

Canadian Council for Career Development
Pre-Budget Submission for the 2017 Federal Budget

The Canadian Council for Career Development (3CD) is the national voice of career development professionals, dedicated to connecting Canadians with careers that fit. We help get more Canadians to work, in jobs that work for them. Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) achieve this by helping people of all ages and backgrounds to effectively manage their learning, work, leisure and transitions. The goal of CDPs is to help people pursue learning and find work that is personally meaningful. CDPs are on the frontlines helping workers navigate the constantly-evolving and complex nature of a modern economy and labour market.

The growth of Canadian businesses, and the sustainability of communities in which they are located, depends not only on the supply of workers with the right skills, but in connecting those workers to the positions they are best suited. The following recommendations will help to ensure that Canadians from all backgrounds, at every stage of life, are equipped with the resources they need to maximize their contribution to the economy. Simultaneously, Canadian businesses will benefit through faster and more efficient access to the talented workers they need to grow and improve. When the best people fill their best role in growing enterprises, the communities they live in benefit enormously. These recommendations will fulfill that promise and make our country more productive, competitive, prosperous, and livable as a result. We call on the federal government to:

1. Support the development of a national workforce development framework that includes programming to promote and empower community-oriented career development
2. Support enhanced use of comprehensive labour market information that will inform better career decisions by Canadians in all regions, from all walks of life, at each stage in their employment journey
3. Develop federal programming to support individuals in underrepresented groups, including those with disabilities, youth, indigenous communities in accessing greater information and accommodation in career planning and accessing employment
4. Support for work-integrated learning opportunities at the postsecondary level

A National workforce development framework to empower community-oriented career development

The most prominent challenge Canada faces in maximizing productivity and quality of life is matching the skills and aspirations of our workforce with available employment. This includes not only the jobs that are currently available, but also jobs and careers that will exist decades from now, with many of these yet to evolve in industries that will change, adapt, and renew. The motivation to pursue specific career paths is influenced and dependent upon many contextual factors, but many of these influences are a product of the communities where people live. These variances can stem from geography, such as proximity to the sea for trade, natural resources and population density, or from socioeconomic factors. Communities also define the parameters for what enterprises will be successful within their boundaries.

All too often, however, economic development initiatives are thrust upon communities with limited consideration for how the jobs generated by the projects will be sustained and will fit with the abilities and aspirations of the residents who live there. It is very difficult to ensure that development projects are placed in communities where the labour pool can support them. While numerous factors influence how or whether projects will be successful in a given community, CDPs can play an integral role in

working to support and enable residents to make effective contributions to the growth and sustainability of their communities and for local businesses to expand and prosper. The Standing Committee on Finance has urged groups to make recommendations that support urban, rural and remote communities to fulfill this goal. While specific items like infrastructure and broadband internet were highlighted, a fundamental consideration in community development must be the availability of human capital.

To support the advancement of community-based development initiatives that support residents and businesses we recommend that the federal government ***develop a national workforce development framework that includes programming to promote and empower community-oriented career development.***

Federal support for more comprehensive, useful labour market information (LMI)

There is a tremendous amount of labour market information already available in Canada, but too often it is out-of-date, cumbersome to use, or inaccessible to the public. Existing LMI also assumes that the user has a clear sense of direction and is ready to hone in on the specific information they need to support their career goals. There is no evidence that this indeed is the case. As a result, all too often, users are overwhelmed and unable to make sense of the information.

Employment and Skills Development Canada from 2010-2013 funded two research projects to understand the current state of practice and unravel how clients are best assisted in accessing and using LMI and how clients interpret and apply LMI for personal use. While it is unclear that traditional LMI has any sustained positive impact, LMI tailored to client needs results in both statistically and clinically significant improvements in user knowledge, skills and labour market outcomes.

A more strategic approach to LMI is needed - one that coaches users to identify their needs and guides them to relevant information. The federal government has a critical role to play in bringing together the provinces and territories to agree on a common approach to LMI that not only ensures an adequate scope and breadth of information but coaches the user to focus on the specific information relevant to their employability needs and to apply the information in the broader context of their career development.

At each stage in a career, whether entering the job market or making a career transition, LMI needs to be user-friendly. Establishing a robust, accessible and easily navigable federal online portal integrated to all provincial and territorial LMI databases is a crucial step in this regard. At present, connecting supply and demand falls to job seekers who, if they are out of work, or have left institutionalized education, have fewer resources at their disposal to connect them with employment. An effective and useful, nationwide LMI aggregator would significantly benefit this difficult to target group.

