

# Mid-cycle assessment of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy

**Final Report**

June 1, 2023

# Table of contents

<b>List of tables</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of figures</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of abbreviations</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>v</b>
Early results of the Strategy's components for targeted youth population and youth with barriers.....	vi
Early results of the modernized Strategy.....	vii
Early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities .....	viii
Results of the data review.....	ix
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Youth Employment and Skills Strategy background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Mid-cycle assessment issues and questions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
3.1 Reaching the targeted population.....	6
3.2 Implementation of modernized elements/measures and early results.....	6
3.3 Covid-19 temporary measures.....	6
3.4 Performance measurement and data collection.....	6
<b>4. Lines of evidence and methodology</b> .....	<b>7</b>
4.1 Administrative data review .....	7
4.2 Literature review.....	7
4.3 Document review.....	7
4.4 Key informant interviews.....	7
4.5 Survey of Canada Summer Jobs employers.....	8
<b>5. Evaluation Findings</b> .....	<b>9</b>
5.1 Reaching targeted population .....	9
5.2 Barriers that youth primarily face .....	11
5.3 Implementation of the modernized elements/measures and early results for the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs .....	14
5.4 Assessment of issues and challenges that could prevent the Strategy from attaining its objectives.....	20
5.5 Covid-19 temporary measures.....	22
5.6 Performance measurement and data collection.....	24
<b>6. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>28</b>
6.1 Summary of findings .....	28
<b>7. References</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix A. 2021 YESS Logic model</b> .....	<b>31</b>

## List of tables

Table 1. YESS funding allocation by program component and by partner department/agency/Crown corporation between fiscal years 2019 to 2020 and 2023 to 2024.....	4
Table 2. Characteristics of participants by Strategy Components .....	9
Table 3. Geographical distribution of Canada Summer Jobs and YESSP participants.....	10
Table 4. Official Language of YESSP participants from April 2020 to December 2022.....	11
Table 5. Percentage of youth facing barriers by YESS component.....	11
Table 6. Combination of barriers self-reported by participants from April 2020 to December 2022.....	13
Table 7. Number of YESSP participants and interventions from June 2019 to December 2022.....	14
Table 8. Distribution of YESSP interventions from April 2020 to December 2022.....	15
Table 9. Combination of interventions by participant and average duration (days) of the combination of interventions from April 2020 to December 2022.....	16
Table 10. Early outcomes of YESSP from April 2020 to December 2022.....	17
Table 11. Number of Canada Summer Jobs participants and average duration (days) of the intervention from June 2019 to December 2022.....	18
Table 12. Yearly Canada Summer Jobs targets for number of paid work experiences opportunities created (from June 2019 to December 2022).....	18
Table 13. Canada Summer Jobs project applications, approvals, average job placement duration and use of temporary flexibilities (from June 2019 to December 2022).....	23
Table 14. Participant Information Template response rates for YESSP participants .....	26

## List of figures

Figure 1. Youth Employment and Skills Strategy components.....	3
--	---

## List of abbreviations

CSGC	Common System for Grants and Contributions
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
YES	Youth Employment Strategy
YESS	Youth Employment and Skills Strategy
YESSP	Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program

## Executive summary

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS or the Strategy) helps young people (between the ages of 15 and 30), particularly those facing barriers to employment, get the information and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition into the labour market. The Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is the lead of this horizontal initiative, which involves 11 other federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations. The YESS began in June 2019 as the successor to the “Youth Employment Strategy” (YES).

The Strategy supports organizations that provide job placements and skills development services to young people, as well as a broad range of supports such as job coaching, mental health support, job interviews, day care services for youth parents and subsidized internet access to help with job searches.

The objective of the Strategy is to help youth facing barriers develop their skills along a continuum to become more job ready. Ultimately, the Strategy aims to help youth to advance in the labour market so that individuals, families and communities mutually benefit from the participation of youth in the Canadian economy.

The Strategy consists of 2 components, the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program (YESSP) and Canada Summer Jobs. ESDC is the only department that delivers Canada Summer Jobs.

The YESSP component consists of 5 employment skills interventions and 3 support measures. The employment skills interventions include:

**Quality Employment Opportunity:** through the YESSP, the contribution recipient provides employers with funding for wage subsidies to create quality job placements for youth in safe, inclusive, and healthy work environments.

**Entrepreneurship Skills Training:** provides an opportunity to acquire entrepreneurial skills through an activity where youth are given exposure to the world of self-employment.

### Evaluation objectives

This document presents the mid-cycle assessment of ESDC’s components of the Strategy: the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program and Canada Summer Jobs.

The report examines the period from the start of YESS modernization (June 2019) to December 2022.

The purpose of the mid-cycle assessment is to:

- Present the early results of ESDC’s components of the modernized Strategy
- Present the early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities
- Inform the implementation of the new performance measurement framework

### The YESS investment

Through its partner departments, agencies, and Crown corporations the Strategy represents a total funding of almost \$4.5 billion between fiscal years 2019 to 2020 and 2023 to 2024. ESDC receives over 73% of the total YESS funding allocation.

### Evaluation methodology

The findings in this report are drawn from 5 separate lines of evidence including:

- Key informant interviews (with ESDC and Service Canada representatives, and youth subject matter experts)
- Document review
- Literature review
- Survey of CSJ employers
- Data assessment

**Employment Services:** help youth secure employment through resume writing, interview advice and job placement support.

**Employment Skills Training:** a pre-employment activity for youth who need some additional skills development before advancing to a work experience.

**Accredited Skills Training:** enables youth to participate in courses that fill specific, identified gaps in their education and skill development, taking into consideration labour market needs.

The support measures for the YESSP component includes:

**Mentorship or Coaching:** mentorship is an employee training system under which a senior employee is assigned to act as an advisor, counselor, or guide to a junior or new employee. Coaching refers to the training of an employee by a specialist, who uses structured intervention techniques to help the employee learn to perform job tasks to the employer's specifications and to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the job site.

**Case Management or Client Assessment:** involves a process of assessment, planning, assistance and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's holistic needs through available supports, services and resources to promote a positive result.

**Other supports to enable youth to participate in a work or training opportunity:** other supports include mental health supports; transportation; work equipment or clothing; housing supports; nutritional supports; childcare supports; addiction supports; supports for youth with disabilities; and culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous people.

Canada Summer Jobs is a separate component of the Strategy which targets youth to participate in summer work placements, supported by mentorship. It has 1 intervention that provides wage subsidies to employers for small businesses, not-for-profit organizations and the public sector.<sup>1</sup>

### Early results of the Strategy's components for targeted youth population and youth with barriers

From June 2019 to December 2022, nearly 368,900 youth participated in a Canada Summer Jobs component. From April 2020 to December 2022, nearly 20,900 youth participated in the YESSP.<sup>2</sup> The most common types of interventions for YESSP participants were Employment Skills Training (n=18,342) and Quality Employment Opportunity intervention (n=15,143). Most YESSP participants received 2 or more interventions.

For targeted youth populations and youth facing barriers, the following barriers are identified for the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs components:

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "employer" refers to the not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, and public sector organizations who create summer work experiences in the Canada Summer Jobs component for young people between the ages of 15 and 30.

<sup>2</sup> Data for fiscal year 2019 to 2020 is not available for the YESSP.

**Barrier 1: high school not yet completed**

Approximately 16% of Canada Summer Jobs and 22% in YESSP participants had not completed a high school diploma or equivalent at the time of their participation.

**Barrier 2: being a new immigrant<sup>3</sup>**

Approximately 2% of Canada Summer Jobs participants immigrated to Canada within 5 years of participating in a Canada Summer Jobs placement. For the YESSP, approximately 12% of participants self-reported as being new immigrants.

**Barrier 3: being a visible minority**

Approximately 21% of Canada Summer Jobs participants and 42% of YESSP participants self-identified as being a member of visible minority group.

**Barrier 4: youth with disabilities**

Just over 3% of Canada Summer Jobs participants and 24% of YESSP participants identified as being persons with disabilities.

**Barrier 5: living and working in a rural area**

For youth in Canada Summer Jobs, 19% reported living and working in rural areas. For YESSP participants just over 9% of participants reported living in rural or remote areas.

