

DEFINING A PATH TO INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT



A Discussion Paper about
Employment for People with
Developmental Disabilities

INDEX

About Community Living BC	3
Introduction	4
Defining the Challenges	5
Current CLBC Programs and Supports	6
Vocational Programs	6
Employment Supports	8
New Ideas	9
CLBC Employment Initiative	9
Customized Employment	10
Individualized Funding	10
Ministry of Housing and Social Development	12
Employment Program People with Disabilities	12
Other Employment Programs	12
10 x 10 Challenge	13
Measuring Up Accessibility Fund	13
CLBC Employment Initiative—Next Steps	14
More Thoughts about Inclusive Employment	16
What do you Think about Inclusive Employment?	17
Acknowledgements	18
Glossary	18
Resources	19

About Community Living BC (CLBC)

CLBC, a Crown agency under the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, funds support and services to people with developmental disabilities. It has a board of self-advocates, family and community members, as well as staff located throughout the province. CLBC believes that people with developmental disabilities and their families know best when it comes to their needs, goals and planning for the future.

Inclusion is a key part of the work of CLBC. Being included means that all people — including those who live with a developmental disability — have a variety of opportunities to contribute to their communities. Successful inclusion means the richness of diversity and reciprocal relationships are recognized and celebrated. By being included, individuals with developmental disabilities can also ‘include’ others into their way of seeing and understanding the world.



“My job made me come out and let people get to know me.”

*– Lucy Lange, Employee
Super 8 Hotel*

Introduction

Working in community is a big part of inclusion. People with developmental disabilities want and need to work at jobs where they are paid real wages and feel valued as employees.

Despite progress by the community living movement in the last 30 years, many people with developmental disabilities are still excluded from work that supports them to be independent, and contribute to their society and community. Many spend their time in day programs where they are involved in community activities but do not have a chance for “real work for real pay.”

In 2008, CLBC established the employment initiative to develop a strategy aimed at increasing employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. This discussion paper is part of that strategy, and is CLBC’s invitation to you to provide your input to promote a shift to employment as a priority within the existing continuum of services, and increase



“Denise has brought a ray of sunshine to our customers and staff. We love her funny conversations and her smiling face along with her strong work ethic.”

– Shellie Zuccato, Owner, Second Cup Coffee

employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. The paper outlines the challenges that need to be overcome, what currently is available for employment services, new ideas being implemented, and what needs to change.

Building inclusive communities is a goal that must be shared by all British Columbians if it is to be realized. Your ideas, perspectives and experiences are important and crucial to the discussion as the path to strengthening inclusive employment is defined. We look forward to our discussions with you.

Defining the Challenges

Adults with developmental disabilities want to work, employers need committed employees and research indicates people support socially progressive businesses that have inclusive workplaces. However, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed to help fully realize the goals of inclusive employment in British Columbia for people with developmental disabilities:

- Creating an employment culture in the community living sector
- Addressing safety concerns that some individuals and families have related to working in the community
- Addressing employers concerns about workplace training and supports for people with developmental disabilities
- Being guided by employment principles, not specific employment models
- Identifying ways to encourage service providers to add an employment focused approach to supports and services
- Providing training and technical support to service providers and their staff to increase employment opportunities
- Increasing the capacity of service providers committed to finding real work for those who want to work
- Defining a multi-disciplinary approach that supports youth to consider employment as their first option when moving to adult services
- Building partnerships with community employment services, Ministry of Education and post secondary education initiatives, such as STEPS Forward Inclusive Post Secondary Education Society, to allow people with developmental disabilities to access the same employment and career options as their non-disabled peers.

The approach needed to address these challenges needs to be multi-faceted, and encourage the involvement of families, individuals, employers, employees, governments, communities and service providers. It will also need to build on the success of past programs and services, and the employment innovations currently taking place in organizations and communities across BC.

**“I really like my co-workers.
Everything is good.
I get out of my house and
go to a place I like.”**

– Denise Blanchette, Employee

“Advocare gains benefits of a practical nature—the work that is done and the enhancement of our team as a whole through increased collaboration and inclusion of all who live and work in our community.”

