

Now and Tomorrow
Excellence in Everything We Do

2016 Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

January 2017



Strategic and Service Policy Branch

SP-1060-02-17E

 Canada

2016 Evaluation of Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

This publication is available for download at canada.ca/publiccentre-ESDC.

It is also available upon request in multiple formats (large print, Braille, audio cassette, audio CD, e-text diskette, e-text CD, or DAISY), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). By teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2017

For information regarding reproduction rights:

droitdauteur.copyright@HRSDC-RHDCC.gc.ca

PDF

Cat. No.: Em20-56/2017E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-07484-9

ESDC

Cat. No.: SP-1060-02-17E

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	ii
List of Tables	ii
<i>Executive Summary</i>	iii
<i>Management Response</i>	1
1. <i>Introduction</i>	6
2. <i>Program Description</i>	7
3. <i>Evaluation Strategy</i>	10
3.1. The 2014 TIOW Summative Evaluation.....	10
3.2. The 2016 TIOW Evaluation	10
4. <i>Best Practices in Programming for Unemployed Older Workers</i>	12
4.1. Alignment of the TIOW program with Best Practices	12
4.1.1. The TIOW Program and What Works.....	12
4.1.2. The TIOW Program and Areas for Potential Improvement	13
5. <i>Performance – Program Reach, Client Profile and Outcomes</i>	16
5.1. Program Reach and Participant Profile	16
5.1.1. Projects Delivered.....	16
5.1.2. New Project Eligibility Criteria	16
5.1.3. Participant Profile	16
5.1.4. Job Separation.....	17
5.2. Outcomes.....	18
5.2.1. Employability Outcomes	18
5.2.2. Employment/Self-Employment Outcomes	19
6. <i>Efficiency and Economy - Performance Measurement and Program Costs</i>	21
6.1. Performance Measurement Strategy	21
6.2. Data Quality	21
6.3. Program Costs	22

7. <i>Conclusions</i>	23
Recommendations	23
<i>Appendix A – Evaluation Matrix</i>	26
<i>Appendix B – Methodology</i>	28
<i>Appendix C – Government of Canada Funding Contribution</i>	30

List of Acronyms

ISA	Information Sharing Agreement
PT	Provinces and Territories
SIN	Social Insurance Number
TIOW	Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

List of Tables

TABLE 1 – THE TIOW PROGRAM PARTICIPANT PROFILE BY GENDER, AGE AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	17
TABLE 2 - THE TIOW PROGRAM PARTICIPANT PRIMARY JOB LOSS EXPERIENCE BY GENDER AND AGE.....	18
TABLE 3 - PARTICIPANT RATING OF THE TIOW PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYABILITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES	19
TABLE 4 – TIOW PROGRAM CLIENT AND COSTS SUMMARY	22

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the 2016 Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program. The main purpose of the evaluation is to inform policy work in 2016-2017 prior to the end of the current renewal period (April 2014 to March 2017). It principally examines two areas: 1) how the introduction of two new eligibility criteria in 2014 impacted provinces and territories (PTs) in program design and delivery; and 2) how the program aligns with older worker labour market programming best practices when assessed against the academic literature. It also looked at the program's performance in terms of achieving outcomes of employability, paid employment and self-employment where data was available.

Program Description

The program is a federal-provincial/territorial cost-shared initiative. It supports unemployed older workers, primarily between the ages 55 and 64, with their re-integration into employment. The program is offered in small communities of 250,000 or less experiencing high unemployment and/or significant downsizing and closures. As per Budget 2014, the program was renewed for a third consecutive time for a three-year period (April 2014 to March 2017) representing a federal investment of \$75M. Since its renewal in 2014, the program's terms and conditions were expanded to include two new community eligibility criteria: unfulfilled employer demand¹ and skills mismatches².

The expected outcome of the initiative is to increase the employability of unemployed older workers and help them to re-integrate into employment. PTs design projects based on the parameters set out in bilateral agreements between the Federal Government and participating PTs. Projects are typically delivered by third-party service providers.

