Final Research Report: Advancing Equal Access for People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace Project

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Prepared by the

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR INCLUSION AND CITIZENSHIP

in partnership with

PEOPLE FIRST OF CANADA

PERSONNES D'ABORD DU CANADA

for

[Inclusion Canada]

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Many people with intellectual disabilities want to work. Having a job helps them in many ways. They feel better about themselves. They connect with other people. Their health can improve. Their life can be better overall.

A person with an intellectual disability who has a job will earn money. This is good for them. They can support themselves. They might not need help from the government.

It is good for employers when people with intellectual disabilities can work. They have more people to work for them.

In Canada it is not easy for people with intellectual disabilities to work. Less than one out of every four people with intellectual disabilities have jobs. The jobs they have do not pay much money. The jobs are often part-time. They often work only a few hours every week.

It is important to help people with intellectual disabilities find good jobs that pay well. Many people and groups in Canada are working on this problem.

We did this project to learn about people with intellectual disabilities and their jobs. We wanted to see how employers and other people helped people with intellectual disabilities get jobs and work. We wanted to learn what stopped people from working. We wanted to learn what helped them.

Equal Access at Work

This project looked at equal access at work for people with intellectual disabilities. 'Equal Access' means everyone can look for jobs and work equally. Employers treat people with intellectual disabilities the same as everyone else. People with intellectual disabilities get the help they need to find jobs and work. They get help when something stops them from working.

'Inclusive Employment' is when people with intellectual disabilities work at jobs with other people. They do not work in special jobs. They do not work at places that are only for them. They work at different jobs doing different things with different people. They are paid the same as everyone who does the same job. They are treated the same at work.

Employers can help with equal access and inclusive employment. There are rules called 'Accessible Employment Standards' that tell them how. These are rules about what employers do to help people with disabilities work. There are standards for how people find work and get hired. There are standards for how they are included where they work. There are standards for talking to them about what they are doing well and what they can do better.

Funding and Partners

Inclusion Canada and People First Canada worked on this project together. The Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship did the research. They are part of the University of British Columbia.

The Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization paid for the project. They are part of the Government of Canada.

Who We Talked to

For this project we talked to people with intellectual disabilities who had jobs. We talked to employers who had people with intellectual disabilities working for them. We also talked to people who provide employment support. We talked to people who had experience or interest in employment for people with intellectual disabilities. Everyone we talked to was 18 years old or older.

We talked to 209 people from the following groups.

- 89 people were experts in employment and work for people with intellectual disabilities.
- 85 people were people with intellectual disabilities. In this report, they are called 'self advocates.'
- 21 people were employers. They all had people with intellectual disabilities working for them.
- 9 people were national advisors.
- 5 people were friends and family members of people with intellectual disabilities.

Everyone we talked to was from Canada. Most of them were from British Columbia and Ontario. Most of the people we talked to spoke English. People who spoke French could get translation services to take part in the project.

What We Did

This project had seven parts.

1. We read about other research on work and employment standards for people with intellectual disabilities. We wrote a report about what we read.

2. We looked at employment standards in Canada and other countries. We wrote a report about these standards.

3. We did an online survey for self advocates, employers, and experts. They told us what it was like to look for work and to work as a person with an intellectual disability. They told us what it was like to hire a person with an intellectual disability.

4. We also did interviews with self advocates, employers, and experts. They told us what it was like to look for work and to work as a person with an intellectual disability. They told us what it was like to hire a person with an intellectual disability.

5. We did an online meeting with self advocates and other experts. We told them what we had learned. They told us what they thought about what we had learned.

6. We held focus groups with self advocates, employers, experts, and family and friends. We told them what we had learned. They told us what they thought about what we had learned. They suggested ways to fix the problems we had heard about. They told us what the most important things were for them.

7. We had another online meeting with self advocates and other experts. We told them everything we learned in the project. They told us what they thought about what we had learned.

What We Learned

There is not much research about work and employment standards for people with intellectual disability. Most countries do not have any employment standards for this group. Canada does not have any.

Some countries have programs to support people with disabilities at work. These help them find jobs and work. They do not seem to help people with intellectual disabilities find jobs and work.

Many employers have rules and information about how to include people with disabilities. These talk about all disabilities. They do not focus on people with an intellectual disability. In places that have government rules about accessibility, the statements have more details.

Self advocates told us what it was like to be a person with an intellectual disability who worked. Employers talked about what it was like to employ a person with an intellectual disability. They told us about problems they had. They told us about things that helped. Experts talked about what they knew about people with intellectual disabilities at work. We heard about six kinds of things that made the most difference. We called these 'themes.'

1. **Attitudes and Beliefs**

These are things people believe. Employers and coworkers have ideas about people with intellectual disabilities. They have ideas about the cost of hiring people and about the benefits. These ideas are not always right.

This is what self advocates said about this theme.
- *"See my ability, that I am hard working and that I learn things fast."*
- *"Fear and prejudice keeps us from being hired."*

2. **Knowledge and Awareness**

This is what employers and coworkers know about working with people with intellectual disabilities. It is what they know about inclusive employment. It is what they know about the benefits of inclusive hiring. It is what they know about people with intellectual disabilities who work for them and with them. It is about knowing what they are good at and where they may need help. It is about knowing where to get resources and support.

This is what an employment specialist said about this theme.
- *"Employers are usually convinced once they have seen a person with an intellectual or developmental disability working and doing a great job."*

This is what self advocates said about this theme.

- *"Having an employer that would take the time to understand how you learn and what your disability is."*
- *"My disability not being taken seriously by coworkers or understood very well."*

3. Accessible Processes

This is about how people are hired and how they are treated at their jobs. It includes how well this matches what people with intellectual disabilities need. It includes how employers change the way they do things to be more inclusive.

This is what a self advocate said about this theme.
- *"The workplace being accommodating and flexible and just adapting to your needs…like slightly modified hours."*

This is what an employment specialist said about this theme.
- *"The typical interview format can be intimidating and difficult for employers to see the positives."*

4. Accommodations

These are changes that employers make to help people with intellectual disabilities who work for them. This includes what employers know about how and when to make changes.

This is what an employment specialist said about this theme.
- *"People have the idea that accommodation means like, huge, huge, huge things. Often it's making visuals out of manuals, things like that…Which helps the person who is the natural support or whoever is around them, as well as the person's roles and other employees, right?"*

5. Workplace Relationships

This is how people work together and connect with each other. It includes how they connect on the job and on a personal level. It includes people with intellectual disability and employers. It includes their co-workers. It includes employment specialists.