— Patricia Gutcher, Employer
Advocare Health Services



Current CLBC Programs and Supports

Adults with developmental disabilities are significantly under-represented in BC’s workforce. Many spend their time in day programs which focus primarily on non-employment related group activities. Some are involved in vocational programs that are funded by CLBC. According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006, just under 30 per cent of Canadians with developmental disabilities participated in the labour force compared to 75 per cent of people without disabilities.

Vocational Programs

CLBC funds service providers to deliver a range of vocational programs which usually have the following characteristics: an over-representation of people with a developmental disability when compared to a typical community setting; work that may or may not be time-limited to satisfy the training exemption of the Employment Standards Act; and participants who may or may not receive pay or benefits at industry standards.

Volunteering may be referred to as work. Although volunteering has many benefits, including contributing to one's community and opportunities for skill development and confidence building, it is not employment and should not be offered as an ongoing replacement for work.

Some of the most commonly used vocational models include:

Enclave

Generally 5 – 8 people with developmental disabilities who are trained, work as a team and are supervised among non-disabled employees in a community business or industry. Initial training, supervision and support are provided by a specially trained on-site supervisor, who may work for the company or the placement agency.

Mobile Work Crew

Up to six people with developmental disabilities working as a distinct unit and operating as a self-contained business to sell a service. The crew participates at several locations in the community under the supervision of a job coach.

Group Support

Program staff assist individuals to obtain and maintain work experience as part of a group of individuals with developmental disabilities. Activities generally include packaging programs and assembly line production.

The B.C. Employment Standards Act applies to all service providers funded by CLBC.

Increasingly, individuals receiving services from traditional vocational and day services funded by CLBC are also being supported to secure employment. In these instances, providers are transforming their service delivery approach and are embedding an employment culture into existing services. Individuals may continue to receive some day supports in addition to employment supports.

**“I like going to work
because it keeps
me busy.”**

– Kim Aiken, Employee
Advocare Health Services

Employment Programs

There are a number of programs, many of which are funded by CLBC, that focus on helping adults with developmental disabilities find real work for real pay. Jobs that meet the following criteria to be considered by CLBC as part of an employment program:

- Work is full-time, part-time or self-employment and engages a person's skills and abilities
- The employer understands their responsibilities to their employee with developmental disabilities
- The employee works alongside non-disabled employees who may provide on-site support
- The employee is paid fair and equitable wages and benefits by their employer
- The employee and employer have access to a job coach who has developed a training and support plan
- The employee is provided with opportunities for advancement.



“I have a great job with lots of friends.”

– Ron Grinder, Groundskeeper, Kelowna Golf and Country Club

Job coaches are available to provide on-site training in job skills and work-related behaviour for employees with developmental disabilities. As the employee gains skills and confidence, and natural supports are developed, the coach gradually spends less time at the work site, but remains available for retraining, assisting with challenges, and providing orientation and training for co-workers.

Self-employment is also an option for people with developmental disabilities. Supports for self-employment are offered through employment specialists and include:

- Business plan development
- Market research
- Help with finding start-up money
- A job coach to help with planning, training and on-going support.

Business is Booming for Young Entrepreneur

Mike Palitti of Abbotsford had always dreamed of owning and operating his own business. In 2003, Mike started washing cars and was always told he did a terrific job. At the time he was looking for employment options and decided to start a carwash. Mike created flyers and delivered them to people he knew in his community and his employment support agency. The business soon took off. Mike is now so busy that he has a partner and eight other of his peers have been taught the skills to assist in the business. Two dollars from each wash goes back into buying equipment and supplies. The rest is split between Mike and the people who helped wash the vehicle. Mike is meticulous about his work and expects the same from his employees. He inspects every vehicle before it leaves the lot to make sure it has been cleaned to his standards. In the future, Mike hopes to move on to other work and leave the car wash to others. His big dream is to open a restaurant.

New Ideas

People with developmental disabilities need and want to work, they want to be paid real wages and feel valued as employees. CLBC believes that community workplaces should reflect the makeup of the people who live in the community. Inclusive employment means that every person with a disability who wants employment is employed. Below are some of the initiatives and projects underway in BC to help increase employment for people with developmental disabilities.

