



Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

Report

June 17, 2024

Social Development Partnerships Program

Large print, Braille, MP3 [audio], e-text and DAISY formats are available on demand by [ordering online](#) or calling 1 800 O-Canada [1-800-622-6232]. If you use a teletypewriter [TTY], call 1-800-926-9105.

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, 2024

For information regarding reproduction rights:

droitdauteur.copyright@HRSDC-RHDCC.gc.ca.

PDF

Cat. No. [Em20-126/1-2024E-PDF]

ISBN or ISSN [978-0-660-71880-4]

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
List of tables	2
List of figures	3
1. Executive summary	4
2. Overall Management Response	5
3. Program background	10
4. Key Findings	12
5. Conclusion: Mapping of recommendations and related findings	39
Annex A: Disability component Logic Model	41
Annex B: Children and Families component Logic Model	42
Annex C: Evaluation questions.....	44
Annex D: Methodology	45
Annex E: Program application and assessment processes	49
Annex F: SDPP provincial/territorial distribution of funded projects	50

List of tables

Table 1: Program's annual grants and contributions funding estimates from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Table 2: Program objectives align with ESDC core responsibilities from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Table 3: Ways in which the Program's communication about its application review process created challenges or gaps for applicants.

Table 4: Ways in which the Program's communication about, and dissemination of, its tools regarding its reporting requirements created challenges for funding recipients.

Table 5: Ways in which the Program's data collection and reporting requirements created a burden for funding recipients.

Table 6: Extent to which the Program's delivery model fostered the Disability component's funding recipients and partner organizations to achieve intermediate and immediate Program outcomes

Table 7: Extent to which the Program's delivery model fostered the Children and Families component's funding recipients and partner organizations to achieve intermediate and immediate Program outcomes

Table 8: Percentage of approaches and activities sustained beyond Program's funding terms

Table 9: Percentage of SDPP projects that leveraged funds from non-federal partners for the fiscal years 2018-2019 to 2021-2022

Table A1. Geographical distribution of funding from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

List of figures

Figure 1: The Program's communication of its data collection and reporting requirements was clear to the majority of the funding recipients

Figure 2: Percentage of final reports, from open and closed projects and/or operational funding, during the evaluation period, that used the Program's reporting templates.

Figure 3: Funding recipients' challenges related to the effectiveness of the Program's communication and dissemination of data collection and reporting requirements.

Figure 4: Funding recipients, from the Disability component, reported that the Program's data collection and reporting requirements primarily had a positive impact on their organizational capacity to collect and report on data.

Figure 5: Funding recipients, from the Children and Families component, indicated that the Program's data collection and reporting requirements mostly had a neutral impact on their organizational capacity to collect and report on data.

Figure 6: Extent COVID-19 impacted capacity to achieve the Program's intermediate outcomes for the Children and Families component.

Figure 7: Extent COVID-19 impacted capacity to achieve the Program's intermediate outcomes for the Disability component.

Figure A1: Program application and assessment processes

1. Executive summary

Introduction

The Social Development Partnerships Program (henceforth the “Program”) is a grants and contributions program that supports the Government of Canada’s priorities through investment in not-for-profit organizations, provincial/territorial entities (including educational institutions, health/social services institutions), municipalities and Indigenous organizations (including band councils, tribal councils and self-government entities). The aim of the Program is to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities, children and families, Black Canadian communities and other vulnerable populations facing physical, economic and social pressures.¹

The current evaluation of the Program covers the 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 period and focuses specifically on the Disability component and Children and Families component.² This evaluation is completed in compliance with the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Policy on Results*. The Program's last evaluation was completed in March 2019 and covered the 2012-2013 to 2016-2017 period.

This is a process evaluation focusing on whether Program activities were aligned with the Government of Canada priorities and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)’s objectives and been delivered as planned and does not specifically examine the efficacy of the Program. The evaluation questions, and the details of the lines of evidence used for this evaluation, including the methodology and their limitations, can be found in [Annex C](#) and [Annex D](#).

Key Findings

1. The Program aligns with the Government of Canada priorities and ESDC departmental objectives on social development, including the priorities on diversity, inclusion and accessibility.
2. Stakeholders and interviewed participants mentioned that additional and clear information (e.g., expectations, resources, eligibility, timelines, final reporting, etc.) may help clarify the application processes.
3. Overall, the majority of funding recipients agreed that reporting requirements were reasonable and the Program’s communication of these requirements was clear. However, evaluation found low uptake in the usage of the final reporting templates over the evaluation period. This finding should be considered within the context that the funding agreements do not mandate the use of customized templates.
4. The Program's data requirements positively impacted the organizational capacity of the Disability component's funding recipients, while funding recipients from the Children and

¹ [GC InfoBase - Infographic for Social Development Partnerships Program \(canada.ca\)](#)

² Other distinct initiatives, with time-based amendments that require specific policy authorities, utilize the flexibilities of the Program’s Terms and Conditions. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Official Language Minority Communities Initiative, the Social Finance Fund and the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation, which are not included in this evaluation. Additional initiatives that also leverage the Program’s Terms and Conditions including the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative and the Emergency Community Support Fund. Both of these initiatives are subject to third-party assessments led by the Program and are not covered by this evaluation.

Families component experienced a neutral impact. Some ambiguities emerged regarding the Program's use of the collected data.

5. All interviewed or surveyed stakeholders agreed that the Program increased social inclusion by decreasing barriers to participation, in Canadian society, while increasing opportunities for community engagement.
6. Projects' approaches were generally sustained, beyond the funding terms, by funding recipients and partner organizations.

Recommendations

The evaluation provides two recommendations.

1. The Program should explore different communications methods towards improved stakeholder access to information of the funding application intakes and how to apply.
2. The Program should explore the barriers experienced by funding recipients related to reporting tools, to better support their performance assessment.

2. Overall Management Response

Thank you to all members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee and the Evaluation Working Group for their valuable contributions to this evaluation of the Social Development Partnership Program (SDPP).

The Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP) is a grants and contributions program that supports the Government of Canada's priorities through investment in not-for-profit organizations, provincial/territorial entities (including educational institutions, health/social services institutions), municipalities and Indigenous organizations (including band councils, tribal councils and self-government entities). The SDPP is comprised of two components, Children and Families and Disability. Each component makes strategic grant and contribution-based investments. The Children and Families component's objective is to support the creation of more responsive programs, services and tools to better serve the diverse needs of children, families, and other vulnerable communities; while the Disability component's objective is to promote the social inclusion and full participation of Canadians with disabilities in learning, work and community life by increasing the effectiveness of the not-for-profit sector.

The Social Development Partnerships Program is aligned with ESDC's vision with respect to individuals and families, namely, to build a stronger and more inclusive Canada, support Canadians in making choices that help them live productive and rewarding lives and improve Canadians quality of life. The Program supports ESDC's core responsibility for social development which seeks to increase inclusion and opportunities for the participation of Canadians in their communities.

The Social Development Partnerships Program supports Government of Canada priorities through investment in not-for-profit and other eligible organizations aiming to improve the life outcomes for people with disabilities, children and families, and other vulnerable populations. The SDPP Disability Component also supports significant actions under Pillars 3 and 4 of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) by applying a "Nothing Without Us" approach towards the objective of improving the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. The use of Grant and Contribution investments represents a flexible and cost-effective way to support the role that communities, not-for-profit and voluntary sector organizations play in helping communities by providing them with the tools and skills to respond to current and emerging social issues.

The 2023 evaluation was a process evaluation that focused on whether Program activities were aligned with the Government of Canada’s priorities and ESDC objectives. While the evaluation did not focus on the efficacy of the program, the key findings presented in the evaluation indicate that the Program is working well towards achieving its intended outcomes and help identify areas where improvements can be made. The evaluation report includes two recommendations which are both supported. The Management Response and Action Plan will be implemented by the Income Security and Social Development Branch in collaboration with the Program Operations Branch and relevant stakeholders where appropriate.

The Program consistently endeavours to consult with external partners and stakeholders, including funding recipients on balancing the desire and need for robust performance measurement, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. It further aims to ensure that funded projects serve a diverse and inclusive range of beneficiaries and communities.

Recommendation #1

The Program should explore different communications methods towards improved stakeholder access to information of the funding application intakes and how to apply.

Management Response

Management acknowledges the need to efficiently and effectively communicate with stakeholders to ensure a seamless application process. The program is already working to address this recommendation. For example, by offering different communications methods and considering ways to improve services in response to ongoing feedback. The introduction of the Program Design and Delivery Planning Framework has enhanced our approach to communications, ensuring a more effective and consistent dissemination of information about funding application intakes and application processes, in line with our commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

Management Action Plan		Estimated completion date	Status	Accountable lead(s)
1.1	The Program Operations Branch (POB) offers accessible information sessions in both official languages on SDPP Calls for Proposals. For the Disability component, specifically, sessions include Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services and simultaneous interpretation via American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ).	December 2023	Completed	Program Operations Branch
1.2	The Program Operations Branch answers all questions received in the official language in which they are received, usually within 48hrs. When requested, program documents are also provided in alternate formats. Follow-up phone calls are also provided upon request.	March 2021	Completed	Programs Operations Branch
1.3	The Program Operations Branch provides an electronic notification system for new Calls for Proposals where potential applicants can register and	July 2023	Completed	Programs Operations Branch

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

	receive regular updates from ESDC funding opportunities .			
1.4	The Program Operations Branch is increasingly encouraging the use of the Grants and Contributions Online Service (GCOS) for applications. Once potential applicants are registered on the system, they can apply for multiple Calls for Proposals and receive confirmations regarding their application's status (e.g., submitted).	March 2026	In progress	Programs Operations Branch, Innovation, Information and Technology Branch
1.5	The Children and Families component promoted the 2021 CFPs through several means including email "blasts" to organizations both directly and by leveraging relationships with other government departments responsible for serving communities and organizations that ESDC may not have previously funded. This helped increase awareness among diverse organizations. This was an important step, since prior to 2021, the component had not launched an open CFP in many years and little communication was previously undertaken. This approach to promotion of funding opportunities has been identified as a best practice and will be applied to future CFPs.	September 2021	Completed	Social Innovation and Community Development Directorate (SICDD), Income Security and Social Development (ISSD) Branch
1.6	In advance of the next funding call, expected to take place in 2025-2026, the Children and Families component will explore leveraging technology to provide more information, and in different formats, to stakeholders about funding opportunities. For example, it will explore different approaches to information sessions and will explore providing advance notice of upcoming funding calls.	March 2026	Yet to commence	SICDD, Income Security and Social Development Branch and Programs Operations Branch
1.7	Under the Disability component, standard outreach is done with stakeholders once the CFP is announced by the Minister. The 2023 capacity building project CFP included a pre-launch announcement of the funding opportunity for the first time. This approach was well received by stakeholders and the program will explore this and other pre-launch announcements in future CFPs.	March 2026	In progress	Office for Disability Issues (ODI), Income Security and Social Development Branch and Programs Operations Branch
1.8	The funding pages produced by the POB (Disability component) and the Citizen Service Branch (Children and Families component), outline the steps and	May 2023	Completed	Program Operations Branch and

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

	requirements to apply to a funding process. These pages have recently changed format to improve ease of use and enhance ease of navigation for applicants.			Citizen Service Branch
1.9	For the Disability component, the “standard application form” is used in CFP processes. There is a need to review the questions within the application form in order to make sure that applicants understand how questions need to be answered. The Department will explore simplifying application questions, adding additional details through prompts, reviewing applicant materials to find potential gaps and developing applicant aids to support completing application packages.	March 2026	Yet to commence	ODI, Income Security and Social Development Branch and Program Operations Branch

Recommendation #2

The Program should explore the barriers experienced by funding recipients related to reporting tools, to better support their performance assessment.

