
ENABLING CHANGE: **REMOVING BARRIERS AND SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT OF ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**



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RESEARCH BY:



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL (ICTC)

WITH SUPPORT FROM:



MARCH OF DIMES CANADA



AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO



ENABLING CHANGE: REMOVING BARRIERS AND SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL
EMPLOYMENT OF ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES IN ICT

www.ictc-ctic.ca

PREFACE

About ICTC

ICTC is a national centre of expertise for the digital economy. With over 25 years of experience in research and program development related to technology, ICTC has the vision of strengthening Canada's digital advantage in the global economy. Through forward-looking research, evidence-based policy advice, and creative capacity building programs, ICTC fosters innovative and globally competitive Canadian industries, empowered by a talented and diverse workforce.

About March of Dimes Canada

March of Dimes Canada (MODC) is a federally registered national charity that offers a wide variety of programs and services to Canadians living with disabilities. Since 1951, MODC has been on the forefront of the disability movement with a mission that is dedicated to maximize the independence, personal empowerment and community participation of people with disabilities. MODC Employment Services offers a full range of services to help people with disabilities find paid employment, and to help business owners and employers meet their hiring needs. MODC Training Institute supports the organization's vision of inclusivity by providing ongoing training and education to its staff and the community, thereby promoting inclusive leadership and workplace best practices.

About the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Developed in 2005, the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a province-wide legislation that sets out a streamlined process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards. The ultimate goal of the AODA is to identify, remove and prevent barriers across Ontario for persons with disabilities by 2025.

About AccessAbility Advantage

AccessAbility Advantage is a program of March of Dimes Canada. Our team regularly consults on accessibility and the AODA. We have had the privilege to positively impact accessibility in Ontario through our contributions in helping develop the AODA Standards and in working with organizations to implement these Standards.

We assist organizations and employers become more inclusive by conducting accessibility assessments, creating customized accessibility guidelines and plans, and by developing and delivering professional AODA and accessibility training.

About this Study

With reliable research related to the participation of persons with disabilities in the Canadian workforce being limited – particularly at the sector-specific level – the *EnAbling Change* project is the first of its kind. It seeks to understand how we can better facilitate meaningful employment of people with disabilities in the tech (ICT) sector. Stemming from consultations with 25 ICT employers across Ontario, this report will outline barriers and challenges that they face in creating accessible and inclusive workplaces. We believe that this research is key to understanding the unique challenges that Ontario ICT companies encounter on their pathways to inclusivity. Additionally, this research is essential to collectively creating solutions and roadmaps that strive to break down those barriers and provide meaningful employment opportunities for Ontarians with disabilities. The results of this research will be utilized by March of Dimes Canada to create training programs, resources, and other materials that Ontario ICT employers can use to reach, recruit and retain persons with disabilities in their talent base.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The impact of technological advancement and development on Canada has been substantial. Additionally, the Canadian information and communications technology (ICT) sector has seen impressive growth over the last few years and this trend is anticipated to continue on an upward trajectory as technology increasingly permeates all sectors of the economy. In 2017 alone, the Canadian ICT sector grew by more than \$3 billion in GDP from the year prior [1]. Totalling nearly \$76 B in GDP, during that one-year timeline, the sector saw a growth rate of almost 4% - a figure that was more than twice the growth seen across the entire economy in that period [2].

At the same time, developments including transformative technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, 3D printing, 5G, and Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) are set to continue to accelerate job growth and the demand for skilled talent in Canada. This is so acute that by 2021, Canada is expected to see a demand for approximately 216,000 digitally-skilled workers [3]. To be clear, this is a demand for which we do not currently have sufficient supply to fill. Of course, the notion that demand for tech talent outstrips supply available to fill it is nothing unique to Canada. In the United States, the demand for tech talent is expected to reach over 1 million by 2020, and the European Commission anticipates a shortfall of over 800,000 during the same time-frame [4]. This demand, which is likely to continue to accelerate as technology scales and enhances, is a central motivator to ensure that as a nation, we are working to build an inclusive, accessible and diverse workforce. Doing so is critical not only to our ability to offer opportunities for all, but to safeguard strong and reliable pipelines of skilled talent both in the short and long term. This is something that is ultimately central to our ability to remain competitive on the global stage.

Further highlighting the need to focus on diversity in the interest of accessing skilled digital talent, a recent study completed on the tech sector in BC, entitled the *2016 Tech Talent BC Report* found that more than 30% of talent supply needed to fill industry demand will have to come from the local workforce, including underrepresented groups like career transitioners, Indigenous populations and persons with disabilities [5].

While little data about the representation of persons with disabilities in the ICT sector currently exists, a survey completed by Statistics Canada in 2012 suggests that at the time, nearly 4 million Canadians were living with some form of disability – and more than half having a disability that was either mild or moderate [6]. At the same time, the unemployment rate for Canadians with disabilities averages around 16% – that is more than 10% higher than the average unemployment rate witnessed among Canadians without disabilities [7]. There is opportunity for both Canadian businesses, and people with disabilities, if even a small portion of this demographic could be integrated into the ICT sector, filling skill needs that are key to propelling our success as a country. This study, *EnAbling Change*, seeks to identify strategies that build the pathways to turn this into a reality.

One key first step is understanding what we mean by “disability”, and acknowledging that this can take many forms from physical, to mental. While broadly speaking, a “person with disability” is usually defined as someone with a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment [8], we have included the following disabilities under the scope of this research: mobility, vision, hearing, communication, developmental, learning, mental health, and autism spectrum disorder.

The second step is understanding the barriers that employers in Canada and Ontario face when it comes to accessing a labour pool of skilled talent with disabilities. In addressing these barriers, it is again important to understand that barriers can be broad and widely encompassing. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines barriers as factors in an individual’s environment that limit functioning [9]. Attempting to broadly cover this space in this study, barriers will be referred to as: attitudinal (biases or stereotypes); architectural (inaccessible infrastructure); information or communication-related (inaccessible workplace information and/or methods of communicating); technological (inaccessible tools preventing the access of information); and systemic (policies or practices that restrict people with disabilities in the workplace).

Once we understand the barriers that people with disabilities face when it comes to obtaining meaningful employment opportunities, we can begin to address those issues and move towards creating value-adding services, including training materials and resources.

Understanding these barriers when it comes to high-growth sectors like ICT is that much more important, given its impact and contributions to the provincial and national economy. Gaining first-hand feedback and knowledge of both barriers to inclusion, as well as opportunities from Ontario tech employers is essential to developing impactful resources that employers can use to engage a larger pool of talent with disabilities.

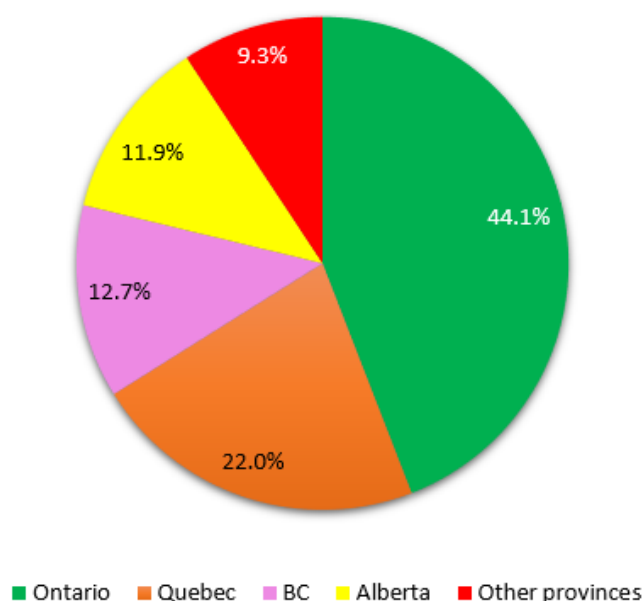
I. BACKGROUND: THE CANADIAN ICT SECTOR - AN ONTARIO PERSPECTIVE

ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF THE ICT SECTOR

In 2017, the economic impact of the Canadian ICT sector totaled more than \$76 billion, representing an increase of \$3 billion from the year prior. In addition, the strength of the ICT sector accounted for more than 4% of the GDP of the entire national economy [10], a figure that is substantially higher than many traditional economic sectors.

Just a year earlier in 2016, the GDP of the tech sector totaled \$73.3 billion [11], with Ontario acting as Canada's leader in this realm. Contributing \$33.1 billion that year, Ontario made up more than 44% of the national ICT sector GDP. By comparison, the second largest contributor was Quebec, whose contribution was half that of Ontario's, making up just 22% of national ICT sector GDP [12].

**PROVINCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS (GDP) TO THE
CANADIAN ICT SECTOR (2016)**



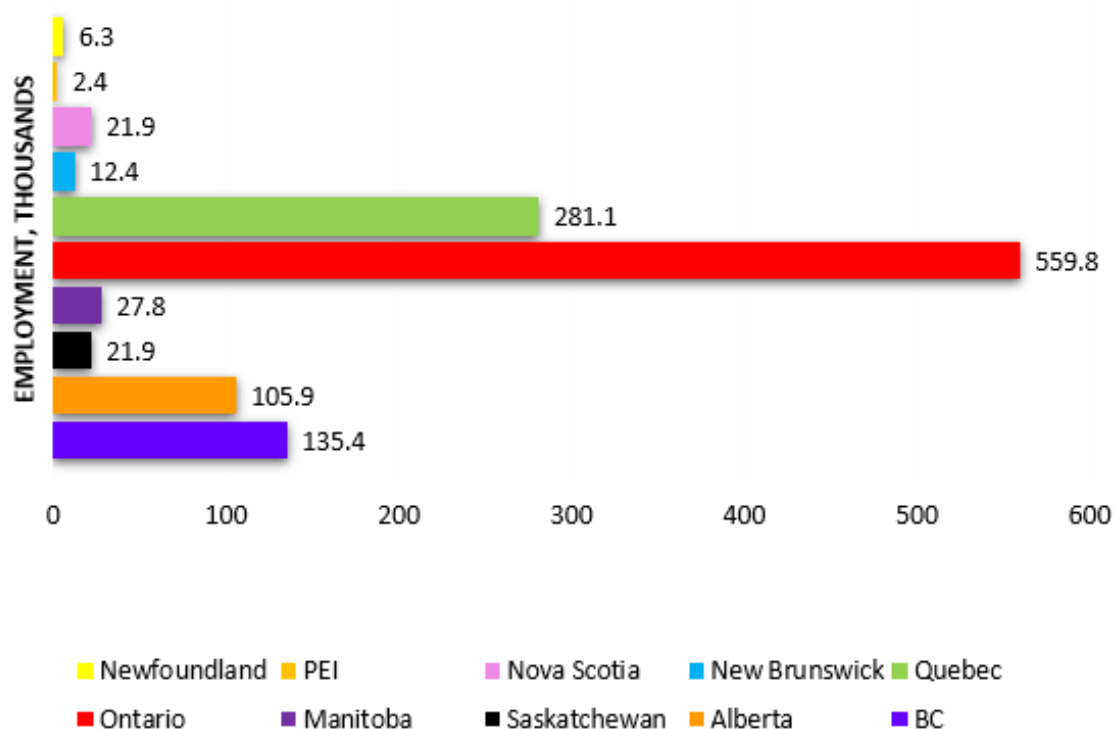
Source: ICTC, Statistics Canada, The Digital Talent Dividend: Shifting Gears in a Changing Economy

EMPLOYMENT IN ICT

While Ontario is the leading province when it comes to contribution to the national ICT sector GDP, it is also a significant leader in the realm of employment within it. For example, in 2016, the Canadian digital economy employed approximately 1,390,000 Canadians. Of that figure, 1,220,000 or 88% were ICT professionals employed either in the ICT sector, or ICT professionals employed in sectors other than ICT (i.e. healthcare, finance, manufacturing, etc.) [13]. When we analyze this at the provincial level, the impact of Ontario on employment of ICT professionals in Canada is evident and clearly substantial. Employing nearly 560,000 ICT professionals across the economy, Ontario was responsible for nearly 46% of all ICT employment in Canada during 2016 [14].