This is what self advocates said about this theme.
- *"Seeing me as just part of the team and paid [the] same as everyone else. That we all get tips if they come in."*

This is what employment specialists said about this theme.
- *"Having employees work closely with the person with and intellectual or developmental disability to be able to get to know them personally, then they see them as a person not a label."*
- *"An employer not making them part of the work culture (including in staff meetings, staff parties, staff benefits, etc.)."*
- *"Segregation of staff in their roles and isolation of staff 'behind the scenes.'"*
- *"Employers and co-workers being afraid to speak or interact with people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, so not including them in general conversations and such."*

6. **Supports and Resources**

These are things that help people with an intellectual disability and employers. An expert who helps employers and people with an intellectual disability is a support. Money to pay for changes to help people get a job is a support.

This is what a self advocate said about this theme.
- *"I wouldn't have been successful at my jobs without the support of my job coach (helps me communicate with my boss)."*

This is what an employment specialist said about this theme.
- *"The lack of family supports, the lack of expectations to work, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities not choosing or wanting to work hours to their full potential are barriers and beliefs that limit opportunities."*

We asked the people we talked to about their top issues from these themes. All self advocates said that workplace relationships were most important. Family and friends ranked this theme as third on their list. No other group said it was a top priority.

Everybody said that knowledge and awareness was in the top three priorities.

Two groups said supports and resources were most important. This was said by employment specialists and friends and family groups. One self advocate group agreed. But it was not in the top three for any other self advocate group.

What Actions Can Help

We asked everybody how we can act on these themes. People said there were three areas of action that could support inclusive employment at all parts of the job cycle. These are education, communication and resources.

1. **Education**

This is about teaching people. Employers, other workers, and groups need to learn about disability and intellectual disability. They need to learn about inclusive employment and how to help people at work. They need to know about success stories. They need to learn how people with intellectual disabilities have succeeded in their jobs. They need to see how problems have been solved.

One example of education is a document that tells people different ways to be a good co-worker to a person with intellectual disability. A self advocate said, *"An explanation sheet sharing best practices to being a good colleague to a person with a disability."*

Self advocates told us they should lead the way in talking about who they are and what they need. This will help show how things really are for them. A self advocate said, *"Whatever [learning] is provided is run and led by the people we are talking about."*

Experts told us it was hard to find information that would help employers. It was in a lot of different places. There should be one place people can go to get information and learn how to help. This place should be the same for self advocate, employers, and other people. An employment specialist said, *"It would be great to have a one-stop place or website with all the information employers need. There is a lot out there and sometimes it can be hard to navigate."*

2. **Communication**

This is about how people talk to each other and share information. All the themes talked about this. Communication needs to be better for everyone. It needs to be more accessible.

Information should be shared in different ways for people who learn in different ways. Some people need to read things. Some need to be told things. Some learn better from pictures. Some learn better by doing things.

People should connect in person to learn and communicate in the best way for them. People with intellectual disabilities can show others what they can do and how they do it.

Everyone told us it was important for people with intellectual disabilities to connect with each other. People with intellectual disabilities who have jobs can help others who want to work. They can support each other. They can share ideas about how to solve problems. A self advocate said, *"Peer support group - people with disabilities can get together to share ideas for how to handle issues."*

People with intellectual disabilities can look at documents to make sure they are in plain language. This will make communication better in meetings and at work. A self advocate said, *"If we are included in meetings, we should be able to go over materials beforehand and make sure everything is in plain language."*

People with intellectual disabilities need to speak for themselves. They can tell their employer what works for them. An employment specialist said**,** *"You have to allow the individual to tell you what's needed. Let them speak for themselves and tell the employer what works for them."*

3. Resources

This is about things to help people with intellectual disabilities and employers. Information is a resource. Money is a resource. Experts who can help people with an intellectual disability and employers are also a resource.

In all the themes we heard that there are not enough resources. Many people said that more accessible resources would help solve problems.

Experts who help people with intellectual disabilities do not have enough time to help everyone who needs them. They need more time for each person they help.

Friends and family told us there are not enough supports. A friend (or family member) said, *"There isn't enough of the people that are there to help. Sometimes you can have support for a year and then lose it and that doesn't work."*

An employer said, *"Not all employers have access to support."* Employers need resources to help them learn about inclusive employment. They do not all have what they need. More resources can help them understand how to hire and support people with an intellectual disability. Self advocates

can be a resource for this. They are experts about people with intellectual disabilities and what they need.

More money is needed in all areas. Employers need money to help them pay their workers better wages. They need money to change their workplaces. They need money to do training.

People with intellectual disabilities need money for things like transportation so they can get to work. One self advocate said, *"Transportation is a big issue."*

They need money if they want to work for themselves. One self advocate said**,** *"More funding is needed including self-employment funding options."*

What Needs to Be Done

This project showed us that many things affect what happens when people with intellectual disabilities look for jobs and work. Some things are helpful. Other things create problems and barriers.

Many things have to be done at the same time for people with intellectual disabilities to have equal access at work. It is not up to just one person or group to change.

Employers need to change things to make jobs inclusive. So do other workers. So do groups and people who help employers and people with intellectual disabilities. So do governments. It will not be enough if only one thing changes.

Here are some actions that can be taken.

1. Make sure that statements and tools include people with intellectual disabilities. This includes statements about disability inclusion. It includes tools like Gender-Based Analysis+.

2. Deliver training for all stakeholders. The training must use information that is about intellectual disabilities. It must cover all parts of the job cycle. The training must be given by self advocates. For example, The Inclusive Workplace has resources for all stakeholders. There are resources for people who are looking for a job or are working. There are resources for employers and employment agencies.

3. Provide funding for education. This should go to different regions to educate stakeholders. The education should be about the false beliefs people have about intellectual disability. It should look at the negative attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities. It should show the positive benefits of hiring people with intellectual disabilities.

4. Encourage all provinces and territories to also provide funding for education. This could be done through transfer funds. This should include funding for employer to employer education. It should also include self advocate led education.

5. Make sure certain groups get training on attitudes, beliefs and discrimination. This should be required for public service workers that do the hiring. It should be required by federal contractors. They should also be trained about the benefits of inclusive hiring.

6. Make a 'best practice' guide about access for people with intellectual disabilities at work. The guide should cover all parts of work. It should talk about people with intellectual disabilities who are looking for work and those who are working. People with intellectual disabilities should help make this guide.

