

REMOVING BARRIERS TO WORK

Flexible Employment Options for People With Disabilities in BC



by Alicia Priest,
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Nick Istvanffy,
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Adrienne Wasik and
Karen-Marie Woods

SUMMARY

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Copies of the full research report are available from the CCPA, and can be downloaded from our website.

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Introduction

Society widely recognizes that people with disabilities benefit personally, socially and economically from participating in the work world. That's true not only because of the obvious link between income and employment, but, more important, because of the deep connection between well-being, self-esteem and meaningful work. As anyone who has experienced prolonged unemployment knows, identity in our culture is hugely dependent on what we do. Participating in a productive endeavour, either as an employee or a volunteer, means being part of something bigger than ourselves. In most circumstances, it also means interacting with others, a vital activity for people with disabilities, many of whom live in loneliness and isolation.

The British Columbia Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities went even further when it recognized the broader economic and societal benefits that come from increased participation of people with disabilities in the labour force. The Council urged communities and industry

sectors across BC to join the “10 by 10 Challenge” and increase employment for persons with disabilities in the province by 10 per cent by the year 2010. Claude Richmond, the Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, recently said that “British Columbia leads the way in building the best system of support for persons with disabilities.” His government, he says, aims “to ensure that our province’s full range of supports and services for persons with disabilities are delivered in a highly effective and responsive way.”

That’s a commendable goal, but how far is the government from achieving it? Answering that question – at least partially – is what this report is about. Despite BC’s booming economy, people with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to employment, with just over half in the workforce compared to more than 80 per cent of people without disabilities. In addition, many work part-time and/or part-year and some populations, in particular people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities, have trouble accessing any employment at all. These particularly vulnerable populations are the focus of our study. Because they work part-time or episodically, they are often dependent on both employment income and income assistance.

To date, most government policy initiatives have focused on supporting those who are able to participate in the labour market on an equal footing with non-disabled peers when provided with limited accommodation and unbiased opportunities. Considerably less attention has been paid to those who require access to additional support or, due to the nature of their disabilities, may be able to participate only on a part-time basis, episodically, or at a level below the norm of expected productivity.

Our study discovered that some people with disabilities need a combination of income assistance and employment in order to function to their full capacity. Current restrictions often discourage this population from participating in the labour market.



Participating in a productive endeavour, either as an employee or a volunteer, means being part of something bigger than ourselves.

This orientation stems from a longstanding societal view toward employment that sees individuals as either being on a payroll or on a welfare roll and nowhere in between. As our study discovered, however, some people with disabilities need a combination of income assistance and employment in order to function to their full capacity. As a result they present unique challenges to both the labour market and the income assistance system.

Current restrictions often discourage this population from participating in the labour market. Many are caught in a classic catch-22 situation. If they become employed, they fear forfeiting some or all of their disability benefits, and if they commit to full-time employment and then find they cannot maintain that employment, they may find themselves without employment income or income assistance from disability benefits.

However, flexible employment and creative income assistance policies could allow workers with a significant disability to cycle into and out of the labour

Our study discovered that some people with disabilities need a combination of income assistance and employment in order to function to their full capacity.



market without risking their access to disability benefits. This enhanced security may in turn encourage these individuals to increase their labour force participation. There is also promise in expanding alternatives to traditional working styles, such as more flexible hours of work, additional supports in the workplace, as well as more comprehensive programs like social enterprises.

How important are these changes not only to those traditionally excluded from the labour market but to society as a whole? If the growing and significant academic literature is any indication, such changes are extremely important. The research points to an escalating positive feedback loop that occurs when an individual is successfully employed: greater social well-being results in greater self-esteem and self-worth, which in turn reduces the symptoms of illness, leading to even greater social well-being. Our study identifies the policies and supports needed to allow the above scenario to become reality for more persons with a disability in BC.

We did this by:

- Analyzing the disability benefits and employment incentives provided through the BC Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA);
- Conducting a comparative analysis of income assistance policies and benefits for persons with disabilities in the five westernmost provinces (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario) and in Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia; and
- Reviewing eight relatively successful community and college-based supportive employment programs in BC that assisted people with disabilities to find work with mainstream employers, seven BC social enterprises that employed people with disabilities directly, and three coordinating groups that supported the development of social enterprises for people with disabilities, two of which were in Ontario.