Management Response

Management acknowledges the need to support applicants in completing reporting requirements. The evaluation found that the requirement to report was evident, however, the reporting expectation was not clearly outlined. As this evaluation period ended in 2021-22, implementation of some activities/measures have already commenced and are ongoing. Funding recipients are required to collect relevant performance data and to report on the results of their projects. Ongoing communication aims to help ensure that these recipients are well informed of Program objectives, expected results and key priorities. This is expected to reduce some of the barriers they experience in reporting on results, improve the quality of results reported by them and enhance their projects’ alignment with the Program’s goals and priorities. With recent implementation of the Program Design and Delivery Planning Framework, we anticipate a more streamlined and effective approach in addressing the barriers faced by funding recipients. This will not only facilitate better performance assessment but also align the reporting processes more closely with the program's evolving objectives and priorities, ensuring consistent progress and enhancement of our services.

Management Action Plan		Estimated completion date	Status	Accountable lead(s)
2.1	The Programs Operation Branch is working with the Office of Disability Issues to add additional specification to the Contributions and Grants Agreements in Schedule C regarding the use of final report templates to indicate that while the template is the preferred option, alternate options are available if needed. Reporting requirements will be included at the time of agreement signing.	January 2024	Completed	Programs Operations Branch
2.2	Subsequent to an organizational realignment that incorporated the performance management function	December	Completed	SICDD, Income Security and

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

	<p>into the policy team, the Children and Families component has analyzed previous challenges related to reporting and has and put in place mechanisms to improve the reporting approach in time for use by the two new cohorts of projects identified through the 2021 calls for proposals.</p> <p>The stream has put in place a mandatory template for the final report and complementary data tracking tool. Tools are tailored to the theme of the CFP to help organizations in the collection of results. Tools were provided to funding recipients early in the cycle, and organizations have been briefed on how to use the tools and who to contact for support.</p> <p>This approach is expected to improve the consistency of results and provide recipients with clearer expectations. In addition, it is being supported without increasing internal administrative costs.</p>	2023		Social Development Branch
2.3	<p>The Children and Families component has put a Community of Practice (CoP) in place to offer knowledge-sharing opportunities to agreement holders funded through the 2021 calls for proposals. The CoP is a forum for discussing topics including results collection and related barriers, and this is expected to improve data collection and performance measurement.</p> <p>Through these ongoing conversations in the CoP, any barriers experienced by funding recipients related to reporting can be explored</p>	December 2023	Completed	SICDD, Income Security and Social Development Branch
2.4	<p>The Children and Families component will explore and analyze the barriers experienced by funding recipients related to reporting tools by analyzing existing information sources and exploring information gaps.</p>	March 2027	Yet to commence	SICDD, Income Security and Social Development Branch
2.5	<p>For the Disability component, administrative costs can be used to administer the reporting requirements of the agreements. The program will better promote this eligible use of funds in the CFP funding pages to ensure applicants are aware they may utilize funding to overcome any capacity barriers to reporting.</p>	March 2026	In Progress	ODI, Income Security and Social Development Branch and POB
2.6	<p>For the Disability component, POB will work with ISSD-ODI in collaboration with the not-for-profit community to explore the barriers encountered with program reports and explore ways to reduce barriers and improve client experience.</p>	March 2026	Yet to commence	ODI, Income Security and Social Development Branch and POB

3. Program background

The Program was created in 1998 to consolidate various social welfare programs delivered across different departments. The Program has evolved over time, yet maintained a focus on working with the not-for-profit and voluntary sectors, provincial/territorial entities (including educational institutions, health/social services institutions), municipalities and Indigenous organizations (including band councils, tribal councils and self-government entities) through grants and contribution funding.

The Program has the following objectives³:

- to support the development and utilization of effective approaches⁴ to address social issues and challenges
- to develop, exchange and apply knowledge, tools and resources that address social needs of individuals, families and communities
- to foster partnerships and networks to address existing and emerging social issues
- to recognize and support the ability of not-for-profit organizations to identify and address social development priorities; and
- to recognize and promote community engagement initiatives that mobilize community assets and develop capacities and resources for action

Disability component

The **Disability** component provides funding for initiatives that help to improve the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. Funding, under this component, represents \$11M and provides organizations with two types of funding:

1. **Operational funding:** supports initiatives that increase the organizational capacity of national disability organizations and regional disability organizations that support the social inclusion⁵ of people with disabilities.
2. **Project funding:** supports initiatives that address social issues and barriers that confront people with disabilities such as developing tools, resources and support services, and fostering partnerships and collaborative networks.

The evaluation of the Program's Disability component focused primarily on national operational funding, although funded projects were also included.

³ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2010). *Social Development Partnerships Program Terms & Conditions*. (Internal document)

⁴ The Program's 2021 Performance Information Profile defined 'approaches' as efforts: "developed by funded recipients to address existing and emerging social issues including: fostering of partnerships and networks; engaging project participants (which can include children, families and vulnerable individuals) and other stakeholders; leveraging of additional resources from non-federal partners; using third-party intermediary models; developing knowledge, tools, solutions; adopting emerging technologies and best practices. Funded recipients can also identify innovative approaches to support and improve service delivery for the vulnerable populations."

⁵ The Program's 2021 Performance Information Profile defines "social inclusion" as: circumstances in which individuals have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, political and cultural life.

Children and Families component

The **Children and Families** component provides funding for projects that help improve the lives of children and families, and other vulnerable populations through increased social inclusion and participation. The focus of this evaluation will be on the grants and contributions project funding which accounts for \$8.8M of that total budget.

The mechanisms and conditions under which the Social Development Partnerships Program and associated funding are delivered is often through an intermediary, or third-party, funding delivery model. This delivery model uses an approach where funding is provided to not-for-profit organizations with specialized knowledge of the needs and conditions in communities. In turn, these not-for-profit organizations allocate most of the funding to partner community and grassroots organizations who deliver projects at the community level.⁶

Context

Table 1: Program’s annual grants and contributions funding estimates from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Social Development Partnerships Program (in \$millions)	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Children and Families component	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
Disability component	11	11	11	11	11

Note: This table includes approved Grants & Contributions funding from main estimates, supplementary estimates, all reprofile requests and excludes internal reallocations. Figures provided by the Chief Financial Officer Branch, October 24, 2022. For the **Disability** component, figures exclude amounts first allocated in 2019 for the implementation of the Accessible Canada Initiative and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as alternate format funding and internal transfers. For the **Children and Families** component, figures exclude amounts for Canada’s Volunteer Awards and activities related to the General Social Survey: Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

⁶ Employment and Social Development Canada Office of Disability Issues Social Innovation and Community Development Directorate (2021) Social Development Partnerships Program Performance Information Profile, Children and Families, and Disability Components

4. Key Findings

Key finding #1. The Program aligns with the Government of Canada priorities and ESDC departmental objectives on social development including diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

The Program aligns and contributes to the Government of Canada priorities and ESDC departmental objectives on social development priorities which include commitment to increasing inclusion and opportunities for participation of Canadians in their communities⁷ (Table 2). Both Program components have the ultimate outcome of increased social inclusion of targeted vulnerable populations.⁸ As defined in the Program's Performance Information Profile (2022), social inclusion refers to circumstances in which individuals can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, political and cultural life which enhance the well-being of all people. Not-for-profit organizations and voluntarism have been cornerstones for community engagement – aiding in efficient, cost-effective and innovative localized service delivery.⁹ The Program acknowledges their role in reducing barriers to participation and inclusion by providing funding to not-for-profit and other eligible entities that are actively involved in delivering activities in line with Program objectives including developing effective resources, fostering partnerships, and building organizational capacity.

⁷ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022*

⁸ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2010). *Social Development Partnerships Program Terms & Conditions*. (Internal document)

⁹ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2010). *Social Development Partnerships Program Terms & Conditions*. (Internal document)

Table 2: Program objectives align with ESDC and Government of Canada responsibilities and priorities from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022

Program objectives	ESDC departmental plans	Government of Canada responsibilities and priorities	Common approaches used by funding recipients and partner organizations ¹⁰
<p>Support the development and utilization of effective approaches to address social issues and challenges.</p>	<p>“Develop social policy initiatives that address the needs of families and of vulnerable groups, support communities in the development of social infrastructure, and advance solutions to social issues through innovative approaches.”¹¹</p>	<p>Legislation/conventions related to social issues and social inclusion, especially for vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2022) • an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families (2020) • the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> (2018) • the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010) • the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) • <i>Employment Equity Act</i> (1986) • Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) • the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> (1977) 	<p>Examples of developed and utilized approaches:</p> <p>Children and Families component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training sessions or events as reported in 63% of final reports • guides and publication were reported in 38% of final reports <p>Disability component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training sessions or events were reflected in 45% of final reports • guides and publication were reflected in 31% of final reports

¹⁰ Data reflected in this column is from both the Disability, and the Children and Families components' administrative data results

¹¹ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2017-2018*.

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

Program objectives	ESDC departmental plans	Government of Canada responsibilities and priorities	Common approaches used by funding recipients and partner organizations ¹⁰
<p>Develop, exchange and apply knowledge, tools and resources that address the social needs of individuals, families and communities, and foster partnerships and networks to address existing and emerging social issues.</p>	<p>“Funding to not-for-profit organizations working to achieve positive solutions to Canada’s biggest social challenges and removing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities.”¹²</p>	<p>The Government is going further to advance equity and diversity research principles, by integrating GBA+ in program design.¹³</p>	<p>Examples of developed exchanged or applied knowledge, tools and resources:</p> <p>Children and Families component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication materials (e.g., newsletters) were reflected in 38% of final reports • website creation was reflected in 19% of final reports • applications or platforms were reflected in 9% of final reports <p>Disability component:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication materials (e.g., newsletters) were reflected in 45% of final reports • website creation was reflected in 22% of final reports • applications or platforms were reflected in 12% final reports

¹² Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2018-2019*

¹³ Federal budget (2018) Equality Growth: A strong middle class

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

Program objectives	ESDC departmental plans	Government of Canada responsibilities and priorities	Common approaches used by funding recipients and partner organizations ¹⁰
Recognize and support the ability of not-for-profit organizations to identify and address social development priorities.	“Enhance capacity to address social issues.” ¹⁴	<p>In helping vulnerable people and organizations access Government funding, the reallocation of \$7.8 million over five years, will begin in 2018–19 from Employment and Social Development Canada’s existing resources, to help community organizations build their capacity.¹⁵</p> <p>(2021) Finalize and release Canada’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan, in consultation with the disability community, ... [including]: supporting national disability organizations to build capacity and partner in efforts to eliminate systemic barriers, ...¹⁶</p>	Organizational capacity (e.g., increased financial capacity and expanding services) was mentioned in 45% of funded projects’ and/or operational funding’s final reports.

¹⁴ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2020-2021*

¹⁵ Federal budget (2018) Equality Growth: A strong middle class

¹⁶ Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion Mandate Letter, from the Prime Minister of Canada (December 2021)

Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program

Program objectives	ESDC departmental plans	Government of Canada responsibilities and priorities	Common approaches used by funding recipients and partner organizations ¹⁰
<p>Recognize and promote community engagement initiatives (i.e., volunteerism, corporate social responsibility, innovation, partnerships, coalitions) that mobilize community assets and develop capacities and resources for action.</p>	<p>“Increase inclusion and opportunities for Canadians to participate in their communities.”¹⁷</p>	<p>Additional funding of \$5 million in both 2018–19 and 2019–20 made available through the Program’s Children and Families component to support projects related to innovation in the service delivery ... to provide not-for-profit organizations, provincial/territorial entities and Indigenous organizations across Canada with funding to tackle barriers faced by children, families and other vulnerable populations.¹⁸</p>	<p>There were 494 partnerships and networks that were fostered amongst funding recipients and partner organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Children and Families component’s fostered 173 partnerships • the Disability component’s fostered 321 partnerships

¹⁷ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2021-2022*

¹⁸ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Departmental Plan 2018-2019*

The Program addresses social development priorities by funding not-for-profit organizations' activities, approaches and operational funding that promote diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Funded activities and operational funding supported the development and utilization of a range of approaches to address social development priorities such as diversity, inclusion and accessibility for vulnerable populations, as reflected in the examples provided in table 2.

The Program supported funding recipients through revising and adapting existing documents to better align with ongoing needs.