7. Review all rules and laws about employment. Make sure these rules have information about the unique needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Put in new guidelines about people with intellectual disabilities and employment if required.

8. Provide funding to make employment programs better for people with intellectual disabilities. This includes pre-employment and employment support programs. This could be done through transfers or other ways. Programs must not include any kind of sheltered work setting. Programs should focus on regular jobs in the workforce. Programs should also cover on-the-job training and support. Programs should have a timeline. There should be outcomes attached to the program such as getting a job or keeping a job or advancing in a career.

9. Consider a tax credit to support transportation to and from workplaces. This could be a federal refundable tax credit. It would support people with intellectual disabilities to get a way to work and back home.

Here are the changes in law that we recommend.

1. Make rules or guidelines about accessibility for people with intellectual disabilities in all parts of employment. This can include using many different ways to advertise a job. It can include different ways to do interviews. It can include different ways to do job evaluations.

2. Make rules that require employers to have accommodation and inclusion plans. The plans must be made with the employee with intellectual disabilities. The plans should cover many different accommodations. It should include accessible communication. It should cover job changes and the use of a support person. It should cover how supervision and evaluation will be done. It should cover flexible work hours.

3. Make rules or guidelines about support persons. These rules would allow support persons to be present at all parts of the job process. The person with an intellectual disability would decide if and when the support person was needed. This should be done with the employer. An employment support person can also be involved if the employee requests it. This information should be included in the accommodation and inclusion plan.

This project was a good start. It made sure people with intellectual disabilities were heard. They told us about their own lives and things that had happened to them. People with intellectual disabilities have to be involved in every step of the process to create equal access at work.

INTRODUCTION

In Canada, only 22.3% of individuals with intellectual disabilities indicate having experience in some kind of employment (Statistics Canada, 2012); and, when employed, most often individuals with intellectual disabilities receive low wages and work few hours a week (Carter et al., 2012; Cheng et al., 2018; Grigol et al., 2014). These statistics are striking given the importance of employment for most working-age adults. Work is a major aspiration for people with intellectual disabilities and a key mechanism for enacting social inclusion (Flores et al., 2011; Humber, 2014; Lysaght et al., 2012). Further, research repeatedly demonstrates that employment enhances quality of life for individuals with intellectual disabilities in areas such as improved financial well-being, increased social inclusion (e.g., increased relationships, social status and sense of belonging), self-esteem, and improved health to name a few e.g. (Barneveld et al., 2013; Beyer et al., 2010; Flores et al., 2011; Sung et al., 2015). These social and health outcomes have important implications for the human rights of people with intellectual disabilities to employment as well as for their rights to social inclusion and citizenship. In addition to these important social and health benefits, increased labour market participation among individuals with intellectual disabilities generates positive economic outcomes for employers, employees with intellectual disabilities, and taxpayers (Camera, 2008; Hole et al., 2011; Ready, Willing and Able, 2015). As Prince (2016) notes, "[Individuals with intellectual disabilities] should have access to real work for real pay," and "their rights should be protected by labour legislation and safety standards, on an equal basis with other workers". (1). Given the social and economic benefits, expanding access to meaningful and competitive paid employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities is a priority of policy and practice initiatives in Canada. *Accessibility employment standards* related to employment and human resource (HR) management and practices are mechanisms that may advance employment equity and improve employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. One area of interest in relation to improving employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities and other marginalized populations is the use of *standards*. *Accessibility employment standards* refer to the rules or best practices for employers with regards to people in the identified group, in this case, people with ID.

Standards are generally concerned with all aspects of employment, including recruitment; hiring; employee integration; and, performance management. A standard sets out rules, guidelines or characteristics. Standards do not have the force of law unless they are adopted in legislation or regulations.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT

In order to explore the issue of accessible employment standards for people with ID the Government of Canada's Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization has funded Inclusion Canada to undertake a research project entitled "Advancing Equal Access for People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace." Inclusion Canada has partnered with People First of Canada and contracted with the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship at the University of British Columbia to undertake the research for the project. This report provides a summary of the main findings across the various phases of the research. The phases reported on here include: 1) A review of the relevant literature; 2) a jurisdictional scan of Canadian jurisdictions and select international jurisdictions as well as a sample of Canadian employers; 3) qualitative research interviews with self-advocates, employers and, employment specialists;[1] 4) an online survey of the same three cohorts noted which included both quantitative questions and open ended questions; 5) a meeting of national advisors to discuss findings from phases 1-4; and 6) focus groups with the same three stakeholders identified above as well as a focus group with family and friends of self-advocates.

PHASE 1 & 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND JURISDICTIONAL SCAN

The literature review (Appendix 1) was guided by the question: What does the literature say about the employment accessibility standards as well as human resource (HR) management for labour market participation for people with intellectual disabilities, specifically within the four key domains of the employment cycle: 1) Recruitment, 2) Hiring, 3) Integration, and 4) Performance Management?

A few key findings were identified. First, while there exists a paucity of research on employment standards for jobseekers and employees with intellectual disabilities, what does exist tends to focus on the pre-employment phase of the employment cycle (employment outcomes, barriers to employment, and recruitment and hiring). Second, while numerous national, state and provincial anti-discrimination and incentive initiatives exist, they are falling short; so too are employment standards at the HR and management level. Third, vocational supported employment is evidence-based and standards, policies and practices, including appropriate funding is necessary.

The jurisdictional scan (Appendix 2) was intended to explore what currently exists in relation to employment standards and intellectual disability. The review included all Canadian Provincial,

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[1] Employment specialist generally refers to persons professionally involved in supporting people with intellectual disabilities to find, integrate into, and retain employment.

Territorial and Federal jurisdictions, select international jurisdictions and a range of Canadian Employers. We anticipated that there would be few explicit employment standards documents for intellectual disability (and indeed none were found) so the scope of the review included a range of related documents from high level Human Rights instruments, employment equity instruments, general employment standards instruments, guidance and advice documents, and broad employment diversity and inclusion statements.

The most obvious, and yet not surprising conclusion is that employment standards for people with intellectual disabilities are rare, and we found no examples of such standards. On the other hand, intellectual disability is generally included in most disability standards and related documents, and this is generally clearly noted. This was less common in corporate diversity and inclusion statements where intellectual disability was not explicitly mentioned and few references to relevant accommodations for people with intellectual disabilities such as plain language materials were noted though they were not explicitly excluded.