## Early results of the modernized Strategy

### Canada Summer Jobs results

Since the implementation of the modernized strategy, the Canada Summer Jobs component has exceeded its target goal for paid work experience, except for the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In fiscal year 2020 to 2021, the component fell short of its target job placements by 11,862. However, the component increased its target for job placements and exceeded them for fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and March to December 2022.<sup>4</sup>

Based on exit surveys for Canada Summer Jobs participants, almost 15% of respondents reported that their placement was their first work experience, while the majority reported having previously worked (85%).<sup>5</sup> In addition, from June 2019 to December 2022, 99% of employers responding to the survey indicated that Canada Summer Jobs participants developed skills during their job placement. Similarly, 97% of youth who responded to the most recent Canada Summer Jobs exit survey

---

<sup>3</sup> A new immigrant is defined as a person who has been in Canada for less than 5 years.

<sup>4</sup> Between fiscal years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022, temporary flexibilities were introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, in 2020 to 2021, an additional \$61 million in funding was granted to the Canada Summer Jobs component.

<sup>5</sup> Exit surveys are conducted during the funding year for Canada Summer Jobs. They are voluntary for youth participants and were voluntary for employers during fiscal years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021. The exit survey was made mandatory for employers starting in 2021 to 2022 and continues to be mandatory.

reported developing or strengthening transferable skills, and 89% self-reported they developed or strengthened employment skills.<sup>6</sup>

### YESSP results

Outcomes for YESSP participants are derived from the Participant Information Templates completed at program exit. From April 2020 to December 2022, early outcomes of ESDC's YESSP participants show that on average 68% are employed, and an additional 13% returned to school following their participation in this component. Approximately 8% were unemployed following their participation.

### Early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities

The Covid-19 pandemic caused sharper employment losses in youth than in all other age groups. From the beginning of the lockdowns in March 2020 to May 2020, the unemployment rate of Canadian youth increased from 17.1% to a peak of 28.8%, representing an increase of 11.7 percentage points.<sup>7</sup> In response to the challenges of the pandemic, increased flexibilities and temporary measures were introduced to the Strategy. For the Canada Summer Jobs component, the temporary measures and flexibilities were first announced in April 2020 and lasted until February 2022. The temporary flexibilities offered to employers included:

- Additional wage subsidies
- Allowing for part-time employment
- Extension of the employment period to allow for placements beyond the summer months
- Changes to project and job activities

In fiscal year 2020 to 2021, many approved Canada Summer Jobs employers took advantage of the temporary flexibilities provided by ESDC because of the Covid-19 pandemic. By fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the use of temporary flexibilities fell off considerably, in particular in terms of part-time employment and employment period flexibilities. During the pandemic, project applications from employers remained near pre-pandemic levels, with approved projects in 2020 to 2021 (26,857) being slightly lower than approved projects in 2019 to 2020 (nearly 29,500). The average duration of Canada Summer Jobs work experiences increased slightly during the pandemic years, from an average of 8.5 weeks in 2019 to 2020 to 8.6 weeks in 2020 to 2021 and 9.3 weeks in 2021 to 2022.

---

<sup>6</sup> In fiscal year 2021 to 2022 the Canada Summer Jobs exit survey was modified to include a specific question regarding youth development or strengthening of transferable skills. In the years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, Canada Summer Jobs exit surveys only asked respondents to list skills they had developed. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the 2 time periods.

<sup>7</sup> Source: [Youth unemployment in Canada, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom in times of COVID-19 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-602-x2021001/article/00001-eng.htm)



## Results of the data review

A data review was conducted to assess the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs data to determine to what extent the data can support the horizontal evaluation, and to assess if the data collection and reporting system in place support the performance measurement of ESDC's Strategy. The main findings by component are reported below.

### YESSP

Agreement holders must provide information in the Participant Information Template, such as intervention type(s), and project start and completion dates. The data assessment found a 100% response rate for this information. Specifically, the CSGC data for YESSP covers participants for whom a template was completed from April 2020 to December 2022, resulting in 77,978 interventions corresponding to 20,888 participants.

The data assessment identified several limitations, including:

- Participant data is not available for the first year of the modernized Strategy (2019 to 2020)<sup>8</sup>
- Data are only available for participants for whom a result date is reported (that is, a Participant Information Template is filled out and submitted to ESDC)
  - No information exists for participants who did not complete the Participant Information Template regardless of whether or not they completed an intervention

Historically, partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations uploaded their participant data to ESDC through a data collection system. A data collection system is not yet available for partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations to securely upload their participant data to ESDC. Alternative means of incorporating partners' evaluation results will be investigated.

With no YESSP participants' data available for fiscal year 2019 to 2020, YESSP participants in 2020 to 2021 will be the most recent cohort of participants that can be used for assessing the impact of the modernized Strategy.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the quantitative analysis for the modernized Strategy, as part of the horizontal evaluation, will be limited to the examination of short-term incremental impacts<sup>10</sup> between 6 and 15 months following participation.

### Canada Summer Jobs

The Evaluation Directorate found that data for Canada Summer Jobs was available from June 2019 to December 2022, covering 100% of participants (N=368,891). As with the previous evaluation of

---

<sup>8</sup> Data for fiscal year 2019 to 2020 are not examined in this report for YESSP participants, as there are only 30 records in the Common System for Grants and Contributions. Agreements between ESDC and organizations delivering YESSP were not in place during the first year of the new Strategy.

<sup>9</sup> This will greatly limit the scope of the quantitative analysis that can be conducted as Canada Revenue Agency taxation data has a 2-year lag period from year of filing to year of availability for analysis (that is, the 2021 tax data will only be available in Autumn 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Incremental impacts estimate the changes that are directly attributable to participating in a component. Participants' outcomes are compared to the outcomes of comparison group consisting of non-participants.

## Mid-cycle assessment of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy

Canada Summer Jobs, the analysis examines immediate outcomes reported in the CSGC through the information collected in the Participant Information Template and data collected by ESDC in the exit surveys for employers and participants. As well, short-term incremental impacts will be examined for Canada Summer Jobs participants.

# 1. Introduction

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (hereafter referred to as “the Strategy” or YESS) is a horizontal initiative of the Government of Canada. The Strategy helps youth between the ages of 15 and 30 get access to the information, and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need, to make a successful transition into the labour market.

The Strategy specifically targets youth facing barriers to employment. The department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is the lead of this horizontal initiative, which involves 11 other federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations.<sup>11</sup>

This document presents the mid-cycle assessment of ESDC’s YESS components and covers the period of June 2019 to December 2022.

The Strategy consists of 2 components, the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program (YESSP) and Canada Summer Jobs. ESDC is the only department that delivers Canada Summer Jobs.

The YESSP component consists of 5 employment skills interventions and 3 support measures. The employment skills interventions include:

**Quality Employment Opportunity:** through the YESS, the contribution recipient provides employers with funding for wage subsidies to create quality job placements for youth in safe, inclusive and healthy work environments.

**Entrepreneurship Skills Training:** provides an opportunity to acquire entrepreneurial skills through an activity where youth are given exposure to the world of self-employment.

**Employment Services:** help youth secure employment through resume writing, interview advice and job placement support.

**Employment Skills Training:** a pre-employment activity for youth who need some additional skills development before advancing to a work experience.

**Accredited Skills Training:** enables youth to participate in courses that fill specific, identified gaps in their education and skill development, taking into consideration labour market needs.

The support measures for the YESSP component includes:

**Mentorship or Coaching:** mentorship is an employee training system under which a senior employee is assigned to act as an advisor, counselor, or guide to a junior or new employee. Coaching refers to the training of an employee by a specialist, who uses structured intervention techniques to help the

---

<sup>11</sup> ESDC, Indigenous Services Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, National Research Council of Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Parks Canada, Canadian Heritage, National Resources Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

employee learn to perform job tasks to the employer's specifications and to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the job site.

**Case Management or Client Assessment:** involves a process of assessment, planning, assistance and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's holistic needs through available supports, services and resources to promote a positive result.

**Other supports to enable youth to participate in a work or training opportunity:** other supports include mental health supports; transportation; work equipment or clothing; housing supports; nutritional supports; childcare supports; addiction supports; supports for youth with disabilities; and culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous people.

Canada Summer Jobs is a separate component of the Strategy which targets youth to participate in summer work placements, supported by mentorship. It has 1 intervention that provides wage subsidies to employers of small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and public sector organizations. The term “employers” will be used throughout the report to refer to these organization types.