CLBC Employment Initiative

CLBC's Employment Initiative includes promoting "employment first" thinking with CLBC staff, families, self-advocates, school system and service providers to help change

the culture of employment for people with developmental disabilities. The project will develop policies and a new framework for programs, and launch a communication and awareness campaign to promote the importance of employment for people with developmental disabilities, and the skilled contributions they can make.

“I like going to work and meeting new people. Starbucks is great.”

– *Leanne Froese*
Employee, Starbucks



CLBC staff are also working with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development on the Customized Employment Project (CEP) to make sure the Employment Initiative is informed by the experience and knowledge gained through CEP.

In addition to this work, CLBC will also continue to encourage and support service providers to use an employment approach within the continuum of day and vocational services they provide.

Customized Employment Project

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development is leading the Customized Employment Project, which develops the right job to fit an individual’s skills, abilities and experience. Through this project, each person is supported by a team



“[Our involvement] has educated and crushed myths that some of our employees had about people with disabilities in the employment world...I have noted that many of our employees who doubted the work ethic of people with disabilities now call them co-workers and friends.”

– Rick Wright

President of Interior New Car Dealer Association

made up of a job coach, family, service providers, and friends. This team helps to identify the person’s skills, interests and abilities, and explore possibilities for work. Individuals involved in the program have a chance to look at different workplaces that fit their interest areas and skills before making a final decision on a position. Once a job has been identified, the job coach works with the employer to identify and provide training for the individual, train co-workers to assist the individual as needed, and act as an on-going resource for the employer, employee and co-workers.

Individualized Funding

Individualized Funding enables individuals and families to develop their own innovative service options, and exercise greater control over the supports and services they choose or develop, and how they are provided. Adults with developmental disabilities who choose individualized funding as a payment option can purchase their own employment services and necessary supports. The funding can be provided directly to the individual and their family, or directly to the agency through what is known as a “host agency option.”

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development provides the following employment programs and services:

a. Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD)

Community-based service providers deliver Core EPPD services province-wide. Core EPPD service providers deliver a full range of specialized employment services to help persons with disabilities participate in their communities, pursue their employment goals as they are able, increase their self-reliance and build skills and experience that may lead to further employment opportunities.

These individualized services include in-depth career planning, skills assessment, pre-employment services, job training and placement, provision of necessary employment supports, disability management assistance, follow-up workplace support and employment crisis services. As appropriate, participants can be matched with a work experience placement to gain skills before entering the workforce. After placement, EPPD staff continue to support employers and individuals with coaching, mediation and making specific arrangements to meet disability needs in the workplace.

b. Other Employment Services

In addition to Core EPPD, the Ministry of Housing and Social Development offers more specialized employment service to individuals with Developmental, Neurological, Mental Health Disabilities (including Autism Spectrum Disorder), Learning Disorders, and other cognitive conditions. These individualized services, delivered by community-based qualified service providers, are modeled on the principles of customized employment, specifically to meet the unique needs of this group of individuals. The goal is employment with the necessary supports that will ensure success for the individual and employer.

“I have had good support that has helped me keep the job I have now. I have been working for years at my job.”

*– Chris Harrington, Employee
Purified Water Store*

c. 10 x 10 Challenge

The 10 x 10 Challenge invites communities and organizations to increase employment for persons with disabilities in British Columbia by 10 per cent by the year 2010. Funding is available through the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to support communities and organizations working to increase employment, accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Measuring Up Accessibility Fund

Measuring Up Accessibility Fund through 2010 Legacies Now helps BC communities assess and improve how accessible and inclusive they are for people with disabilities. The Fund supports community projects aiming to improve how people with disabilities can actively participate in, and contribute to, their communities.



“Chris is a stable employee who has stuck with me and does a good job; I cannot complain. It’s been excellent and we have been assisted with education and on-going support.”

*– Chris Collinson, Owner
Purified Water Store*

“Carrie is a reliable, helpful and a good worker...She has been a great addition to our staff, is part of our team and participates like all our employees.”