The Program updates and customizes its reference documents and tools to ensure ongoing alignment with the Government of Canada priorities and ESDC departmental objectives on social development including diversity, inclusion and accessibility, and continued address to existing and emerging social issues. Some of this work includes:

- updated the Terms and Conditions to improve performance measurement (e.g., additions of new outcomes) and address the needs of vulnerable populations due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- updated the Program's Performance Information Profile to include the separation and creation of the Program components' new Logic Models, and revised narratives and performance indicators.
- created the applicant guide
- customized reporting templates for funding recipients for each component (as of 2019)
- the **Disability** component established a Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+) template, in 2021, to help guide funding recipients' reporting and established a Performance and Accountability Framework in collaboration with national disability organizations.

Key finding #2. Stakeholders and interviewed participants mentioned that additional and clear information (e.g., expectations, resources, eligibility, timelines, final reporting, etc.) may help clarify the application processes.

The document review demonstrated that the Program maintains an extensive application process.¹⁹ It includes:

- the launch of Calls for Proposals
- information sessions:
 - supporting the Calls For Proposals by further explaining their requirements and answering questions
- a two-stage review process, including:
 - pre-screening of applications, regarding eligibility
 - assessment of the application's merit, including consideration of intersectional factors
- Ministerial funding decisions

¹⁹ [Annex E](#) provides a flowchart of the Program's application and assessment processes.

Funding opportunities are thematic and vary in scope and/or objectives. Calls for Proposals outline, for example, its priorities, objectives and eligibility criteria. Additionally, the Program used two types of Calls for Proposals: competitive processes and non-competitive processes. The competitive processes consist of:

- open Calls for Proposals
- targeted Calls for Proposals
- Expressions of Interest

The non-competitive processes included solicited and unsolicited processes.

However, insights into challenges or gaps, identified by key informants during the interviews, are included in table 3. They highlight communication challenges such as gaps in awareness, clarity, access, and inclusion regarding the Program’s application review process and the assessment of grants and contribution funding applications.

Table 3: Ways in which the Program’s communication about its application review process created challenges or gaps for applicants.

Challenges/Gaps	Key Informants by Source ²⁰
Theme: Awareness and communication	
Lack of awareness on Calls for Proposals’ launch and timing	Disability component’s funding recipients
Lack of samples (e.g., examples of applications and/or responses to application questions)	
Infrequency and lack of follow-up to Program information sessions	Children and Families component’s applicants Disability component’s funding recipients
Lack of awareness of eligible expenses	Disability component’s funding recipients
Lack of awareness of the application’s two stage assessment process	Both components’ funding recipients Disability component’s Program officials

²⁰ With regard to these findings, applicants were representatives from organizations that had submitted applications that had not yet received a funding decision or their application had not been approved.

Challenges/Gaps	Key Informants by Source ²⁰
Lack of feedback on funding decisions	Both components' applicants
Theme: Application and Assessment Processes	
Long and onerous review process	Both components' fundings recipients and applicants Disability component's Program officials
Short timelines to complete the applications	Both components' Program officials Disability component's funding recipients
Technical issues experienced with completing the application	Both components' fundings recipients and applicants Disability component's Program officials
Theme: Organizational and Operational Issues	
Lack of internal alignment/effective communication between Policy officials and the Program Operations Branch (e.g., timing of disseminating reporting templates and inconsistent messages related to eligible expenses)	Both components' Program officials Disability component's funding recipients
Lack of Program officials training and retention	Children and Families component's funding recipients
Potential duplication ²¹ of funding to similar previously funded projects	Children and Families component's Program officials
Theme: Inclusivity and Cultural Appropriateness	
Lack of internal alignment/effective communication between Policy officials and the Program Operations Branch (e.g., inclusive language use in Program documents)	Children and Families component's applicants Disability component's funding recipients and Program officials

²¹ This refers to a possibility of funding projects - which had similar activities, target populations or intended results – to those that had been funded in previous years. It was noted, by Program officials, that such consideration is not part of the assessment of applications.

Note: The word “lack” references a deficiency, not an absence.

Key finding #3: Overall, the majority of funding recipients agreed that reporting requirements were reasonable and the Program’s communication of these requirements was clear. However, evaluation found low uptake in the usage of the final reporting templates over the evaluation period. This finding should be considered within the context that the funding agreements do not mandate the use of customized templates.

The majority of funding recipients, from both components, indicated that the Program’s communication of its reporting requirements was generally clear, however guidance on reporting expectations is needed.

An average of 57% of surveyed funding recipients from the **Disability** component and an average of 54% from the **Children and Families** component indicated that the Program’s communication of its data collection and reporting requirements was *clear*.

The document review, and key informant interviews with Program officials and funding recipients noted that the data reporting requirement is referenced in funding agreements. More specifically,

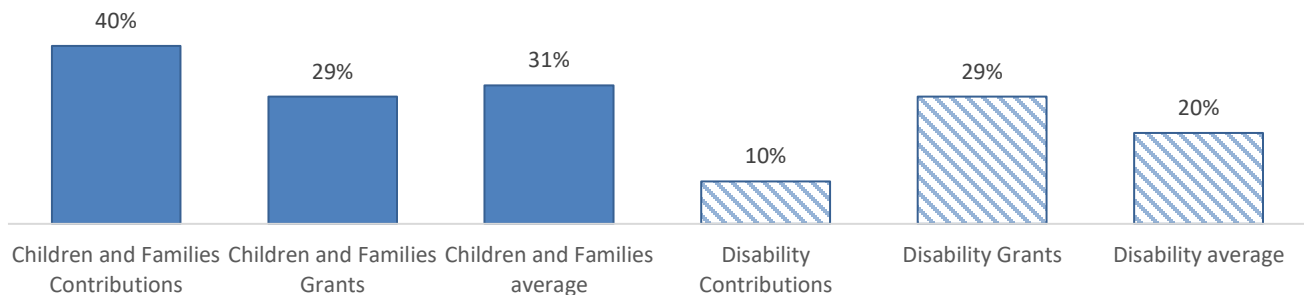
- 48% of surveyed funding recipients from the **Disability** component, and 50% from the **Children and Families** component, reported that they found the Program’s communication of its data collection requirements clear. While, 65% from the **Disability** component, and 57% from the **Children and Families** component found the Program’s communication of the data reporting requirements clear (Figure 1).
- However, the majority of funding recipients, from **both components**, also indicated that they did not have a comprehensive understanding of specific expectations regarding the reporting requirements. Based on the document review, funding agreements are clear that reporting is required, but do not provide additional information on what is expected from funding recipients. Supporting evidence on why this disconnect exists is not available. However, it is noteworthy that the period of the evaluation includes years prior to when the customized reporting templates were created in 2019.

and Families component, and a large majority (80%) from the **Disability** component did not use the Program’s data collection and reporting tools.

Moreover, in examining the final reports submitted for **both Program components**, the review noted that when templates had been used, there was very little consistency in the way the required information had been reported and not all funding recipients answered all questions. Therefore, although the majority of funding recipients, from **both components**, reported that the communication of data reporting requirements was clear, based on the evidence found in the key informant interviews as well as the administrative data review, a comprehensive understanding of reporting expectations is not apparent.

Additional information gathered from the key informant interviews with funding recipients identified certain factors that may explain, in part, the low uptake in usage of the Program’s final report templates. It suggests that there may be a connection between these results and identified challenges with the Program’s communication about, and dissemination of its, tools on data collection and reporting; primarily related to the issue of **lack of timeliness** in providing funding recipients the final reporting templates and guidelines on reporting expectations (Table 4).

Figure 2: Percentage of final reports, from open and closed projects and/or operational funding agreements, during the evaluation period, that used the Program’s reporting templates.



(Source: Administrative data from both Program components)

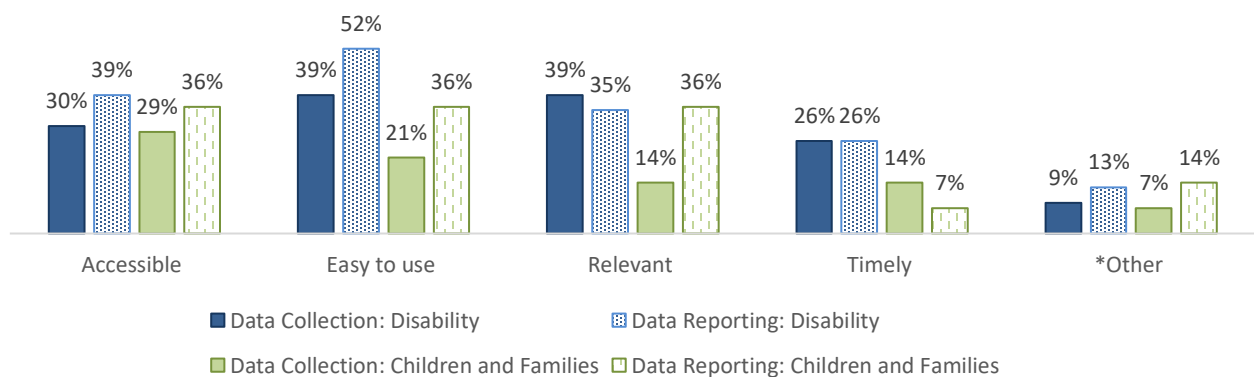
Note: These percentages were calculated by examining the final reports that had been uploaded into the Commons System for Grants and Contributions. The timeframe included the full period of the evaluation starting from 2017-2018, which includes years prior to, 2019, when the customized templates were created.

The analysis of the final reports comprised of a sample of eighty (80) reports. The **Disability** component comprised 49 final reports including 21 contribution agreements and 28 grant agreements. The **Children and Families** component comprised 31 final reports, including 12 contribution agreements and 19 grant agreements. Moreover, the extraction of the reports was done by evaluation during in the fall of 2022. However, additional final reports may have been submitted into the Common System for Grants and Contributions by the Program, after the evaluation’s extraction period. Therefore, those final reports would not be included in the evaluation’s analysis, including the percentages reflected in figure 2.

A number of data collection and reporting challenges were reported by the funding recipients.

- 30% from the **Disability** component and 44% from the **Children and Families** component stated that they did not receive any supporting tools from the Program
- Timely dissemination of data collection and reporting tools was perceived as one of the major challenges by the funding recipients (Figure 3).
 - Regarding the the Program’s communication and dissemination of data collection requirements:
 - less than 40% of survey respondents from the **Disability component** considered the communication about the requirements to be accessible, easy to use, relevant and timely.
 - less than 30% of survey respondents from the **Children and Families component** considered it to be accessible and easy to use, with less than 15% considering it to be relevant and timely
 - Regarding the the Program’s communication and dissemination of data reporting requirements:
 - while the majority of survey respondents (52%) from the **Disability component** considered the communication and dissemination of data reporting requirements to be easy to use, less than 30% found it to be accessible, relevant and timely.
 - 36% of survey respondents from the **Children and Families component** considered it to be accessible, easy to use and relevant, while only 7% considered it timely.

Figure 3: Funding recipients’ perceptions of the Program’s communication and dissemination of its data collection and reporting requirements.



(Source: Survey results from both Program components; Disability component (n=23), and Children and Families component (n=14))

Please note that the ‘other’ category captured open ended responses and mostly reflected supplemental details to other categories.

The following table (Table 4) identifies some complementary, and supporting perspectives on the challenges related to the effectiveness of the Program’s communication about its reporting requirements, and dissemination of associated tools. These were uncovered in the survey data and through key informant interviews.

Table 4: Ways in which the Program’s communication about, and dissemination of, its tools regarding its reporting requirements created challenges for funding recipients.