The purpose of this mid-cycle assessment is to:

- Present the early results of the Strategy’s effect on targeted youth and youth facing barriers
- Present the early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities
- Present the early results of the modernized Strategy
- Inform the implementation of the new performance measurement strategy

The mid-cycle assessment will also inform the scope of the methodology for the YESS horizontal evaluation.<sup>12</sup>

---

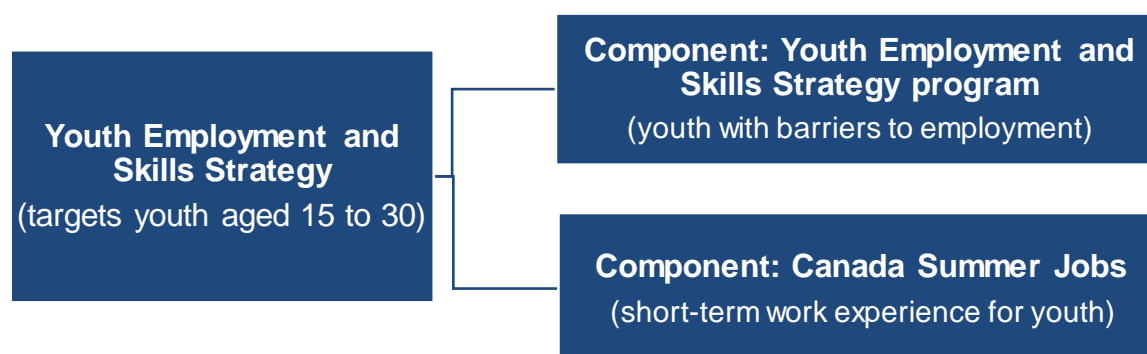
<sup>12</sup> The Horizontal Evaluation of YESS is expected to be completed in 2024 to 2025.

## 2. Youth Employment and Skills Strategy background

The Strategy initially started in 1997, as the “Youth Employment Strategy” (YES) and underwent a realignment in 2003 from its 5 original components to 3 (Career Focus, Skills Link and Summer Work Experience).

In 2019, the YES was modernized and became the YESS. It still shares the same overarching objective which is to support youth to help them prepare for and successfully transition to employment and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge. The main impetus for the modernization of the Strategy was to broaden both the scope of available interventions and the requirements for eligibility, as well as to add flexibilities. At the same time, it recognizes the need for more tailored interventions to better support youth, with a focus on youth facing barriers. As shown in Figure 1, this is done under 2 components.

**Figure 1. Youth Employment and Skills Strategy components**



The YESSP involves 11 partner departments, agencies, and Crown corporations. It represents about 55% of the funding envelope. The YESSP provides funding to organizations to deliver a range of interventions that help youth overcome barriers to employment and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge to participate in the current and future labour market.

The Canada Summer Jobs component, delivered by ESDC only, provides wage subsidies to employers to create summer work experiences for young people between the ages of 15 and 30. This provides them with opportunities to develop and improve their skills, responds to national and local priorities, and improves access to the labour market for youth including those who face unique barriers. It represents close to 45% of the total funding envelope.

Through its partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations the Strategy offers various interventions and represents a total funding of almost \$4.5 billion from the 2019 to 2020 fiscal year to the 2023 to 2024 fiscal years. ESDC receives just over 73% of the total funding allocation. Table 1

presents the funding allocation by YESS component and by partner department, agency, or Crown corporation for the 5 fiscal years between April 2019 and March 2024.

**Table 1. YESS funding allocation by program component and by partner department/agency/Crown corporation between fiscal years 2019 to 2020 and 2023 to 2024<sup>13</sup>**

Department/agency/Crown corporation	YESSP		Canada Summer Jobs	
	\$	%	\$	%
ESDC	\$1.264 billion	28.1%	\$2.022 billion	100%
Indigenous Services Canada	\$397.4 million	8.8%	n/a	n/a
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada	\$172.2 million	3.8%	n/a	n/a
National Research Council of Canada	\$140.3 million	3.1%	n/a	n/a
Environment and Climate Change Canada	\$100.5 million	2.2%	n/a	n/a
Natural Resources Canada	\$95.9 million	2.1%	n/a	n/a
Canadian Heritage	\$90.4 million	2.0%	n/a	n/a
Parks Canada	\$82.2 million	1.8%	n/a	n/a
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	\$54 million	1.2%	n/a	n/a
Global Affairs Canada	\$32 million	0.7%	n/a	n/a
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	\$30.2 million	0.6%	n/a	n/a
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	\$16.9 million	0.3%	n/a	n/a
<b>Total share of the \$4.498 billion YESS funding envelope</b>	<b>\$2.476 billion</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>\$2.022 billion</b>	<b>45%</b>

**Source:** Financial tables from internal ESDC documents; Fall Economic Statement 2020 and Budget 2021.

<sup>13</sup> A total of \$247.4 million in additional funding was advanced to the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This amount is not included in the 2020 to 2021 planned spending as the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act was approved after the release of the Departmental Plan 2020 to 2021.

In 2020, public health restrictions and associated shutdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted youth employment.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the Government of Canada's response provided for temporary flexibilities under Canada Summer Jobs and for additional job placements under both components to support youth employment. These temporary flexibilities were introduced in fiscal years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 to support employers through a period of economic recovery.

The Strategy, then known as YES, was evaluated 3 times between 2009 and 2020. Over this period, and considering previous evaluations recommendations, improvements on the data collection front have progressively allowed for the conduct of more advanced quantitative analysis. Recent evaluations of the Skills Link component relied on causal analysis whereby impacts found could be attributed to the intervention. Findings pointed to the inherent challenges associated with helping youth facing barriers to employment.

---

<sup>14</sup> Source: [Impacts on Youth](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/98-646-x/2020001/article/00001-eng.htm) (statcan.gc.ca)

## **3. Mid-cycle assessment issues and questions**

The mid-cycle assessment focuses on the early results of the YESS modernization, the temporary Covid-19 measures, and the status of the data collection to date.

Within this context, the following evaluation issues and questions are examined.

### **3.1 Reaching the targeted population**

To what extent are ESDC components reaching the targeted youth population, including youth facing barriers?

### **3.2 Implementation of modernized elements/measures and early results**

What are the early outcomes of the YESS ESDC interventions on youth participants and employers? Any early takeaways associated with the implementation of the modernized strategy and its delivery?

### **3.3 Covid-19 temporary measures**

To what extent were the Strategy's temporary measures put in place by ESDC in response to the pandemic successful? Any lessons learned from an implementation perspective?

### **3.4 Performance measurement and data collection**

To what extent do the performance measurement tools collect sufficient, valid and reliable data that support ongoing monitoring, policy analysis, decision-making and evaluations?



## 4. Lines of evidence and methodology

The issues and questions selected for the mid-cycle assessment are addressed using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to produce the evaluation findings.

### 4.1 Administrative data review

A thorough data review was conducted to assess ESDC's YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs data from April 2019 to December 2022. The purpose of the data review is to examine the completeness and accuracy of YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs data. This information is used to address the mid-cycle assessment questions and to inform the possibility of using quantitative analysis for the horizontal summative evaluation.

### 4.2 Literature review

The literature review updated information collected in the context of previous youth evaluations by adding new literature published between 2018 and 2022. Findings from the literature review provides contextual information on the impacts and effects of the pandemic on youth employment, particularly for those facing barriers.

### 4.3 Document review

A review of YESS documents and monitoring reports provides context and details on the design and delivery of the components. It also helps to contextualize the components considering the Covid-19 pandemic. This review includes, for example:

- Policy documents such as planning and design documents, third-party reports, and presentations used in support of drafting the modernized Strategy
- Information documents provided to applicants or to the public
- Communications and presentations to various departments and committees
- Exit surveys of Canada Summer Jobs employers and participants<sup>15</sup>

### 4.4 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted to provide further information and clarification on component delivery features as well as challenges and lessons learned. In total 15 semi-structured interviews

---

<sup>15</sup> Exit surveys are conducted during the funding year for Canada Summer Jobs. They are voluntary for youth participants and were voluntary for employers during fiscal years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021. The exit survey was made mandatory for employers starting in 2021 to 2022 and continues to be mandatory.

were conducted. Interviews were conducted in the summer of 2022. The number and type of key informants were as follows:

- 12 ESDC/Service Canada staff members responsible for various components of the YEESP and Canada Summer Jobs components, as well as the horizontal policy.
- 3 youth subject matter experts.