The terms and conditions specify that projects must provide employment assistance activities such as résumé writing, interview techniques, employment counselling and job search techniques. In addition, projects must also offer at least two employability improvement activities such as assessment activities, peer mentoring, skills training, wage subsidies, community based work experiences, preparation for self-employment, post project follow-up and mentoring. Projects involving activities other than work experience or subsidized employment must offer income support in the form of allowances to participants, where PT legislation allows. All projects must involve at least 25 hours per week of activity for participants. There is no minimum or maximum number

¹ An unfulfilled employer demand occurs when employers have vacant positions that they are unable to fill within a certain time-frame.

² A skills mismatch occurs when the current skill sets of employed and/or unemployed individuals does not meet or align with what is required by employers for available jobs in those communities and may include situations in which individuals lack specific skills or are over-qualified for available positions.

of weeks of participation.

Context

A more rigorous evaluation of the program was completed in 2014. It employed a complex and costly non-experimental design and survey and concluded authoritatively on the program's performance. Among other things, it found that:

- Program participants were more likely than non-program participants to find employment by 6 percentage points.
- No employment earnings differences were found between participants and the comparison group of older workers.

The 2016 Evaluation complements this earlier work. It is calibrated and uses an outcome based design; its scope and focus are defined by the needs of the program area and the Department, as set out in the TIOW Evaluation Strategy approved by the Departmental Evaluation Committee in November 2014.

The 2016 Evaluation uses an exploratory/investigative approach focusing on enhancing the collective knowledge base on effective labour market programming approaches for older workers and the new demand driven aspects of the program. The evaluation examined the new project eligibility criteria and sought to understand the best program design activities, delivery practices and lessons learned from programs similar to TIOW. It also looked at the program's performance in terms of achieving outcomes of employability, paid employment and self-employment where data was available.

The data collection consisted of a review of program documents, administrative data captured by the program, key informant interviews and a review of national and international literature.

The original scope of this evaluation included all provinces and territories with the exception of Québec, which carries out its own evaluations, and Nunavut, as it did not participate in the program. This evaluation bases its reporting on the administrative data available between April 2014 and February 2016 from four PTs: Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Yukon.³ Administrative data is only available from four PTs because Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) with other PTs were still being negotiated during the data-gathering phase of this evaluation.

Data quality issues also presented challenges in conducting an outcomes-based assessment. Incomplete participant information, for example, constrained the level of analysis that could be undertaken. Since the evidence does not reflect the unrepresented

³ As per the renewal agreements established for the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program post March 31, 2014, there was a new requirement to have Information Sharing Agreements (ISA) between Canada and each participating province and territory (PT) established in order to access participant data. By February 2016, ISAs were signed with Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia. Therefore only administrative data from these PTs could be used for evaluation purposes.

provinces, the findings and conclusions that follow present a partial story of the program's overall performance.

Conclusions

A total of 287 projects (60 new projects and 227 renewed) were delivered across Canada (including Quebec) by Project Sponsors between April 2014 and March 2016. Approximately 83 percent (50 out of 60) of the new projects qualified for funding as a result of the new eligibility criteria allowing communities challenged by skills mismatches and/or an unfulfilled employer demand to participate in the initiative. Overall, the program is reaching its targeted clients in Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia where the majority of participants are in the primary age range (55 and 64 years of age).

Participant outcomes from British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia suggest that the TIOW program in those PTs is progressing towards its intended outcome. Outcome findings indicate that overall, participants expressed positive satisfaction regarding the program, and that job seeking activities and employability activities were seen as helpful overall.

When compared to the academic literature, research showed that overall the TIOW program is effectively designed and delivered to assist older workers to re-integrate into employment. For example the program engages in the recruitment of participants which includes the identification, assessment and selection of participants. It also provides income supports tailored to the needs of older workers. It provides relevant employment assistance and employability improvement activities, and facilitates those activities through group-based approaches. The program is in effect closely modeled after similarly designed labour market programs for older workers that successfully produced higher rates of employment and employment earnings as well as job satisfaction.