While the goal of this paper is to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to work if and when they are able, it is essential to remember that employment is not a realistic goal for many people on disability assistance. It is an important option, but the primary goal of the disability assistance system should be to ensure that all people with disabilities have access to social support and are able to live with dignity, regardless of their ability to engage with the labour market. This is not the case in BC. For although PWD benefits are much higher than regular welfare, people on PWD still live well below the poverty line.

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The BC Picture

Fewer people moved to employment and received medical-only benefits between 2004 and 2006, despite the fact that BC's economy was booming.

A Freedom of Information request of ministry data covering the period from September 2000 to July 2006 revealed significant changes in the number of people receiving Person With Disability (PWD) and Person with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) benefits earning income within the earnings exemption limit, moving into full-time employment or volunteering.

These changes include:

- A 70 per cent increase in the number of people on PWD in seven years and a dramatic decline in the number of people in the expected-to-work category;
- A doubling of the number of people in the Community Volunteer Program immediately following increased funding for this program;
- Increased uptakes of the higher earnings exemption, but still less than 16 per cent of PWD report any earnings at all; and
- Fewer people moving to employment and receiving medical-only benefits between 2004 and 2006, despite the fact that BC's economy was booming.

This suggests that, while the ministry boasts that "British Columbia leads the way in building the best system of support for persons with disabilities," there remains ample room for improvement and for learning from other jurisdictions.

The Picture Elsewhere

Our study reviewed a wide range of disability benefits and employment practices in the five westernmost provinces (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario) and in Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. Though none of the policies are perfect, there are several that could significantly benefit persons with disabilities. For instance, a designated person with a disability in Alberta can have assets up to \$100,000 compared to BC's \$3,000. As a result, British Columbians with disabilities are expected to expend virtually everything they own prior to becoming eligible for benefits.

As noted above, most people in BC receiving disability benefits do not receive additional income from employment. But our review of legislative and policy regimes in nine jurisdictions targets several policies that could enable more persons with disabilities to do so. They include:

- Clarifying that individuals have continued medical and dental benefits at the same level as when on income assistance until such time as they receive an equal or greater level of benefits from their employer, as is the case in Ontario. (While the medical-only policy is officially in



Most people in BC receiving disability benefits do not receive additional income from employment. But our review of legislative and policy regimes in nine jurisdictions targets several policies that could enable more persons with disabilities to do so.

place in BC, it is not clearly defined or well communicated to either front-line income assistance staff or people with disabilities).

- Ensuring unlimited reinstatement as in Ontario and rapid requalification for income benefits including earnings exemptions, as in Alberta.
- Providing a monthly transportation allowance or bus pass for people who access *any* employment, as in Ontario.
- Increasing earnings exemptions by including the current flat rate earnings exemption of \$500 per month in BC and adding a 50 per cent graduated reduction in benefits for additional earnings, as in Alberta.
- Developing “working credits” to even the flow of earnings exemptions, as is done in Australia.
- Developing an employment start-up benefit of up to \$500 for any new employment-related activity that can be initiated once per year, as in Ontario.
- Raising asset limits to be eligible for benefits to \$100,000, as is done in Alberta.

While such changes would help reduce barriers to employment, they are not sufficient. Many people with disabilities also need support in accessing and retaining paid employment. Supportive employment programs and social enterprises play an important role in enabling more persons with disabilities to work.

A designated person with a disability in Alberta can have assets up to \$100,000 compared to BC's \$3,000. As a result, British Columbians with disabilities are expected to expend virtually everything they own prior to becoming eligible for benefits.



Supportive Employment

Historically, employment options for people with significant developmental, psychiatric and other disabilities were limited to sheltered workshops that paid below minimum wage and were segregated from the larger community. The growth of the disability rights movement in the 1980s and the application of provincial minimum wage legislation to sheltered workshops have shifted the focus to supportive employment.

Supportive employment is programming that supports people with disabilities to find and retain work in the mainstream labour market. Emphasis is placed on an individual participant's interest and preferences, relatively rapid placement in mainstream employment, and ongoing employment supports.