### 4.5 Survey of Canada Summer Jobs employers

An online survey with employers who accessed Canada Summer Jobs funding was conducted from late fall 2022 to early winter 2023 by the Evaluation Directorate of ESDC.<sup>16</sup> The survey provides additional information to complement the Canada Summer Jobs components exit survey. It focuses on early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities put in place by ESDC to respond to the needs of employers and youth (wage subsidies, part-time employment, extension of employment period, and adjustments to projects and job activities). It allows for an assessment of the extent to which the flexibilities have been used by employers and youth.

The sample frame for the survey was stratified using various characteristics from the profile of employers. In total, 881 employers answered the survey, representing a response rate of approximately 7.3%. With a low response rate, the findings from the survey are used as non-representative assessment of employers' perspectives.

---

<sup>16</sup> While the survey had non-representative results and a low response rate of 7.3% (n=881), the responses can provide some indications of the effects of the Covid-19 temporary measures.

## 5. Evaluation Findings

### 5.1 Reaching targeted population

#### Profile of participants

From June 2019 to December 2022, nearly 368,900 youth participated in Canada Summer Jobs and nearly 20,900 youth participated in YESSP.<sup>17,18</sup> Table 2 details the characteristics of participants in both components. Information about sociodemographic groups is self-reported.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 2. Characteristics of participants by Strategy Components**

Categories	Canada Summer Jobs June 2019 to December 2022	YESSP <sup>20</sup> April 2020 to December 2022
<b>Number of participants</b>	368,891	20,888
<b>Gender</b>	Female = 61% Male = 37% Other = <1% Missing / declined = 1%	Female = 48% Male = 46% Other = 2% Missing / declined = 4%
<b>Age</b>	15 to 19 = 41% 20 to 24 = 44% 25 to 29 = 13% 30 and over = 2%	15 to 19 = 25% 20 to 24 = 38% 25 to 29 = 27% 30 and over = 5% Missing = 5%
<b>Sociodemographic group</b>	Indigenous person = 7% Person with disability = 3% Visible minority = 21% Recent immigrant = 2%	Indigenous person = 20% Person with disability = 24% Visible minority = 42% Recent immigrant = 12%
<b>Living in an urban or rural area</b>	Urban = 81% Rural = 19%	Urban = 84% Rural = 9% Missing = 6%

<sup>17</sup> Data for fiscal year 2019 to 2020 are not examined in this report for YESSP participants, as there are only 30 records in the Common System for Grants and Contributions. Agreements between ESDC and organizations delivering YESSP were not in place during the first year of the new Strategy.

<sup>18</sup> The number of participants is based on the start date of participation.

<sup>19</sup> Sociodemographic categories are self-reported and voluntary. Participants have the option to decline to answer, which may result in the sociodemographic categories of interest being under reported.

<sup>20</sup> Each intervention taken by an individual participant has the same start and end date, therefore the duration of each interventions received cannot be determined.

<b>Education level<sup>21,22</sup> (highest level completed at time of participation)</b>	High school incomplete = 16% High school complete = 23% College or equivalent incomplete = 13% College or equivalent complete = 5% University incomplete = 27% University complete = 16%	High school incomplete = 22% High school complete = 38% College or equivalent incomplete = 7% College or equivalent complete = 10% University incomplete = 4% University complete = 10%
---	---	--

Source: ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

### Province or territory of residence

Table 3 presents the geographic distribution of participants in Canada Summer Jobs from June 2019 to December 2022, and in YESSP from April 2020 to December 2022. For the Canada Summer Jobs component, most participants (64%) are located in Ontario and Québec. For the YESSP, most participants (52%) are from Ontario.

It is noted that there is a Canada-Québec agreement with the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale for the regional (YESSP) component. Since this agreement is in place, organizations are not eligible for the regional component, and can only apply for the national component. Quebec is responsible for reporting its data to ESDC. At the time of the mid-cycle assessment, this information was not available.

**Table 3. Geographical distribution of Canada Summer Jobs and YESSP participants**

Province / Territory	Geographic distribution of Canada Summer Jobs participants	Geographic distribution of YESSP participants
British Columbia	9%	13%
Alberta	10%	13%
Saskatchewan	3%	5%
Manitoba	3%	6%
Ontario	43%	52%
Quebec	21%	< 1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	4%	2%
Nova Scotia	4%	3%
New Brunswick	4%	1%

<sup>21</sup> Note: The category of secondary incomplete consists of elementary school incomplete, elementary school complete and secondary incomplete.

<sup>22</sup> For 8% of YESSP participants, the education level was identified as "not applicable".

Prince Edward Island	1%	1%
Nunavut	< 1%	3%
Northwest Territories	< 1%	< 1%
Yukon	< 1%	< 1%

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** The reference period examined for Canada Summer Jobs participants is from June 2019 to December 2022, while for YESSP the reference period is from April 2020 to December 2022.

Table 4 presents the first official language of YESSP participants. From April 2020 to December 2022, approximately 95% of YESSP participants self-reported English as their first official language, while 4% reported French<sup>23</sup> as their first official language. Official Language data for Canada Summer Jobs participants is not available.

**Table 4. Official Language of YESSP participants from April 2020 to December 2022**

Official Language	Frequency	Percent
English	19,821	95%
French	841	4%
Not declared	226	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,888</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

## 5.2 Barriers that youth primarily face

Under the Strategy the following barriers to employment for youth have been identified for both components. Table 5 details the percentage of youth facing barriers for each component.

**Table 5. Percentage of youth facing barriers by YESS component**

Barriers to youth employment	Canada Summer Jobs component	YESSP component
<b>Barrier 1:</b> high school not yet completed	16%	22%
<b>Barrier 2:</b> new immigrant	2%	12%
<b>Barrier 3:</b> visible minority	21%	42%

<sup>23</sup> This includes participants residing outside of the province of Quebec and self-reporting French as first official language.

<b>Barrier 4: youth with disabilities</b>	3%	24%
<b>Barrier 5: living and working in a rural area</b>	19%	9%

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** The reference period examined for Canada Summer Jobs participants is from June 2019 to December 2022, while for YEESP the reference period is from April 2020 to December 2022.

### Canada Summer Jobs Component

#### **Barrier 1: high school not yet completed<sup>24</sup>**

As shown in Table 5 approximately 16% of Canada Summer Jobs participants had not completed a high school diploma or equivalent at the time of their participation (from June 2019 to December 2022).

In addition, Canada Summer Jobs data included the amount of time that participants were out of the education system (if not currently a student at the time of starting a participation). Only 35% of participants provided a response:

- For 24% of respondents this was less than 6 months
- For 3% of respondents this was 6 months to 1 year
- For 6% of respondents this was over 1 year
- For <2% of respondents this was over 5 years

#### **Barrier 2: being a new immigrant**

Approximately 2% of participants reported having immigrated to Canada within 5 years of participating in a Canada Summer Jobs placement.

#### **Barrier 3: being a visible minority**

Approximately 21% of participants self-identified as being a member of a visible minority group, while 73% did not. Just over 5% of participants declined to answer.

#### **Barrier 4: youth with disabilities**

Just over 3% of participants identified as being persons with disabilities. Almost 93% of participants did not self-identify as having a disability, and 6% declined to answer.

#### **Barrier 5: living and working in a rural area**

For youth in Canada Summer Jobs, 19% reported living and working in rural areas versus 81% in urban areas.

---

<sup>24</sup> Participants identifying with this barrier could be either youth who are early leavers from high school or youth who are still in the process of completing high school as the data does not distinguish between the two.

## YESSP component

### Barrier 1: high school not yet completed

As can be seen in Table 5, approximately 22% of participants in YESSP did not have a high school diploma or equivalent when they entered the component.<sup>25</sup>

### Barrier 2: new immigrant

Approximately 12% of participants self-reported as being new immigrants.<sup>26</sup>

### Barrier 3: visible minority status

Approximately 42% of participants self-identified as being a visible minority, while 53% did not. Five percent of participants did not respond.

### Barrier 4: youth living with disabilities

Almost a quarter of participants (24%) self-identified as persons with disabilities. Five percent of participants did not respond.

### Barrier 5: youth living in rural or remote areas

Just over 9% of participants lived in rural or remote areas.<sup>27</sup>

### Combination of barriers most commonly faced by YESSP participants

Based on participants' self-reported information, the most common combination of barriers that participants face is being:

- Visible minority and new immigrant
- Visible minority and a person with disabilities
- Visible minority and high school not yet completed
- High school not yet completed and a person with disabilities.

Table 6 below outlines the most common combination of barriers that YESSP participants report.