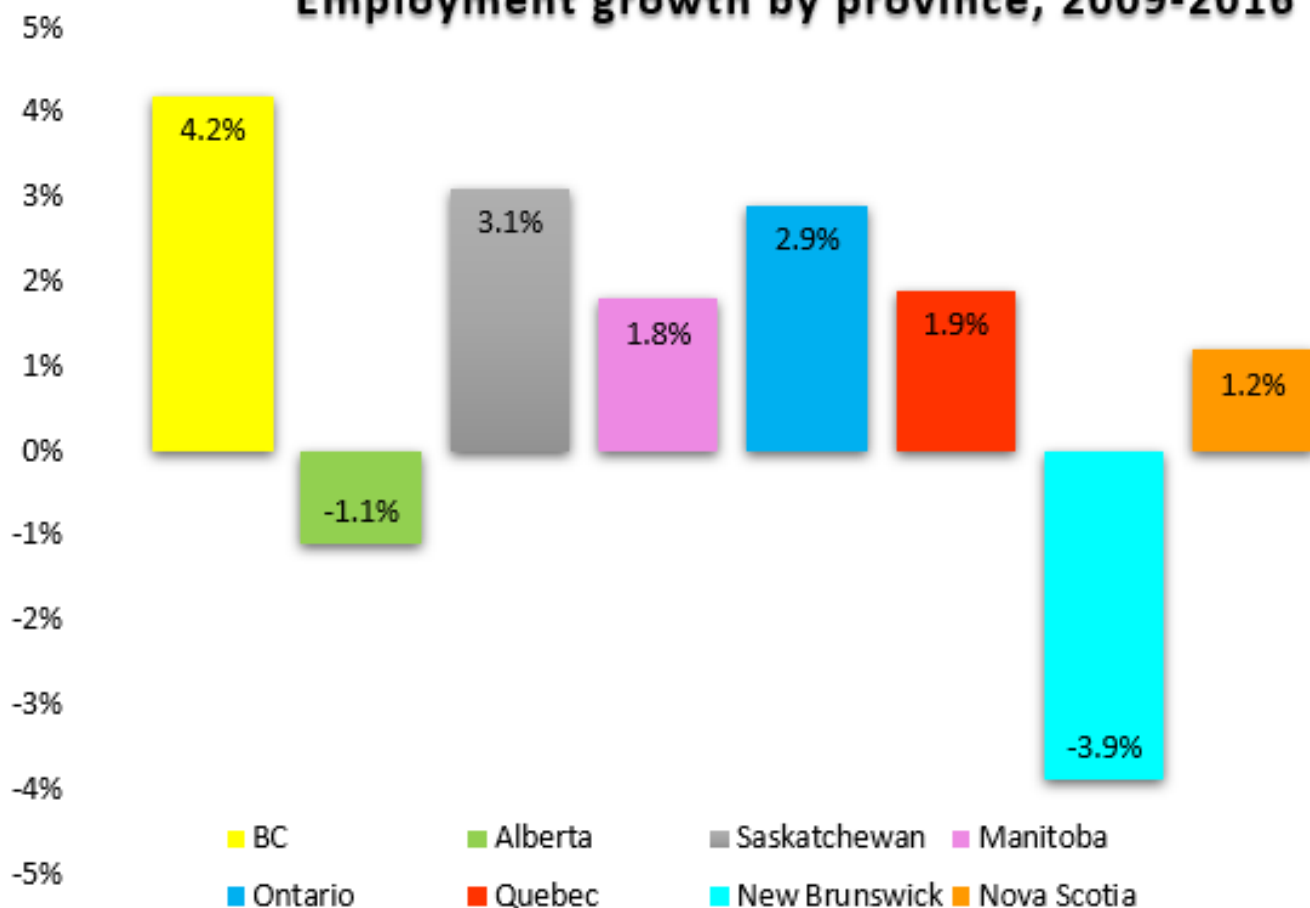
At the same time, the province experienced some of the highest growth rates when it came to employment of ICT professional across the economy over the last few years. From 2009-2016, Ontario's employment growth rate averaged 2.9%. At nearly 3%, the province come in behind only BC and Saskatchewan which averaged 4.2%, and 3.1% employment growth, respectively [15].

ICT Employment by Province



Source: ICTC, Statistics Canada, The Next Talent Wave: Navigating the Digital Shift - Outlook 2021

Employment growth by province, 2009-2016



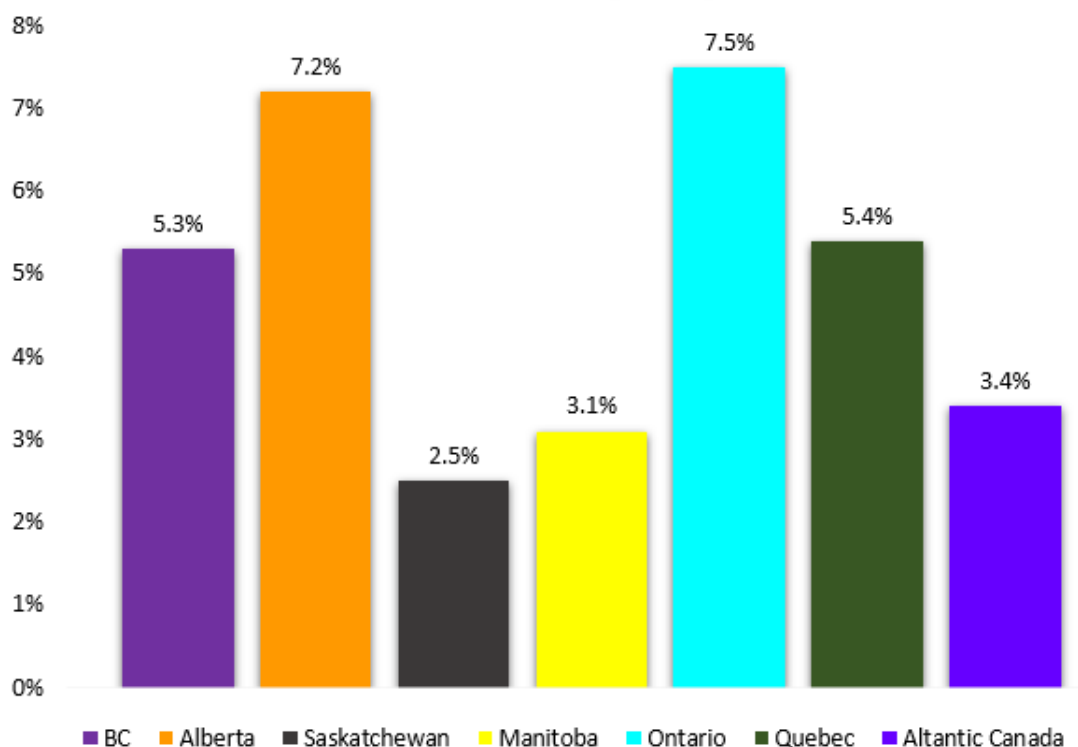
Source: ICTC, Statistics Canada, The Next Talent Wave: Navigating the Digital Shift – Outlook 2021

BUSINESS REPRESENTATION BY PROVINCE

Furthermore, a look at total business counts places the Canadian ICT sector ahead of several others in the race. Representing 6.1% of all Canadian businesses, the tech sector accounted for over 70,000 companies across Canada in 2015 [16]. A provincial breakdown of the impact of tech companies highlights the important role that Ontario plays in this space, as well. That year, ICT businesses represented 7.5% of all businesses in the province [17].

This was closely followed by Alberta, which – owing primarily to a strong representation of engineering companies that are included in the count – found that tech companies totaled 7.2% of all businesses that year. Following closest to Alberta was Quebec, whose tech company count totaled 5.4% of companies in the province [18] – a figure more than 2% below that of Ontario.

ICT SECTOR as a proportion of total businesses PER PROVINCE (2015)



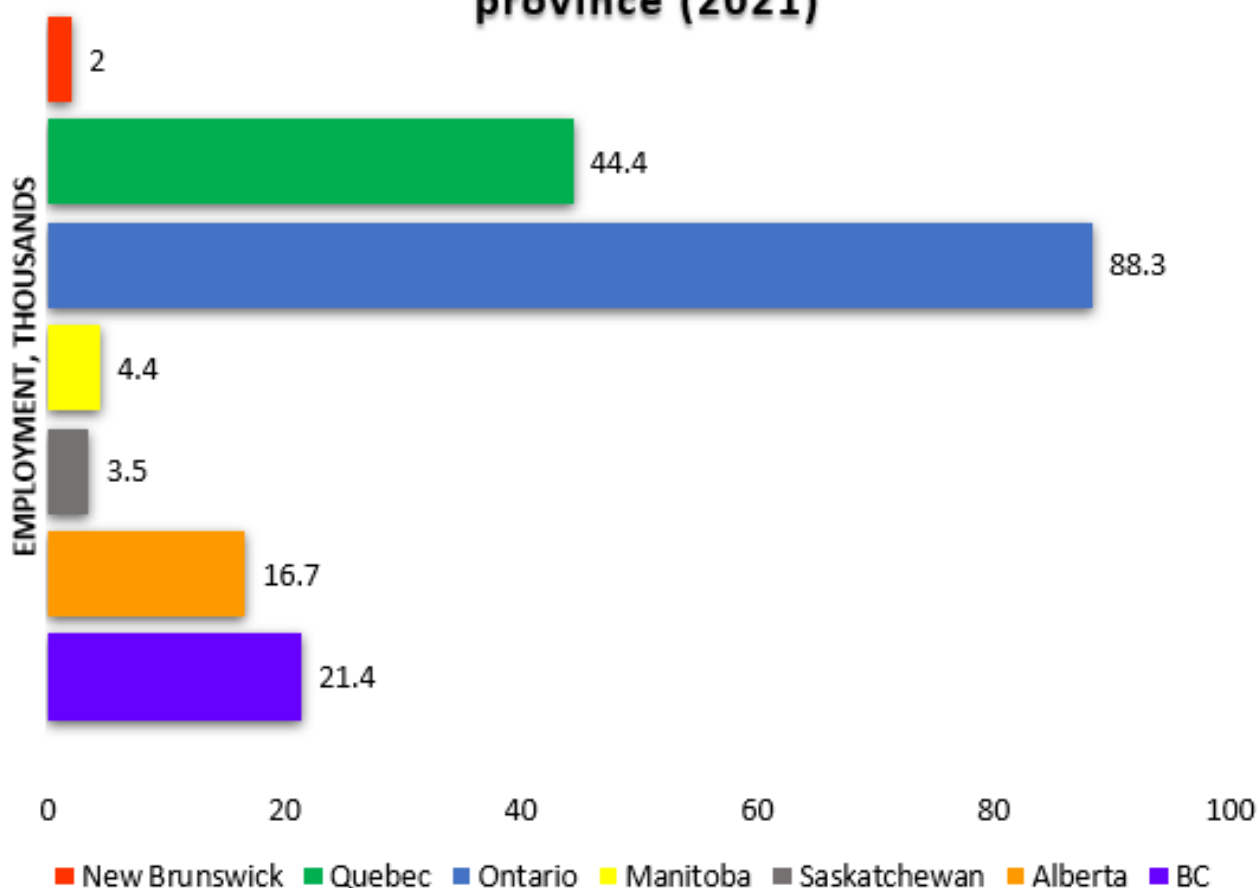
Source: Brookfield Institute, The State of Canada's Tech Sector, 2016

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR ICT EMPLOYMENT IN ONTARIO

While a conservative estimate suggests that Canada will need to fill roughly 216,000 digitally-skilled occupations by 2021, one thing that must be understood is that this demand will be felt across the country. However, a provincial breakdown of this figure puts yet another spotlight on Ontario, signifying the province's footprint on Canada's future ICT growth. With the Ontario ICT sector being the most robust of any province, its employment needs are projected to be the most substantial over the next few years. By 2021, a conservative estimate points to the conclusion that Ontario will need to fill a total of 88,300 of the 216,000 jobs [19] for which there is currently insufficient supply to meet.

Considering the accelerated need for digital talent among key roles across the country – and across Ontario – the case for integrating all supply streams into this fast-growing sector is clear. Understanding this need, Ontario must begin to focus on how to engage underrepresented groups like women, Indigenous persons, and persons with disabilities into the ICT sector. Doing so is crucial to our ability to meet demand, while providing meaningful employment opportunities for all Canadians.

Projected ICT Employment Growth to by province (2021)



Source: The Next Talent Wave: Navigating the Digital Shift, Outlook 2021

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS A KEY SOURCE OF UNDERUTILIZED TALENT

Persons with disabilities are a key source of underutilized talent that can be critical to filling employment demand in sectors across the economy, including ICT. With more than 200,000 digitally-skilled workers needed in Canada by 2021, increasingly, we will have to focus on alternative supply streams to fill this need, including from underrepresented groups. At the same time, ensuring that workplaces are diverse and inclusive via the inclusion of underrepresented groups in the economy has been linked to increasing productivity and profit. A recent study by the Trudeau Foundation that surveyed nearly 8,000 workplaces across Canada found that an increase of as little as 1% in ethno-cultural diversity contributed to a 0.5% increase in workplace productivity [20]. Additionally, an increase in diversity had the most substantial impact in terms of productivity for the information and cultural industries, which saw 3% revenue growth with a 1% increase in ethno-cultural diversity [21].