In an extensive review in 2000 of supportive employment programs in Canada, people with disabilities expressed a high level of satisfaction with their work, their workplaces and their coworkers, even though their incomes increased only modestly. Staff in these supportive employment programs spoke of the powerful role employment plays in countering feelings of social exclusion and low self-esteem.

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Our study focused on eight long-standing, community-based supportive employment and college-based special education programs and not on the relatively new “performance-based programming” contracted through the ministry. These eight programs receive global funding and service providers are primarily small, not-for-profit, disability-specific organizations. All programs have been in place for many years, are well regarded by the key informants, target populations with developmental and psychiatric disabilities, and represent diverse funding sources and urban and rural locations.

In contrast, ministry programs – business-oriented funding models introduced in 2003 – are awarded through a competitive bidding process where funding is based on a “fee-for-service” or “pay-for-performance” model, i.e. contractors are paid a set fee to provide certain predetermined interventions. We address the outcomes of these programs in more detail later.

While employment outcomes varied among the eight programs in our study, common success factors and barriers to success were identified in supporting people with significant disabilities to find and retain employment. Agencies had difficulties with federal and provincial programming, including ineffective service coordination, a lack of consistency in terms of the services offered and inadequate funding structures for supportive employment.

While employment outcomes varied among the eight programs in our study, common success factors and barriers to success were identified in supporting people with significant disabilities to find and retain employment.



Success depended on several factors, including:

- Ongoing supports without time limits;
- Onsite job skills development;
- An unrelenting focus on participants' preferences, skills and employment goals;
- Strong working relationships between agencies, supportive employment staff and program participants;
- Effective coordination between employers and supportive employment staff;
- Welcoming working environments with strong natural supports, including well developed training tactics and social supports;
- Global funding structures that provide the flexibility to meet individual needs; and
- A connection to a disability-specific agency that provides long-term, non-employment, person-centred social supports.

In addition to the above supports, agencies emphasized the importance of rapid placement. In some cases, too much time is spent on pre-vocational assessment and training at the expense of "hard skills" and actual employment placement. Participants in this study reported 2005-06 program and service dropout rates of zero to 23 per cent, compared to 59 per cent and 78 per cent for the ministry's Planning and Employment Services and Pre-employment Services programs respectively.

Even more notable is the difference in placement rates between the eight programs we studied and the placement rates for the MEIA's Employment Programs for People with Disabilities (EPPD). According to the ministry, only 12.5 per cent of the people who participated in the programs from April 1, 2003 to April 1, 2007 obtained paid employment. In the community-based projects we surveyed, those working with people with psychiatric disabilities achieved placement rates of 36 to 54 per cent, while programs working primarily with people with developmental disabilities had placement rates of 47 to 80 per cent.

Curiously, the government has not expanded these relatively successful community-based programs, but instead has introduced a new, more business-oriented "fee-for-service" model. It has awarded \$18 million in contracts under the fee-for-service model through a competitive bid process to three very large, cross-disability, regional-based service providers. Concerns about these

Our study found that success depended on several factors, including welcoming working environments with strong natural supports.

programs were raised repeatedly by our key informants. These concerns are well founded given higher drop out rates and much lower placement rates.

Furthermore, the agencies we surveyed expressed concerns that MEIA's performance-based funding models have resulted in a decrease in the number of employment services in the province, and have led to "cream skimming" of higher-functioning participants in order to boost outcomes. While the ministry may offer marginal employment outcomes, as one informant expressed: "Retention is the proof in the pudding." Ongoing supports are critical to ensuring that people with disabilities not only obtain employment, but *retain* employment. The ministry's EPPD programs provide only limited ongoing supports.

Agencies also reported problems with the coordination of MEIA's programs, such as complex systems of automated voice messages, long assessment periods and lengthy waitlists. These detours discourage many people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities, many of whom quit before they've begun.

Ongoing supports are critical to ensuring that people with disabilities not only obtain employment, but *retain* employment.

Finally, the ministry's emphasis on volunteer placement is troubling as it encourages exploitation of people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities. Participants often end up "volunteering" with for-profit businesses, despite being employment-ready.