One clear finding was that having a legislative base such as an accessibility act with clear regulatory requirements does stimulate more robust and comprehensive responses from employers. In jurisdictions where no such act is in place, more general statements on diversity and inclusion with limited detail are the norm. Whereas employers under regulatory responsibility such as those under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) establish comprehensive statements and plans for access and inclusion. The degree to which this results in improved employment outcomes for disabled persons, however, is not clear and would require a detailed review of outcome data from relevant jurisdictions which is beyond the scope of this review.

As noted, no standards or related documents specific to intellectual disabilities were found. This then raises the question of whether general disability employment standards such as those found in Manitoba and Ontario sufficiently address the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. A full response to this question is beyond the scope of this current review but is one that will be important to address. That said, clear statements on communication accommodations, individualized accommodation plans and staff training all would seem to be generally applicable to people with intellectual disabilities. As above, this does not say anything regarding the efficacy or effectiveness of these standards with regards to employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities but does suggest that general disability standards are at least in part broadly inclusive of intellectual disability. A key question is to what extent are specific standards for intellectual disabilities needed and/or what is lacking in general standards to fully address the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities.

When reviewing the relevant documents, it is clear that there is a layered and interconnected set of documents relevant to the issue of employment standards and intellectual disability. Broad human rights, employment standards and, employment equity documents do seem to be able to provide some protection of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in the employment sector. Accessibility legislation complements this by seeking to address the positive duties of employers with regards to people with disabilities generally and people with intellectual disabilities specifically. On the employer level, statements on diversity and inclusion provide a public commitment but unless they are backed up by enforceable standards, they may do little to significantly foster inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace.

PHASE 3 & 4: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS AND ONLINE SURVEY

The qualitative interviews and online survey both targeted the same cohorts noted above with overlapping questions and lines of inquiry. Unlike traditional surveys, the current online survey yielded significant amounts of qualitative data through the open-ended questions. Both sets of data were analyzed separately using thematic analysis and then the emergent themes were compared to produce a set of core themes. While there was much overlap between the two sets of data, there were some differentiated findings. While standards were asked about in the interviews and online survey, the primary focus and responses was on barriers and facilitators that may contribute to the development of effective standards.

Across the interviews and surveys, we heard from 177 people, including 86 employment specialists, 71 self-advocates, and 20 employers. Participants lived in provinces and territories all across Canada, with many hailing from British Columbia or Ontario. Most of the participants spoke or wrote their answers in English.

Synthesis analysis resulted in six themes: (1) Assumptions & Attitudes, (2) Knowledge & Awareness, (3) Accessibility of Processes, (4) Use of Accommodations, (5) Workplace Relationships, and (6) Supports & Resources. All themes were identified by participants as being particularly impactful on the generation and reinforcement of barriers and facilitators across all stages of employment.

Theme 1: Assumptions & Attitudes

Stakeholders identified mostly employer, but also co-worker and societal assumptions and attitudes, as directly and indirectly impacting employment experiences. This includes beliefs that people have about intellectual disabilities and the costs and benefits of inclusive hiring.

<u>Key Facilitators</u>**:** Employer tone, openness, and intent to be an inclusive employer was identified as a key facilitator across all stages of employment, as well as inclusive workplace culture, and third-party advocates (such as employment specialists) who can use their role to actively disrupt stigma and reinforce strengths. In the interviews, participants noted that understanding individual strengths and ability were seen as a strong facilitator when done well, and a barrier when incomplete.

<u>Key Barriers</u>**:** Employer stigmatizing assumptions and attitudes were identified as a key barrier across all stages of employment. Interview participants placed more emphasis on this barrier as impacting early (recruitment and hiring) stages of employment. Employment specialist survey participants also identified societal stigmatizing assumptions and attitudes as a key barrier during early stages of employment. Employment specialists and self-advocate survey participants noted that co-worker stigmatizing assumptions and attitudes are a barrier during the integration process specifically.

Theme 2: Knowledge & Awareness

As with the assumptions/attitudes theme, stakeholders mostly spoke about *employer* knowledge and awareness as being particularly impactful on employment experiences and outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. This included how much knowledge or information employers have about intellectual disability, inclusive hiring practices, the benefits of inclusive hiring, accommodation options, and resources and supports. Survey participants again identified co-worker knowledge and awareness as impacting experiences at the integration stage specifically.

<u>Key Facilitators</u>: Employer knowledge of intellectual disability, inclusive hiring practice, and/or prior experience working with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Another facilitator noted by survey participants was employers with knowledge about the employee's strengths and needs, and employees with knowledge about the role and expectations. Interview participants and self-advocate and employment specialist survey participants identified third parties such as employment specialists and job coaches as being facilitators to knowledge translation.

<u>Key Barriers</u>**:** Employer's lack of knowledge, awareness, and experience related to intellectual disability, inclusive hiring practices, the benefits of hiring people with intellectual disabilities, and knowledge and awareness of accommodation regulations, options and, relevant resources and supports. While most of the employers interviewed were connected to support agencies, another barrier identified across all participants was lack of training and/or supports available to facilitate and increase employer knowledge and awareness.

Theme 3: Accessibility of Processes

The accessibility of employment processes, policies, and approaches to hiring and retention of employees with intellectual disabilities was identified as having a key impact on employment experiences.

Key Facilitators: Accessible processes, including employer flexibility in adapting processes to individuals' needs, were noted as an organizational strength facilitating inclusive hiring efforts and reducing the need for personalized accommodations. Accessible processes noted include: opportunities for in-person applications, customized or modified interview processes, lengthened onboarding period, buddy or mentorship programs, regular and timely feedback, flexibility throughout the employment cycle. Clear, timely, and direct communication between employer and employee was identified as a facilitator, particularly during integration and performance management stages, including clarity of role and responsibility as an important factor in ensuring both job fit and sustainability. Plain language usage was noted as a facilitator at all stages of the employment cycle. *Diversity and Inclusion* statements were identified by interview participants as a positive contributor to inclusive hiring, however there was mixed feedback with regards to the extent of their usage and the inclusion of intellectual disabilities within the statements. Interview applicants primarily indicated they were not widely adopted and most did not include intellectual disabilities specifically, whereas many of the survey respondents noted that intellectual disabilities were regularly included. Employment specialists and job coaches were identified by survey participants as being key facilitators in introducing and supporting accessible processes.