While these results are limited to ethno-cultural diversity and not specific to disability, they support the notion that increasing inclusivity and diversity in the workplace can ultimately yield positive results for employers.

Similar results are also echoed internationally. For example, the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) have recently partnered to create the Disability Equality Index (DEI) [22]. This index has now been in existence for three years, with its purpose being to measure the commitment of US companies in providing inclusive and accessible employment environments. The results so far are impressive. In 2017, the Index found that nearly 62% of employers who participated in the DEI earned a top score of 100% - suggesting that the majority of employers are increasingly committed to inclusivity and diversity as a core principle of business operation [23]. Likewise, if we examine these rankings over the last three years, we note a steady incline in results. Just three years prior in 2014, the index found that only 23% of employers earned scores of 100% [24]. With a growth of nearly 40% in just three years, this indicates that more and more employers are seeing not only the value of inclusivity and accessibility, but are actively taking steps to implement it.

When we compare these results back to Canada, however, we cannot help but assert that further work must be done. While at the federal level and some provincial levels like Ontario, we see some support services intended to help persons with disabilities find employment opportunities - including support in job search, job training, software needs, transportation assistance and others [25] - this is only a starting point. One of the central challenges that has to be addressed is the lack of clarity on employers' parts when it comes to how to adequately source, train, and enable the inclusion of persons with disabilities as part of the workforce. In fact, during our consultations with Ontario tech employers, we found that many were not aware of where they could even find candidates with disabilities to consider for open vacancies. It is crucial to strengthen connections and knowledge of resources that can help them reach this talent.

This study intends to be a first step in this process. With this research, we aim to understand the pain points of Ontario tech employers across all size categories when it comes to recruiting, retaining and creating accessible environments for people with disabilities.

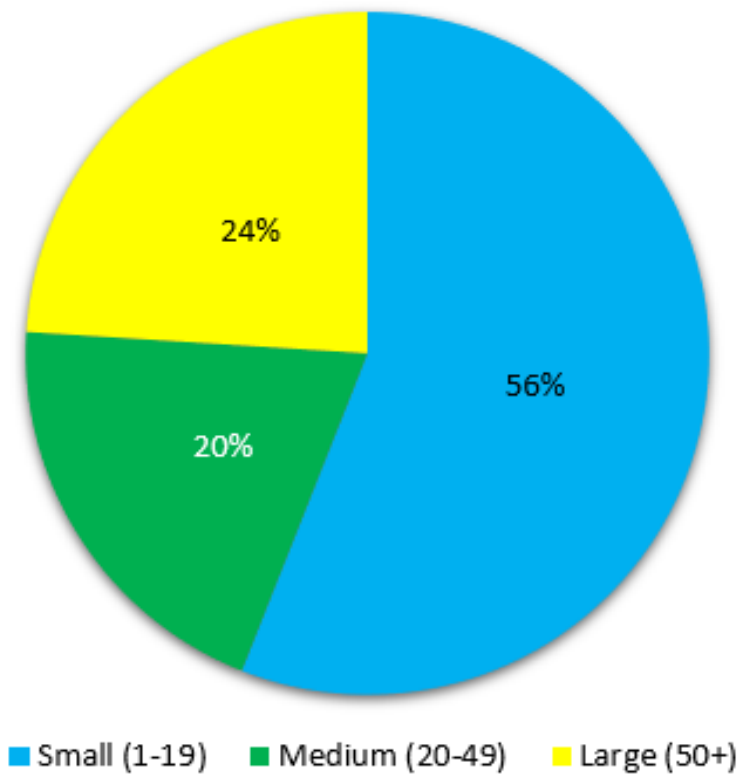
Only from there can we begin to better develop, shape, and enhance training materials and support programs that can have lasting positive effects on the employment prospects for persons with disabilities in ICT. Forging these pathways is important not just to ensure that businesses are more accessible and inclusive; but ultimately, they are essential to our ability to meet industry demand, and to continue to drive innovation, creativity and sustainable growth for Ontario and Canadian employers.

II. THE INTERVIEWS: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE BREAKDOWN OF ONTARIO ICT COMPANIES

In Canada, the vast majority of ICT companies are SMEs (small to medium enterprises), totaling more than 99% of all businesses in the sector [26]. The representation of company size in this study mirrors this national reality, with the majority of companies interviewed by ICTC during the course of this study (56%) being small in size, employing between 1-19 people. This was followed by the representation of large employers (employing over 50), which totaled nearly one quarter of responses.

SIZE BREAKDOWN OF EMPLOYERS INTERVIEWED



Source: ICTC, 2018.

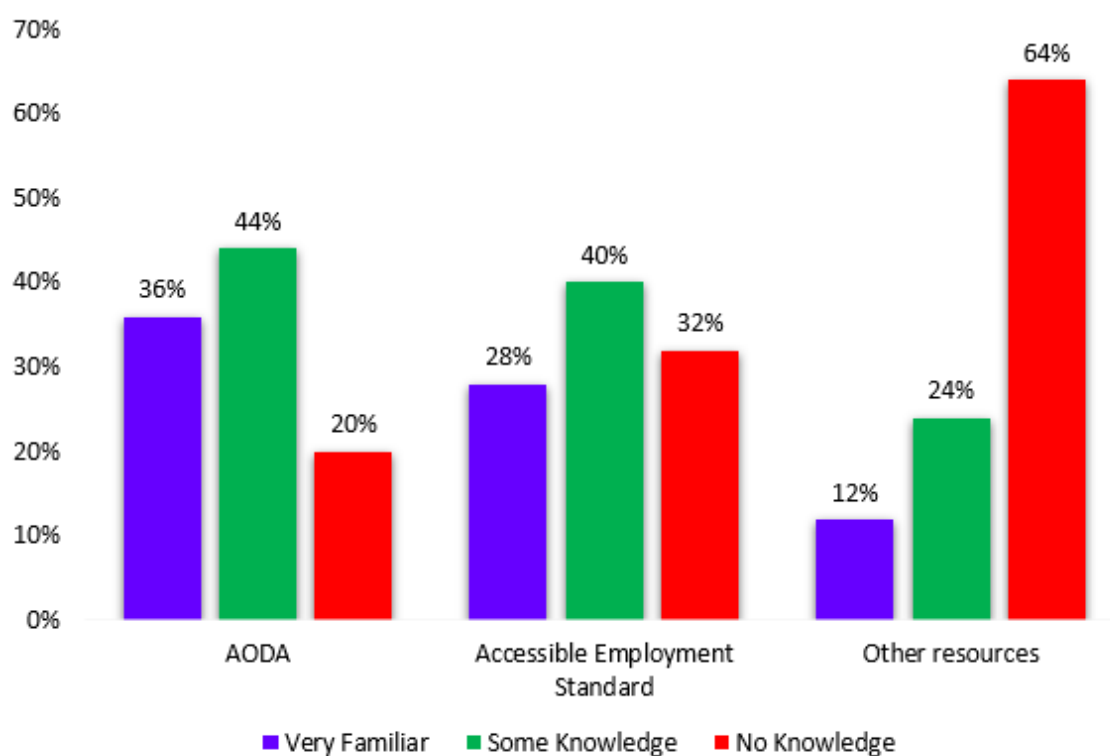
KNOWLEDGE OF STANDARDS

Of these employers, a fair portion noted that they were either very familiar or had some knowledge of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessible Employment Standard (80% having at least some knowledge of the AODA and 68% having at least some knowledge of the Accessible Employment Standard).

In cases where employers stated that they had “some knowledge” of the AODA or Accessible Employment Standard, they mentioned being aware of some aspects of each – for example, standards revolving around offering physically accessible workplaces – but not necessarily others, like standards surrounding policies, recruitment practices, or candidate assessment.

Likewise, 20% of employers said they had no knowledge of the AODA and 32% indicated that they had no knowledge of the Accessible Employment Standard. There was a positive correlation between employers who had no knowledge of the AODA and a lack of compliance – meaning that all of the employers who reported having no knowledge of the AODA were either not compliant with it, or were unsure about whether or not they were.

KNOWLEDGE LEVELS OF RELEVANT STANDARDS

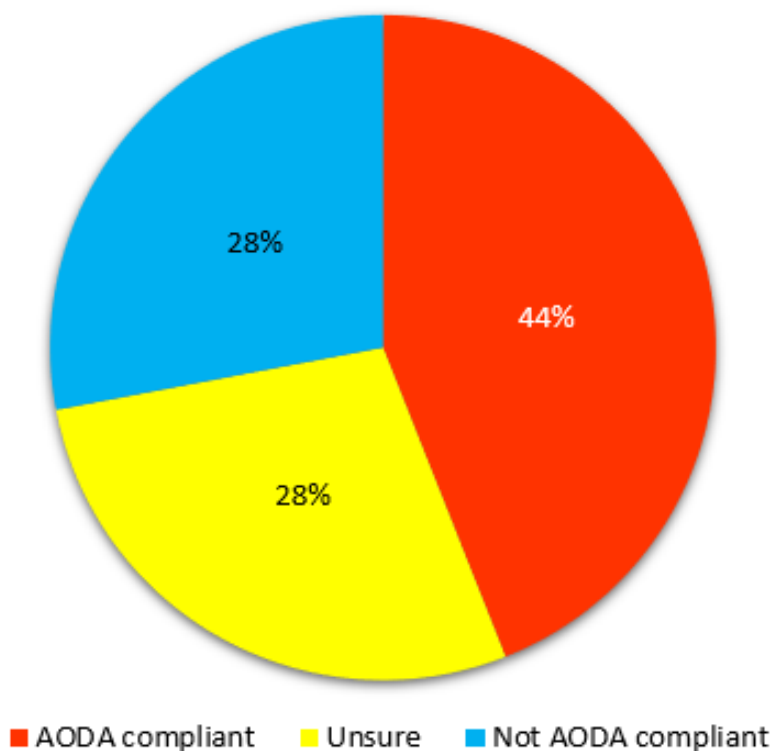


Source: ICTC, 2018.

The biggest knowledge gap among employers was related to knowledge of other resources offered by government or non-governmental organizations. These include services like AccessForward, a web platform created in partnership with the Government of Ontario that offers free training modules for AODA compliance [27], or March of Dimes Canada Employment Services that help match candidates with disabilities to employers' highest priority skill needs. When it came to knowledge of services like these, 64% of employers reported having no knowledge of these additional resources or where to access them.

While in Ontario, companies employing fewer than 20 are not required to complete accessibility compliance reports, access to knowledge on AODA standards and procedures may promote compliance even in cases where it may not be expressly mandated. Among small companies in the interview process, the majority surveyed noted that they were either not compliant with AODA standards or unsure if they were. For those who were unsure, many stated a lack of certainty regarding complete standards for compliance – that is, standards and requirements beyond accessibility in the architectural sense. Specifically, a significant number of employers expressed uncertainty about compliance from a policy perspective, including lack of knowledge regarding suitable HR or hiring practices.

AODA COMPLIANCE BREAKDOWN



Source: ICTC, 2018.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE AODA

Although a positive causal relationship took shape between Ontario ICT employers who were not aware of AODA standards and who were not compliant, overall, nearly half of employers (44%) noted that they were compliant with the AODA. A size breakdown of these results indicate that compliance was highest among medium and large companies (67% being compliant), while only 27% of small companies reported being compliant. An additional 33% reported being unsure of whether or not they were. That said, all employers interviewed who were currently not compliant were clear about their intention or desire to become so. No employers noted that compliance was not in their interest or a priority in the future.

When employers were asked about the resources that they may need in order to become compliant, the most common responses were “time”, “funding” and “access to information.” 20% of employers said that more time and funding would be necessary for them to become fully compliant – including time to create or shape policies, and funding to implement training sessions and programs. Considering that the majority of Canadian tech employers are small, this is not altogether surprising, as these types of businesses tend to have the fewest resources available to expend on training and policy development.

In cases where time and funding were not barriers identified impacting AODA compliance, many employers suggested that they were not fully aware of everything they needed to do in order to ensure they were compliant. This was primarily focused on policies that they need to adopt, processes they need to implement and HR practices that were essential to compliance. As a result, 16% of employers said that access to information and knowledge sharing on compliance requirements would be extremely helpful.

THE PRESENCE OF WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES AT ONTARIO ICT COMPANIES

While some employers noted that they were either not AODA compliant or unsure if they were, nearly half also stated that they currently had at least one employee with some type of disability at their company. Over 44% of all employers accounted having at least one employee with disabilities, while another 48% noted that they did not.