Social Enterprises

Supportive employment is not the only way people typically defined as unemployable can access the social and economic benefits of employment. A newly emerging yet still small social enterprise sector has been successful in providing employment to people who were previously defined as “unemployable.” Broadly defined, social enterprises are businesses with a social purpose. We conducted in-depth interviews with seven BC social enterprises that employ people with disabilities and, in addition, conducted interviews with agencies that coordinate social enterprises initiatives, two from Ontario and one from BC.

Often, these enterprises are restricted by the relationship that exists between employment income and disability income/assistance and benefits. In five out of seven social enterprises studied, all participant-employees claim BC Disability Benefits and almost all work up to, but do not exceed, their earnings exemption threshold. Most tend to limit their labour market participation to, on average, 10 to 15 hours of paid work per week. Several social enterprises employers reported that some participant-employees do not work more hours because of the 100 per cent clawback on their income, and fears of losing their disability benefits and their extended medical and dental benefits.

A newly emerging yet still small social enterprise sector has been successful in providing employment to people who were previously defined as “unemployable.”

According to ministry policy, PWDs are eligible to retain their extended medical and dental benefits when they are working off-benefits. Yet none of the seven social enterprises interviewed (nor their participants) were aware of this policy.

None of the social enterprises in this study provide extended medical and dental benefits and several saw this inability as a barrier for their participant-employees to increase their hours. It should be noted, however, that according to MEIA policy, PWDs *are* eligible to retain their extended medical and dental benefits when they are working off-benefits. Yet none of the seven social enterprises interviewed (nor their participants) were aware of this policy.

Despite these limitations, these social enterprises successfully employ people with very limited or no previous employment history. All seven reported both economic and social benefits for their participant-employees, in particular a higher standard of living and more economic security than their non-employed peers. As well, all the social enterprises reported that employment has resulted in improved self-esteem, increased independence and broader social networks for their workforce, and a few reported a decrease in use of health care and mental health services by their participant-employees, shorter and fewer hospitalizations, the near elimination of criminal activity, and stabilized housing.

Indeed, one social enterprise told of an employee who prior to employment was hospitalized four times a year for approximately one month at a time. After beginning employment, however, this employee stayed out of hospital for a full year and the last time he was in it was for only two weeks. On that occasion, he repeatedly said that he had to get back to work.

“When people start getting a sense of commitment...they become less dependent on the health system,” a staff person from Yards R Us said. “By giving people the opportunity to go to work, have structure and earn some extra money, it is huge. There is no medication that can meet that need.”

With the cost of psychiatric hospitalization approximately \$500 a day, a one-time reduction in this man’s hospitalization by even two weeks saves the health care system \$7,000 annually. A two-week reduction projected over four hospitalizations annually saves \$28,000 a year. And with no psychiatric hospitalizations required by this man in the last year, the savings to the health care system may be as high as \$56,000.

By any social or monetary measure, these are enormous accomplishments. But they are not the product of miracles. The social enterprises we studied recorded successes by incorporating two common sense strategies: workplace accommodations and social supports. Workplace accommodations play a big part in employee satisfaction and job retention. Accommodations include: considering the number of hours employees want to work or when they want to work; individual ability; preferences in terms of the intensity and variety of work contracts; giving employees more breaks than required; on-call scheduling; a lighter mix of physically demanding jobs; and/or facilitating the return of

employees after a pause in employment due to poor health. One enterprise, for example, began as a janitorial business and changed to property maintenance when employees preferred not to work evenings and weekends.

From an employer perspective, workplace accommodations are driven by the need to balance the revenue-generating objectives of social enterprises with their mandate to employ a particular population. As one employer explains:

Some might ask, "Well, you have some workers who are faster than others – why don't you just hire fewer people with intellectual disabilities?" Well, that's not our mandate. We need to find a balance, bringing in contracts that are suitable for these individuals...but we won't make any money off of it. So we need to find suitable work, find employees that meet our mandate but that also meet our speed criteria.



The social enterprises we studied recorded successes by incorporating two common sense strategies: workplace accommodations and social supports.

Social supports are another way social enterprises attract and retain target employees. These supports include job coaching, personal and life skills counselling, and referrals to other services such as mental health, legal aid and career counseling. Providing social supports reflects a conscious remodeling of the employer-employee relationship on the part of these enterprises, the majority of which take responsibility for the social, emotional and personal well-being of their employees to degrees not often seen in mainstream businesses. One employer described its social enterprise as having “a longer fuse” than most other businesses.