In spite of the program having many best practices in place, there are a few areas where potential improvements could be made:

- Many of the program activities strengthened job seekers self-efficacy beliefs; however job goals were not consistently clarified nor set with participants. When goals are clearly defined, a focused search strategy generally produces more positive employment outcomes.
- The most successful programs for older workers provide some form of marketing of older workers to employers. Not all projects marketed participants to employers or established partnerships with potential employers. Linking participants to employers responds to their need for pre-screened, trained older workers.
- A high level of ongoing, positive peer support motivates participants which is positively co-related with job-search intensity. There was a lack of formal, ongoing support facilitated by projects following the end of participation in programming.

- Labour market programs for older workers should include the careful identification, screening and selection of its participants. As noted above, this is done to an extent. However, Project Sponsors do not consistently assess all potential participants; the processes and tools used for assessment vary from one jurisdiction to another; and some assessments are more robust than others.

Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this report, the evaluation proposes the following three recommendations:

Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that ESDC work with the provinces and territories to develop guidelines for projects to include activities that:

- 1.1. Clarify and set job goals for participants.
- 1.2. Improve access to labour markets by linking participants with employers.
- 1.3. Provide facilitated ongoing group sessions for participants following the end of their formal programming.

Recommendation #2:

It is recommended that ESDC work with the provinces and territories to develop recruitment guidelines for projects through the careful identification and screening of older workers so that they may be streamed into the most appropriately designed labour market interventions. This may translate into providing less intense programming (i.e. less than 12 weeks) to more highly educated participants through the TIOW program or referring them elsewhere within a PT where other, more relevant labour market programming is available.

Recommendation #3:

It is recommended that ESDC improve the quality of the data collected from all Project Sponsors and participants for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes by:

- 3.1. Capturing more reliable employability and employment measures on the Participant Information Forms, Participant Feedback Forms and follow-up Evaluation Forms.
- 3.2. Examining the feasibility of implementing the electronic capture of its data collection forms from the provinces and territories.
- 3.3. Engaging key stakeholders to explore the feasibility of collecting participants' Social Insurance Numbers in future years.

Management Response

Introduction

The Skills and Employment Branch (SEB) would like to thank the Evaluation Directorate and all those who participated in the 2016 Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW). In particular, SEB acknowledges the contribution of provinces and territories (PTs), participants, including key informants, and program officials during the course of this Evaluation.

TIOW is cost shared between the federal and provincial/territorial governments and supports unemployed older workers (typically ages 55 to 64) living in small, vulnerable communities with their reintegration into employment. It is targeted to cities and towns with a population of 250,000 or less that are affected by high unemployment and significant downsizing or closures. As noted below, two additional community eligibility criteria were added in 2014: unfulfilled employer demand and skills mismatches.

Under TIOW, PTs are responsible for targeting specific communities and for designing and delivering projects which offer group-based programming and/or self-employment assistance. The federal government is responsible for establishing policy parameters, approving projects, overseeing overall implementation of agreements, managing allocations and conducting program evaluations.

TIOW was renewed in 2014 for an additional three years to support the Government's commitment to making labour market programming more demand-driven. Accordingly, the program's eligibility criteria were expanded to provide PTs with the added flexibility to implement TIOW projects in communities that are experiencing an unfulfilled employer demand or skills mismatches.

TIOW is intended to complement other types of labour market programming currently available such as, but not limited to, the Canada Job Fund, Labour Market Development Agreements and Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities in its orientation towards human capital development focusing on both employment assistance activities (such as résumé writing, interview techniques, counselling and job finding clubs, etc.) and employability supports (such as skills training, preparation for self-employment, basic skills upgrading work experience, direct marketing to employers etc.) for older workers.

In the Summer-Fall 2016 ESDC undertook a comprehensive review of its full suite of labour market transfer agreements (LMTAs) including broad-based consultations with PTs and stakeholders with the objective of ensuring that LMTAs are relevant, flexible and responsive to current and emerging labour market needs and priorities. This aligns with the Government of Canada's commitment to rationalize and expand agreements that support skills training. Findings from this review supported the need for future labour market agreements to:

- reflect to the needs of individuals, workers, employers and under-represented groups;
- build on strong evidence for relevant performance measurement to better inform and serve Canadians and help them achieve meaningful employment outcomes; and
- foster capacity to develop innovative program approaches and the sharing of best practices within the skills training agreements.