**Table 6. Combination of barriers self-reported by participants from April 2020 to December 2022**

Combination of barriers	2020 to 2021 N=5,719	2021 to 2022 N=10,691	March to December 2022 N=4,478	Total N=20,888
Visible minority and recent immigrant	9%	9%	9%	9%

<sup>25</sup> Unlike Canada Summer Jobs data, the YESSP data does not include information about the amount of time participants (who were not students at the time of participation) were away from the education system.

<sup>26</sup> Almost 6% of participants declined to respond.

<sup>27</sup> Data was missing for 6.4% of participants.

Visible minority and person with disabilities	5%	5%	3%	5%
Visible minority and high school not yet completed	4%	5%	6%	5%
High school not yet completed and person with disabilities	5%	4%	3%	4%
High school not yet completed and living in a rural area	2%	2%	2%	2%
High school not yet completed, who is a visible minority and person with disabilities	1%	2%	1%	1%

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** Not all combinations of barriers are listed due to small populations (<1%).

### 5.3 Implementation of the modernized elements/measures and early results for the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs

This section examines the implementation of the modernized Strategy and the early results for the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs components. For the YESSP, early results are examined through a data assessment of the number of YESSP participants and interventions.

For Canada Summer Jobs, early results are derived from Canada Summer Jobs exit surveys completed from June 2019 to December 2022. It was supplemented with key informant interviews and a document/literature review.

#### YESSP

As seen in Table 7, from June 2019 to December 2022, 20,889 YESSP participants took part in 77,982 interventions, with most participants receiving 2 or more interventions.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 7. Number of YESSP participants and interventions from June 2019 to December 2022**

Fiscal Year	Number of YESSP participants	Number of YESSP interventions
2019 to 2020	N/A	N/A
2020 to 2021	5,719	19,971
2021 to 2022	10,691	40,362
March to December 2022	4,478	17,645

<sup>28</sup> Data challenges were encountered in the transition year 2019 to 2020 and ongoing efforts are being devoted to address these errors. This may allow for more accurate numbers in the horizontal evaluation for that year.



<b>Total</b>	<b>20,889</b>	<b>77,982</b>
--------------	---------------	---------------

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** The participant numbers are based on the start date for YESSP participation.

**Note:** This table does not include participants from the YESSP Quebec regional component under the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale

### Types of YESSP interventions

The YESSP component consists of 5 employment skills interventions and 3 support measures.

As can be seen in Table 8, the most common type of intervention for YESSP participants was Employment Skills Training (n=18,342), followed by Quality Employment Opportunity intervention (n=15,143). Fiscal year 2021 to 2022 had the highest number of participants and YESSP interventions. This increase is likely due to increased funding under the flexibilities granted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Table 8. Distribution of YESSP interventions from April 2020 to December 2022**

Intervention types	2020 to 2021		2021 to 2022		March to December 2022		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Accredited Skills Training	853	4.0%	1,259	3.1%	402	2.3%	2,514	3.2%
Employment Services	3,448	17.3%	6,741	16.7%	2,994	17.0%	13,183	16.9%
Employment Skills Training	5,367	26.9%	9,291	23.0%	3,684	20.9%	18,342	23.5%
Entrepreneurship Skills Training	359	1.8%	467	1.2%	198	1.1%	1,024	1.3%
Quality Employment Opportunity	3,895	19.5%	7,961	19.7%	3,285	18.6%	15,143	19.4%
Mentorship or Coaching	1,504	7.5%	3,931	9.7%	1,916	10.9%	74	9.4%
Case Management or Client Assessment	2,509	12.6%	5,457	13.5%	2,594	14.7%	10,560	13.5%
Other supports	2,036	10.2%	5,255	13.0%	2,572	14.6%	9,863	12.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,971</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40,362</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>17,645</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>77,980</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions (April 2020 to December 2022)

**Note:** YESSP data has different start and end dates for each YESSP participant in YESSP projects. However, each intervention taken by individual participants has the same start and end date. This makes it impossible to define the length of each intervention received.

**Note:** Fiscal year is based on the start date of interventions within the project.

**Note:** Participants may take multiple interventions, as such the number of interventions is greater than the number of participants.

### Combination of YESSP interventions

As shown in Table 9, most YESSP participants receive 2 or more interventions. Table 9 also details the findings by fiscal year. During the reference period, the average duration of combinations of interventions declined from a high of 141 days in 2020 to 2021 to 83 days from March to December 2022.

**Table 9. Combination of interventions by participant and average duration (days) of the combination of interventions from April 2020 to December 2022**

Number of interventions by participant	2020 to 2021			2021 to 2022			March to December 2022		
	Number of participants	Percentage	Duration (Days)	Number of participants	Percentage	Duration (Days)	Number of participants	Percentage	Duration (Days)
1	1,194	21%	111	1,617	15%	111	439	10%	74
2	1,412	25%	135	2407	23%	114	941	21%	75
3	762	13%	156	1518	14%	123	775	17%	82
4	736	13%	136	1605	15%	114	737	16%	84
5	501	9%	163	1244	12%	130	638	14%	87
6	568	10%	171	1294	12%	132	504	11%	96
7	150	3%	170	325	3%	135	191	4%	105
8 and more	396	7%	157	681	6%	116	253	6%	73
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,719</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>10,691</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4,478</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>83</b>

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** This table does not include participants from the YESSP Quebec regional component under the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale

**Note:** Please note that all interventions assigned to the participants have the same start date and end date

Based on exit information collected as part of the YESSP, Table 10 introduces the early outcomes of ESDC's YESSP participants. It was found that on average 68% are employed, with an additional 13%

returning to school following participation. Approximately 8% were unemployed following their participation.

**Table 10. Early outcomes of YESSP from April 2020 to December 2022**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2020 to 2021 N=5,719</b>	<b>2021 to 2022 N=10,691</b>	<b>March to December 2022 N=4,478</b>	<b>Total N=20,888</b>
Employed	66%	69%	66%	68%
Return to school	13%	12%	18%	13%
Not reached	6%	5%	5%	5%
Unemployed	9%	9%	6%	8%
Not return to school	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	5%	1%	0%	2%
Not declared	1%	4%	5%	3%

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

**Note:** This table does not include participants from the YESSP Quebec regional component under the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale.

### Canada Summer Jobs

The following information comes from Canada Summer Jobs exit surveys for participants and employers (from June 2019 to December 2022), as well as a review of ESDC documents. The exit surveys are conducted by ESDC's Program Operations Branch. At the end of each funding cycle, the exit survey asks employers and youth (who have completed Canada Summer Jobs-funded work placements) to complete questionnaires on client satisfaction and experience with the Canada Summer Jobs component. The employer questionnaire became mandatory in fiscal year 2021 to 2022, while the youth questionnaire is voluntary but encouraged.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Response rates for employers were approximately 100% in 2021 to 2022 and March to December 2022 when the survey was mandatory, and 95% in 2020 to 2021 and 62% in 2019 to 2020 when it was not mandatory. Response rates for youth are generally consistent with 33% in fiscal year 2019 to 2020, 35% in 2020 to 2021, 38% in 2021 to 2022 and 34% in March to December 2022.

As shown in Table 11, the results from June 2019 to the December 2022 found that 368,891 individuals participated in the Canada Summer Jobs component. On average, placements were 71 days in duration.

**Table 11. Number of Canada Summer Jobs participants and average duration (days) of the intervention from June 2019 to December 2022**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Average duration (days)</b>
2019 to 2020	79,178 (22%)	67
2020 to 2021	52,392 (14%)	75
2021 to 2022	126,912 (34%)	78
March to December 2022	110,409 (30%)	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>368,891 (100%)</b>	<b>71</b>

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions.

As shown in Table 12, from June 2019 to December 2022, the Canada Summer Jobs component exceeded its target goal for paid work experiences for participants (except for the first year of the pandemic in 2020 to 2021). The component increased its target goal for paid work experiences and exceeded them from 2021 to 2022 and March to December 2022.