Challenges/Gaps	Key Informant Interviews by Source
Theme: Communication about, and dissemination of, data collection and reporting requirements	
Lack of timeliness of communicating expectations	Both components’ funding recipients
Lack of clarity in communicating expectations	
Limited guidelines on data collection and reporting	
Lack of data collection and reporting training for funding recipients	Children and Families component’s funding recipients
Lack of resources for funding recipients	Disability component’s Program officials
Limited focus on the collection and reporting of qualitative data (i.e., impacts on beneficiaries/end-users)	
Concerns with timeliness of providing funding recipients with final report templates	Both component’s funding recipients Children and Families component’s Program officials
Concerns with internal communication between Policy and Program Operations Branch (e.g., timing of disseminating reporting templates and inconsistent messages related to eligible expenses)	Both components’ Program officials

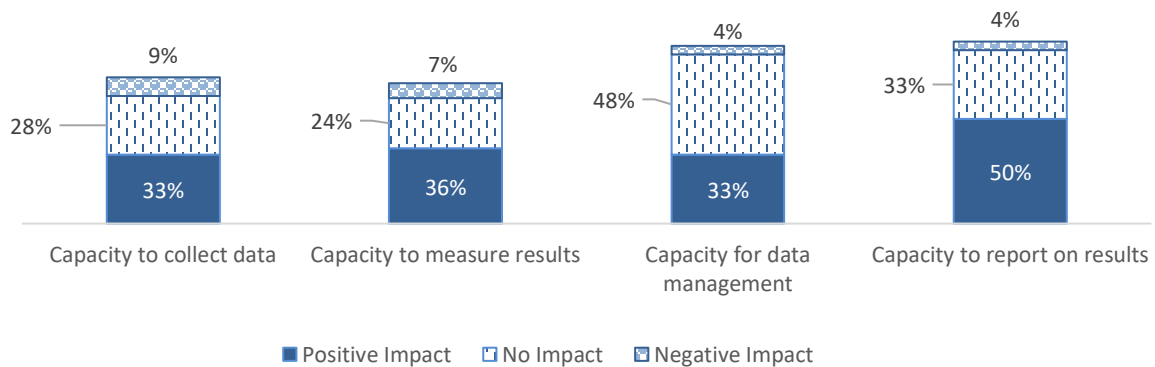
Note: The word “lack” references a deficiency, not an absence.

Key Finding #4: The Program's data requirements positively impacted the organizational capacity of the Disability component’s funding recipients, while funding recipients from the Children and Families component experienced a neutral impact. Some ambiguities emerged regarding the Program’s use of the collected data.

Program officials, who were interviewed from the **Children and Families** component, indicated they were not aware of whether the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements increased funding recipients’ organizational capacity to measure their intended results. However, the majority of Program officials from the **Disability** component, stated that it had.

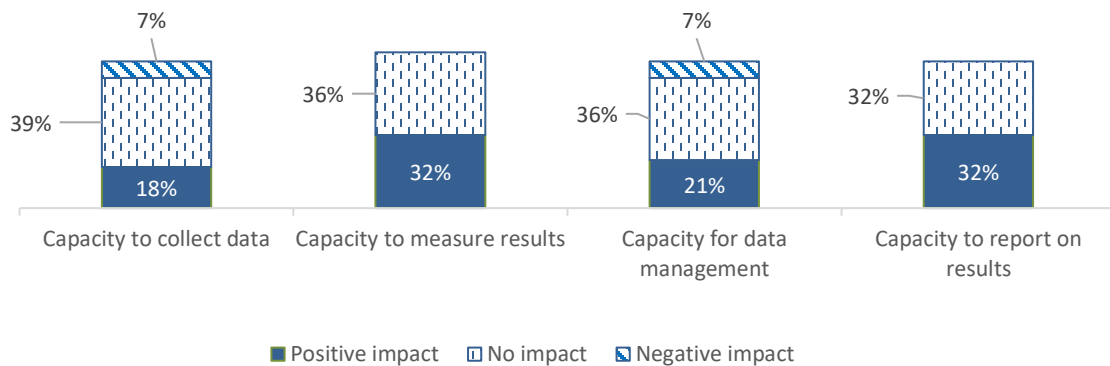
The evaluation sought to gather information on the impact the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements had on funding recipients’ organizational capacity to measure their results (Figure 4 and Figure 5). This information was intended to provide a better understanding of whether the requirements helped funding recipients to manage their data collection (e.g., setting baselines) and reporting (e.g., providing a structure for reporting). Improved organizational capacity to collect data and report on results could improve the quantity and quality of data provided in final reports; thereby increasing the funding recipients and the Program’s ability to inform performance measurement. As demonstrated, in figures 4 and 5, the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements impacted **both components’** funding recipients, with the **Disability** component showing primarily a positive impact on their organizational capacity and the **Children and Families** component showing primarily a neutral impact.

Figure 4: Funding recipients, from the **Disability** component, reported that the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements primarily had a positive impact on their organizational capacity to collect and report on data.



(Source: Survey results from the Disability component. (n=23))

Figure 5: Funding recipients, from the **Children and Families** component, indicated that the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements mostly had a neutral impact on their organizational capacity to collect and report on data.



(Source: Survey results from the Children and Families component. (n=14))

Diversity and intersectionality

The evaluation also explored whether the Program’s requirements for data collection and reporting impacted funding recipients’ ability to consider diversity and intersectionality.²³ The document review demonstrated that in 2021 the **Disability** component began to provide funding recipients with the GBA+ template and a link to a related information webinar to assist in reporting on diversity and intersectionality. The **Children and Families** component’s reporting template includes questions related to groups served by the projects. The template allows for funding recipients to collect and report on information related to diversity and intersectionality.

Survey responses, from **both components’** funding recipients (n=40), reflected that the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements had a positive impact on them. More specifically, 50% of funding recipients from **Disability** component reflected this experience. This was further supported with evidence from the administrative data review wherein final reports demonstrated common themes of increased knowledge and understanding of intersectional forms of discrimination and inequities affecting persons with disabilities. Moreover, 21% of funding recipients, from the **Children and Families** component, also reported that the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements impact their consideration of diversity and intersectionality. Final reports, from this component, further demonstrated examples of strengthened partnerships with organizations serving marginalized populations, needs assessments to better serve these populations, as well as innovative approaches to providing safe and inclusive spaces and materials.

²³ Given the 2017-2018 start date of the evaluation’s timeline, consideration of intersectionality was not a Program requirement for funded projects or operational funding. Based on the nature of the Program’s objectives and target populations, intersectionality would have been considered intuitively (e.g., tailored approaches) as all organizations intended to serve one or more vulnerable populations or identities. However, due to its prominence in recent years, and the 2021 implementation of the GBA+ template by the Disability component, this information is being provided within the evaluation for the Program’s consideration.

Reporting requirements on funding recipients

To further explore impacts of the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements on organizations, the evaluation also investigated whether they created a burden for funding recipients. While the majority (51%) of surveyed funding recipients, from **both Program components** (n=40), indicated that the reporting requirements were *reasonable*, they reported on the ways in which the requirements created a burden for their organizations (Table 5).

Additionally, interviews with Program officials, from **both components**, also reflected on funding recipients’ organizational capacity to conduct data collection and reporting requirements. They indicated that funding recipients may lack capacity and/or resources to conduct this work and thus, may find the requirements burdensome. For example, it might be burdensome to a small organization, with limited staff, to prioritize data collection and reporting over project delivery such as serving clients.

Table 5: Ways in which the Program’s data collection and reporting requirements created a burden for funding recipients.

Challenges/Gaps	Key Informants by Source
Time consuming	Both components’ funding recipients
Lack of clarity and communication on reporting expectations	
Inflexibility/ rigidity (i.e., submission of quarterly and final reports)	
Financial reporting (e.g., forecasting budget)	Disability component’s funding recipients
Lack of qualitative focus (i.e., extent of impact on funded project’s beneficiaries/end-users)	Disability component’s Program officials
Lack of rationale for collecting/reporting on the data	
Lack of guidance	
Lack of experience	Children and Families component’s Program officials
Reduced organizational capacity to focus on delivering projects (i.e., burden of having to shift resources from project delivery to data collection and reporting, increasing).	

Note: The word “lack” references a deficiency, not an absence.

With regard to support provided by the Program to funding recipients, to assist with data collection and reporting, evidence was gathered.

- Interviews with Program officials, from the **Disability** component, stated that they engaged with funding recipients by providing guidance, as needed, follow-ups and monitoring of projects to enhance accountability and collect more data on results. Along with providing templates, some Program officials stated that they provided rationales on the need for data, and simplified requirements and terminology. Some funding recipients agreed that rationales were provided however, they received limited guidance on data collection and reporting.
- Some interviewed funding recipients, from the **Children and Families** component, mentioned that the Program had provided limited guidance on data collection and reporting. Similarly, the majority of Program officials stated that they were unaware of any Program supports related to data requirements, although one Program official mentioned that they provided templates as well as guidance and direction when needed.

There is a range of evidence on the usage of collected data

The evaluation explored the Program's use of data collected from funding recipients. While certain aspects of data collection were supported by Program officials, it remains unclear how the data is specifically used to inform the Program's design or lessons learned.

- Some Program officials, interviewed from the **Children and Families** component, stated that the Program used data, collected and reported on by funding recipients, to inform lessons learned and Program design (i.e., the requirement of mandatory leveraging additional funds for projects was removed).
- The majority of Program officials, interviewed from **both components**, were unable to speak to how the data was used, nor were they aware of any data collection or reporting challenges. Some Program officials indicated that the use of data differs, depending on the Program area. Notably, varying roles and responsibilities within the Program and challenges related to internal communication, as previously highlighted, may hinder awareness of data findings and its usage.

Key finding #5. All interviewed and surveyed stakeholders agreed that the Program increased social inclusion by decreasing barriers to participation, in Canadian society, while increasing opportunities for community engagement.

The Program is a *partnerships* program that funds many national organizations that are often situated in urban centres. Those organizations (i.e., funding recipients) often partner with other organizations (i.e., partner organizations) across the country. The Program's provincial and territorial funding distribution, throughout the period of the evaluation, is presented in [Annex F](#).

As defined in the Program's Performance Information Profile (2022), social inclusion refers to circumstances in which individuals can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, political and cultural life which enhance the well-being of all people.

Both Program components share a similar ultimate outcome²⁴ and aim to increase social inclusion of its target populations.²⁵ All interviewed and surveyed stakeholders agreed that the Program has contributed to social inclusion through Program funding and its delivery model.

While all outcomes (intermediate and immediate) were evaluated, they were not always detailed separately for both components. Therefore, for the purposes of this evaluation, outcomes of both components were consolidated into four common outcomes. This approach reflects their similarities and seeks to focus on their main essence.

1. Increasing opportunities to access support for addressing social needs
2. Contributing to community engagement
3. Contributing to community participation
4. Improving abilities to address diverse barriers to social inclusion

The majority of funding recipients and partner organizations, from both Program components, reported that Program funding, to a large extent, was used to increase social inclusion of their target populations.

Funding recipients and partner organizations, from both components reported that Program funding, to a large extent, was used to increase social inclusion.

- Specifically, 89% of respondents (n=27) from the **Children and Families** component, and 93% of respondents (n=29) from the **Disability** component reflected these findings.

1. Funding recipients and partner organizations, from both Program components, reported that Program funding, to a large extent, was used to increase opportunities to access support to address social needs.

Survey responses showed that 89% of respondents, from the **Children and Families** component, used the Program's funding to contribute to the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support in addressing social needs” for children and families, and vulnerable populations, to either a large (74%) or to some (15%) extent. This finding was also supported by evidence from interviews and administrative data.

- All interviewed funding recipients, from this component, indicated that the funding helped in applying innovative tools such as tailoring training materials and support services to meet beneficiaries’ (i.e., end-users) needs, and exchanging knowledge through mobile applications and open source data platforms to help address accessibility challenges. These training materials and support services contributed to the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support”. This was also confirmed by the majority of Program officials based on their review of the reported results, including final reports.

²⁴ The Disability component’s outcomes are outlined in its Logic Model, in [Annex A](#). The Children and Families component’s outcomes are outlined in its Logic Model, in [Annex B](#).

²⁵ Methodology Report (2023). Evaluation of the Social Development Partnerships Program (internal document)

- Administrative data review noted that close-to-half of final reports (45%) showed contributions to the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support” for target population including children and families and other vulnerable groups. An example of this was materials provided for services and training in six different languages.