Where known, the most represented disabilities in the workplace were: learning disabilities, mental health illnesses, and individuals on the autism spectrum. 20% reported having at least one worker with learning disabilities, and 18% noted having at least one employee with a mental health illness. 12% stated having at least one employee on the autism spectrum.

III. THE INTERVIEWS: BARRIERS

The majority of employers interviewed reported that they did not face significant barriers that functioned to prevent them from hiring persons with disabilities. Where barriers were faced, the majority of employers noted that they were either small or only somewhat significant. This was common among small, medium and large companies, alike.

SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS - ARCHITECTURE & TECHNOLOGY

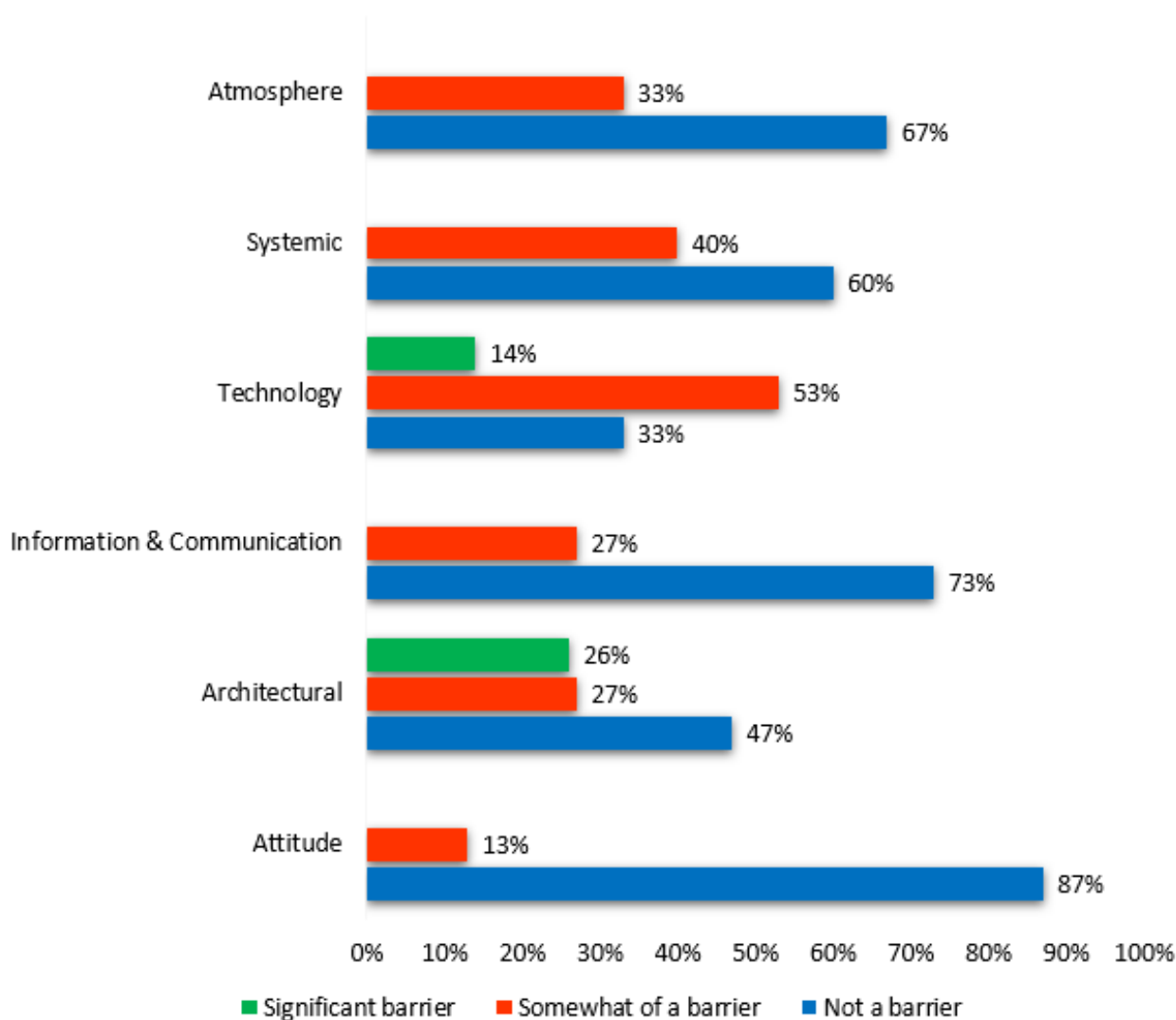
When asked if they experienced barriers ranging from attitudinal to systemic, the majority of employers noted that these were either “not a barrier” or only “somewhat of a barrier” (a barrier that is inconvenient, but not directly preventing an accessible workplace). The barrier that was most represented as a “significant barrier” was architectural. Architectural barriers were described to be “significant” by 26% of small companies and 20% of medium-sized companies. In all of these cases, the companies noted issues ranging from minor challenges to physical accessibility such as two-storied workspaces, or major challenges such as being housed in a building that is not wheelchair accessible. In a few cases, companies stated being located in an old building without wheelchair access, but also relayed that they did not have the funding necessary to change locations. On another occasion, a company’s workspace was split over two floors, with the kitchen located on the second floor. With no elevator access to the second floor, the company considered this to be a significant barrier, hindering the ability of persons with disabilities to easily access the kitchen. This feeds back into the earlier trend we highlighted around companies needing additional funding to become more accessible.

The next most significant barrier was “technological” – that is, the ability to source the necessary equipment or technology to accommodate persons with disabilities. This may range from things like braille keyboards for people with vision impairments, adjustable desks, screen-reading software, joysticks and others.

Technological challenges were highlighted as “somewhat of a barrier” by 53% of small companies, and 40% of large companies. While some new developments exist, including Budget 2017’s commitment to devote \$22.3 M to an Accessible Technology Development program that will co-fund partnerships that develop accessible devices and solutions [28], more funding would be key. The top reason for challenges in this realm were often time and cost-related.

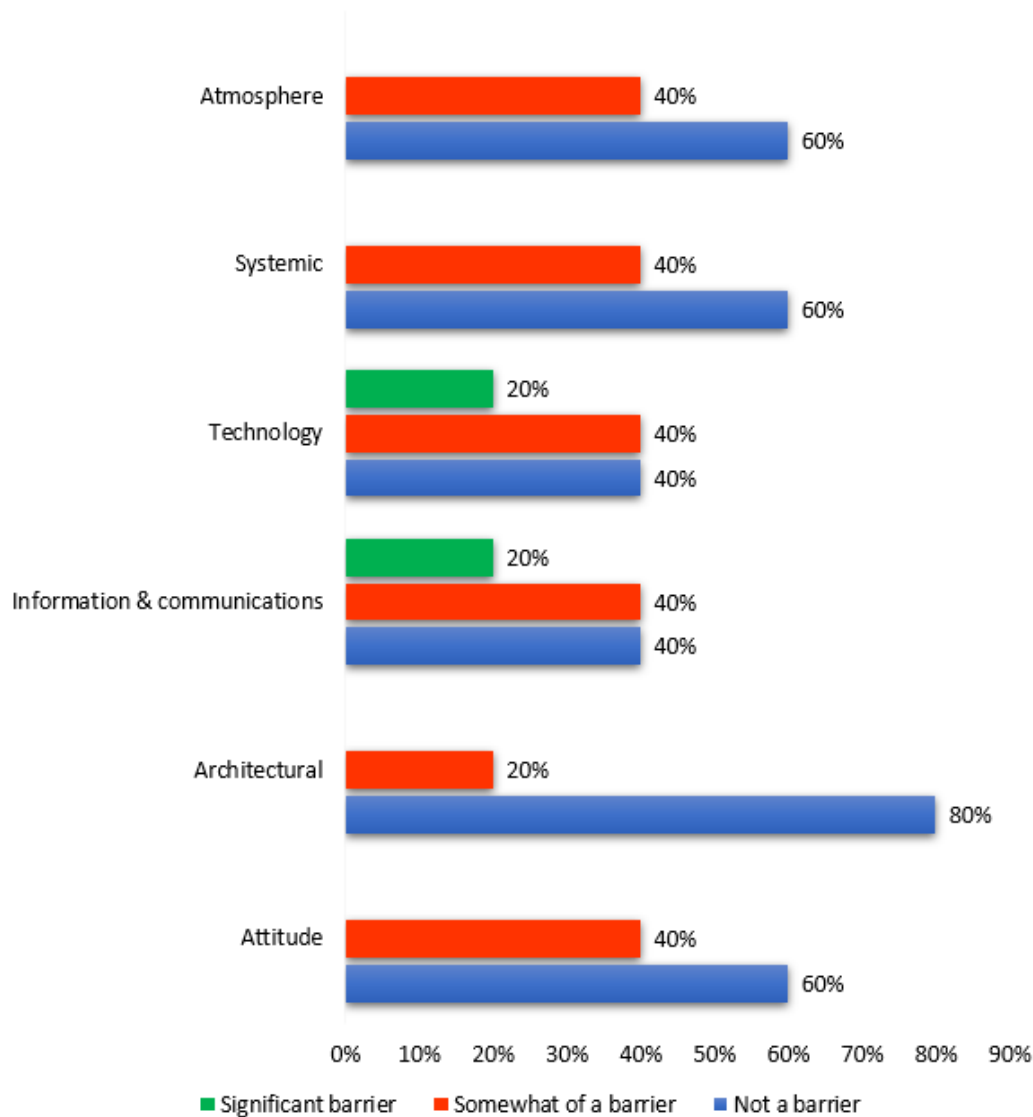
Many small companies expressed some concern regarding the cost of sourcing certain technological equipment to create accessible workplaces. However, where cost was not the driving factor behind this challenge, companies relayed a sense of uncertainty regarding where to source accessible software, the best and most appropriate type of software to source, and how to implement it in the workplace.

BARRIERS - SMALL COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

BARRIERS - LARGE COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

At the same time, when it came to barriers that were least present among employers, attitude, information and communication, atmosphere and systemic barriers topped the list. Here, the least significant barrier among companies was the attitudinal barrier, selected by 87% of small companies and 60% of large companies as “not a barrier”.

BARRIERS REMOVED TO CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE

Where barriers were removed to accommodate a(n) employee(s) with disabilities (for companies who had employees with disabilities), the most common adjustments that were made were to attitudinal and systemic barriers. However, where these barriers – when they existed – were immediately addressed by employers, other barriers such as technology or architectural concerns were not always done immediately.

This potentially speaks to the importance that employers place on creating an inclusive culture that values accessibility and diversity before making additional accommodations.

Throughout the interviews, we found that 2 large companies and 1 small company reported removing barriers to attitude by developing training that focused on identifying, addressing and removing stigmas and stereotypes. These include notions about what people with disabilities can or cannot do, limited professional ability, lack of interest in certain roles, and others. Similarly, 2 large companies and 2 small companies also asserted that they created and reshaped policies and practices to focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. These activities included developing training materials, webinars, or offering links to accessibility resources from the Government of Ontario for use in onboarding materials.