Key Barriers**:** Traditional approaches and processes across all stages of employment were noted to be inaccessible to people with intellectual disabilities for many reasons, and employers' rigid adherence to these methods exacerbated these barriers. Key barriers during the recruitment and hiring stage identified by survey participants included union requirements, unclear or rigid job descriptions and expectations, advertising methods, impersonal and online application processes, and pre-screening processes that limited the number of opportunities available for people with intellectual disabilities that also pay well. Survey participants noted that key barriers during integration and performance management stages included high demands on productivity and fast-paced working environments.

Theme 4: Use of Accommodations

Participants spoke about the use of workplace accommodations as having a key impact on employment experiences for persons with intellectual disabilities, including employers knowing when and how to accommodate needs effectively.

Key Facilitators: Accommodations were noted as a positive facilitator, particularly when accessible practices noted above were not already in place. On-site support and communication support were both noted as beneficial throughout the processes. Self-advocate survey participants noted 'patience' from employers and coworkers as a key facilitator. Third party supports, such as employment specialists, were identified by self-advocate and employment specialist survey participants as being facilitators in navigating discussions about accommodations.

Key Barriers: Employers lack of knowledge of how and when to accommodate as well as the misuse of accommodations (over or under accommodating) were noted. Interestingly, the cost of accommodations was never mentioned as an actual barrier, but was noted as a perceived barrier by employers.

Theme 5: Workplace Relationships

Participants across all groups spoke about opportunities to develop, deepen, and maintain personal connections between people with intellectual disabilities and employers, coworkers, and employment specialists as having a key impact on employment experiences.

Key Facilitators: Opportunities to establish relationships with employers and coworkers, including in-person contacts with employers prior to being hired, and being treated as a valued member of the team throughout the employment cycle was noted as having a positive impact across all stages of employment. Mentorship and Buddy programs were noted in the interview analysis as being positive contributors to inclusion and integration in the workplace. The positive impact on the buddy or mentor was also identified by interview participants specifically.

Key Barriers: All participants noted automated or impersonal pre-screening or onboarding approaches as a key barrier to hiring and retention of employees with intellectual disabilities. A key barrier to integration specifically identified by employment specialists and self-advocates in surveys was segregation from coworkers and/or being treated differently from coworkers by employers.

Theme 6: Supports & Resources

Accessibility of and appropriate utilization of employment and other (for example practical, health and well-being, and socio-economic) resources and supports was noted to have a key impact on experiences of people with intellectual disabilities navigating all stages of employment.

Key Facilitators: All participants throughout both data sets identified the importance of third party supports, particularly employment specialists and/or job coaches. It was noted that the availability and access to on-site and in-person employment supports was essential throughout the employment cycle. Of note, employer survey participants did not specifically mention employment specialists as a key resource.

Key Barriers: Particularly in the interview analysis, it was identified that the quality of supports varied and negative support interactions/relationships can have an adverse effect on job sustainability and the employers' future commitment to hiring inclusively. Under, over, or misuse of third-party supports was noted as a potential barrier.

PHASE 5: NATIONAL ADVISOR MEETING #1

National advisors and experts in inclusive employment were invited to join a consultation meeting on May 19, 2022 where they were invited to share their thoughts on the findings of the project to date. Fourteen people including members of the research team and self-advocate partners attended the meeting and contributed feedback about the findings and suggestions for moving forward. One key suggestion that came of this meeting was for the next phase (focus groups) to focus its goal on seeking specific feedback from stakeholders on their suggestions for how to address or intervene to better support inclusive employment for people with intellectual disabilities.

PHASE 6: FOCUS GROUPS

The sixth phase of the project involved focus groups asking stakeholders to share their ideas on how to address the themes found in the previous phases of this project, as well as identifying a hierarchy of themes in terms of priority for being addressed in research, policy, and practice related to employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Preparation

A PowerPoint presentation and focus group guide was drafted by the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship team and shared with the team at People First of Canada for feedback and edits. The PowerPoint shared the six themes that had been identified in the interviews and surveys and further validated in the national advisor group, as well as key questions for focus group participants. Participants were then asked for ideas on how to address or improve on these six areas of employment experiences and which themes they felt were of highest priority to address. Several

plain language edits were completed and an agreement for the facilitation plan was made between the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship facilitators and the self-advocate facilitators. Before each focus group, the facilitation team met to ensure everyone was feeling prepared and comfortable.

Participants

The three categories of interview/survey participants (self-advocates, employers, and employment specialists) were similarly segmented for the focus groups with the addition of a family and friends' group. Focus group participants were recruited by Inclusion Canada and People First of Canada. French translation services were offered to French speaking participants and written material was translated into French and provided in either language to all participants in advance of the meetings.

Delivery

Focus groups were held via zoom and each was co-facilitated by a research assistant from the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship and a self-advocate from People First of Canada. A staff person from People First of Canada also attended the meetings to help operate the focus group slides and contribute to the meeting setup and debrief. Consent to participate, introductions and an overview of the project were shared and then a brief summary of the six themes found in phases 3 and 4 were provided, with a discussion period following each theme. Discussion questions focused on finding solutions or ideas to address the themes presented. After the theme discussion, participants were provided with a poll and asked to identify the three themes they felt were most important to address in the new employment standards. Results were shared, discussed and agreed upon by the group.

Participant Demographics

Seven focus groups were held over the course of one month in June 2022. A total of 23 stakeholders participated: 14 self-advocates (SA), 5 friends and family members of self-advocates (F&F), 3 employment specialists (ES), and 1 employer (E). The vast majority of participants chose to communicate in English, with only two making use of the available French translation services. Participants hailed from provinces and territories across Canada, with the exception of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Yukon Territory and, Nunavut. Several attempts were made by various members of the research team and partners to recruit additional employers to no avail. See Table 1 below for more detailed information about participant demographics.

Table 1: Focus Group Participants

Demographic	Group	Total
Stakeholder Group	Self-Advocate	14
	Friends and Family	5
	Employment Specialist	3
	Employer	1
Language Spoken	English	21
	French	3
Geographical Location	Ontario	6
	Alberta	4
	British Columbia	3
	Saskatchewan	3
	Manitoba	2
	Quebec	2
	New Brunswick	1
	Newfoundland and Labrador	1
	Northwest Territories	1

Prioritizing Themes

When asked to identify the themes that stakeholders felt were top priority to address, many stakeholders noted that all the themes were important to address. One self-advocate group noted that the priority list they identified was only created out of a feeling of obligation to identify only a few, and that their preference was to include all six as key priorities as they felt a focus on only one or a few would miss key influential factors that arise from the intersection of one or many of the six.