In regards to the **Disability** component, findings from all lines of evidence underscore the Program's contribution to the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support and addressing social needs” for persons with disabilities in Canadian society, in particular:

- 89% of the survey respondents used the Program's funding to either a large (65%) or to some (24%) extent towards the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support and addressing social needs”
- key informant interviews, including beneficiaries (i.e., end-users) and funding recipients also highlighted the use of innovative tools such as customized training modules and incorporating assistive technology to address accessibility challenges. This contributed to the outcome of “increasing opportunities to access support”. It allowed beneficiaries (i.e., end-users) to meaningfully participate in various activities such as participating in conferences and webinars, and developing toolkits. Program officials also confirmed the development and use of innovative tools.
- the administrative data review revealed that 45% of funded projects and operational funding agreements' final reports contributed to the outcome of “increasing opportunities”.

2. Funding recipients and partner organizations from both Program components reported that Program funding, to a large extent, was used to contribute to community engagement and participation in target populations.

Survey responses showed that 93% of respondents, from the **Children and Families** component, reported using the Program's funding to contribute to community engagement to either a large (63%) or to some (30%) extent. This finding is further confirmed by evidence from interviews and administrative data.

- Key informant interviews revealed that all funding recipients under the **Children and Families** component, and the majority of their partner organizations engaged in various collaborative activities and partnerships that contribute to the outcomes of “engaging the community” and “increasing opportunities for participation”. They applied different engagement strategies such as sharing information, providing training sessions, skill-sharing, and consultations.

Example of a partner organization's experience

The **Data Driven Engagement** project, funded by the Program starting in 2021 (ongoing), supports the engagement of Canadian donors and volunteers by increasing awareness, understanding, access to and promotion of the use of data related to giving and volunteering. One of the partner organizations shared insights on the benefits of having a partnership with the funding recipient:

“The fact that not everyone had the same level of expertise, on data, is in some ways a challenge, but that's also normal. That's the reason we're collaborating. There were some other data sources for us that we were not familiar with, but (the funding recipient) had that expertise. Working with other organizations to leverage our skills and their domain expertise and their networks and their relationships ... the benefits are pretty clear.” - a representative from a **partner organization**, Children and Families component

- Administrative data review also demonstrated the importance of “community engagement” and “increasing opportunities for participation”, which was reflected in the majority of funding recipients’ final reports under the **Children and Families** component. Examples include the use of different engagement channels to address the various needs of the target populations, such as social media, webinars and conferences.

Survey responses, from the **Disability** component, showed that 96% of respondents reported using the Program’s funding to contribute to the outcome of “community engagement” to either a large (72%) or to some (24%) extent. Results from interviews and administrative data, from this component, also reflected ways the Program’s funding was used to contribute to the outcomes of “community engagement” and “increasing opportunities for participation”. All beneficiaries (i.e., end-users) who were interviewed highlighted that the Program’s funding supported them with being able to:

- effectively communicate their stories and contributions
- develop and apply life skills
- increase awareness of human rights
- develop and apply advocacy skills

Examples of participants’ experiences

Example 1

The **Leading Change through the Values-based Leadership of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities** project, funded by the Program from 2020 to 2022, developed the leadership capacities of eight youth with intellectual disabilities through a values-based leadership course, and an inclusive leadership development program. This supported developing the next generation of leaders in the disability sector in Canada. A beneficiary (participant) of the Leading Change project shared her experience:

“It (participating in the project) taught me a lot of skills. It taught me how to be brave. We can be hard workers and great volunteers. We can make a difference together as a community.” – a **youth participant**, Disability component

Example 2

The **Childhood Disability Communications Hub** project, funded by the Program from 2017 to 2019, built on partnerships and knowledge within the disability community across Canada, to further promote social inclusion of children with disabilities in different aspects of Canadian society. One of the projects’ initiatives included an expansion of the **Jooay app** to all provinces and territories. The Jooay app is free app that helps children with disabilities and their families find leisure opportunities that are accessible, local, and suited to their needs and preferences. A user of the app shared her experience:

“When we were displaced due to the forest fires in Fort McMurray, I could decide which ones (activities) were best or worse suited to my child’s needs and interests, while in (an unfamiliar city). It presented a lot of options to chose from.” – a **parent**, Disability component

- The administrative data review, for the **Disability** component, also reiterated the importance of community engagement and increasing opportunities for participation in achieving Program

objectives. An example of this is providing the space to share lived experiences which allowed the fostering of a sense of engagement among participants.

Funding recipients, from **both components**, however, faced some challenges in achieving this outcome, including:

- tight project timelines
- constraints and limited partnership experience
- financial constraints in acquiring necessary resources
- absence of direct support from the Program in engaging partner organizations in the **Children and Families** component
- navigating the department's structure and roles (particularly for funding recipients in the **Disability** component)

3. Funding recipients and partner organizations, from both Program components, reported that Program funding, to a large extent, was used to improve abilities to address the diverse barriers to social inclusion.

The **Children and Families** component

- Survey responses showed that 85% of respondents used the Program's funding to improve their abilities to contribute to the outcome of “addressing barriers to social inclusion” to either a large (52%) or to some (33%) extent.
 - Results also demonstrated that 82% reported an improved ability to consider diversity and intersectionality within the implemented activities.
- All funding recipients and partner organizations under the **Children and Families** component, who were interviewed, indicated alignment with the Program’s objectives, emphasizing that they addressed barriers to social inclusion. More specifically, interviewees pointed out that the Program facilitated collaboration across different types of organizations and initiatives. Thus directly addressing the communication barrier. Considerations to diversity and intersectionality were also highlighted. The majority of Program officials interviewed confirmed this finding.

Example of a partner organization’s experience

The **Formation et renforcement des capacités des éducateurs/éducatrices de la petite enfance** (translation: Training and Capacity Building for Early Childhood Educators) – **Phase I** project, funded by the Program in 2019 – 2021, offered training to francophone early childhood educators living in French language minority communities in Canada. One of the funding recipient’s partner organizations shared his views on the project outcomes:

“The project was around the idea that (language minority early childhood) educators are vulnerable or not well supported and aren’t able to accomplish everything that needs to be done in a day. The project really allowed us to put in place tools. We are 2 years after the end of the project, but there are still tools and skills in place today that are used daily, thanks to this project.” (translation) – a representative from a **partner organization**, Children and Families component

- Administrative data review also reflected this focus, indicating a high presence of activities related to the outcome of addressing barriers to social inclusion, with 71% of funding recipients’

final reports under the **Children and Families** component mentioning it. Among the activities highlighted under this outcome was offering free accessible training to the general public on creating safe and inclusive spaces.

The **Disability** component

- Survey responses showed that 96% of respondents reported using the Program's funding to improve their abilities to contribute to the outcome of “addressing barriers to social inclusion” to either a large (69%) or to some (27%) extent.
 - Results also demonstrated that 86% reported an improved ability to consider diversity and intersectionality during the development and implementation of measures and activities.
- Funding recipients, who were interviewed, revealed that most of them focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of their approaches and training.
 - These interviews emphasized the importance of elevating the voices of people with disabilities to change policies.
- As part of this evaluation, a few individuals who benefited from participating in projects funded under the **Disability** component (i.e., beneficiaries/end-users) were interviewed. Those few who were interviewed stated that the services received through funded projects and operational funding helped decrease barriers. They specifically highlighted the important role played by learning support workers in reducing barriers, such as preparing participants for meetings and helping them understand session objectives. Without addressing these communication barriers, participants indicated they might have had to drop out of their program.
- The administrative data review found limited presence of activities and approaches related to the outcome “improved abilities to address diverse barriers” in the submitted final reports. However, these reports noted that there were discussions to review solutions and initial findings through raising awareness in addressing barriers to social inclusion.

The majority of funding recipients indicated that the Program’s delivery model increased their organizational capacity to achieve social inclusion of target populations.

Surveyed funding recipients strongly indicated that the Program’s delivery model helped fostered their capacity to achieve social inclusion in both components.

- The majority (more than 70%) of the participants from **both components** affirmed that the Program’s delivery model helped foster their capacity to either a large or small extent.
 - 85% of respondents from the **Children and Families** component and 79% respondents from the **Disability** component’s reported increased capacity for social inclusion.
- The majority of survey respondents also acknowledged that the Program’s delivery model also fostered the achievement of all intermediate and immediate outcomes (Tables 6 and 7).

These findings align with the evidence from key informant interviews and administrative data which also reflected the effectiveness of the Program’s delivery model in fostering organizational capacity to achieve social inclusion.

Table 6: Extent to which the Program’s delivery model fostered the **Disability component’s** funding recipients and partner organizations to achieve intermediate and immediate Program outcomes

Disability component’s Program outcomes		Large extent	Some extent	Combined
Intermediate outcomes	Increased opportunities for persons with disabilities access support (programs, services and resources) to address their social needs:	52%	32%	84%
	Communities are engaged in supporting persons with disabilities	56%	31%	87%
Immediate outcomes	Funding recipients build their organizational capacity	46%	37%	83%
	Funding recipients foster partnerships and networks	63%	27%	90%
	Funding recipients develop and utilize effective approaches	66%	22%	88%

(Source: Survey results from the Disability component’s funding recipients and partner organizations)

Table 7: Extent to which the Program’s delivery model fostered the **Children and Families** component’s funding recipients and partner organizations to achieve intermediate and immediate Program outcomes

Children and Families component’s Program outcomes ²⁶		Large extent	Some extent	Combined
Intermediate outcomes	Improved ability of recipients to address the diverse barriers to social inclusion faced by participating children and families, and vulnerable populations	56%	26%	82%
	Increased opportunities for participation of children and families, and other vulnerable populations in their	52%	33%	85%

²⁶ The Children and Families component’s Logic Model ([Annex B](#)) includes an intermediate and an immediate outcome related specifically to the Canada’s Volunteer Awards. That aspect of the Program recently underwent its own separate evaluation and thus was not included in this evaluation. As such, those two associated outcomes are not presented in Table 8.

	communities			
Immediate outcome	Increase in approaches to address current and emerging social issues faced by children and families, and vulnerable populations	67%	22%	89%

(Source: Survey results from the Children and Families component’s funding recipients and partner organizations)

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the capacity of funding recipients and partner organizations from both components in achieving increased social inclusion.

While the pandemic raised challenges, funding recipients and partner organizations demonstrated adaptability by implementing innovative adjustments to their approaches towards achieving increased social inclusion for the Program’s target population.

- The pandemic affected funding recipients and partner organizations to varying degrees (Figure 6 and Figure 7)
- Interviewed funding recipients and Program officials, from **both components**, noted the crucial role of the Program’s flexible support and stable funding in assisting organizations during the pandemic.
- The survey data indicated that less than 37% of respondents in the **Children and Families** component and less than 30% from the **Disability** component reported negative impacts from the pandemic.
- Among the funding recipients who submitted final reports,²⁷ only 39% acknowledged the impact of the pandemic. They cited both positive and negative effects, likely due to factors including adaptability and Program support.