– Betty Caldwell, Supervisor
Westbank Animal Care Hospital



CLBC Employment Initiative — Next Steps

CLBC’s Employment Initiative and its advisory committee have identified a number of strategies, along with the input gained through the discussion paper, that will be used to strengthen employment for people with disabilities in BC. These strategies include but are not limited to:

COMMUNICATION — deliver an awareness campaign that includes a DVD to showcase the successes and benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities and help build an employment first culture.

INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES — support service providers to explore ways to increase employment outcomes.

TRAINING — working in collaboration with partners to ensure training and technical assistance is available; analyze sector training needs and invest strategically; explore ways CLBC can support specialist training in employment; compile a list of training resources for service providers; provide training for CLBC staff.

**“It’s good, I like it,
I get to work with animals!”**

*– Carrie Derickson, Employee
Westbank Animal Care Hospital*

POLICY AND STANDARDS — develop policy and a community engagement strategy that supports an employment culture; participate in the development of employment standards; and ensure CLBC staff is including employment as part of the planning process with individuals and families.

CONTRACT RECONFIGURATION — clearly communicate the expectations of employment services and monitor outcomes on a regular basis.

YOUTH IN SCHOOL AND POST SECONDARY EDUCATION — ensure the transition protocol for youth developed with partner ministries identifies issues associated with employment; work with the school system to raise awareness about increasing employment outcomes for students with disabilities; and work in partnership with provincial post-secondary education initiatives to ensure there is the option for individuals with developmental disabilities to better prepare for careers at college or university.

More Thoughts about Inclusive Employment

People with developmental disabilities represent an untapped resource of talent for employers. Employers who have people with developmental disabilities on their staff report their performance has met or exceeded that of employees without disabilities. Co-workers often report a more positive workplace when it is inclusive of people with developmental disabilities.

“My job has helped me to be independent. I have employment I rely on rather than having the government’s pay cheques.”

*– Ryan Courtemanche
Employee*



Research also shows that with real work for real pay, people with developmental disabilities are less likely to live in poverty, and are less likely to be reliant on public funds to support them.

It is clear that providing employment services to support people in the workplace requires a specialized set of skills. CLBC recognizes that it will need to support service providers across the province to develop the capacity of their existing workforce and strategically realign their day supports to focus on employment, while still providing a continuum of services to meet individual needs. This discussion paper is part of CLBC’s strategy to identify innovations that help move BC forward towards inclusive employment and inclusive communities.

What do you think about Inclusive Employment?

Thank you for taking the time to read this paper. There are different ways you can join this discussion about inclusive employment. We encourage you to ask questions and actively participate in talking and planning about ways to increase employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Comments about this discussion paper are welcome. You may want to send a written response to CLBC at the address below.

For more information about employment, look under What We Do > Employment on the CLBC website www.communitylivingbc.ca

Thanks for participating.

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Glossary of Terms

Service Provider

A community organization that provides support and services to people with developmental disabilities.

Self-Advocate

A person who speaks out for him or herself.

Supported Employment

Real work in an integrated setting with on-going support provided by a knowledgeable service provider with expertise in finding employment for people with developmental disabilities.

Employment

Real work for real pay in an integrated setting.

Resources

Community Living BC

www.communitylivingbc.ca

BC Association for Community Living

www.bcacl.org

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/publicat/bcea/EPPD.htm

10 X 10 Challenge

www.eia.gov.bc.ca/epwd/10by10/

2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up Accessibility Fund

www.2010legaciesnow.com/measuring_up/

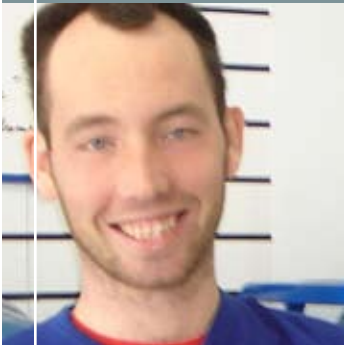
Self-Advocate Net

www.selfadvocatenet.com/

Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006:

Labour Force Experience of People with Disabilities in Canada

www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2008007-eng.htm



“It has been great working with the local agency over the years. They help us fill the need to get excellent workers.”

*– Andy Prout, Employer
Operations Coordinator, Kelowna Food Bank*