

Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities

(Phase I)

The Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities fills gaps in employment services for unemployed persons with disabilities who are not eligible for Employment Insurance benefits or who cannot access the employment and training supports delivered under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. Through the Program, persons with disabilities are given the opportunity to acquire or develop skills, and to obtain paid employment experience or assistance in becoming self-employed.



EVALUATION RESULTS

- ★ About 22% of survey respondents noted that they would have been unlikely to find work without participating in the Program.
- ★ Post-program, more participants were employed, self-employed or returned to school:
 - 55% in fiscal year 2016-17; compared to
 - 42% in fiscal year 2012-13.
- ★ Post-program employment and self-employment is conditioned by many factors, including:
 - illness or disability;
 - the inability to obtain an employment income that exceeds available social assistance benefits;
 - lacking access to adapted transportation; and
 - family or other personal responsibilities.
- ★ The Opportunities Fund could serve more clients and there is opportunity to increase awareness of the Program among employers.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Continue enhancing employers' awareness of the valuable contribution that persons with disabilities can make and of the various supports available to facilitate their hiring and workplace integration.

2

Explore the possibility of extending the availability of supports and follow-ups with participants.

3

Further clarify the concept of social innovation and its application within the context of the Program, and establish specific criteria for assessment and monitoring purposes.

4

Better link the Program's logic model to the reforms and new policy directions of the Program, and continue improving indicators used for performance measurement purposes.

The full [Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities Phase 1 report](#) is available on [Employment and Social Development Canada's website](#).