Challenges and innovative adjustments

The challenges faced by the **Children and Families** component included the sudden loss of revenue due to the cancellation of fundraising events and logistical challenges linked to office closures, volunteer engagement, and staffing. The following are some of the adapted measures that were applied:

- enhancing mental health support services
- shifting to remote work
- improving technological skills
- using flexibilities, provided by Program officials, to use funding for unanticipated costs (e.g., larger spaces to accommodate physical distancing)

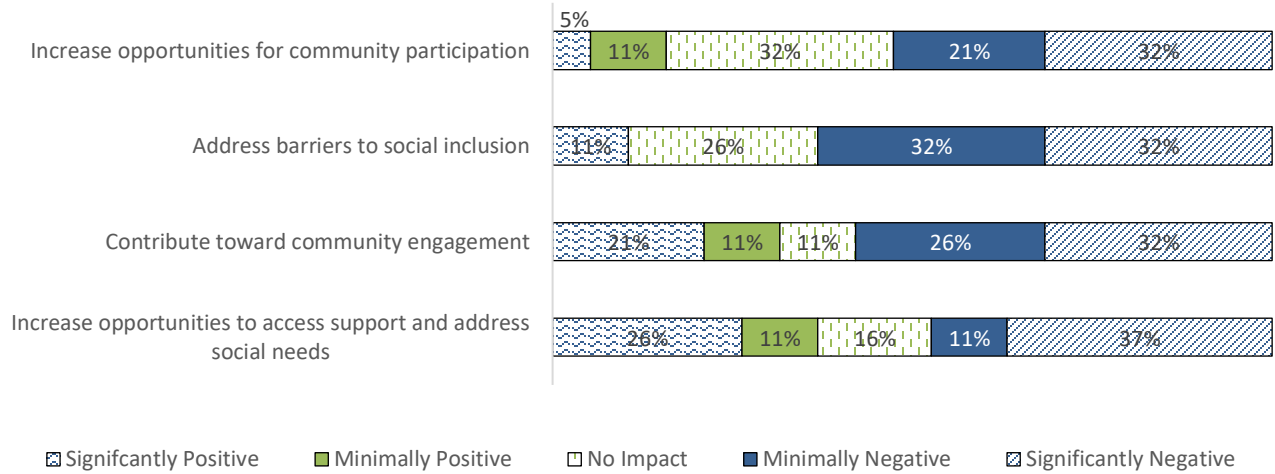
²⁷ This reference includes projects that began after March 2020 as well as multi-year agreement that encompassed some timeframe post March 2020.

The main challenge faced by funding recipients and partner organizations from the **Disability** component was that their targeted population was at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.²⁸ Some of the adapted measures that were applied included:

- fostering partnerships
- developing new approaches (e.g., virtual events, re-designed best practices)
- increasing opportunities for social inclusion
- shifting to virtual communication and outdoor meetings

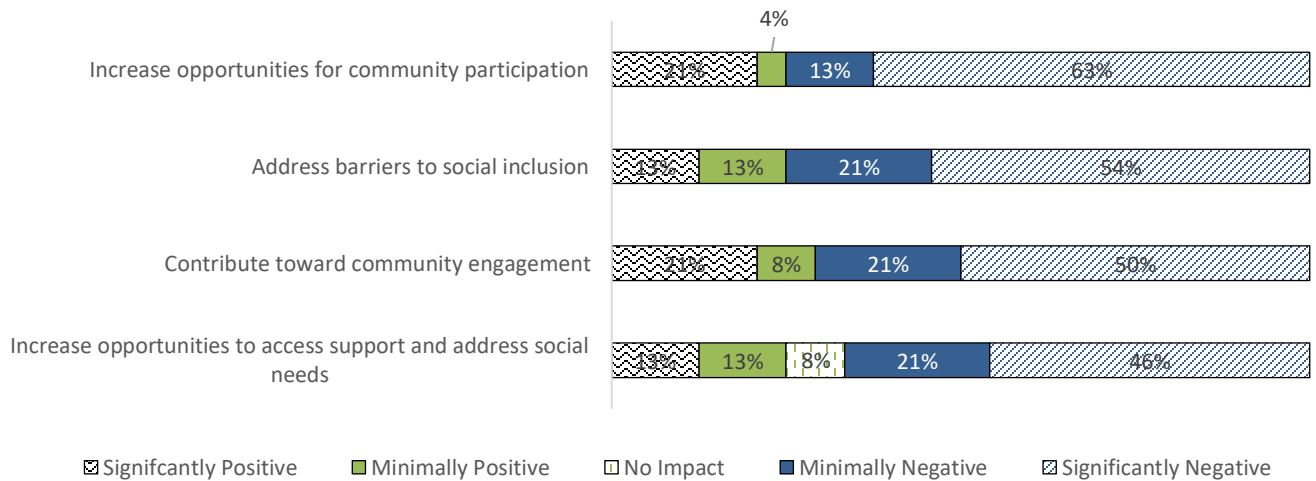
²⁸ Vulnerable populations, like the ones targeted by the Program, were more at risk at contracting the virus and developing severe complications due to their health, social, and economic circumstances (PHAC, n.d.).

Figure 6: Extent COVID-19 impacted capacity to achieve the Program’s intermediate outcomes for the **Children and Families** component.



(Source: Children and Families component - survey results (n=29))

Figure 7: Extent COVID-19 impacted capacity to achieve the Program’s intermediate outcomes for the **Disability** component.



(Source: Disability component - survey results (n=27))

Key finding #6. Projects' approaches were generally sustained beyond the funding terms, by funding recipients and partner organizations.

The Program’s Performance Information Profile (2021) defined “project sustainability” as “the ability of a project to continue to implement some or all of its components such as activities, outputs, and outcomes beyond the funding term”.

The majority of the funding recipients and partner organizations reported sustained project approaches.

Sustained²⁹ project approaches, beyond funding terms, were achieved as indicated by 62% of surveyed funding recipients and partner organizations from the **Disability** component and 59% from the **Children and Families** component. Table 8 lists the most commonly sustained approaches/activities. The three most common included:

- partnerships and networks
- resource expansion and distribution
- ongoing community participation

Table 8: Percentage of approaches and activities sustained beyond the Program’s funding terms

SUSTAINED PROJECT ACTIVITIES	DISABILITY COMPONENT	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMPONENT
Work with partners and/or networks continued	94%	88%
Resources, such as knowledge, tools and/or data, continued to be further developed and/or distributed	83%	88%
Community/stakeholder participation continued	89%	56%
Leveraging ³⁰ non-federal funding began or continued	72%	38%
Delivery of events/training continued	78%	50%
Organizational capacity continued to increase	61%	56%
Other	11%	13%

(Source: Administrative data from both Program components)

The administrative data, from **both components**, noted several approaches that fostered and supported sustainable outcomes, including:

- continued partnerships

²⁹ The term "sustained" refers to project results extending beyond the funding period, including any passage of time post-funding.

³⁰ The Performance Information Profile defines leveraging as a process in which funded organizations obtain cash and in-kind contributions from partners to assist in the development and implementation of funded projects. Leveraging other sources of funding is not a requirement for receiving Program funding.

- continued engagement with stakeholders
- application of *lessons learned*
- addressing areas for improvement, including application of GBA+ lens, and deepening relations with Indigenous people
- continued research/data collection to support complementary studies
- knowledge transfer (of resources and final reports)
- securing additional resources/funding

Interviews with partner organizations, from the **Children and Families** component, added that they had built online services and developed codes of conduct. They also provided input on the support they received from funding recipients to ensure sustainable project outcomes, including:

- support in project design
- baseline results
- project design
- organizational knowledge
- continued use of product/services
- professional and network development

Additionally, leveraging funds from non-federal partners enabled the Program to increase the impact of its interventions on social issues. Between 2018 and 2022, the majority of funding recipients from **both components** demonstrated the ability to leverage funds from non-federal sources, as illustrated in table 9.

Table 9: Percentage of Social Development Partnerships Program projects that leverage funds from non-federal partners

FISCAL YEAR	DISABILITY COMPONENT	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMPONENT
2018-2019	88%	At least 90%
2019-2020	88%	100%
2020-2021	83%	86%
2021-2022	54.5%	100%

Source: TBS infobase 'Percentage of SDPP projects that leverage funds from non-federal partners'. [GC InfoBase - Infographic for Social Development Partnerships Program \(canada.ca\)](#)

Beneficiaries from the Disability component reported sustained skill building and personal development.

A few individuals who benefited from participating in projects funded under the **Disability** component (i.e., end-users) were interviewed. Those few who were interviewed stated that they had sustained

outcomes, beyond the funding term, from having participated in and benefitted from approaches that had been funded by the Program. They included:

- creation of and ongoing usage of tools (i.e., videos, webinars)
- gained personal development and skills
- gained advocacy skills
- improved communication skills
- increased access to and usage of services

These activities contributed to their social inclusion and increased participation and engagement in their communities. They indicated that these outcomes have been sustained well past the funding terms. The tools were created, and the skills and personal development were gained, with the assistance of the learning support workers, who were paid through the Program's operational funding.

Interview and survey data from funding recipients reported that approaches led to sustainable outcomes. The sustainability of outcomes is a focus of the Program, and funding recipients were supported in different ways depending on the Program component. The **Children and Families** component provided support through project funding as well as the promotion of cross-sectoral leveraging (e.g., non federal leveraging referrals). The **Disability** component, supported sustainability through these means and by increasing organizational capacity through operational funding.

There were some challenges...

Funding recipients from the **Disability** component suggested that efforts are not always sustained given the short time period of project and operational funding, and the impact it has on promoting and assessing activities to ensure sustainability. Some funding recipients, from **Children and Families** component, also identified challenges and mentioned the lack of operational funding grants restricting sustainability of their project outcomes.

Interviewed funding recipients from **both components** indicated that, regardless of the sustainability of the results after the Program funding ends, the projects' and operational funding sustainability are significantly affected by the ongoing challenge of securing funding for not-for-profit organizations. Nonetheless, key informant interviews with funding recipients supported the findings from the administrative data indicating that they continued to implement approaches and/or activities beyond the funding term, demonstrating a commitment to sustaining their initiatives despite the ongoing challenge of securing funding. Continuing to work with partners and/or networks and to further develop and distribute resources such as knowledge, tools and/or data are among the top approaches and activities sustained beyond the funding term, as detailed in Table 8.

5. Conclusion: Mapping of recommendations and related findings

The Program aligns with Government of Canada priorities and ESDC departmental objectives, addressing social issues, and supporting vulnerable groups. It emphasizes knowledge exchange, integrates GBA+ for equity, and enhances the capacity of community organizations. Moreover, the Program demonstrated flexibility, evident in the updating of Terms and Conditions to address emerging issues, such as improving performance measurement and meeting the needs of vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic [**Key Finding #1**]. Furthermore, all stakeholders acknowledged the Program's role in reducing barriers to participation, in Canadian society, and increasing opportunities for community engagement [**Key Finding #5**]. This positive alignment contributed to the continuation of projects' approaches even after the designated funding terms concluded [**Key Finding #6**].

Recommendation 1

The Program should explore different communications methods towards improved stakeholder access to information of the funding application intakes and how to apply.

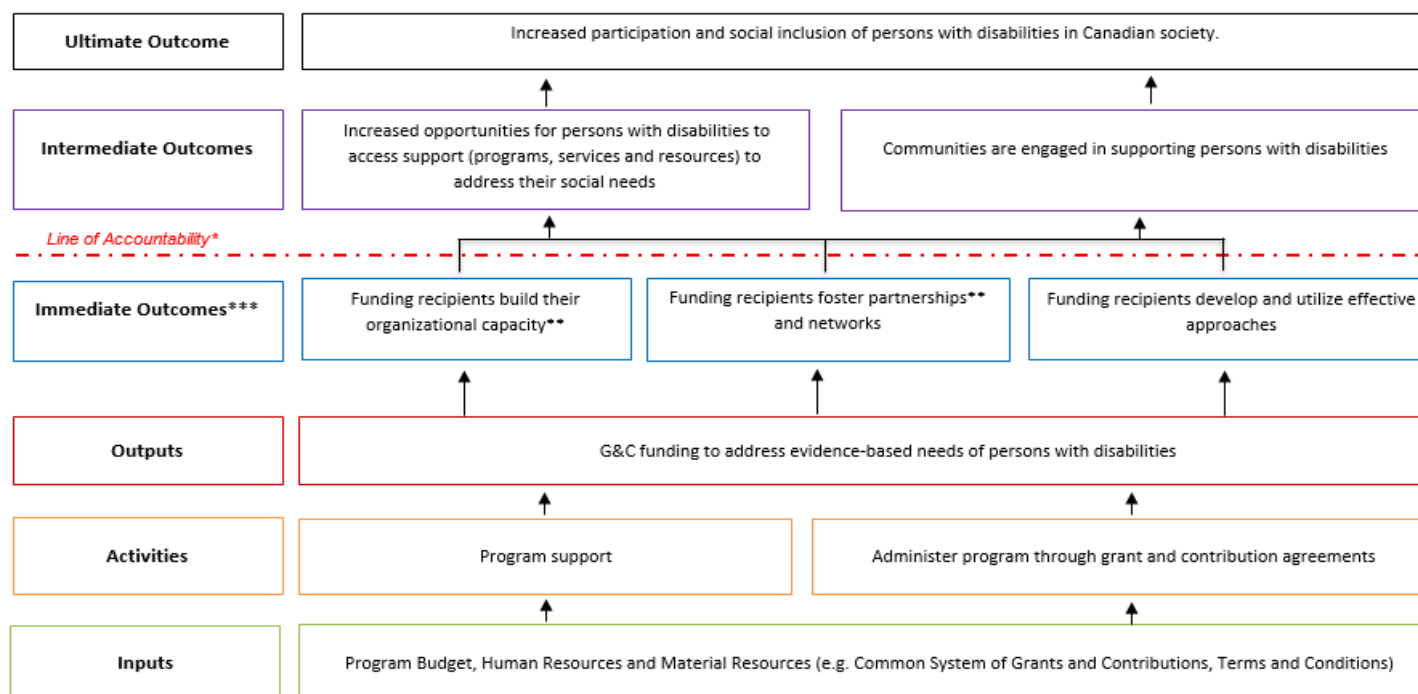
Stakeholders and interviewed participants mentioned that additional and clear information may help clarify the application and assessment processes [**Key Finding #2**]. Funding recipients, from both components, expressed concerns about the lack of awareness of the applications' two-stage assessment process, the long and onerous review process, and the technical issues experienced when completing the application. Program officials, from both components, raised the issue of a lack of internal alignment and effective communication between its policy and operations branches, along with difficulties with the short timelines to complete the applications. These challenges impact accessibility, as applicants are facing barriers in understanding and navigating the application process efficiently.