**Table 12. Yearly Canada Summer Jobs targets for number of paid work experiences opportunities created (from June 2019 to December 2022)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Target goal for paid work experience opportunities</b>	<b>Actual number of paid work experience opportunities</b>	<b>Difference between target goal and actual number of paid work experiences</b>
2019 to 2020	70,000	79,273	+9,273
2020 to 2021	80,000	68,138	-11,862
2021 to 2022	120,000	123,882	+3,882
March to December 2022	100,000	113,223	+13,223

**Source:** Internal ESDC reporting documents.

## Extent to which Canada Summer Jobs contributes to job readiness, career advancement and helping youth attain needed skills

From June 2019 to December 2022, 99% of employers indicated that Canada Summer Jobs participants developed skills during their job placement.<sup>30</sup> For the most recent Canada Summer Jobs exit survey, the following skills were among the most reported by employers:

- Teamwork (81%)
- Communication (72%)
- Problem solving (64%)
- Collaboration and decision-making (61%)

Similarly, youth surveyed in the most recently available exit surveys reported developing or strengthening:<sup>31</sup>

- Transferable skills (97% of respondents), including:
  - Teamwork (85%),
  - Problem solving (82%)
  - Decision making (79%)
  - Adaptability (72%),
  - Learning from mistakes (72%)
- Employment skills (89%), including:
  - Communication (77%)
  - Developing positive professional relationships (58%)
  - Collaboration (57%)
  - Conflict resolution (50%)
  - Client service (43%)
- Of the job supports provided by employers, youth reported the following as the most offered during their Canada Summer Jobs placement:
  - Mentoring (91%)
  - Training (85%)
  - Career/labour market information (49%)

<sup>30</sup> This information comes from exit surveys conducted.

<sup>31</sup> For Canada Summer Jobs in fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and March to December 2022, the exit survey was modified to include a specific question regarding youth development or strengthening of transferable skills. In the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 exit surveys the questionnaire only asked respondents to list skills they had developed. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the 2 time periods.

On average, 15% of participants reported that their placement was their first work experience, while the majority reported having previously worked (85%). Most participants (61%) reported that their Canada Summer Jobs placement was related to their field of study.

Slightly more than half of Canada Summer Jobs participants intended to return to school full-time (54%) following their participation, while 42% did not. Data was missing for just over 3% of participants.

### **5.4 Assessment of issues and challenges that could prevent the Strategy from attaining its objectives**

Multiple issues and challenges that may prevent the Strategy from obtaining its objectives were identified by key informants and through the document review. Broadly, there are challenges associated with the implementation of the modernized Strategy and the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **Challenges associated with the implementation of the modernized strategy**

According to program officials interviewed, the following challenges associated with data collection could prevent the Strategy from attaining its objectives:

While there is a horizontal Performance Information Profile in place, 2 data collection systems have traditionally been used for data collection. Specifically, one for ESDC's data, and another one for partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations. Historically, partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations uploaded their participant data to ESDC through a data collection system. A data collection system is not currently available for partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations to securely upload their participant data to ESDC. Alternative means of incorporating partners' evaluation results will be investigated.

Data standardization issues where collected data differs from partner to partner (for example, inconsistencies in partners collecting data on specific barriers faced by youth).

Key informants identified negative aspects regarding the communication of new component changes and a lack of a clear definition of youth barriers between partner departments and agencies.

#### **Challenges associated with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic**

Youths reported that the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted their education, with youth being increasingly concerned about their financial situation, even after the announcement of the Canadian Emergency Student Benefits. These factors likely contribute to lower mental health levels among youth, who have experienced the greatest decline in mental health since the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>32,33,34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Source: [Impacts on youth \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/99-011-x/2020001/article/00001-eng.htm)

<sup>33</sup> Source: [Making up time: The impact of the pandemic on young adults in Canada](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/99-011-x/2020001/article/00001-eng.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Source: [Mind and body: Impact of the pandemic on physical and mental health](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/99-011-x/2020001/article/00001-eng.htm)

According to a literature review conducted for the evaluation, the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges and impacts faced by youth who are facing barriers such as 2SLGBTQ+, visible minority, Indigenous and/or persons with disabilities.<sup>35</sup> For example:

- The pandemic has worsened educational outcomes, compromised mental health, increased cyberbullying and victimization, increased unemployment, and exacerbated family conflict for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.
- Some vulnerable segments of black and racialized student populations may be at greater risk of experiencing declining social mobility.

The pandemic exacerbated racial inequities in education and widening social inequities, disparities, and vulnerabilities within Black and racialized communities.

- Online platforms adopted across Canada in response to the pandemic may disadvantage Indigenous communities based on holistic and communal learning.

Furthermore, there are challenges with internet connectivity and access to electronics and other devices.

For persons with disabilities, the pandemic resulted in a loss of access to disability-related supports and critical community services. The pandemic added a new level of strain for students reliant on assistive technologies to support in class instruction.

### **Lessons learned regarding the type of interventions that work for youth facing barriers**

A literature review also identified lessons learned to help youth facing barriers, these include:

Early interventions for high-school youth in the education system appear to be very effective, especially for disadvantaged youth.<sup>36</sup> They increased education outcomes including subsequent university and college graduation and subsequent earnings.

Provision of timely and local labour market integration and job search assistance is of increasing importance for youth.<sup>37</sup> It is effective, especially for disadvantaged youth, and especially because of its low-cost. Labour market integration and job-search assistant should be targeted and designed for the needs of the different groups.

Micro credentials can be especially important for youth since they can be acquired in a more flexible manner that allows for targeting of specific requirements for different jobs and can be used for life-long learning.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Source: *Sexual and Gender Minority Stress Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for LGBTQ Young Persons' Mental Health and Well-Being*, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Source: *What Works to Reduce Inequalities in Higher Education*, 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Source: *Soft skills as a workforce development strategy for Opportunity Youth*, 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Source: *Effectiveness of Youth Employment Programs Post 2018, 2022* (internal document).

### Lessons learned from the evaluation of the Labour Market Development Agreements<sup>39</sup>

The Horizontal Evaluation of the Labour Market Development Agreements found that youth in interventions such as Skills Development<sup>40</sup> and Targeted Wage Subsidies<sup>41</sup> improve their labour market attachment through increases in their incidence of employment and employment earnings compared to similar youth non-participants. They also decrease their dependence on government income support (that is, the combined use of Employment Insurance and social assistance benefits).

### 5.5 Covid-19 temporary measures

The Covid-19 pandemic caused sharper employment losses in youth than in all other age groups. From March to May 2020, the unemployment rate of Canadian youth increased from 17.1% to 28.8%, representing an increase of 11.7 percentage points.<sup>42</sup> In response to the challenges of the pandemic, increased flexibilities and temporary measures were introduced to the Strategy.

#### Canada Summer Jobs

For the Canada Summer Jobs component, the temporary measures and flexibilities were first announced in April 2020 and lasted until February 2022. The temporary flexibilities offered to employers in fiscal years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 included:

##### Wage subsidies:

All funded employers were eligible to receive a wage subsidy reimbursement of up to 100% (75% for 2021 to 2022) of the provincial or territorial minimum hourly wage. Previously, private and public sector employers were only eligible to receive up to 50% of the provincial or territorial minimum hourly wage.

##### Part-time employment

All funded employers could offer part-time placements (for example, fewer than 30 hours per week). Previously, all Canada Summer Jobs-funded employment had to be full time (a minimum of 30 hours per week for at least 6 weeks). This continued in 2021 to 2022.

##### Employment period

All funded employers could offer job placements between May 15, 2020 and February 28, 2021. Employers could offer part-time employment to youth who wanted to work during the academic year. This continued in 2021 to 2022.

---

<sup>39</sup> Source: [Horizontal Evaluation of the Labour Market Development Agreements](#)

<sup>40</sup> Skills Development helps participants obtain employment skills by giving them financial assistance in order to attend classroom training.

<sup>41</sup> Targeted Wage Subsidies help participants obtain on-the-job work experience by providing employers with a wage subsidy.

<sup>42</sup> Source: [Youth unemployment in Canada, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom in times of COVID-19 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)



### Changes to project and job activities

All funded employers were provided with the flexibility to amend project and job placement activities to support the delivery of critical services. This continued in 2021 to 2022.

Following fiscal year 2021 to 2022, temporary flexibilities offered for Canada Summer Jobs were ended due to low uptake of the flexibilities.

As described in Table 13, project applications from Canada Summer Jobs employers remained near pre-pandemic levels, with approved projects in fiscal year 2020 to 2021 (26,857) being slightly lower than approved projects in 2019 to 2020 (close to 29,500). The average job placement duration of Canada Summer Jobs job placements increased during the pandemic years (8.6 weeks in 2020 to 2021 and 9.3 weeks in 2021 to 2022).