ESDC is currently exploring policy options for moving forward that have been informed by the review. Findings from this evaluation will be particularly relevant in helping to identify best practices in labour market programming designed to reach those clients most in need.

As the population ages and older Canadians represent a larger share of the workforce, it is important to encourage their retention and re-entry in the labour market to support economic growth.

SEB agrees with the evaluation findings and provides the following Management Response.

Key Findings

While the Evaluation looked at the program's performance in terms of achieving outcomes where data was available, its main focus was to examine two areas: 1) how the introduction of two new eligibility criteria in 2014 impacted program delivery by PTs and 2) how the program aligns with older worker best practices when assessed against the academic literature.

The Evaluation found that 83 percent of new TIOW projects approved between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2016 were designed to support communities meeting the new eligibility criteria. This suggests that these added flexibilities addressed local labour market needs. The Evaluation also indicated that TIOW programming uses many of the best practices identified in the literature and identified some gaps that could be addressed in the future when designing labour market programming for older workers. Evidence shows that the program is reaching a vulnerable population in need of employment services. In addition, the Evaluation found that participants were satisfied with the job seeking and employability activities they received through the program and that TIOW effectively assists unemployed older workers improve their employability and transition into employment. While data limitations present challenges for analysis, this Evaluation nonetheless provides valuable insights into the program's effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The evaluation outlined three recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Evaluation recommends that the program area work with the provinces and territories to develop guidelines for projects to include activities that: clarify and set job goals for participants, improve access to labour markets by linking participants with employers and provide facilitated ongoing group sessions for participants following the end of their formal programming.

Follow-up Action 1:

A program guide developed by ESDC officials currently exists. In addition to outlining eligibility and other requirements of TIOW, as laid out in the terms and conditions of the initiative, the program guide highlights some best practices related to the delivery of group-based employment programming as well as specific tools and tips for project development. This document is evergreen and is regularly shared with PTs.

This guide will be strengthened by adding guidelines supporting goal setting, employer linkages and ongoing group sessions post intervention. It is important to note, however, that under current labour market transfer agreements, PTs have the flexibility to design and deliver programming that meets their local need as long as it is consistent with broader program parameters.

Administrating and delivering this cost-shared program has fostered strong Federal-Provincial/Territorial relationships. This multilateral engagement can further support a dialogue to address this recommendation. The regular sharing of best practices through FPT calls, the Best Practices Compendium and focused discussions at multilateral workshops is another aspect of the program that is transferable across other labour market programming as we look for opportunities to innovate.

Recommendation 2:

The Evaluation recommends that the program area work with the provinces and territories to develop recruitment guidelines for projects to support the careful identification and screening of older workers so that they may be streamed into the most appropriately designed labour market interventions.

Follow-up Action 2:

Including such recruitment guidelines for projects could strengthen the program guide by providing PTs with additional tools and tips to improve project development. As noted above in response to Recommendation 1, it would be at the discretion of PTs to incorporate the guidelines into the design and delivery of their programming in response

to their local labour market needs. The other multilateral engagements described above could also support a dialogue to address this recommendation. The program area will continue to look for opportunities to support innovation and the sharing of best practices as a means to ensure effective programming.

Recommendation 3:

The Evaluation recommends that ESDC improve the quality of the data collected from all project sponsors and participants for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes by: capturing more valid and reliable employability and employment measures on its Participant Information Form, Participant Feedback Form and follow-up Evaluation Form; examining the feasibility of implementing the electronic capture of its data collection forms from the provinces and territories; and, engaging key stakeholders to explore the feasibility of collecting participants' Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) in future years.

Follow-up action 3:

The program area agrees that the quality of the data captured through the TIOW program could be enhanced. Similar recommendations were made in the 2014 Evaluation and a number of steps have been taken to address them. These include:

- Discussions with both internal and external stakeholders have been undertaken to explore alternate approaches to streamline the collection and dissemination of TIOW client data. In 2016-17, a TIOW database project proposal and business case that includes the electronic capture of program data was submitted as part of the annual Investment Management Process and was approved as recommended.
- The program area began negotiating Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) with PTs in April 2014. At the same time, the program area was also negotiating separate ISAs under the Canada Job Fund Agreements. As a result, it has taken some time to establish and implement ISAs with all PTs. Work will continue to establish ISAs with the remaining jurisdictions to ensure that PTs can share client information with ESDC.