Recommendation 2

The Program should explore the barriers experienced by funding recipients related to reporting tools, to better support their performance assessment.

The evaluation findings reveal that the majority of funding recipients perceived the Program's reporting requirements as reasonable and communicated clearly. However, the evaluation found low uptake in the usage of the final reporting templates over the evaluation period, from both Program components. This finding should be considered within the context that the funding agreements do not mandate the use of customized templates. Moreover, in the cases when templates had been used, there was very little consistency in way the required information was reported. In addition, 30% of the survey respondents from the **Disability** component and 44% from the **Children and Families** component stated that they did not receive any tools from the Program. Additional challenges included timely dissemination of data collection and reporting tools was perceived as a major challenge by the funding recipients. Other challenges include, but are not limited to, lack of timeliness and clarity in communicating reporting expectations and limited guidelines on data collection and reporting [**Key Finding #3**].

Annex A: Disability component Logic Model



(Source: Document review)

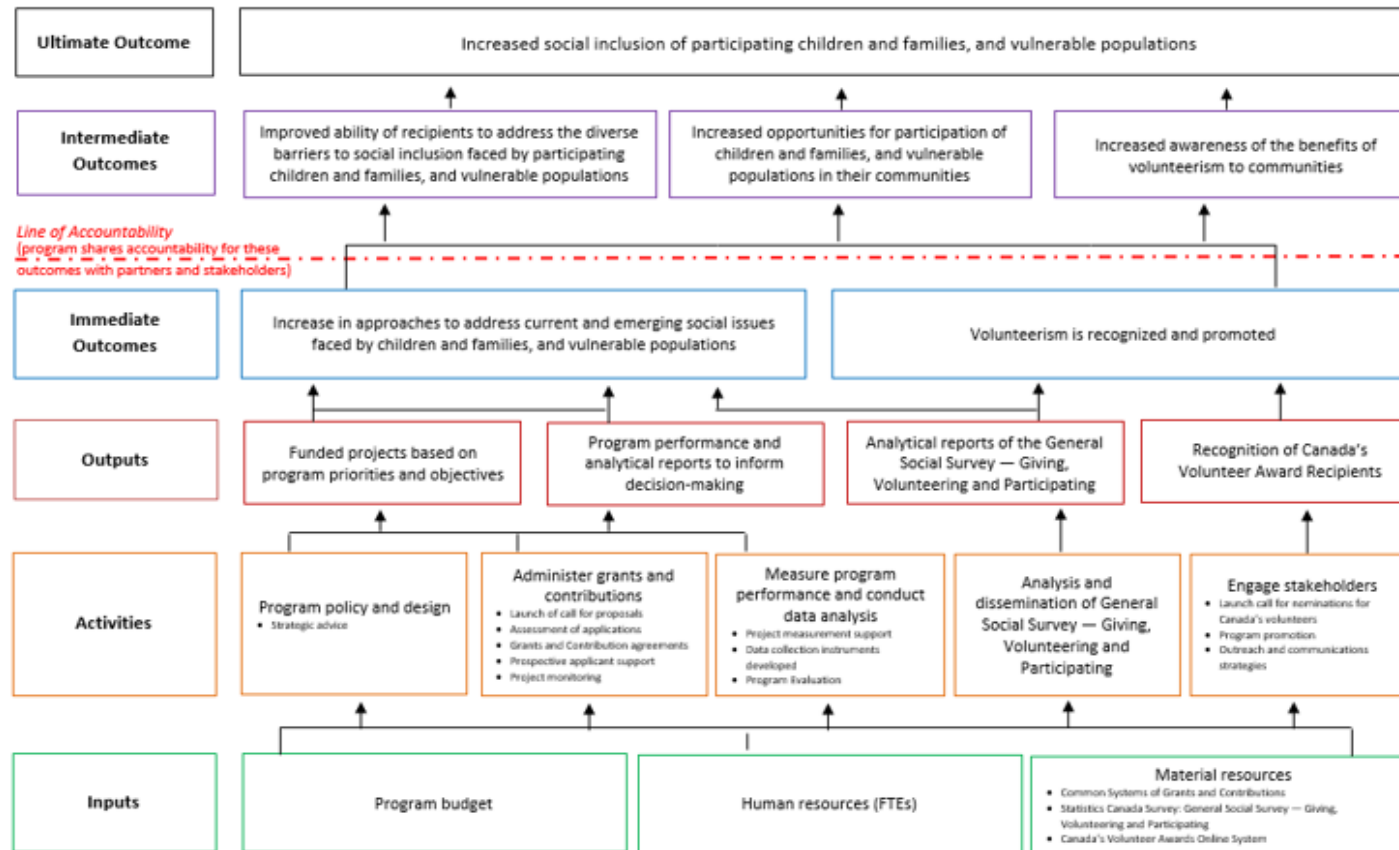
* Outcomes below the line of accountability are influenced more directly by the Program. Outcomes above the line are also influenced by other factors.

** Organizational capacity is defined as the range of resources that organizations require to support their projects effectively to advance their objectives and improve performance.

Partnerships are defined as collaborative relationships between two or more organizations to develop and implement projects involving other not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, citizens, foundations and governments where partners commit various resources such as money, labour, property, or knowledge to the partnership, formally or informally.

*** All immediate outcomes address and identify social issues and challenges for persons with disabilities, which is necessary for the ultimate outcome.

Annex B: Children and Families component Logic Model



(Source: Document review)

Annex C: Evaluation questions

1. How does the Program contribute to the Government of Canada priorities, and ESDC departmental objectives?
 - 1.1 Do activities carried out by funding recipients continue to be aligned with the Program's objectives?
2. How is the Program's funding being used by funding recipients to achieve Program outcomes?
 - 2.1 How is the Program's delivery model fostering funding recipients' capacity to achieve Program outcomes?
 - 2.2 To what extent has COVID-19 affected the capacity of funding recipients to achieve Program outcomes?
 - 2.3 How has the Program supported new ways of addressing social issues faced by its target populations (persons with disabilities, children and families and vulnerable populations)?
3. How (*and to what extent*) are the Program's data collection strategies improving funding recipients' capacity to measure their intended results?
 - 3.1 How has the requirement of data collection and reporting affected the Program's funding recipients?
 - 3.2 How has the Program been using the data, collected by funding recipients, to make Program improvements?
4. To what extent does the Program's funding application process reach intended target groups?
5. Do the Program's funding recipients undertake approaches that result in sustainable outcomes beyond the funding terms? If yes, how?

Annex D: Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach that included several lines of evidence. This approach ensured adequate data triangulation supported the robust evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Lines of evidence

1. Document and literature review
2. Administrative data and analysis
3. Key informant interviews
4. Online survey with funding recipients and partner organizations

Scale used to report the findings

- “Large majority or most” – findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 75% but less than 90% of key informants in the group.
- “Majority” - findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 51% but less than 75% of key informants in the group.
- “Some” - findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 25% but less than 50% of key informants in the group.
- “A few” - findings reflect the views and opinions of at least two respondents but less than 25% of key informants in the group.
- “One” – findings of one highly knowledgeable key informant

1. Document and literature review

The sixteen (16) document review sources were primarily derived from internal Program documents, while the twenty-nine (29) literature review sources were primarily derived from online search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, EBSCO, GCpedia, the Government of Canada Publications Catalogue and the Statistics Canada publications catalogue.

Key limitations

The Program’s internal studies and documentation surrounding the current evaluation topics, was limited. Despite using the earlier stated search engines, access to and availability of extensive peer review articles were limited. Nonetheless, to mitigate these limitations, multiple lines of evidence have been included in the evaluation to complement evidence gaps in any particular line.

2. Administrative data review and analysis

Evaluation reviewed and analyzed administrative data from the Common System for Grants and Contributions (CSGC). Data for the period from April 2017 to March 2022 was submitted by funding recipients as part of quarterly progress reports and final reports’ reporting requirements. Reports included information on activities, projected and achieved outcomes, as well as partnerships. The administrative data analysis of the final reports derived from a sample of 80 funding agreements (taken

from the 130 unique projects or operational funding agreements files that were funded during the evaluation period) and was conducted using MAXQDA 2022.

The sample of 80 funded projects or operational funding agreement files was selected using a representative approach including consideration to **both Program components**, funding mechanism (grant or contribution), fiscal year covered in the evaluation period, geographical representation, and urban or rural representation.

Key limitations

There were also a number of limitations, which were specific to this line of evidence.

- Data challenges related to data entry in CSGC as not all project files were complete, and it was unclear in some cases whether the status of the files were up to date.
- Not all components nor funding mechanisms were utilized each fiscal year (for example there were no funded Children and Families grant projects funded in either 2020-2021 or 2021-2022).
- There was a low number of funding recipients located in rural areas. Final reports, and the amount of details contained therein varied widely regardless of whether the funding recipient used reporting templates.
- Of the 80 sampled projects, 9 projects (11% of sample) either did not submit final reports, or their final reports were not available at the time of the evaluation. Another 21 projects (26% of the sample) were ongoing at the time of report retrieval and consequently did not contain a final report. This represents 37.5% of projects in the sample. In particular, findings related to template usage were impacted by the unavailability of the final reports. Additionally, one of these files, within the Children and Families component, submitted two final reports for separate elements of their project, as opposed to submitting one final report, which may have marginally skewed frequency percentages as both were coded in the analysis of template usage.

One area of focus for the **Children and Families** component was on projects related to sustainable development goals. These projects were funded under a separate funding source, from the rest of the component's projects. However, they were included in the sample of projects provided for the evaluation. As such, they were included in the administrative data review. Awareness of this limitation came during the final evaluation report stage. It was not possible to entirely remove this data. Nonetheless, related administrative findings, to the extent possible, were removed. The impact of this discrepancy was likely minimal as the evaluation results from the **Disability** component were mostly aligned with the **Children and Families** component.

3. Key informant interviews

A list of all funding recipients was provided by the Program, which was then analyzed by evaluators to remove duplicates. One-hundred and eighty-three (183) projects were funded within the evaluation period, and 130 were determined to be unique organizations. These 130 made up the purposive sampling frame for initiating the key informant interviews.

Key informant interviews with Program officials, funding recipients, partner organizations, applicants, and beneficiaries (i.e., end-users) were conducted for the evaluation. The objective was to gain insight on the application process, use and impact of funding, as well as views on the extent to which the Program supported the achievement of outcomes.