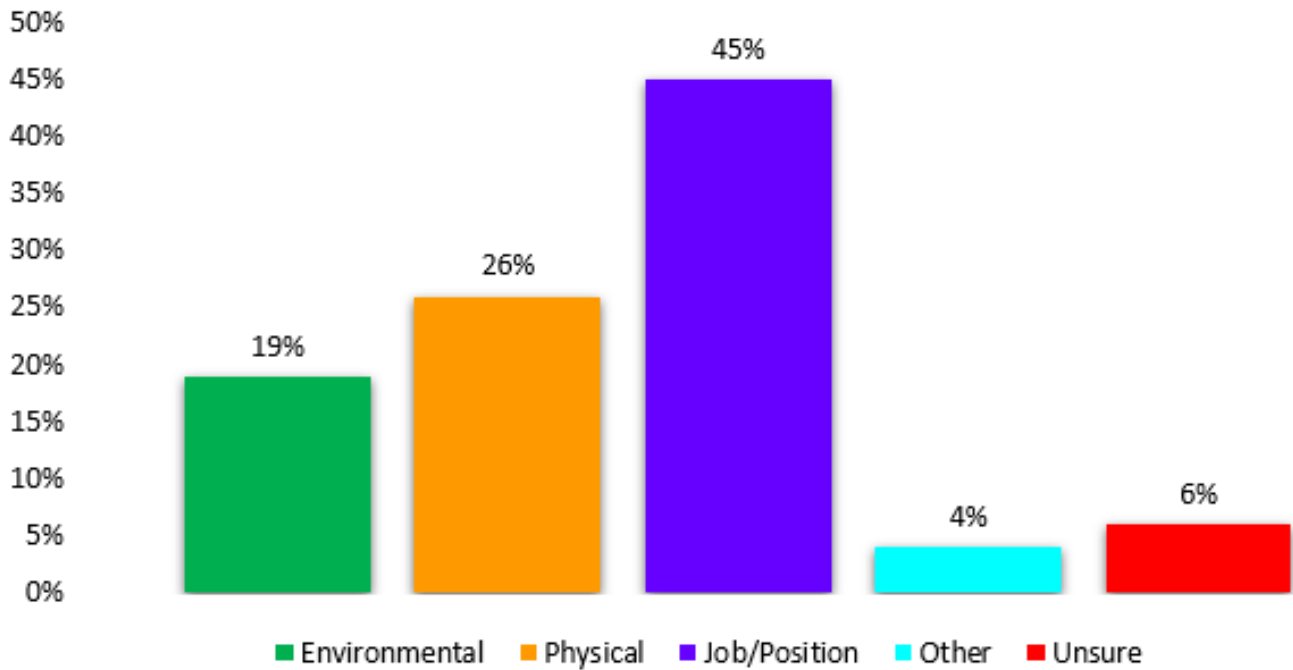
While the majority of employers noted that they were unsure of the cost associated with removing these barriers, 3 companies (1 small and 2 large) estimated cost to be between \$1,001 to \$5,000. This cost was often attributable to hiring external consultants to develop training materials and tools, acquiring legal advice to ensure that HR policies are inclusive and comprehensive, or hiring trainers to facilitate training sessions, focus groups, or working groups.

OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS MADE BY ONTARIO ICT COMPANIES

Similarly, when it came to other accommodations provided by employers in the interest of promoting an inclusive and accessible workplace (i.e. regardless of whether or not said employers had individuals with disabilities working there), the vast majority reported making adjustments to the role/position, itself. This included offering flexible work arrangements, providing the ability to work from home or work remotely, and the reassignment of tasks based on challenges experienced or needs of the employee.

This was followed by physical adjustments that were made to the buildings themselves, including 12% of companies who noted adding wheelchair ramps, or moving to an accessible building. A fair portion of companies also reported making small changes to their environment, like adjusting temperature and noise levels, improving lighting, or improving ventilation. One company specifically referenced creating a “scent-free” environment, to accommodate employees with sensitivities to smell.

ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT



Source: ICTC, 2018.

IV. THE INTERVIEWS: SKILLS & JOB FITS

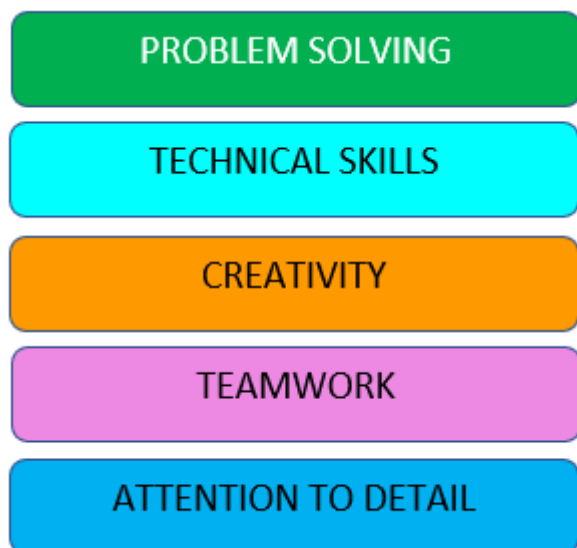
KEY SKILLS FOR THE ICT SECTOR

During the course of the interviews, employers highlighted a handful of key technical and/or digital skills as necessary or “critical” to their successful business operations. Of course, some variance was noted primarily based on the stage of the company – for example, smaller companies tended to have a higher representation of “industry knowledge” or “knowledge of current software” than larger companies. This may be as a result of having a smaller budget for salaries and training. Additionally, smaller companies noted needing workers who were more able to “hit the ground running” and “wear different hats” (i.e. be versatile in their abilities and responsibilities), more often than large companies.

Smaller ICT companies also tended to categorize their employment needs as largely rooted in technical or digital talent – meaning that roles like software developers, data analysts, or designers usually made up the majority of their hiring. Therefore, smaller companies often place a heavier emphasis on technical/digital skills, entrepreneurialism as well as attention to detail. By contrast, large companies showcased a higher need for “teamworking skills” and “problem solving”.

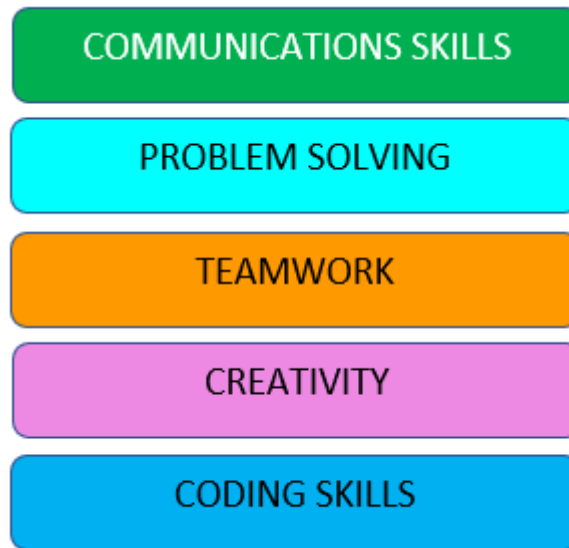
For larger more established companies, employment needs were more diverse. Larger companies indicated diverse talent needs like sales or business development personnel, marketing and communications talent, finance, and others. As a result, the critical skills required by these companies were boarder, including skills like communications and interpersonal skills, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

TOP 5 SKILLSETS - SMALL COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

TOP 5 SKILLSETS - LARGE COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

JOB FITS - CONSIDERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR VARIOUS ROLES

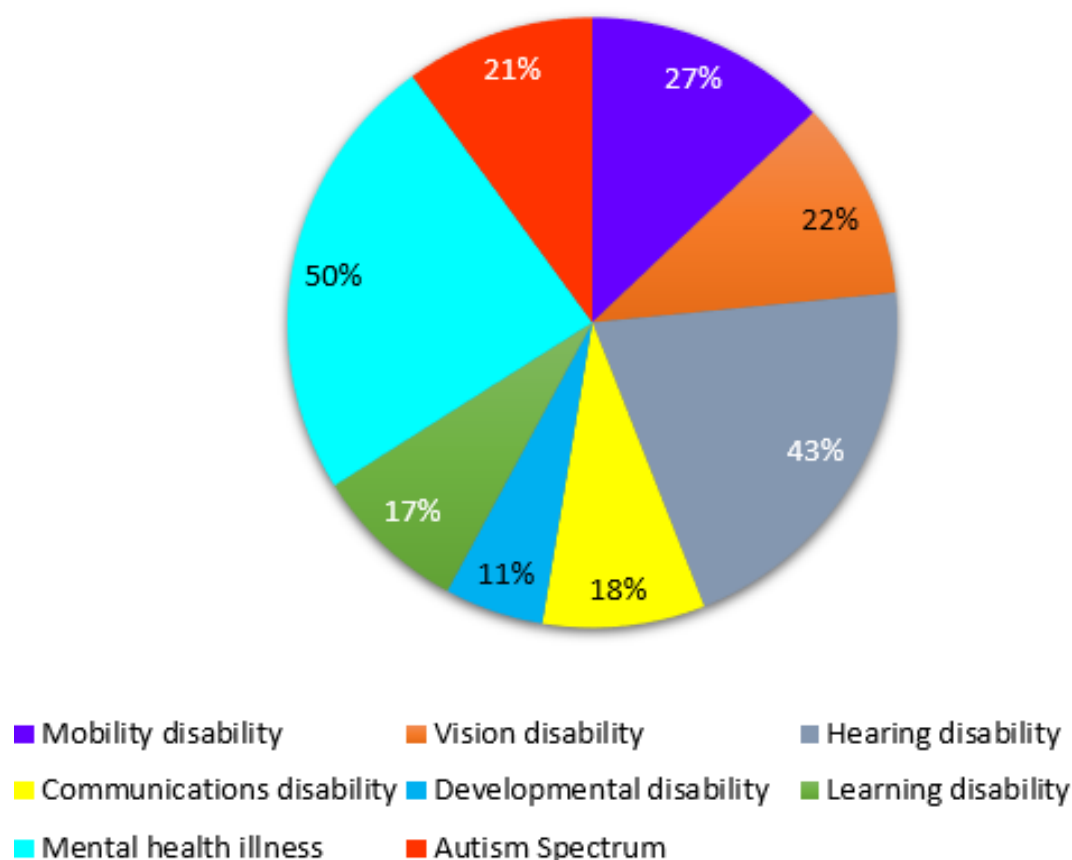
When employers were asked whether they would consider persons with disabilities for certain roles vs. others, the majority responded being unable to categorize in the general sense like that. Instead, most noted that they would need to evaluate each role and person on a case-by-case basis, rather than grouping them as appropriate only for certain types of roles based on their disability. Moreover, the majority of employers stated that they would be more inclined to consider persons with all disabilities for all roles as a default, vs. categorizing according to disability.

Where concern was voiced surrounding certain disabilities and certain roles, it tended to reside around the ability of persons with mobility or hearing impairments to be successful in sales roles. Here, many employers stated that their sales personnel needed to be either highly mobile (i.e. to travel frequently), or to be communicating frequently with clients over the phone.

As a result, they felt that someone with a mobility disability would find it difficult to travel frequently, and someone with an auditory disability may find it challenging to spend long periods of time on the phone.

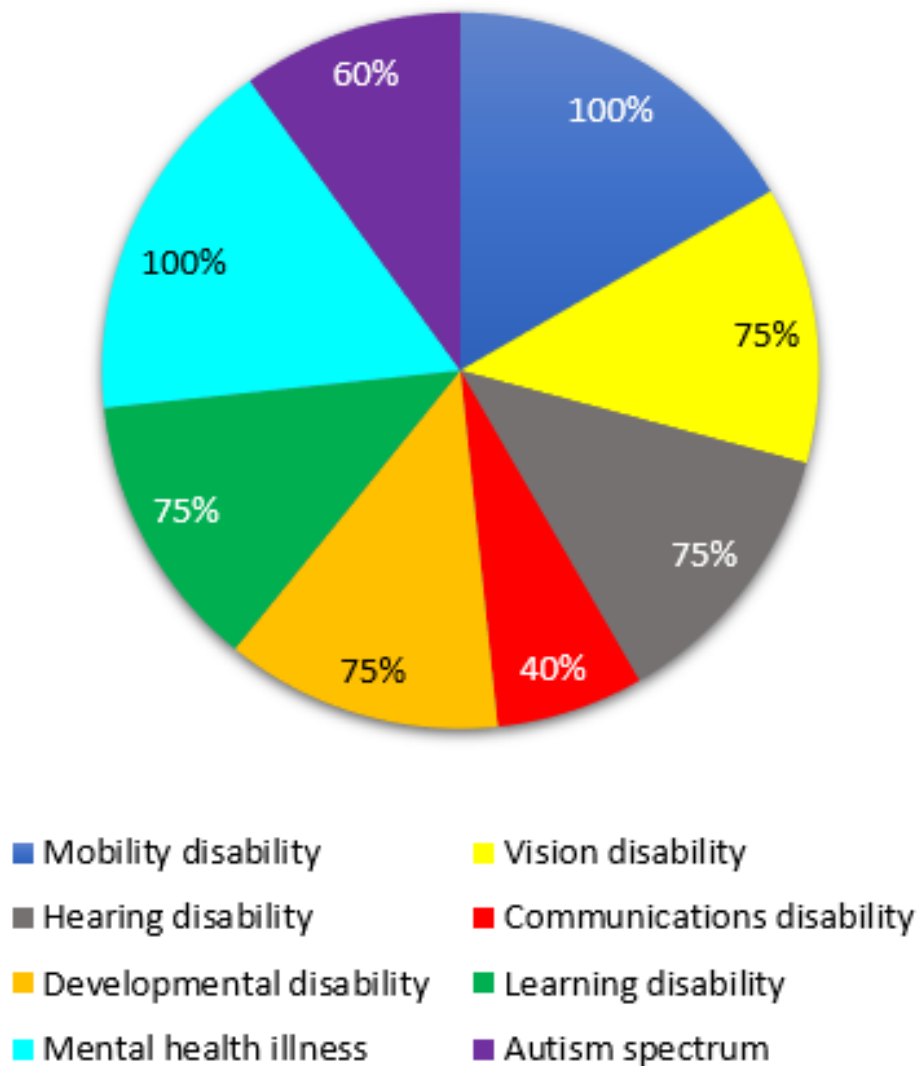
That said, it should be noted that employers were more likely to consider some disabilities for all roles, vs. others. At small companies, the type of disability that employers were most inclined to consider for all roles were mental health illnesses (50% of employers said they would consider them for all roles). Aside from a few employers who said they would not consider someone with a hearing impairment for a sales role, the majority of small employers seemed to agree that this disability presented the fewest challenges for employment (43% would consider for all roles). Larger companies were more willing to consider a number of disabilities for all roles. 100% of large employers said they would consider persons with mobility disabilities and mental health illnesses for all roles. This was followed by vision and hearing impairments (75% of employers would consider for all roles), and autism (60% of employers would consider for all roles).