Performance measurement was an area of significant interest to stakeholders and provinces and territories during recent consultations on the future of ESDC's suite of labour market transfer agreements. There is a need to improve data collection to better measure outcomes, support comparisons across the transfers and inform future policy development. There are also opportunities to reduce the administrative burden on both ESDC and our provincial and territorial partners.

The collection of Social Insurance Numbers (SIN) would greatly enhance performance measurement and ESDC is exploring the feasibility of collecting SINs under all labour market transfer agreements. PTs have been engaged on this subject and have expressed their support. Authority to collect SINs would need to be obtained from the Treasury

Board Secretariat. Proper privacy and data-sharing protocols would need to be developed to ensure that SINs are used exclusively as a file identifier for the purposes of performance measurement and not to identify individuals.

1. *Introduction*

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the 2016 Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program. It examines the period from April 1, 2014, when the program was last renewed, to June 2016, with the objective of informing policy work in 2016-2017 prior to the end of the current renewal period on March 31, 2017.

This Evaluation is calibrated; rather than employing the more comprehensive methodology used in the 2014 Summative Evaluation of the program, its scope and focus are defined by the needs of the program area and the Department, as set out in the TIOW Evaluation Strategy approved by the Departmental Evaluation Committee in November 2014. It aims to: (1) enhance collective knowledge on design, delivery and effectiveness and (2) explore implementation of new program eligibility criteria. It also looked at the program's performance in terms of achieving outcomes of employability, paid employment and self-employment where data was available.

This Evaluation originally intended to cover all provinces and territories (PTs) with the exception of Québec, which carries out its own evaluations, and Nunavut, which does not participate in the program. However, in 2014, it was recommended that the Department put in place individual Information Sharing Agreements (ISA) with each PT. As a result, at the time of the data analysis there was limited availability of administrative data since ISAs were not in place with all PTs. Evaluators therefore reported the program's reach and client profiles for British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Yukon and reported on outcomes for British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Yukon, as Ontario does not provide program outcome data to ESDC. The evaluation was carried out entirely in-house by ESDC evaluation staff between March 2015 and June 2016.

This report provides a description of the program's mandate, objectives, components and resources (Section 2); the evaluation strategy (Section 3); the evaluation's key findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations (Sections 4 to 7); the evaluation questions (Appendix A – Evaluation Matrix); the evaluation design and methodology (Appendix B - Methodology); and the Government of Canada Funding Contribution (Appendix C).

2. *Program Description*

The TIOW program is a federal-provincial/territorial cost-shared initiative that has two main objectives. First, it supports unemployed older workers living in small, vulnerable communities by helping them to re-integrate into employment. Second, in labour markets with little likelihood of immediate employment, programming aims to increase the employability of unemployed older workers and extend their labour market participation while their communities undergo adjustment.

The Government of Canada introduced the TIOW program in 2006 to address challenges that older workers face with re-integrating into employment and started to establish bilateral Agreements with PTs in 2007. Budget 2008 extended the program until March 2012 and Budget 2011 extended it again until March 2014. Budget 2014 renewed the Initiative a third time for a three-year period (until March 2017) representing a federal investment of \$75M (i.e. \$25M/year in 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17). The program is cost-shared between the federal government (up to a maximum of 70% of total program costs) and each participating PT (a minimum of 30% of total program costs).⁴ See Appendix C – Government of Canada Funding Contribution for a breakdown by PT.

The program was initially designed to assist unemployed older workers in small communities of 250,000 or less that were experiencing high unemployment and/or significant downsizing and closures. With the renewal in 2014, the program's terms and conditions were expanded to include two new eligibility criteria—that of unfulfilled employer demand and/or skills mismatches.⁵ These were added in response to stakeholders' desire to incorporate a more well-rounded approach focusing on both demand-driven and supply-side aspects.