The facilitation of interviews was done internally from June 8 to August 21, 2023. The interviews consisted open-ended questions. Five separate interview guides were created and used for both

Program components' stakeholders. Interview questions were constructed internally and derived from the broader evaluation questions and associated indicators.

A total of thirty-six (36) semi-structured interviews were conducted by online video, with a diversity of key stakeholders:

- ESDC Program policy officials from the Social Development Partnerships Program, including directors, managers and senior analysts from the Office of Disability Issues (n=2) and the Social Innovation and Community Development Directorate (n=2).
- ESDC Program officials from the Program Operations Branch, National Grants and Contribution Delivery Centre (n=4) and Program Oversight (n=2) including managers, senior analysts and/or senior program officers
- representatives of funding recipients (n=10)
- representatives of partner organizations (n=9)
- beneficiaries (i.e., end-users) from the Disability component (n=9)
- applicants, including representatives of applications that had not yet received a funding decision or their application had not been approved (n=9)

The sampling of funding recipients, partner organizations, applicants as well as the Program officials reflected a purposive sampling approach. Specifically, for the funding recipients, partner organizations, and applicants represented diverse organizations, funding component, funding stream, fiscal year, geographical location as well as rural and urban profile.

Attempts were also made to have a purposive and representative sample of individuals who benefited from funded projects (i.e., beneficiaries/end-users). However, the evaluation team was only successful in attaining contact information for beneficiaries from the **Disability** component. Consequently, the sample comprised of only 11 names, and thus a convenience sample resulted. Nonetheless, these participants represented various organizations, funding streams, genders, abilities, geographical locations, and roles and responsibilities.

Recruitment of beneficiaries, as mentioned, came exclusively through the **Disability** component. The beneficiaries had diverse abilities and barriers. Accordingly, some of the participants were able to respond to similar recruitment efforts that were used for other stakeholders, such as the email invitation that had been sent to funding recipients and partner organizations. They made up approximately half (5) of the 9 interviews and they each represented a project that had been funded by the Program. The remaining four interviews took place in two small group interviews, and those participants represented one specific funding recipient. The composition of these group interviews included youth (under the age of 30) who benefitted from the assistance of a learning support worker to participate in both the interviews as well as in the projects or operations of the organization, as funded by the Program. Learning support workers were present for both group interviews and their involvement was paid through Program funding.

Technical/subjective terms such as third party delivery model and beneficiaries were defined, visually and orally, to limit the misinterpretation of questions. To preserve the integrity of interviews, interviewers refrained from leading participants' answers, asked for clarity when necessary and provided time at the end of each interviews for participants to comment or address aspects of the Program not raised.

Key limitations

Some funding recipients and partner organizations were not responsive or the email address provided by the Program was not accurate, resulting in bounce back emails. The evaluation team made several

efforts to gather accurate information through internet searches and telephone calls. During the interviews, participants did not answer every question. Some questions or answers were clustered producing overarching responses. Additionally, some key informants may not have a clear recollection of their entire experience due to the passage of time since their involvement with the Program and when the interviews took place. Further, some terms may have been misunderstood due to subjective usage within the Program (i.e., third party delivery model, or partnership model or intermediary model) and/or with respect to translation from one official language to the other (e.g., funding recipients and beneficiaries). Moreover, the Program's Performance Measurement division was subsumed within the responsibilities of the Program's policy team in the spring of 2023, just prior to conducting the interviews with Program officials. This may have impacted some key informants' lack of awareness of reporting tools or data usage.

Written responses, to the interview questions, were encouraged for the following participants:

- organizations that had limited capacity to participate
- participants that did not respond to all interview questions but exceeded the permitted interview time and additional time provided (e.g., 1 hour and 30 minutes)
- participants that were unable to respond to all questions and were unable to continue passed the permitted time
- participants that were interested but could not, or had limited capacity to, participate during the interview facilitation timeframe

Two (2) written responses were submitted. They were reviewed by the evaluation team for quality assurance and, if required, participants were contacted to provide clarity on information submitted.

Lastly, as mentioned in the administrative data analysis limitations section, projects related to sustainable development goals, which were part of the **Children and Families** component, were included key informant interviews. However, only 2 of the 36 interviews were associated with these projects.

4. Online survey

A survey with Program funding recipients and partner organizations was conducted for the evaluation, to gain insight on aspects such as the level of satisfaction with the Program's data collection and reporting requirements, as well as views on the extent to which the Program supported the achievement of outcomes.

The survey was designed internally by the evaluation team and administered by ESDC's Internal Fact-Finding Service between July 12 and August 9, 2023. The questionnaire consisted of mostly closed-ended and multiple choice questions. A single survey was used for both funding recipients and partner organizations. However, skip logic was utilized throughout the survey to allow respondents to skip sections that were not relevant to their experience. The survey, and all associated communications, were offered in both official languages.

A list of all funding recipients was provided by the Program, which was then analyzed by the evaluators to remove duplicate organizations. One-hundred and eighty-three (183) projects were funded within the evaluation period, and 130 were determined to be unique organizations (i.e., funding recipients). It was these 130 that created the purposive sampling frame. From those funding recipients, contact information for 84 unique partner organizations was provided to the evaluation team. They were also included in the survey.

Each potential respondent was assigned a unique identifier and the survey was sent to 214 individuals (entire population) via email. Overall, the survey received 68 complete responses, for a response rate of 32%.

Limitations

There are several limitations, which are specific to this line of evidence. Program data entry was not always consistent as sometimes organizations appeared with multiple legal names, and/or not all information was entered. Notably, not all of the unique organizations had contact information. All partner organizations may not have had the opportunity to participate in the survey because it was only sent to organizations who were identified by a funding recipient, and not all funding recipients responded to the request for information about partner organizations. As the Program did not collect information on partner organizations, funding recipients received an email early in the evaluation process asking them to provide the names and contact information for their partner organizations. To avoid respondent duplicates, the evaluation team looked for duplicate postal codes in addition to legal names. To ensure that as many organizations as possible had an opportunity to participate in the evaluation, where contact information was not available, evaluators conducted online searches of organizations to gather information. In some cases the evaluation team called organizations to obtain a contact email address that could be used for correspondence. Additionally, some respondents may not have had a clear recollection of their entire experience due to the passage of time since their involvement with the Program and when the survey was conducted and/or some terms used in the survey may have been misunderstood (i.e., reporting requirements).

As mentioned above, for the **Children and Families** component, projects on sustainable development goals were funded under a separate funding source and should not have been included in the survey sample. Although, it was not possible to remove the data from the survey, its results only included 2 representatives from those projects. This represents only 3% of the survey data.

Use of Performance Information Profiles and Logic Models in program evaluation

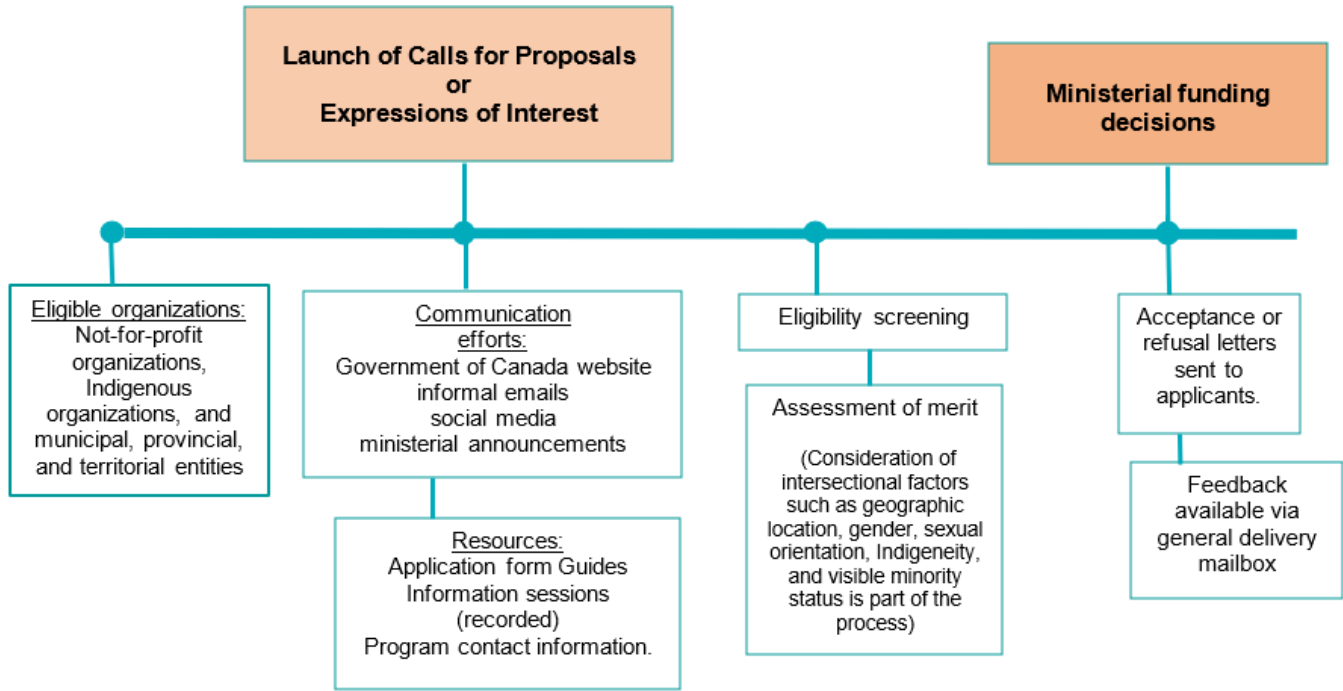
The design and conduct of an evaluation heavily rely upon program Performance Information Profiles and Logic Models. In using these resources, for this evaluation, observations were made.

- The Program's Performance Information Profile was revised in 2021, and new indicators were included at that time. As such, baseline data and targets had not yet been determined³¹ and thus could not be used as part of the evaluation. Moreover, no qualitative indicators were created for the Children and Families component. Nonetheless, the evaluation used the stated indicators, to guide the evaluation's methodology and provide reference for its lines of inquiry.
- The Program components' Logic Models are very similar and contain many overlapping outcomes. Additionally, although language variations reflect some differences, the essence of the outcomes seemed synonymous. This created some challenges with collecting, disaggregating and analyzing Program data.

³¹ The Program's 2021 Performance Information Profile indicated that baseline data and targets, for its newly developed indicators, would be determined in 2023.

Annex E: Program application and assessment processes

Figure A1: Program application and assessment processes



(Source: Document review and key informant interviews with Program officials)

Annex F: SDPP provincial/territorial distribution of funded projects

The Program is a *partnerships* program that funds many national organizations that are often situated in urban centres. Those organizations (i.e., funding recipients) often partner with other organizations (i.e., partner organizations) across the country, to contribute to the Program's objectives and outcomes. This means for example that a funding recipient in Ontario could be reaching various regions throughout Canada via their partner organizations.

In addition, the Program does not collect data on partner organizations, so details regarding the reach of the Program's funding, outcomes and populations served is not known at this time. As such, the provincial/territorial distribution of the Program's funding, using funded agreements as shown in table A1, does not represent the Program's true geographical reach, nor populations served.

Table A1: Geographical distribution of funding, to funding recipients, from 2017- 2018 to 2021-2022

Province/Territory	Disability component: <i>n</i> =123	Children and Families component: <i>n</i> =60
Ontario	57 (46%)	34 (56%)
British Columbia	19 (15%)	4 (6%)
Quebec	10 (8%)	10 (16%)
Manitoba	10 (8%)	2 (3%)
Alberta	5 (4%)	2 (3%)
Nova Scotia	3 (2%)	4 (6%)
Saskatchewan	3 (2%)	2 (3%)
Yukon	2 (1%)	2 (3%)
Northwest Territories	3 (2%)	0
Newfoundland and Labrador	3 (2%)	0
Prince Edward Island	3 (2%)	0
New Brunswick	3 (2%)	0
Nunavut	2 (1%)	0

(Source: Administrative data)

Note: Total funded agreements: 183 (fiscal years 2017-2018 to 2021-2022)