WOULD CONSIDER FOR ALL ROLES - SMALL COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

WOULD CONSIDER FOR ALL ROLES - LARGE COMPANIES



Source: ICTC, 2018.

Conversely, the types of disabilities that employers were least likely to consider for all roles were developmental disabilities (22% of small employers would not consider them for any roles), followed by learning disabilities and autism (16% would not consider them for any roles). When asked why employers would not consider people with these specific disabilities for any roles, responses ranged from challenges with communications skills, employers being unsure of what their abilities might be (particularly when it came to people on the autism spectrum), to being unsure of whether or not they would be able to successfully complete the type of work the business required (particularly when it came to people with developmental disabilities and highly-technical work).

Where distinctions were made for certain occupations, employers responded that they would be most likely to consider people with mobility disabilities and those on the autism spectrum for coding and/or technical roles, due to the heightened need for not only high attention to detail, but reliance on the visual and auditory senses for both everyday tasks and future career prospects. Employers also noted that people with vision impairments or mobility disabilities may be best suited for HR roles, and that people with vision impairments may also be well suited sales/marketing roles. When pressed for reasons behind these choices, employers stated a belief that these occupations did not tend to require a reliance on the visual sense – instead, the most in-demand skill for these occupations was strong communication skills.

V. THE INTERVIEWS: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

SOURCING CANDIDATES

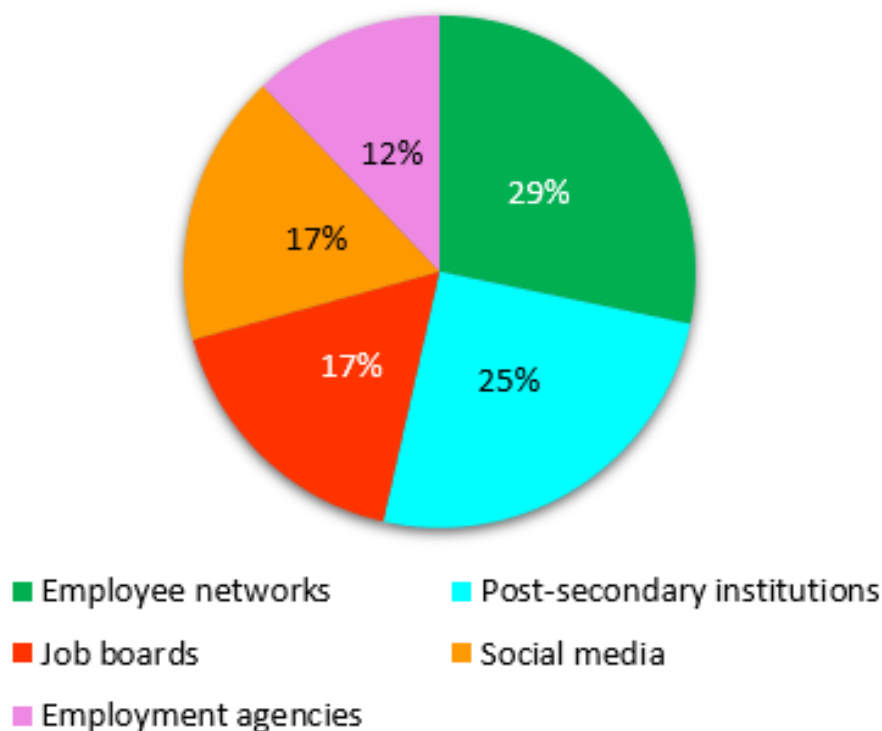
Overall, the vast majority of employers asserted that they were open to hiring people with disabilities, and even accepting pre-screened candidates whose skills matched certain postings (76% of employers stated that they would accept pre-screened candidates). However, despite the openness to do so, many employers remarked that they did not know where or how to access talent pools with disabilities. Specifically, they stated being unaware of how to connect with them on job boards, via specific HR groups or other traditional sourcing streams. The majority of employers tended to find their candidates from traditional sources, rather than working with employment agencies or recruitment companies. These sources were: employee networks or referrals (32%), post-secondary institutions (24%), and job boards or social media (17%). Similarly, of employers who did use employment agencies, none were aware of or had encountered agencies that were specifically servicing candidates with disabilities.

ASSESSING CANDIDATES

When it came to the assessment of candidates, the majority of employers noted that they always attempted to employ inclusive recruitment practices, including making accommodations like having interviews over Skype, or over the phone. That said, none were expressly aware of taking other actions like ensuring that job postings are phrased in an inclusive way or posted on inclusive job boards – something that may be a factor contributing to the lack of applicants with disabilities to open postings.

Other mechanisms for candidate assessment included having candidates showcase past work via work portfolios or samples of prior work, or particularly in the case of technical roles like software developers or coders, requiring candidates to complete timed tests, assignments, code reviews, or even project work. In all cases other than project work, employers noted that candidates were able to complete these assignments from their homes (remotely).

TOP CHANNELS FOR RECRUITMENT

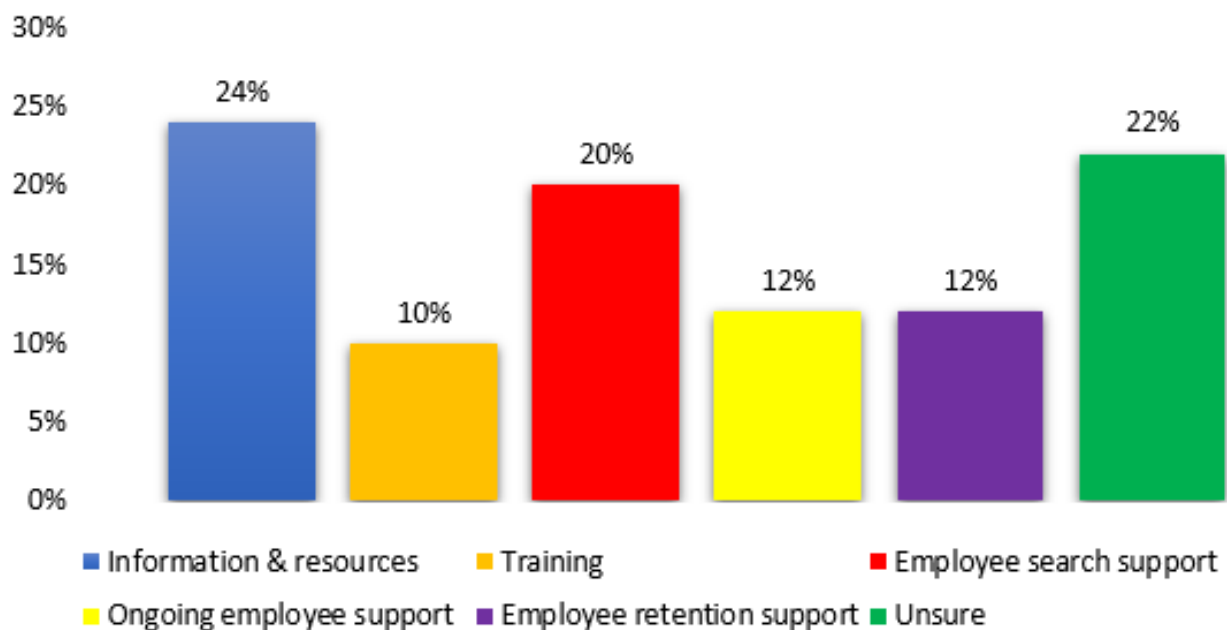


Source: ICTC, 2018.

RESOURCES & SUPPORT IN THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROCESS

With the need to alleviate some challenges in the recruitment process – particularly challenges in sourcing persons with disabilities as potential candidates – employers were asked what resources they would find helpful in reaching, recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities as part of their workforce. Here, the majority noted that any resources available would be useful, but in particular, information and knowledge related to how to engage persons with disabilities in the recruitment process and ensure that recruitment practices are inclusive was the most pressing (68%). The next most useful resource was employee search support, including having access to services or organizations that specialize in placing candidates with disabilities.

SUPPORT NEEDED TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE



Source: ICTC, 2018.

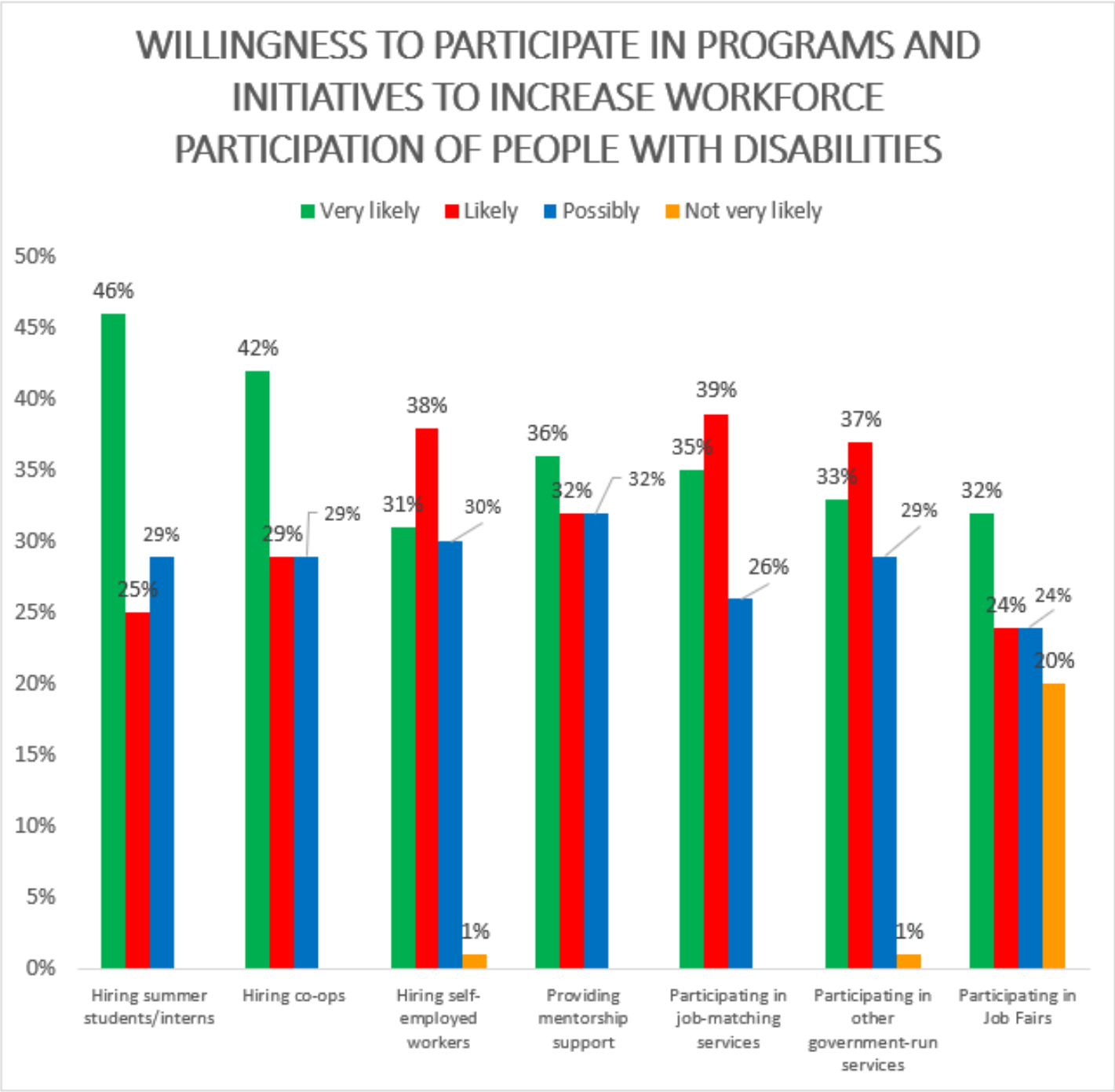
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

When employers were asked about their likelihood to participate in programs, activities or initiatives designed to help them access a larger pool of candidates with disabilities, the vast majority were very willing to participate. These activities included hiring summer students, interns or co-ops, hiring self-employed workers, acting as a mentor for people with disabilities interested in tech, or participating in job fairs.