**Table 13. Canada Summer Jobs project applications, approvals, average job placement duration and use of temporary flexibilities (from June 2019 to December 2022)**

Fiscal year	Canada Summer Jobs Project applications	Approved Canada Summer Jobs projects	Average job placement duration (weeks)
2019 to 2020	39,933	Close to 29,500	8.5
2020 to 2021	39,202	26,857	8.6
2021 to 2022	50,404	37,491	9.3
March to December 2022	48,506	41,039	8.4

Source: Internal ESDC reporting documents.

### Canada Summer Jobs employers use of temporary flexibilities during the pandemic

In fiscal year 2020 to 2021, many approved Canada Summer Jobs employers took advantage of the temporary flexibilities provided by ESDC because of the Covid-19 pandemic. By fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the use of temporary flexibilities fell off considerably, in particular in terms of employment period and part-time employment. During the pandemic, project applications from employers remained near pre-pandemic levels, with approved projects in 2020 to 2021 (26,857) being slightly lower than approved projects in 2019 to 2020 (nearly 29,500). The average duration of Canada Summer Jobs work experiences increased slightly during the pandemic years, from an average of 8.5 weeks in 2019 to 2020 to 8.6 weeks in 2020 to 2021 and 9.3 weeks in 2021 to 2022.

### YESS responsiveness to the needs of Canada Summer Jobs employers

In the fall of 2022, a survey of Canada Summer Jobs employers was conducted by ESDC for the evaluation. While the survey had non-representative results and a low response rate of 7.25% (n=881), the responses can provide some indications of the effects of the Covid-19 temporary

measures. The results for the ESDC Canada Summer Jobs survey for employer use of temporary flexibilities (n=546) are as follows:

- Of employers surveyed, 62% stated that they used the temporary flexibilities
- For survey respondents, 81% indicated that the temporary flexibilities either mostly or completely met their organizations needs
- For survey respondents who used the temporary flexibilities 90% reported that the Canada Summer Jobs application process with the inclusion of the temporary flexibilities was easy or very easy

Approximately 48% (n=546) of respondents who used the temporary flexibilities used a combination of these in their Canada Summer Jobs project.

### 5.6 Performance measurement and data collection

In late 2022, the ESDC Evaluation Directorate conducted a data assessment of the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs component data. The objective was to determine the feasibility of using the data for the horizontal evaluation, and to assess if the data collection and reporting system in place supports the performance measurement of ESDC's Strategy.

#### YESSP<sup>43</sup>

The ESDC YESSP data is stored in the Common System for Grants and Contributions (CSGC). Based on the data assessment, records are only available for YESSP participants from April 2020 to December 2022

**Data limitation:** There are only a handful of YESSP participants from fiscal year 2019 to 2020. The lack of participant records for the first year of YESSP is attributed to the lack of signed agreements in the first year of the Strategy.

The YESSP data is collected via the Participant Information Template. Agreement holders must provide information in the template such as intervention type(s), project start date, and project completion date. The data assessment found 100% response rates for this information. Specifically, the CSGC data for YESSP covers participants for whom a template was completed from April 2020 to the December 2022 period, resulting in 77,978 interventions corresponding to 20,888 participants.

**Data limitation:** Data are only available for participants for whom a result date is reported (that is, a Participant Information Template is filled out and submitted to ESDC). No information exists for participants who did not complete the Participant Information Template regardless of whether or not they completed YESSP interventions. This may limit the estimation of incremental impacts and limit

---

<sup>43</sup> Given the Canada-Québec agreement with the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale, the voluntary nature of data collection approach from participants, and some participants not completing exit forms, the total number of participants who filled out the YESSP onboarding form may not equate the total number of participants in the YESSP.

conducting a cost-benefit analysis. Peer reviewers have consistently advised to consider all participants who started program participation to assess program impact and effectiveness.

The new YESSP is intended to meet an individual's holistic needs through available supports, services, and resources to promote a positive result. As such, a participant can receive supports concurrently with any intervention. In particular, supports can vary and be provided before, during and after the intervention, within the project start and end dates. There are challenges for the implementation of new performance measurement frameworks.

**Data limitation:** Intervention start and end dates are not uniquely captured; only the start and end dates of participation in the full YESSP project is recorded. Because of this data collection approach and the way intervention dates are captured, there are challenges to assigning outcomes to a “main” intervention type, as is traditionally examined in other ESDC labour market program evaluations (for example, the Labour Market Development Agreements). This lack of start and end dates per intervention may limit the capacity to estimate incremental impacts with the perspective of informing which interventions work best for whom.

With no YESSP participants' data for fiscal year 2019 to 2020, participants in 2020 to 2021 will be the earliest cohort of participants that can be used for impact analysis for the modernized Strategy. This will limit the scope of the quantitative analysis that can be conducted as Canada Revenue Agency taxation data has a 2-year lag period from year of filing to year of availability for analysis (that is, the 2021 tax data will only be available in Autumn 2023). As a result, the quantitative analysis for the modernized Strategy, as part of horizontal evaluation, will be limited to the examination of immediate incremental impacts<sup>44</sup> (between 6 and 15 months post-participation for individuals who started their participation between April and December 2020).

Cost-benefit analysis is not possible at this time given the limited number of years available to assess the benefits associated with participation in the modernized Strategy.<sup>45</sup> As such, the YESS horizontal evaluation will not be able to fully assess the impact and effectiveness of the modernised Strategy.

As previously mentioned, the CSGC database does not contain data for Quebec specific projects. There is a Canada-Québec agreement with the ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité sociale for the ESDC YESSP Regional component. Because this agreement is in place, organizations were not eligible for that component; they could only apply for the national component. Quebec is responsible for reporting its data to ESDC. At the time of the mid-cycle assessment, this information was not available.

---

<sup>44</sup> Incremental impacts estimate the changes that are directly attributable to participating in a component. Participants' outcomes are compared to the outcomes of comparison group members.

<sup>45</sup> Cost-benefit analysis allows for an examination of the costs and benefits associated with component participation for the individual, the government, and society (that is, the combination of the individual and the government).

**Data limitation:** As the Quebec specific data are not available in the CSGC database, any analysis of YESSP will not include Quebec.<sup>46</sup>

For participants, the collection of sociodemographic and personal information such as Social Insurance Number, birth date, gender and postal code through the Participant Information Template is done at the onboarding stage and is voluntary. While voluntary, the data analysis found high response rates for the fields presented in Table 14.

**Table 14. Participant Information Template response rates for YESSP participants**

Field name	Participant Information Template response rate
Social Insurance Number	96%
Last name	98%
Birth date	96%
Postal code	94%
Gender	98%
Visible minority	97%
Indigenous person	96%
New immigrant	96%
Attainment (education level)	96%
Person with disabilities	97%

**Source:** ESDC's Common System for Grants and Contributions (April 2020 to December 2022 YESSP participants).

### Partner YESSP departments, agencies and Crown corporation data

Historically, partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations uploaded their participant data to ESDC through a data collection system. A data collection system is not currently available for partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations to securely upload their participant data to ESDC. Alternative means of incorporating partners' evaluation results will be investigated.

---

<sup>46</sup> The Quebec specific agreements represent up to \$50 million per year over the period of fiscal years 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025.

- Data limitation: due to the lack of available data and given time constraints to respect the *Financial Administration Act* and Treasury Board requirements, the quantitative analysis for YESSP participants will be limited to ESDC participants.

Each partner department and agency is responsible for the management and implementation of their respective YESS initiatives and also for the decision on whether to conduct their own evaluation for their initiative(s). Given that, this Evaluation strategy aims, in part, to guide any activities conducted by partner departments and agencies to provide and inform a more comprehensive horizontal assessment of the YESS program.

If a partner department or agency plans to conduct an evaluation of its own YESS initiative, the Evaluation Directorate will use the findings to inform the Horizontal Evaluation report. Furthermore, ESDC evaluation will use available complementary information, documentation or analysis held by partner departments or agencies regarding their YESS initiatives or programs. Relatedly, partner departments and agencies are also responsible to provide Employment and Social Development Canada with administrative data and information on their initiatives.

### Canada Summer Jobs<sup>47</sup>

The Evaluation Directorate found that data for Canada Summer Jobs was available for the period of June 2019 to December 2022, covering 100% of participants (N=368,891). As with the previous evaluation of Canada Summer Jobs, the analysis will examine immediate outcomes reported in the CSGC through the information collected in the Participant Information Template and data collected by ESDC in the exit surveys for employers and participants.