Under TIOW, the federal government is responsible for establishing policy parameters, approving projects, overseeing overall implementation of agreements, managing allocations and conducting program evaluations. PTs are responsible for identifying specific communities for participation, as well as for designing and delivering projects that meet their local labour market situations and client needs. Projects are delivered by third-party service providers (Project Sponsors) and PTs are responsible for managing these contracts and conducting monitoring visits to ensure projects align with program objectives.

Once a PT identifies an eligible project, it submits a proposal to ESDC for assessment

⁴ TIOW projects are cost-shared. PTs pay all program administration costs and a minimum of 16% of projects costs. Accordingly, the federal government contributes a maximum of 84% towards eligible project costs but a maximum of 70% of overall program costs.

⁵ An unfulfilled employer demand occurs when employers have vacant positions that they are unable to fill within a certain time-frame. A skills mismatch occurs when the current skill sets of employed and/or unemployed individuals does not meet or align with what is required by employers for available jobs in those communities and may include situations in which individuals lack specific skills or are over-qualified for available positions.

using a description and recommendation form. ESDC works with the PT to ensure that the proposal meets all of the necessary requirements and then submits it to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour for approval.

In order to be eligible to participate in the program, older workers must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be unemployed.
- Be legally entitled to work in Canada.
- Lack skills needed for successful integration into new employment.
- Live in an eligible community.
- Normally be aged 55 – 64.⁶

Under TIOW, all projects must provide employment assistance activities such as résumé writing, interview techniques, counselling and job search techniques. In addition, projects must offer at least two employability improvement activities such as:

- Assessment activities, which include (but are not limited to) prior learning assessment, personal portfolio development, essential skills assessment, vocational and interest testing, and high school equivalency assessment.
- Peer mentoring activities, which include (but are not limited to) counselling and tutoring.
- Skills training that allow participants to obtain the skills they need to become employed, ranging from basic to advanced skills.
- Wage subsidies to employers to help participant's access available jobs.
- Preparation for self-employment where participants receive training, professional business support and mentoring to assist them with starting their own business.
- Community-based work experiences in communities with no other opportunities for older workers to gain practical hands-on work experience.
- Direct marketing to employers including the marketing of project participants by the sponsor or the provision of a job-worker matching service.
- Post-project follow-up mentoring and support including ongoing counselling, networking and individual support during a work placement or to project graduates who continue their job search.
- Other employability approaches that have demonstrated success (e.g. job shadowing).

Projects involving work experience or subsidized employment must provide income support in the form of wages to participants. Projects involving activities other than work experience or subsidized employment must provide income support in the form of allowances to participants unless PT legislation does not permit it. All projects must

⁶ All projects are designed for and marketed to unemployed older workers aged 55 - 64. Workers aged 50 - 54 and those aged 65 and over who have similar needs may also be eligible to take part in the program as long as their participation is not at the exclusion of those in the primary age range (i.e. 55 - 64).

involve at least 25 hours per week of activity for participants. There is no minimum or maximum number of weeks of participation.

3. Evaluation Strategy

3.1. The 2014 TIEW Summative Evaluation

The TIEW Summative Evaluation conducted in 2014 employed a complex and costly non-experimental design and concluded authoritatively on the program's performance. The evaluation methodology consisted of a survey of former program participants, an incremental impact analysis using a limited-treatment comparison group, a benchmark study to examine the extent of job loss of older Canadians living in the same geographic areas as the program participants, key informant interviews with employers, project representatives, ESDC program officials and PT representatives and a review of key documents.

The 2014 Evaluation concluded that 75% of survey respondents found paid employment following their participation in the program and the majority of former program survey respondents believed that their program participation improved their employability. Many factors may have contributed to this positive outcome. The incremental impact analysis was used to determine how much of those outcomes can be attributed to the program. It concluded that:

- Program participants were more likely than non-program participants to find employment by 6 percentage points.
- No employment earnings differences were found between program participants and the comparison group of older workers.