From an employer perspective, workplace accommodations are driven by the need to balance the revenue-generating objectives of social enterprises with their mandate to employ a particular population.



Yet clearly, there is a cost involved in providing ongoing supports and accommodations, and social enterprises must increase their revenue to recover these costs. That situation raises the issue of sustainability. Only one social enterprise was entirely self-sufficient, and three relied on significant volunteer labour by their senior staff. However, they were adamant that their greatest barrier to self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability was not employing people with disabilities, but their lack of business expertise and capital. That's because most social enterprises are developed by people with no business experience or training, and with little to no capital to invest. For the social enterprises in our study, access to planning and/or capital funding comes almost entirely from the private sector, and most frequently from a group of socially-minded investors. Still, many social enterprises are caught in a double bind: they require business expertise and capital investments to increase their revenues, but cannot afford to hire business experts or make such capital investments until their revenues climb to a certain level.

There is no government funding in BC to support social enterprises. However, as the situation in Ontario demonstrates, the viability of this sector can be increased by government funding of social enterprise coordinating groups that help with both the business development and social supports required to sustain this sector. The Ontario case studies we outlined suggest that social enterprise coordinating initiatives have the potential to benefit social enterprises in five key areas: consolidation of business expenses and resources, including reducing repetitive activities; development of business expertise, including innovation of new models and tools; enhanced fiscal management and supervision of general managers; centralized access to business expertise and funding, including assistance with contract tenders; and, investment in long-term planning and business development.

A word of caution is needed, however. When asked to comment on an expanded funding role for government, most social enterprises expressed concern that the government would fail to recognize the diversity of models they have developed, or would impose restrictions on their operations or workforce that would curtail their entrepreneurship. As a result, funding community-based coordinating groups could be a way of providing government support while still ensuring community control.

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Conclusion

When society offers people with disabilities a variety of options, the result is the empowerment of those who have traditionally been barred from a chance to function at their individual and societal best.

The world of social welfare – income assistance and related social supports – and the world of work are generally viewed as two distinct domains. But in the social enterprises described above, these worlds combine in financially and socially beneficial ways. When society offers people with disabilities a variety of options, such as opportunities to work full-time, sporadically, part-time and/or part-year, as well as volunteer placements, the result is the empowerment of those who have traditionally been barred from a chance to function at their individual and societal best.

With that goal in mind, our study offers 11 recommendations aimed at maximizing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the labour market if and when they are able. The recommendations arise out of our analysis of policies and benefits in other jurisdictions, our interviews with both supportive employment programs and social enterprises, and discussions with disability servicing organizations. The recommendations cover four areas:

- eligibility for income support,
- the amount and type of income support,
- employment supports, and
- communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Eligibility

The provincial government should:

- Ensure that individuals receive continued medical and dental benefits at the same level as provided while on income assistance until they receive an equal or greater level of extended benefits from their employer, as is the case in Ontario. This would include persons with disabilities who are attending post-secondary education, in training or in employment.
- Ensure unlimited reinstatement, as is the case in Ontario, and rapid reinstatement for two years, as is the case in Alberta. The present BC policy, while allowing for reinstatement, is unclear on the time limits and eligibility for rapid reinstatement.
- Increase asset limits to \$100,000 for a person with a disability to be eligible for disability benefits in BC. The assets should exclude the value of their principal residence and other retirement accounts. This change would make the assets limitation in BC closer to that in Alberta.

Income Support

The provincial government should:

- Provide one \$500 employment start-up benefit per year for *any* employment-related activity, as in Ontario.
- Maintain the bus pass provision, or provide a \$120 per month transportation allowance for people who can't access public transportation, with the possibility of additional transportation support based on individual need for people who are working and not receiving PWD benefits. Both the bus pass and transportation allowance would continue until an individual's income rises above Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off.