Of all activities offered, the most popular by far was the willingness to hire summer students, co-ops or self-employed workers with disabilities. When it came to these categories, the majority of employers indicated that they would either be very likely or likely to participate in these services. This suggests that employers not only see the value of integrating persons with disabilities into the workplace, but particularly of providing employment opportunities for students, new grads and non-conventional (i.e. not full-time) workers with disabilities.

Conversely, the activities that employers were least willing to participate in were job fairs. When asked why they would not participate in these activities, many stated either having negative experiences in the past, including not finding suitable candidates, or being too small for job fairs to provide value.

Large employers with a significant number of vacancies were most likely to participate in job fairs, and as a result, see the benefit of them, where small employers with only a few vacancies did not.



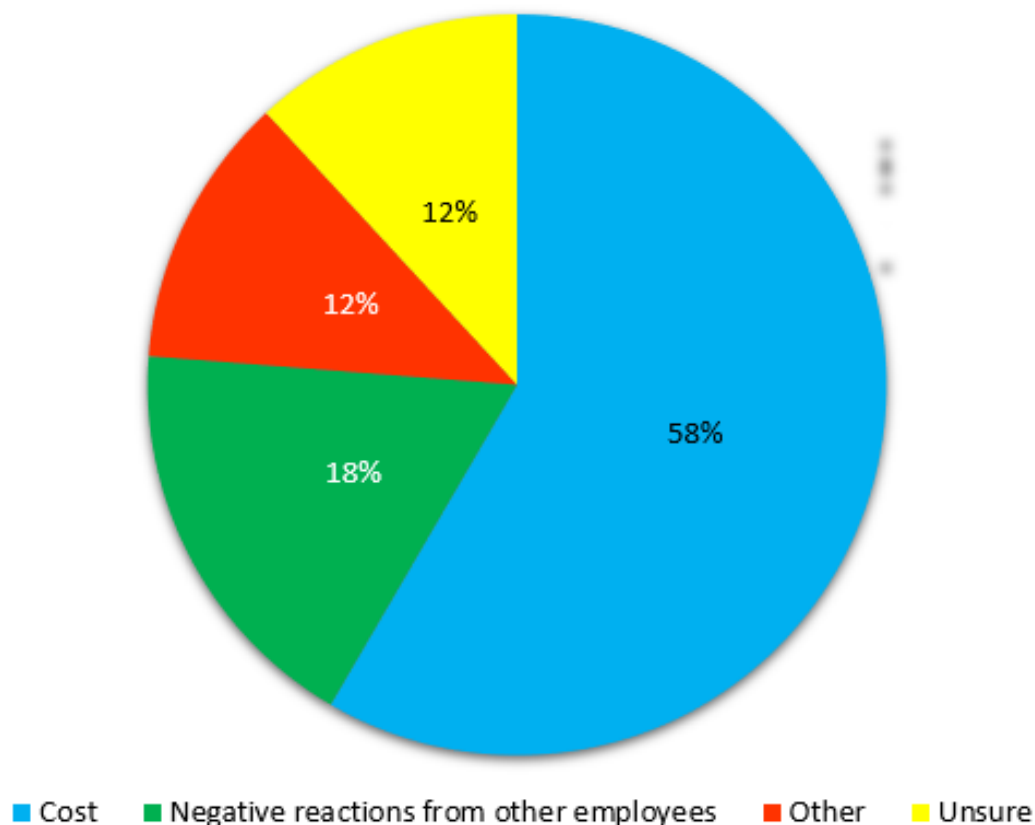
Source: ICTC, 2018.

CONCERNS TO CREATING ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT & MOTIVATORS FOR INCLUSIVITY

When employers were asked whether or not they had any concerns related to offering accessible and inclusive workplaces, a significant portion (35%) said they did not.

However, of the ones that noted concerns, the majority listed cost as the biggest challenge – that is, the cost associated with creating policies, making physical or structural adjustments to ensure an accessible building, sourcing training or program development, and other activities. The concern over cost of such accommodations again closely echoes the top challenges that employers highlighted in becoming AODA compliant (the cost of doing so).

BIGGEST CONCERNS TO OFFERING AN ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACE



Source: ICTC, 2018.

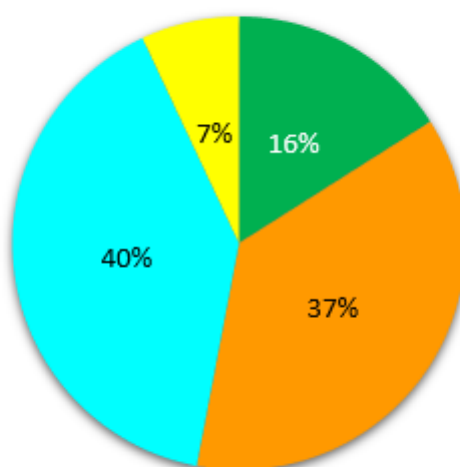
Concerns about cost were most closely followed by concern over negative reactions from other employees (18%). Specifically, employers noted a concern for potentially hostile or unfriendly reactions associated with not only hiring someone with disabilities, but making the accommodations needed to ensure that the employee would be successful in the role. Examples included the need to source additional equipment for the employee (like specific software) or offer accommodations like compressed workweeks or remote working opportunities. In these situations, some employers were worried that some employees may view this as the person with disabilities receiving “favorable treatment”, which in turn may provoke a negative reaction.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO CREATE EMPLOYER CHAMPIONS

An Employer Champion for accessibility is one that is a leader in creating accessible work environments. These may be employers who have undergone substantial changes in order to increase accessibility, from architectural changes to changing HR policies and procedures in order to ensure that accessibility is at the core of business operations. Recent examples of Canadian employer champions include companies like Accenture, who created a National Accent on Enablement employee group featuring a chapter for mental health and another for persons with disabilities [29]. Similarly, the University of Victoria had recently worked with CanAssist to create accessible and inclusive recreational programming such as national wheelchair rugby training camps [30]. Both of these employers were among Canada's top 100 diversity employers in 2018 [31].

When employers were asked which resources they may need to become "employer champions", answers were similar to resources that employers would find useful in order to become AODA compliant. Here, more than half of employers (56%) suggested that additional funding such as government grants or subsidies would help them implement changes needed to become employer champions. That said, while funding was a substantially needed resource, an overwhelming majority of employers – both small and large – listed "access to best practices" as the most important resource that would help them on this pathway. This further echoes the notion that more education, as well as marketing of such resources would be beneficial. Employers expressed the will and desire to be inclusive and offer accessible workplaces, but were not always sure where to begin in the process.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO BECOME EMPLOYER CHAMPIONS



■ Time ■ Funding ■ Access to best practices ■ Unsure

Source: ICTC, 2018.

VI. THE INTERVIEWS: SUCCESS STORIES

While many companies interviewed relayed some level of uncertainty or lack of awareness when it came to compliance with the AODA, or to understanding how to successfully pinpoint, address and remove barriers to creating inclusive and accessible workplaces, our interviews also uncovered several success stories. These stories showcase different initiatives taken across small and large companies alike, and underline active steps by each to remove barriers to accessibility.

SMALL COMPANY SUCCESS STORY

Many small companies tended to indicate that they oftentimes lack the resources (both time and financial) to create extensive policies or hire trainers that can facilitate training programs and develop HR policies. That said, one company we interviewed underwent significant changes to develop an inclusive workplace for an employee with learning disabilities. In this process, the company identified attitudinal barriers, including individual biases held by other employees regarding the abilities of that employee; as well as systemic barriers relating to the lack of established policies or practices on inclusion.

Discovering this, the company utilized government resources to customize their own internal policies and procedures to ensure that these biases were addressed in the onboarding process, going forward.

Here, the company created annual in-person training sessions, and developed a digital employee guide which included a section on accessibility of persons with disabilities. This guide was provided to all employees in the onboarding process.

These small changes were critical steps taken by the company to ensure that the work atmosphere was inclusive and accessible to all employees, and stigmas or biases were removed. Additionally, while the cost of implementing these policies and practices was minimal (\$1,000-5,000), it showcased the commitment to inclusivity among small companies with limited resources.

LARGE COMPANY SUCCESS STORY

Unsurprisingly, larger, more established companies tended to have fewer concerns related to the cost of developing or sourcing resources to create and encourage an inclusive and accessible workplace.

One company interviewed noted experiencing all barriers at one point in time. These included attitudinal, architectural, information-related barriers, technology-related barriers and systemic barriers. The company made wide-scale changes including undertaking a variety of different tactics to remove each.

Addressing attitudinal barriers, the company created internal training programs and diversity and inclusion efforts to reduce biases and stigmas around accessible employment. These included online training videos that became a mandatory part of the onboarding process to be completed by each employee in the first 3 months. Questions addressed in this training include definitions of accessibility and accommodation, employer rights and employee obligations. These are also all topics that are reflected in the company's Canada policy handbook, which is located in an online employee portal for easy access. These tools were developed in collaboration with the use of Government of Ontario resources and external consultants that were hired to tailor the training and policies themselves.

Other changes taken by the company included removing physical barriers and providing alternative solutions like accessible access to stairways or even individualized accommodations that can be made for employees who submit a request. Additionally, the company also noted that employees may submit a request for technological accommodation, which the company would provide at no cost.

Lastly, in addressing systemic barriers, the company stated trying to ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the pinnacle of their culture – they have done so by integrating a diversity and inclusion strategy into all practices and policies. This was done in the interest of promoting an inclusive culture that is accommodating, while at the same time, allows all employees and the employer itself to continually adapt and educate themselves.

CONCLUSION

The crunch for skilled talent is one that is felt around the world. Whether in Canada, the US or the European Union, one thing remains constant: the need for skilled workers to help create, innovate and continue to drive economic growth in an increasingly digital age. In Canada, the next few years will require a focus on that talent.

This means nurturing and developing it at our post-secondary and training institutions, as well as sourcing it from new and existing channels, including immigration and underrepresented groups. Only using these combined methods will we be able to make our way closer to filling the need for 216,000 digitally-skilled workers by 2021. With a significant portion of skilled talent that will need to come from already-existing sources, the requirement to focus on all supply streams, including underrepresented groups such as persons with disabilities, is crystal clear.

Persons with disabilities can be a central source of labour supply for Canada, and across the provinces. However, accessing this talent pool can be challenging when it is unclear where to find them, or how to engage with them. This study highlighted this central issue at a provincial level, by offering a snapshot of how ICT employers in Ontario understand and experience barriers to employment for persons with disabilities within their companies. Based on these employer consultations, it quickly became very evident that employers both want to engage persons with disabilities to fill open vacancies, and also want to ensure that their workplaces are inclusive and accessible. The challenge to doing so often lies with a few central factors: a lack of awareness on how and where to connect with talent with disabilities, a lack of funding to create appropriate policies, and a lack of knowledge on resources related to how to build an inclusive and accessible environment. At the same time, while these challenges are real, all employers relayed their commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that their workplace is accessible.

Some significant challenges to accessibility for Ontario employers exist – and we cannot ignore them. However, the commitment of employers to face and respond to these challenges and roadblocks is clear and encouraging. Helping employers understand what they can do to create accessible environments is an absolute must – and oftentimes, the response needed is as simple as providing access to information or best practices. Understanding needs is the first step. Investing in tactics to tackle those needs is the next, and building programs and action plans to create sustainable solutions is the final journey.

Based on the results of this study, March of Dimes Canada will be developing resources like training materials, tools and workshops to help Ontario ICT employers reach a larger and diverse talent pool with disabilities, and to create inclusive and accessible employment practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research completed, and findings and trends identified, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Develop and promote enhanced economic incentives to encourage Ontario ICT businesses (particularly small businesses) to hire people with disabilities. These incentives can range from wage subsidy programs, to carefully designed tax credits that offset a portion of the costs incurred to accommodate employees with disabilities.
- Create and enable a central entity that focuses on facilitating the sharing of best practices and information. This can assist companies in their quest to gain the knowledge necessary to capitalize on success paths for hiring, retaining, and advancing the role of persons with disabilities in the workforce.
- Provide upstream coaching mechanisms to assist people with disabilities in the employment process. One example may be creating "Coaching to Career" short duration programs that match persons with disabilities with businesses and mentors that can provide them with the knowledge and tools to succeed in careers at ICT companies in Ontario. Coaching services may range from job search to interview practices, understanding the culture of ICT companies, and the provision of business knowledge to help persons with disabilities succeed in the workplace. Such programs can motivate greater participation of persons with disabilities within the digital landscape.
- Develop and streamline clear HR strategies (including job advertising, staffing, retention, workplace inclusion, accommodation, career development) at the province-wide level, and communicate these broadly.