3.2. The 2016 TIEW Evaluation

The objective of the 2016 Evaluation was to inform policy work in 2016-2017 prior to the end of the current renewal period on March 31, 2017. It was therefore calibrated, rather than employing the more comprehensive methodology used in the 2014 Summative Evaluation of the program. The Evaluation Directorate and the Employment Program Policy and Design Directorate agreed to a strategy that would enhance the collective knowledge base on effective labour market programming approaches for older workers.⁷

More specifically, it focused on examining best practices in program design and exploring the implementation of the new program eligibility criteria. Where data was available it also assessed the program's performance in terms of achieving outcomes such as employability, paid employment and self-employment.

The data collection consisted of four methodologies that included:

⁷ As a result of being calibrated, this evaluation does not include an incremental impact study as it was undertaken in the 2014 evaluation and would have been limited due to data restrictions and timeline constraints.

- A review of program documents.
- A review of national and international literature.
- Key informant interviews with ESDC National Capital Region program administrators, PT program representatives, community based organization project sponsors, participants and employers from three provinces (Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia).
- Administrative data captured from Participant Information Forms and Participant Feedback Forms available from four PTs (Yukon, British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia), Project Approval Documents and Project Sponsor information.⁸

The analysis of the design and delivery of the program consisted of identifying older worker labour market programming best practices and lessons learned from the literature. They were assessed for their relevance and compared against the key design elements of the program through program documents and key informant interviews. Any design aspects that could potentially improve the program were identified and are described in other sections of this report.

Program employment outcomes relied mainly on the available administrative data and reporting was based on three PTs [British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia]. As such, the interpretation of program outcomes cannot be assumed to represent the program's overall performance. Finally, program documents and to a lesser extent views from respondents from three provinces [Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia] were also used to report on outcomes. See Annex B for a more detailed description of the methodology used for this evaluation.

⁸ As per the renewal agreements established for the TIOW program post March 31, 2014, Information Sharing Agreements had to be established between Canada and each participating PT in order to access participant data. By February 2016, data from four PTs (i.e. Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon, and Nova Scotia) was available for evaluation purposes.

4. Best Practices in Programming for Unemployed Older Workers

The following section describes best practices in the design and delivery of labour market programming for unemployed older workers based on a review of national and international literature.⁹ These best practices were compared to TIOW projects designed and delivered by PTs to determine the extent to which the program aligns with them. Lessons learned emerged in cases where the best practices were not observed in the program. This literature review examined the instructional components (e.g. employment assistance and employability improvement activities) and labour market interventions (e.g. income support) provided to older workers. Also included were specific program design elements that have been found to be particularly effective in helping older workers become re-employed, such as one-on-one and group support, peer mentoring and post-project follow-up. It also considers recruitment activities designed to identify, assess, select and stream participants into the most relevant labour market programs.

4.1. Alignment of the TIOW program with Best Practices

4.1.1. The TIOW Program and What Works

The program includes many design elements that are similar to other labour market programs that successfully reintegrate older workers back into the workforce. Furthermore, there are a number of other experimental studies of programs similar in design to the program that targeted other populations (e.g. general job seekers and people with physical disabilities, mental health problems, prison records and alcohol/drug problems). These studies found significantly higher employment rates for individuals who participated in those programs compared to individuals who received no labour market programming interventions.

Some of the key program design best practices found in the TIOW program include the following:

- Employment assistance activities as well as direct marketing to employers;
- Training to help older workers obtain new job skills either through basic skills upgrading, specific occupational skills training or preparation for self-employment;
- Income support either in the form of allowances or wages;
- One-on-one and group support, peer mentoring and post project follow-up intended to help clients through the difficulties encountered in both training and the subsequent job search; and
- Participant recruitment and assessment activities.

⁹ ESDC Evaluation Directorate, “Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Literature Review Technical Report” (updated March 2015).

4.1.2. The TIOW Program and Areas for Potential Improvement

This section presents several key design elements from the literature that could have a practical application when implementing TIOW. The evidence from the literature is firstly presented to support the best practice. It is then followed by some context as to the extent to which the best practice was observed in the field.