Interestingly, workplace relationships were identified as a top priority among all self-advocate participants and was ranked 3rd of a top three priority list by friends and family participants, but this theme was not identified as being a top priority by participants from the other stakeholder groups. All stakeholder groups included knowledge and awareness on a list of top three priorities. Employment specialists and friends and family identified supports and resources as being the top priority among the six, though this theme was only identified as a top three priority by one of the self-advocate groups and was not included as a top three by any other groups.

Ideas Shared

<u>Attitudes and Assumptions</u>

Focus group participants all identified strongly with this theme, validating and recognizing that problematic attitudes and assumptions about employment of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and other disabilities are prevalent in the employment space. Ideas for addressing this theme generally involved ways to broaden people's thinking. One self-advocate captured the essence of the ideas shared in stating a need to support others in "how to see past disability, to ability". Suggestions for addressing attitudes and assumptions included educational, experiential, and equity reinforcement initiatives.

Educational Initiatives
- At the government level (pre-employment)
- Employment specialists and employment agencies should provide regular education and training (both generally and also "to orient fellow workers to new employees") - Education directed at business owners and C-level employees ("Having an employer who really understands how to treat a disabled person is key")
- Education from employers that have hired inclusively (B2B) ("It's one thing when I go in and tell them about all the benefits of inclusive hiring, but it is more powerful when an employer can mentor another employer" [ES])
- Educating managers, supervisors, and colleagues ("Training for managers to improve tolerance. This will inspire coworkers")
- Education about intellectual disabilities, tolerance, seeing past disability, about individual employees, inclusive hiring
- Learn from success stories / inclusive models

Experiential Initiatives
- ➢ Exposing employers to employees during recruitment and hiring ("Not everybody has the luxury of knowing someone with an intellectual disability in their personal life" [ES])
- ➢ Exposing potential employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities to employment networks ("Like speed dating. Bring your CV and present yourself to a rotary group, or business network, or chamber of commerce" [ES])
- ➢ On the job demonstration of skills
- ➢ One day unpaid opportunities (to expose employer and employees) ("She (daughter) volunteered virtually and then they took her on and created a job for her" [F&F]) - Judge people by ability not disability ("Don't assume that because I have a disability, I need an entry level job" [SA])
- ➢ Self-advocate led training and education

Equality Reinforcement Initiatives
- ➢ Create accessible orientation so it is the same for all employees
- ➢ Clarity of role and expectations - have accessible expectations so all employees can follow
- ➢ Increase employment training programs
- ➢ Reduce ES workload so they can provide quality support ("My counsellor has 60 clients. There is not enough time" [SA])

Knowledge and Awareness

Similar to the ideas shared for improving attitudes and assumptions, stakeholder suggestions included educational and communication-related initiatives, and increasing resources available to improve knowledge and awareness at various systemic levels.

Education
- ➢ For broader society
- ➢ For employers
- ➢ For CEOs and business owners ("CEOs need to know more about intellectual disability" [SA])
- ➢ For coworkers ("An explanation sheet sharing best practices to being a good colleague to a person with a disability" [SA])
- ➢ Education on disability (including that it is not uncommon) ("Training on the basics of disability. What it is" [SA])

- Mandatory training for employers and employees (not all agreed on this) ("Mandatory training for all employers and employees to learn how to work with people with any diversity" [SA], "Mandatory training exists and "doesn't hit home" to a lot of employers" [SA])

Communication
- Successful employers to share their stories (including how overcame challenges) ("People that own businesses should be talking about this" [SA])
- Show the facts (benefits of hiring)
- Employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities to share success stories ("Employers need to see what is going on and people with disabilities can share their experiences" [SA])
- Communication/information sharing about individual employees ("People aren't the same, you have to allow the individual to tell you what's needed. Let them speak for themselves and tell the employer what works for them" [ES])
- Ensuring job description and expectations are clear ("When you are hired, make sure you know what your job is. Don't be afraid to ask" [SA])
- Alternate formats (ex. Information sheet on inclusive hiring, how to work alongside someone with a disability, how to be respectful; Video training)
- Self-advocate led or in collaboration with ("The information should be created by the people with disabilities" [SA])

Increase Resources
- More support people available to offer support re knowledge and awareness as needed on a general or individual basis ("Having a specific person there to do initial education and consultation as needed. That is the key" [E])
- Include self-advocates as resource for increasing knowledge and awareness ("Whatever literature is provided is run and led by the people we are talking about. Other trainings tend to be more clinical and do not represent people's experiences" [SA])
- Opportunities for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities to learn more about workplace environment (e.g., 'speed dating' idea)
- Self-advocate led advocacy ("The more that we stand up and be heard, the more this can be improved going forward" [SA]
- Promote natural resources in the workplace ("Ultimately the staff need to take over and be the support system. Even one person in the workplace who sees themselves as a coach/mentor" [SA])

Accessibility of Processes

Stakeholders shared ideas related to accessible communication, employer responsibilities, and increasing support and resources that may help to improve accessibility of employment processes from recruitment through to retention of employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Communication
- Clear and accessible communication throughout, for example plain language job descriptions, speaking slowly ("Discussions should be slow and clear so that we understand what they want us to do" [SA])
- Physically visible job postings, for example bulletin board posters
- Opportunities for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities to connect and network with employers, for example job fairs
- Having support persons present during interviews ("Allowing person in the interview to support and potentially translate or mediate communication" [SA])
- Sending interview questions to prospective employees ahead of interview ("Can help with nervousness and anxiousness for all employees" (not just those with intellectual disabilities) [SA])
- Offer multiple formats for communicating information ("The video was so fast and the way my brain processes information…I wasn't able to answer the question" [SA]) - Sharing common themes of successful experiences making processes accessible ("A group of people specialized in working with the population to showcase success stories to reproduce elsewhere. Group stories together instead of individually" [SA]) - Advocacy at societal level about the need to make processes accessible ("TV, news, media. Write a column or something on Facebook to advocate for people with disabilities right to work" [SA])

Employer Responsibility ("Flexibility of employer is key for sure" [ES])
- Flexibility with screening applicants, for example adjusting expectations about prior experience ("How am I supposed to get the experience, just give us a chance" [SA]) - Flexibility with job descriptions ("Maybe carving out a job that's outside of the union standards" [ES])
- Mandating hiring quotas ("In every business, there should be a certain number of people with disabilities required" [SA])
- Mandating a baseline for accessibility of processes ("Creating some sort of baseline of accessibility could be really important. Maybe we could create an accessibility audit for invisible disabilities" [SA])
- Offering alternative approach to interviews, for example on the job demonstration of skills (Need a whole separate standard of intake for people with intellectual disabilities" [E])