---

<sup>47</sup> As previously stated, Canada Summer Jobs is an ESDC-specific component.

## 6. Conclusion

The YESS helps young people, particularly those facing barriers to employment, get the information and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition into the labour market. This report was designed to report on the early findings of the Canada Summer Jobs and YESSP components of the YESS from June 2019 to December 2022, including:<sup>48</sup>

- The early results of the YESS components effect on targeted youth populations and youth facing barriers.
- The early results of the Covid-19 temporary flexibilities,
- The early results of the modernized Strategy, and
- The implementation of the new performance measurement framework components

### 6.1 Summary of findings

#### Canada Summer Jobs

From June 2019 to December 2022, nearly 368,900 youth participated in the Canada Summer Jobs component. During that period, almost 15% of Canada Summer Jobs participants reported that their placement was their first work experience. Canada Summer Jobs also exceeded its target goal for paid work experience with the exception of the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In 2020 to 2021, the component fell short of its target job placement creation by 11,862 job placements, but in the following 2 years the component increased its target goal for job placement creation and exceeded them from fiscal year 2021 to 2022 and March to December 2022. In fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the component created 23,882 job placements over target and was 13,223 job placement creations over target from March to December 2022.

On average, from June 2019 to December 2022, 99% of employers responding to the Canada Summer Jobs exit survey indicated that participants developed skills during their job placement. Similarly, youth surveyed in the most recently available Canada Summer Jobs exit survey showed that 97% self-reported they developed or strengthened transferable skills, and 89% self-reported they developed or strengthened employment skills.

In fiscal year 2020 to 2021, many approved Canada Summer Jobs employers took advantage of the temporary flexibilities provided by ESDC because of the Covid-19 pandemic. By fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the use of temporary flexibilities fell off considerably, in particular in terms of employment period and part-time employment. During the pandemic, project applications from employers remained near pre-pandemic levels, with approved projects in 2020 to 2021 (26,857) being slightly lower than approved projects in 2019 to 2020 (nearly 29,500). The average duration of Canada Summer Jobs work experiences increased slightly during the pandemic years, from an average of 8.5 weeks in 2019 to 2020 to 8.6 weeks in 2020 to 2021 and 9.3 weeks in 2021 to 2022.

---

<sup>48</sup> Data for fiscal year 2019 to 2020 is not available for the YESSP.

## YESSP

From April 2020 to December 2022, nearly 20,900 youth participated in the YESSP. The YESSP is a more intensive component focusing on youth facing barriers. Most YESSP participants receive 2 or more component interventions. From April 2020 to December 2022, the average duration of combinations of interventions declined from a high of 141 days in 2020 to 2021 to 83 days from March to December 2022. A data assessment on barriers that youth mainly face for the YESSP and Canada Summer Jobs was conducted based on 5 known barriers to youth employment including:

- Youth who have not yet completed high school
- Youth who are a new immigrant
- Youth who are a visible minority
- Youth who are a person with disability
- Youth who are living in rural or remote areas

Combinations of barriers was also examined based on participants' self-reported information, the most common combination of barriers that participants face are being:

- Visible minority and new immigrant (9%)
- Visible minority and being a person with disabilities (5%)
- Visible minority and high school not yet completed (5%)
- High school not yet completed and being a person with disabilities (5%)

Early outcomes on the modernized Strategy for the YESSP found that on average 68% are employed, and an additional 13% returned to school following component participation. Approximately 8% were unemployed following their participation.

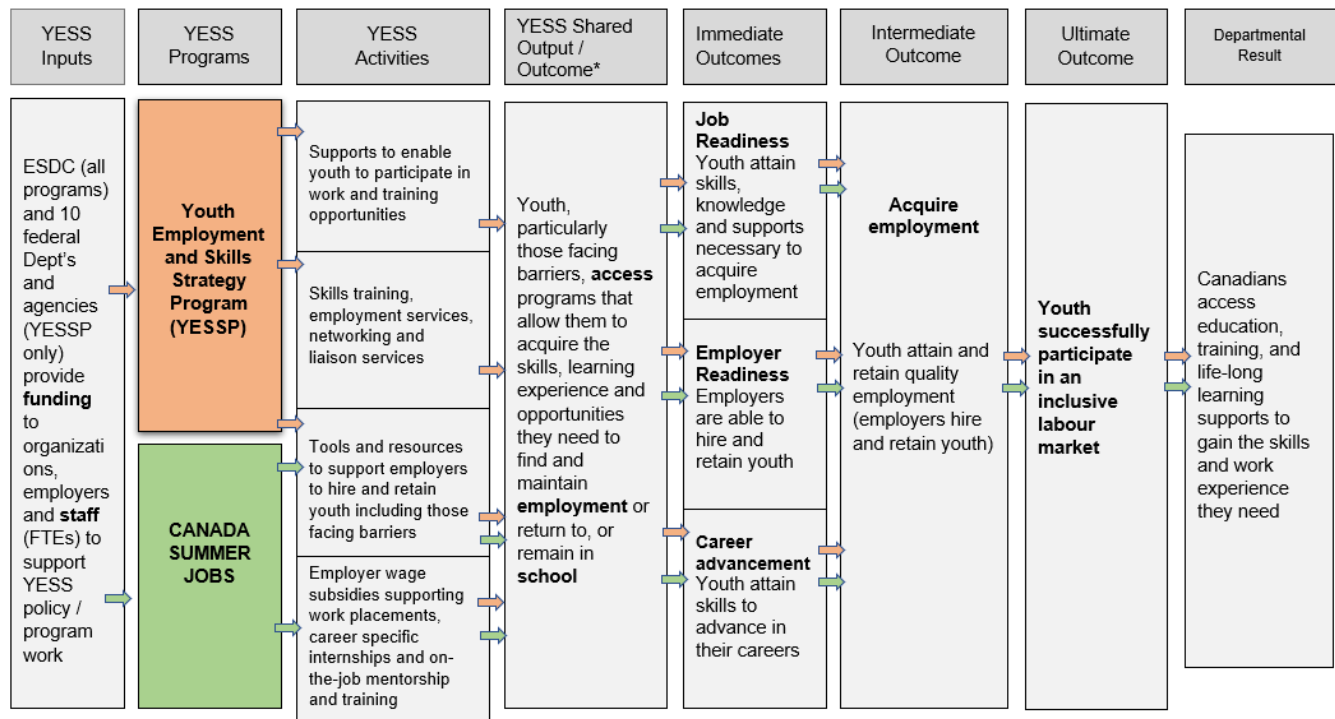
In regard to the implementation of the new performance measurement framework components, for YESSP participants specifically, it is now voluntary for participants to provide personal information such as Social Insurance Number, birth date, gender and postal code through the Participant Information Template. While voluntary, the data analysis found high response rates for key fields. Historically, partner YESS departments, agencies, and Crown corporations uploaded their participant data to ESDC through a data collection system. A data collection system is not currently available for partner departments, agencies and Crown corporations to securely upload their participant data to ESDC. Alternative means of incorporating partners' evaluation results will be investigated.

## 7. References

- Bobadilla, A., et al., *Soft skills as a workforce development strategy for Opportunity Youth*, 2021.
- Deng, Z., et al., *Youth unemployment in Canada, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom in times of COVID-19*, 2023.
- Gunderson, M., *Effectiveness of Youth Employment Programs Post 2018*, 2022. (Internal document)
- Herbaut, E., Geven, K. *What Works to Reduce Inequalities in Higher Education? A Systematic Review of the (Quasi-)Experimental Literature on Outreach and Financial Aid*, 2019.
- Salerno, J. P., et al., *Sexual and Gender Minority Stress Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for LGBTQ Young Persons' Mental Health and Well-Being*, 2020.
- Environics Institute for Survey Research. *Making up time The impact of the pandemic on young adults in Canada*, 2021.
- Environics Institute for Survey Research. *Mind and Body: Impact of the Pandemic on Physical and Mental Health*, 2021.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. *Horizontal Evaluation of the Labour Market Development Agreements*, 2023.
- Statistics Canada. *The Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19: A Six-Month Update*, 2020.



## Appendix A. 2021 YESS Logic model



\* Each YESS department may track their own individual outputs that they don't report on as part of the Horizontal performance measurement framework. It is assumed that the conduct of eligible activities results in the output of these activities (such as training activities lead to youth being trained), and that evidence of youth being served implicitly measures the realization of any related outputs