The federal government should ***support enhanced use of comprehensive labour market information that will inform better career decisions by Canadians in all regions, from all walks of life, at each stage in their employment journey.***

Programming to support individuals in underrepresented groups to access greater information in career planning and finding employment

Career development “is one of the few active labour market measures that has an impact on learning (education, vocational training) and labour market outcomes for citizens” (ELGPN, 2015, 5). While the Federal and Provincial governments provide multiple avenues to connect those underrepresented in the

labour market (Indigenous populations, youth, and persons with disabilities, those living in rural and remote areas) to employment, access to services, career education and up-to-date career planning resources and labour market information is significantly lacking. Many of these programs provide basic information and connection to available jobs and not to career planning supports. One telling example is The Job Search Toolkit for Aboriginal Youth, which was last updated in 1999. It includes out-of-date resources including the names of federal departments and initiatives, and contact information. Yet it still features prominently in available resources for Indigenous youth on government websites.

Another example is the Skills Link program in the Youth Employment Strategy. This program is geared toward individuals at greater risk of not making a successful transition to the workplace. The listing of eligibility criteria is nearly 5,000 words long and in technical language. While interventions can be made, the success of accessing this program may depend on whether or not a person's community is resourced with a professional to assist them in understanding their eligibility and completing applications.

For many underrepresented populations, having access to career education and career planning resources can provide valuable learning and the development of career management skills that support greater labour market attachment. Ideally, these supports would begin early - in their formative years - as early intervention has been shown to have significant impact on those from underrepresented groups (ELGPN, 2015; Bruce & Marlin, 2012; Crawford, 2012; Malatest & Associates, 2004). This programming would enhance the uptake and success of existing programs and ensure smoother career transitions for underrepresented groups navigating Canada's employment landscape.

Rural and remote youth, Indigenous youth and youth with disabilities are the most likely to have poor labour market attachment. With regard to youth more broadly, another significantly challenged group in the Canadian employment landscape is Poorly Integrated New Entrants (PINEs). These individuals often have diplomas or degrees and yet despite their education they have no consistent foothold in the labour market. They fill temporary or contract jobs and unpaid internships. They are unemployed and looking, or giving up taking part in the labour force because of a lack of opportunity, whether real or perceived.

Improving transitions for Canada's youth is a complex, largely systemic problem; The solution requires more than services for target populations or stronger engagement of specific stakeholder groups. Student access to transition support in Canada is spotty at best and no system exists to support Canadian youth in their school-to-work transitions.

While provincial governments are taking steps to study a national transition strategy it is vital that the federal government take steps immediately to ***develop federal programming to support individuals in underrepresented groups, including those with disabilities, youth, indigenous communities in accessing greater information and accommodation in career planning and accessing employment.***

Support for work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities at the postsecondary level

Canada invests significantly in tertiary education (nearly twice the OECD average) and has the highest proportion of adults with post-secondary credentials among all OECD countries (OECD, Education At-a-Glance, 2013) but despite the investment and attainment statistics, the school-to-work transition for young graduates are becoming more polarized. Many of Canada's young graduates are doing very well in the knowledge economy while a significant number of tertiary graduates (approximately 20 to 25%) are precariously attached to the labour market and live at or below the poverty line (Tal and Enejor, 2013).

Reasons for the rise in precarious work and the difficulty that many graduates are having in their school-to-work transitions are complex but one strategy that supports better labour market outcomes is to earn while learning. Young adults who actively connect to the labour market throughout their learning have shorter school-to-work transitions (OECD and ILO, 2011; OECDb, 2010; Hango, 2010; Marshall, 2010). The OECD states that any detachment from the labour market, even if it is to focus on school, lengthens the time it takes to transition to work after graduation (OECDb, 2010). Working within reason while in school (i.e. no more than 20 hours per week), helps youth develop employability skills that will support them once they graduate.

It is, therefore, encouraging to see that many of Canada's postsecondary institutions and large employers have made recent public statements about the importance of WIL programs and see it as an opportunity to nurture talent and create connections to employment for students and recent graduates. Not only are programs like co-operative education, internships for scholastic credit, non-credit *paid* internships, and practica a good way to learn how new knowledge can be applied, they are also a window into the working world for the next generation of Canadian talent. These opportunities foster many of the soft skills employers look for in new hires and provide valuable insight that can be transferred back into the classroom in many disciplines at Canada's colleges, universities, and polytechnics.

Canada must continue to improve access to postsecondary education for all and facilitating far-better transitions to work for graduates through WIL.

Recently, the Business/Higher Education Roundtable made a bold statement in calling for 100% of postsecondary students to have access to WIL. Moving forward on this ambitious but needed goal will take the collaboration and the commitment of governments, education and business leaders. It is our stance that the federal government ***should support work-integrated learning opportunities by directly funding or incentivizing development of partnerships between private and public sector employers and post-secondary institutions.***