Increase Resources

➢ Increase supports for those in pre-recruitment phase, for example support to learn about personal strengths and interests ("I am trying to find something else, but I have no idea what I want to do" [SA])

➢ Increase supports for navigating screening processes ("More assistance to help those who want to get through screenings" (during hiring process) [SA])

➢ Create incentives for employers to be more inclusive in hiring ("Wage subsidies give employers extra incentive to hire and retain people with disabilities" [ES]) - Provide supports for employee integration ("There has to be that person, whether they come from an association or the company, that is there to help make sure they are supported." [ES])

➢ Increase resources to support and promote self-employment ("We need to empower the idea of self-employment for disabled people because it provides the flexibility we need" [SA])

<u>Use of Accommodations</u>

Stakeholders shared ideas related to increasing knowledge about formal accommodations, ongoing communication about need for accommodations, employer commitment, and increasing accommodation-related resources.

Increasing Knowledge

➢ Informing employers about real costs and benefits of accommodations ("Employers need to understand that accommodations can benefit everyone. If you accommodate an employee, you may also be opening the door to other customers." [ES])

➢ Informing co-workers that accommodations are not advantages ("Make sure people know these aren't advantages, these do not take away from other people" [SA])

Ongoing Communication about Needs

➢ Employee personal awareness and articulation of needs ("Let employers know your strengths and weaknesses. Let employers know if you have any special needs" [SA])

➢ Employer initiated inquiry into needs ("Tell employers, don't be afraid to ask questions" [SA])

➢ Finding a middle ground ("Find a middle ground and be reasonable between employer and employee. Finding somewhere when you can agree" [SA])

➢ Ensuring accommodations are appropriately implemented, and not over or underutilized ("Too many accommodations do not give people the opportunity to excel" [E])

Employer Commitment
- ➢ Employers committing to trying ("Whoever is providing the accommodations needs to be a champion and doesn't need specific credentials but needs to use out of the box thinking and be interested in committed to doing that." (F&F)
- ➢ Committing to ongoing discussion about needs ("It's not like physical disabilities where you just add a ramp; there needs to be a conversation about people's needs" [F&F]) - Prioritizing safety (Prioritize "safe environment for everyone involved" [SA])

Increasing Resources
- ➢ Implementing accommodations as soon as possible starting in the hiring process
- ➢ Having an experienced support person to mediate discussions about accommodations ("Support person should be available to advise on how much accommodations to offer for individual employees" [E]) "The average employer does not have the skills to properly assess" how much is too little or too much in terms of accommodations" [E])
- ➢ Including employment specialists in discussion (Working with employment specialists. Employment specialists take the time to get to know job seeker and then advocate with prospective employers" [ES])

Workplace Relationships

Stakeholders shared ideas related to equitable inclusion in workplace activities such as meetings, and prioritizing personal and social relationships.

Equitable Inclusion
- ➢ Ability to review information before meetings ("Making sure if we are included in meetings, we should be able to go over materials beforehand and make sure everything is in plain language" [SA])
- ➢ Not physically separating people from their colleagues
- ➢ Treating people with disabilities like equals to other employees ("Not being overprotective. For example, for fear of safety" [ES])
- ➢ Foster in-house inclusive support systems ("Make sure job coaches do not get in the way. We need to look for people within the environment than can provide support when we're not there" [ES])
- ➢ Be explicit in teaching people with disabilities about workplace norms and etiquettes ("It can be really hard when people don't have experience or an understanding of what workplace relationships look like" [ES])

Prioritizing Personal and Social Connections

➢ Having fun in the workplace ("If people can play around and have fun with me, for me that is a really big thing otherwise it is really boring" [SA])

➢ Creating opportunities to connect personally with coworkers ("We spend most of our time with our coworkers and we should be able to connect with them" [SA]; "It has to be intentional to bring people together, our daughter would not have joined in, but they really encouraged her and it means so much to her. When she goes out to dinner with her coworkers it is just another day for others, but it is a huge, huge deal for her" [F&F])

➢ Having buddy or mentorship programs in the workplace ("Buddies. Match with natural supports in the workplace" [ES])

➢ Hold team events or social gatherings outside of work hours ("Team events are important and that's how you will get to know what my son is all about and who he is. At work he is just working on completing his job, so team events are helpful" [F&F])

➢ Offer opportunities for in-person connections with colleagues even if work is solely or mostly virtual ("For me I would rather do it in person so I can see someone face to face rather than online" [SA])

➢ Sharing personal information among coworkers ("Support person to educate other employees about the person with intellectual disabilities. What they like, background, family, etc. Trying to build common bonds" [E])

➢ Have an external person review and assess personal connections ("Six months after hiring, support person does an audit - check in on relationships and connections. If it is not happening, maybe ask coworkers what is missing or needs to happen" [E]; "We're there to help facilitate communication and we play an important role in building and supporting those relationships" [ES])

➢ Employers fostering personal connections with people with disabilities outside of the workplace ("Employers with personal point of reference. Exposure to disability outside of the employment space" [ES])

Supports and Resources

Stakeholders shared ideas about how to increase access to beneficial supports and resources in and outside of the workplace. Suggestions included employer responsibilities, utilization of support people, allocation of money, and making information accessible.

Employer Responsibilities

➢ Awareness and understanding of limitations with transportation ("Transportation is a big issue and sometimes I am late to things" [SA])

- Allowing flexibility in work hours to accommodate transportation limitations ("What happens is that I am usually an hour early. Having flexible start times would be good" [SA])
- Following through on commitment ("When you make a commitment to hire a person with a disability, you need to follow through, even if it includes your own money" [E])

Utilization of Support People
- Prioritizing long-term consistent support ("There isn't enough of the people that are there to help. Sometimes you can have support for a year and then loose it and that doesn't work" [F&F])
- Having support people for employers to utilize ("Not all employers have access to support" [E])
- Support people (like employment specialists) knowing when and how they are needed by the employee ("Don't hover" when it is not needed [SA])
- For employees to use resources that are available ("Maintain contact with employment specialist even when you are already employed" [SA])

Allocation of Money
- Offering financial support for self-employment ("More funding is needed including self-employment funding options" [SA])
- Offer competitive wages to disabled employees ("Real work for real pay" [E]) - Finding ways to retain employment specialists so they do not quit their jobs

Making Information Accessible
- Having a hub or centralized location where information is shared ("Would be great to have a one-stop place or website with all the information employers need. There is a lot out there and sometimes it can be hard to navigate" [ES])
- Peer support opportunities outside of the workplace ("Peer support group. People with disabilities can get together to share ideas for how to handle issues" [SA]

Thematic Analysis of Suggestions

Further analysis of the suggestions shared above highlighted three overarching areas of action to support and reinforce inclusive employment across all stages, from recruitment through to sustainability and retention of employees with intellectual disabilities: Education, Communication, and Resources.

