

Summary of the Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities

The Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities is designed to fill gaps in federal support for those who are not eligible for Employment Insurance or training under Employment Insurance Part II. To ensure that these individuals can access the assistance needed when trying to integrate or re-integrate into the labour market, the Program supports a range of projects delivered by third-party organizations. These projects include a range of interventions that provide training, wage subsidies, employment assistance services, and work experience.



KEY FINDINGS



Over the 5-year post-participation period, the average annual earnings of participants increased by 38% due to participation in the program. This translates to about \$1,100 higher than non-participants with similar characteristics.



Skills for Employment and Wage Subsidies were the most effective interventions at improving participants' employment opportunities and decreasing reliance on social assistance benefits.



Overall, \$1 investment in the Opportunities Fund program yields \$1.7 in return over a 10-year period following the intervention.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The program should examine the means by which the department can directly access employers participating in Opportunities Fund programming for the purpose of evaluation and performance measurement.
2. Explore different ways to collect more granular data on the Skills for Employment intervention to allow for an increased understanding of what elements contribute to changes in employment and employment earnings.
3. Re-examine the six-month limit that was placed on training programs as a result of the 2014-2015 program reforms. Given that the participants in the Skills for Employment intervention experienced a lower average income after the reforms than before, the preliminary evidence suggests that this decision may not have had its intended effect.

The full Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities is available at:

canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/evaluations/opportunities-fund-persons-disabilities-phase2.html