APPENDICES

METHODOLOGY

Understanding that there is limited data related to the employment of persons with disabilities in Ontario's economy, let alone the ICT sector, ICTC had undergone primary qualitative research via interviews with ICT employers. ICTC completed a series of 25 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with Ontario ICT employers, in order to understand barriers and challenges that they may face when it comes to the recruitment, retention and employment of persons with disabilities at their companies.

The key informant interviews were comprised of 20 questions, addressing topics including: AODA compliance rates, resources used to develop policies or training materials, recruitment and candidate assessment practices, barriers to hiring and how they were overcome, employment prospects of people with disabilities, key skills needed by Ontario tech companies, and top motivating factors to creating an inclusive workplace.

The KIIs were held over the phone, or where phone calls were not possible, were completed by the company's representative. Company representatives were largely from HR backgrounds and/or senior roles with knowledge of recruitment and hiring practices.

KIIs were completed with companies across Ontario, representing a total of 11 cities. Lastly, considering that challenges and barriers may differ across company size, the KIIs were completed with small (1-19 employees), medium (20-49 employees) and large (50+ employees) companies. However, understanding that compliance requirements vary across company size, and that small companies employing fewer than 20 employees are not required to file compliance accessibility reports, our study focused on smaller companies. This was done with the intent of isolating whether or not they are compliant and accessible, despite not having a requirement to be. In total, interviews were completed with 14 small companies, 5 medium companies, and 6 large companies.

Where possible and relevant, qualitative data received from the KIIs was supplemented with quantitative data from secondary sources including Statistics Canada, and other research reports. This was done with the purpose of showing a broader perspective on topics related to the study, as well as to highlight trends and relevant data-points related to the Canadian and Ontario tech sectors themselves.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

While many attempts were taken to ensure more representation from medium and large companies, difficulties encountered in the outreach process proved significant. These included relatively low levels of “buy-in”, time constraints, or alternative priorities on behalf of company representatives. As a result, representation from medium sized companies totals only 20% of all companies, and representation from large companies only 24%. While methodologically, focusing on small companies was reasonable, a better spread across company size may have proven valuable.

Although location in a given region (Ontario) is not likely to be an indicator for success or lack of success in a study such as this one, attempts were taken to ensure that interviewees were scattered across the province. This culminated in representation from a total of 11 different cities, however owing to ICTC's vast network of ICT companies in Ottawa, with a slight over-representation from the Ottawa region. As a result, 35% of companies interviewed were from the Ottawa region, followed by Toronto, with nearly 20% of companies.

Other limitations of research include lack of quantitative data available at the national or provincial level on the employment of people with disabilities in the tech sector, and on few occasions (2), interviewees expressing some difficulty answering all questions fully. Having quantitative data on employment of people with disabilities in the tech sector – whether national or provincial – would help shape the results of the report more accurately. Specifically, they would help draw better trends and conclusions on topics like availability of supply, skill competencies, educational backgrounds, salaries, and other indicators.

Additionally, in future studies, complementing the views of employers with those of other groups or organizations (including employment agencies, for example) that expressly benefit persons with disabilities may be useful.

INTERVIEW BREAKDOWN

The type of companies interviewed range; with a focus on software, digital media & design, gaming, data visualization and hardware. The following presents a breakdown of companies interviewed across size, location and type.

Company Size	Company Location	Company Type
Small (1-19)	St. Catharine's, ON	Digital Media/Game Design
Small (1-19)	Hamilton, ON	Software
Small (1-19)	North Bay, ON	Web Platform
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Data Visualization
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Software
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Telecommunications
Small (1-19)	Peterborough, ON	Game Design
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Software/Mobile App
Small (1-19)	Toronto, ON	Digital Media
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Software
Small (1-19)	North Bay, ON	E-health
Small (1-19)	Thunder Bay, ON	GIS/mapping
Small (1-19)	Hamilton, ON	Digital Media
Small (1-19)	Ottawa, ON	Web platform
Medium (20-49)	Kitchener, ON	Hardware
Medium (20-49)	Ottawa, ON	Software
Medium (20-49)	Kitchener, ON	Hardware
Medium (20-49)	St. Catharine's, ON	Software/Mobile App
Medium (20-49)	Toronto, ON	Software
Large (50+)	Ottawa, ON	E-health
Large (50+)	London, ON	Digital Media
Large (50+)	Barrie, ON	Hardware
Large (50+)	Ottawa, ON	Software
Large (50+)	Toronto, ON	Software
Large (50+)	Toronto, ON	Software

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PROVINCIAL RESOURCES:

Discover Disability Network

Free online portal and resource that connects Ontario businesses directly with persons with disabilities seeking employment, showcases the businesses advantages of employing persons with disabilities, and provides support for both employers and candidates during the hiring process.

Website: <https://discoverability.network/>

March of Dimes Canada's Employment Services

Free services to hundreds of people with disabilities achieve greater independence and to employers across Ontario by providing full cycle support in the hiring process and providing job training for employee retention.

Website: <https://www.marchofdimes.ca>

Toll Free: 1-866-380-0758 ext. 272

Contact Info: Julie Malcolm at jmalcolm@marchofdimes.ca

Ontario Disability Employment Network

Professional body of employment service providers united to increase employment opportunities for people who have a disability.

Website: <https://odenetwork.com/>

Tel: 1-866-280-6336

Email: info@odenetwork.com

Specialisterne

Harness the talents of people on the autism spectrum by providing them with the opportunity to sustain meaningful employment by developing practices (hiring and management) that enable employment of people with autism.

Website: www.specialisterne.ca

Tel: 416-479-0689

Email: info@specialisterne.ca

REGIONAL RESOURCES:

HAMILTON

Agilec: Redefining Change

Secure meaningful and long-term work for persons with disabilities by ensuring the removal of barriers and allowing employment access to various locations and services.

Website: <https://agilec.ca>

Tel: 905-667-0760

Email: info@agilec.ca

Lawson Ministries – Salvation Army

Assist adults with developmental disabilities and psychiatric issues in gaining skills to live to their maximum potential in all areas of life including employment.

Website: <http://www.lawsonministries.org/index.htm>

Tel: 905-527-6212 ex. 224

Email: brendatrotter@lawsonministries.org

KINGSTON

Restart – Employment Service

Support job seekers with disabilities in order to create a skilled and diverse workforce by helping them build strong employment networks.

Website: <http://www.restartnow.ca/>

Tel: 613-542-7373

Email: reception@restartnow.ca

St. Lawrence College Employment Services

Enhance the economic strength of Eastern Ontario by providing persons with disabilities the most up to date career opportunities and the tools necessary in making positive impressions on potential employers.

Website: <http://www.employmentservice.sl.on.ca/>

Tel: 613-544-5400 ext. 1603

Email: esk@sl.on.ca

LONDON

Fanshawe College Employment Services

Assist students with disabilities by providing accommodation and removing barriers so that they can achieve their full academic potential and obtain long-term employment after graduation.

Website: <https://www.fanshawec.ca/student-life/student-services/accessibility>

Tel: 519-452-4282

Email: accessibility@fanshawec.ca

Leads

Promote customized employment as a universal approach within the workforce system to enable youth and adults with disabilities to secure and maintain employment.

Website: <http://www.leadcenter.org/accessibility>

Tel: 202-296-2040

Email for accessibility: info@leadcenter.org

Nokee Kwe

Provide services to identify and find solutions to employment and learning barriers. Constantly expanding to fill educational and training gaps in London and the surrounding areas (for both indigenous and non-indigenous populations).

Website: <http://www.nopeekwe.ca/>

Tel: 519-667-7088

Email: info@nopeekwe.ca

NIAGARA

Able Works: Connecting Businesses with Abilities

Free job posting website and service that helps businesses in Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk regions recruit, hire and train the right candidates who have a disability.

Website: <http://www.ableworks.ca/>

Jobs Niagara - Community Living

Assist people with developmental/intellectual disabilities to secure employment and help them make connections in an innovative work environment.

Website: <https://clstcatharines.ca/>

Tel: 905-688-5222

Email: administration@clstcatharines.ca

Transitions to Employment - District School Board of Niagara

Help people with disabilities (16+ years of age) that are eligible for ODSP to find professional employment.

Website: <https://www.dsbn.org/community/transition-to-employment>

Tel: 905-682-0756

Email: TTE@dsbn.org

OTTAWA

Distinct Programmes Inc.

Help match reliable and hardworking candidates with good employers in our community.

Website: <http://www.distinctprogrammes.com/>

Tel: 613-260-9059

Email: distinctprogrammes@sympatico.ca

Performance Plus Rehabilitative Care

Provide personal employment counseling services to people with physical, psychological or developmental disabilities looking to enter/re-enter the workforce.

Website: <http://www.pprc.ca/en/home.aspx>

Tel: 1-800-427-6214

Vanier Community Services Centre

Provide resume writing, online workshops and interview strategies to persons with disabilities for employment success.

Website: <http://www.cscvanier.com/>

Tel: 613-744-2892

Email: cscv@cscvanier.com

PEEL REGION

Job Centre

Provide a range of employment support to youth/young adults with physical, mental health and developmental disabilities by assisting them to acquire the necessary tools for career success and job retention.

Website: <http://thejob-centre.ca/index.html>

Tel: 905-842-8787

Email: celeste@thejob-centre.ca

YMCA

Provide services that respects the independence of persons with disabilities and ensure they benefit from the same employment facilities as other customers.

Website: <https://ymcagta.org/>

Tel: 905-897-9622

Email: accessibility@ymcagta.org

SUDBURY

Northern Vocational Services

Provide all persons with disabilities with the skills and support they need to enter the labour force and secure meaningful employment by offering skills exercises, client-centered approaches, advocating, networking and more.

Website: <http://www.northernvocationalservices.com/>

Tel: 705-674-4141

THUNDER BAY

Heald Consulting

Provide services to individuals with disabilities to secure employment.

Website: <http://www.healdconsulting.com/>

Tel: 807-626-3485

Email: diane@healdconsulting.com

Independent Living Resource Centre

Assist persons with disabilities by educating them with the necessary skills and training to be successful in finding jobs.

Website: <http://www.ilrctbay.com/article/welcome-1.asp>

Tel: 807-577-6166

Email: df@ilrctbay.com

TORONTO

Ability Learning Network

Reduce barriers to finding employment for motivated jobseekers with disabilities by helping them search for and maintain employment through skill learning, job development and employment support.

Website: <http://www.aln.ca/index.php>

Tel: 416-350-2331 ext. 105

Job Start

Assist adults and students with disabilities by matching their skills and qualifications to obtain full or part time employment.

Website: <http://www.jobstartworks.org/>

Address: 219 Dufferin St. Toronto, ON M6K 3J1

Tel: 416-231-2295

Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN)

Network of 22 community agencies in the Greater Toronto Area helping employers match their hiring needs to suitable candidates with disabilities by providing job/career fairs, and accommodation services.

Website: <http://joininfo.ca/>

Tel: 437-777-5548

Email: info@joininfo.ca

WATERLOO

Canadian Hearing Society

Committed to treating individuals with hearing disabilities maintain their dignity by preventing employment barriers that stand in their way.

Website: <http://www.chs.ca/accessibility>

Tel: 1-866-518-0000

Email: accessibilityconsulting@chs.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

Provide a collaborative workforce with in-depth training, practical resources and support to employees with mental health disabilities in order to gain employment and remove psychological barriers in the workplace.

Website: <https://cmha.ca/>

Tel: 1-844-264-2993

WINDSOR

Insight Advantage

Help individuals with disabilities reach their full potential in accordance with the industry's best practices and secure employment opportunities.

Website: <http://www.insightadvantage.ca/>

Tel: 519-254-1445

Email: contactus@insightadvantage.ca

YORK REGION

Ability Management

Provide services to clients with developmental disabilities and their families with access to employment services with the goal of helping individuals with progressive disabilities achieve their highest potential.

Website: <http://www.acclaimability.com/>

Tel: 416-486-9706

Email: info@acclaimability.com

Community Employment Connections

Provide accessible employment to York Region's residents who have been affected by illness, injury or disease by removing barriers and allowing them to return to work and carry on with daily activities.

Website: <http://york.ca>

Tel: 1-888-464-9675

Email: accessyork@york.ca

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