Education

Educational initiatives were suggested at the micro level of individual employees, colleagues, and supervisors, through management and administration, and out to broader society. Widely shared information about disability, inclusive employment, and workplace accommodations was identified as lacking and needed. Stakeholders identified the value of self-advocate led initiatives, highlighting stories of success as well as overcoming challenges/barriers, actively dispelling myths, and creating a centralized hub or 'one-stop' place with up-to-date and vetted information and practical supports for self-advocates, employers, and members of society to access.

Communication

Adaptations to improve or enhance communication between various stakeholders was identified across all themes, including a need for more clear and accessible communication between employers and prospective or current employees, employment specialists and employees, as well as between employers and support persons such as employment specialists. Suggestions including offering multiple formats for communicating to allow for different learning or communication processing needs, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities for in-person connections and hands-on demonstration of skills and abilities across all stages of the employment process. Stakeholders also recognized a systemic gap and also immense value in peer support initiatives for self-advocates to connect with others who may have had or are currently going through similar experiences.

Resources

A recurring emphasis on the lack of accessible and appropriate resources was identified across all six themes and in many of the suggestions made by stakeholders. Suggestions included increasing the capacity of employment support specialists so they could spend more time and efforts with each client rather than being stretched across the current size of their caseloads. Additionally, suggestions included resources for employers that better support knowledge and confidence in implementing inclusive hiring initiatives. Stakeholders spoke of the value of utilizing self-advocates as a resource and source of expertise. Finally, financial resources were suggested including those that could improve transportation accessibility, competitive wages, rapid implementation of necessary accommodations, and support self-advocates who wished to be or were self-employed.

PHASE 7: NATIONAL ADVISOR MEETING #2

The same national advisors and inclusive hiring specialists from the first national advisor meeting were invited back for a second discussion on September 26, 2022. Thirteen people attended the meeting, including members of the research team. Findings from the focus groups and our emerging thoughts and recommendations for bringing forward to the relevant decision makers were shared for feedback. Contributions from the stakeholders at this national advisor meeting are weaved into the final discussion and recommendations below.

DISCUSSION

This project confirmed the paucity of formal employment standards for people with intellectual disabilities. It should be noted that the current data does not tells us why this is the case or whether such standards would have any impact on employment outcomes. Until such standards are implemented and evaluated the impact of standards for intellectual disabilities remains an open question. That said, there is some indication that labour and human rights instruments do offer some protection for people with intellectual disabilities in the labour market, though may be limited in how much positive effect they have on gaining employment.

What is clear from across all of the stages of this project is that there are relatively clearly defined barriers and facilitators which impact the employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. The challenge going forward is to determine which of these can be addressed through the use of standards and what these may look like as well as their relative prioritization. It is worth restating that more general protections and enablers exist within other areas of human rights, labour and accessibility instruments. Indeed, it is always preferable that wherever possible generic or general disability instruments are fully inclusive of people with intellectual disabilities. Ideally, there is a layering of protections and enablers beginning with broad instruments such as human rights codes followed by disability specific instruments and initiatives. It is only those aspects which cannot be included in the above in which there is a need for intellectual disability specific instruments such as targeted employment standards.

As noted, Standards *per se* can have only limited scope and impact. As such, we outline below both non-standard related actions that can improve employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities and three areas where specific standards could be consider based on the findings of this project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Non-Standard Actions

1. Ensure Disability Equity and Inclusion, Gender-Based Analysis+ and similar statements and analyses are inclusive of intellectual disabilities.

2. Use intellectual disabilities specific information and training materials targeted at all key stakeholders and covering all aspects of the employment cycle to deliver self-advocate- led training. For example, The Inclusive Workplace has resources for job seekers/employees, employers, and employment agencies.

3. Fund regional initiatives to educate and inform all key stakeholders on false assumptions, negative attitudes, and positive benefits of inclusive hiring of people with intellectual disabilities.

4. Encourage all Provinces and Territories (potentially with transfer funds) to undertake similar initiatives as noted above and to fund information and education resources for employers including employer to employer and self-advocate led initiatives.

5. Implement mandatory training for all senior public service executives involved in hiring and federal contractors with regards to attitudes, stigma, unconscious bias, and discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities and the benefits of inclusive hiring.

6. Develop 'best practice' guidance on accessibility for people with intellectual disabilities for all phases of employment, with significant input from self-advocates.

7. Review all general employment standards to ensure they fully take into account the unique accessibility needs of people with intellectual disabilities and where required provide guidance specific to people with intellectual disabilities.

8. Provide funding to Provinces and Territories to enhance pre-employment and employment support programmes for people with intellectual disabilities through transfers and other incentives. Programming should not include sheltered work or sheltered pre-employment settings. It should be focused on competitive employment, on-the-job training and support, and include a defined timeline and desired outcomes related to competitive employment – such as securing a job, job retention, or career

advancement.

9. Consider a Federal refundable tax credit to support people with intellectual disabilities to access suitable transportation to and from places of employment.

Standards

1. Develop standards and/or guidelines about accessibility for people with intellectual disabilities across all phases of employment. This may include for example; using multiple advertising formats, a variety of interview process options, various job performance approaches, etc.

2. Develop standards which require employers to provide jointly developed accommodation and inclusion plans specific to the individual employee with intellectual disabilities when they request this. These plans should cover the full range of accommodations including, as required, accessible communication, job modifications, use of support persons, inclusive supervisory and evaluation processes, and flexible work hours.

3. Develop standards that require employers or potential employers to facilitate support persons to be present at all phases of the employment journey as required and as determined by the applicant and/or their decision-making supporters. This should be done in consultation with the employer and with the involvement of employment support persons if the employee with intellectual disabilities requests their involvement. Such arrangements should be included in the accommodation and inclusion plan.