- Increase earnings exemptions by retaining the BC \$500 flat rate earnings exemption, plus adding a 50 per cent reduction on the next \$1,400 in earnings for a total maximum monthly earnings exemption of \$1,200 for a single adult. This expands on the earnings exemption limits in Alberta.
- Develop “working credits” to even the flow of earnings exemptions for those who, because of their disability, have fairly dramatic fluctuations in their ability to earn employment income. Working credits are used to average the earnings over time so that people who can work significant hours but only intermittently are not penalized. A working credits system is in place in Australia.

Employment Supports

The following recommendations are based on research interviews with both supportive employment programs and social enterprises and discussions with disability servicing organizations.

The provincial government should:

- Increase the amount of funding for supports to employment and training to PWD and PPMB given that people with disabilities now represent more than 60 per cent of the income assistance caseload.
- Require that all future funding for employment programming is based on a global and not “pay-for-performance” method of payment and includes population-specific employment supports.
- Ensure greater accountability through independent audits of employment programming, including reporting of dropout, placement and retention rates, costs and best practices. The findings from these audits should guide future funding decisions.
- Expand college-based adult special education programs, given the evidence that these programs have been very successful in supporting younger people with disabilities to transition into mainstream employment.
- Provide stable long-term (four year) provincial government funding for three to five social enterprise coordinating groups around the province to support business development and ongoing social supports for social enterprises employing people with disabilities and/or a combination of people with disabilities and people without a disability.

Communications

The provincial government should:

- Develop plain-language fact sheets on all benefit provisions, employment supports, and information on how to report income. These fact sheets should be in multiple formats and languages and should be made easily accessible to front-line ministry staff, community agencies and persons with disabilities.
- Provide education to front-line ministry staff and communication materials for agencies working with people with disabilities on the policies that allow persons with disabilities who are working to retain medical coverage.
- Provide annual audited reports on levels of funding for different types of training and employment programs (i.e. college-based, community, pay-for-performance) including annual placement and retention rates.



When society offers people with disabilities a variety of options, such as opportunities to work full-time, sporadically, part-time and/or part-year, as well as volunteer placements, the result is the empowerment of those who have traditionally been barred from a chance to function at their individual and societal best.

GLOSSARY

LABOUR MARKET AGREEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (LMAPWD) is a 50/50 cost-sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments designed to provide employment and training services for people with disabilities through a variety of programs and other supports.

THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE (MEIA) is the BC government ministry that administers income assistance and disability benefits and programs under the Employment & Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act (EAPWDA) and the Employment & Assistance Act (EAA). This ministry also administers employment programming for people with disabilities funded under the Labour Market Development Agreement for People With Disabilities (LMAPWD).

PERSON WITH A DISABILITY (PWD) benefit is defined in the Employment & Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act (EAPWDA). To qualify for PWD an individual must have a severe mental or physical impairment that is likely to continue for at least two years and majorly restricts the person's ability to perform daily living activities either continuously or periodically so that significant help or supervision is needed. The designation is not "permanent" so although people with PWD designation are not required to seek employment as a condition of receiving benefits, their status may be reviewed every five years.

PERSON WITH PERSISTENT AND MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT (PPMB) benefit is defined in the Employment & Assistance Act (EAA). To qualify for PPMB an individual must have received regular income assistance for 12 of the 15 months before they apply and have a severe barrier or a medical condition that is likely to continue for two years and preclude or impede their ability to search for or accept continuing employment. The PPMB designation is not permanent and is reviewed every two years.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES are businesses with a social purpose. This study selected social enterprises whose primary mandate was to provide employment for people whose disability poses a barrier to mainstream labour market participation. Other social enterprises are more focused on generating revenue for a social purpose (i.e. to supplement the revenues of a non-profit agency) and are less likely to employ people with a disability.

SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT is programming that supports people with disabilities to find and retain work in the mainstream labour market. Emphasis is placed on an individual participant's interest and preferences, relatively rapid placement in mainstream employment, and ongoing employment supports.



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About the Economic Security Project www.policyalternatives.ca/economic_security

The Economic Security Project is a major research initiative of the CCPA's BC Office and Simon Fraser University, in partnership with 24 community organizations and four BC universities.

The project examines how recent provincial policy changes affect the economic well-being of vulnerable people in BC, such as those who rely on social assistance, low-wage earners, recent immigrants, youth and others. It also develops and promotes policy solutions that improve economic security.

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