

Province of Ontario

[Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Initial Report](#)

Province of Ontario

[Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities Final Report](#)

Province of Ontario

[The Path to 2025: Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan](#)

Retail Council of Canada

[EnAbling Retail for Accessible Employment](#)

Notes