Goal Establishment

The literature suggests that clarity around an individual's job search goals can have a positive influence on job search effort and intensity.¹⁰ When goals are clearly defined, a job search will be more focused and more likely to lead to the desired type of employment.

The establishment of goals for participants was not offered as a project activity by all Project Sponsors. Although some service providers interviewed stated that goal establishment was key, others did not put as much emphasis on it.

Marketing to Employers

The literature suggests that the most successful programs for older workers involved the marketing of workers to employers.¹¹ More generally, partnerships between employers and community organizations delivering labour market programs to older workers should be well established. For example, job placement services improve access of older workers to employers and responding to the latter's desire for pre-screened and trained older workers.

The marketing of participants to employers is not a mandatory activity for Project Sponsors. Interviews with Project Sponsor respondents suggest that many types of employer related activities were provided. For example, in some projects employers were invited to make presentations to groups of program participants. In other cases participants took part in job fairs. Finally some Project Sponsors promoted participants directly to potential employers.

However, some Project Sponsors did not establish partnerships with potential employers. This is a particularly important activity given that the literature points to older workers often being victims of age discrimination and negative stereotyping over their work performance. Linking participants with employers where feasible improves access to jobs, providing employers with sought after pre-screened and trained older workers.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Peer Support

According to the literature an important job seeking activity for older workers (beyond resume writing, interview skills, counselling and job search techniques) is peer support.¹² Older job seekers who receive peer support tend to display high levels of activity and intensity in job searching. Moreover, supportive messages provided by peers such as unemployed friends are perceived to be more positive than those provided by family or employed friends. Programs using a peer support approach have shown greater job placement effectiveness than have those using traditional job referral and information strategies.

At the end of the formal TIOW program activities, some participants reported that they formed informal networks amongst themselves as a means of supporting each other. Some Project Sponsors reported offering former participants individual access to their facilities and services. However, no formal post program group support facilitated by Project Sponsors was observed with the exception of Prince Edward Island's real-time interactive social media network platform known as a "Ning".¹³ Similar to Facebook, it allows current participants, past participants and program/provincial coordinators to share links, news, contact information, quotes, videos and most importantly, allows the participants to stay in touch during and after their program training ends.

Recruitment: Identification, Assessment and Selection of Participants

The literature suggests that the demographic characteristics of older adults can assist in the streaming of individuals into the most appropriately designed labour market programs.¹⁴ For example, individuals lacking in social support, demonstrating anxiety and possessing lower levels of education would benefit from a more structured and formal programming that offers assistance and ongoing support. In contrast, individuals who have higher levels of education, are generally self-directed learners, and have considerable social support may not respond favourably to such programming and may prefer a more independent, investigative job search approach. The program administrative data shows that 54 percent reported "having at least some post-secondary education".¹⁵ The consistent application of standardized assessments of program participants may help ensure that they are streamed into other most relevant labour market programming offered within a province or territory.

Project Sponsors that included an initial assessment of participants generally did so on the basis of abilities, skills, experience, educational level, objectives, physical capabilities,

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For more information on how PEI incorporates this platform in to its older worker programming, see: 2014 *Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Best Practices Compendium*. <http://wapes.org/en/news/targeted-initiative-older-workers-best-practices-compendium>

¹⁴ ESDC Evaluation Directorate, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁵ Administrative data captured from Participant Information Forms available from four PTs (Yukon, British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia).

motivation and personal or social problems. These criteria were regarded as critical by the Project Sponsors in terms of the success or failure of the project. The evidence gathered through interviews suggests that not all potential program candidates are assessed by the Project Sponsor. But in cases where program candidates are assessed, the key informants and Project Sponsors' reporting documents suggest that the objectives of assessing and the types of assessments administered to participants vary. For example, some Project Sponsors screen for readiness and select those who are most likely to obtain employment. Some assessments are standardized (by jurisdiction for example) while some Project Sponsors create their own assessment tools. Some Project Sponsors do not assess potential participants and recruit on a first come first serve basis. As stated by a key informant, there are numerous routes of entry for participants to access programming.

5. Performance – Program Reach, Client Profile and Outcomes

This section presents findings on the TIOW program's performance with respect to the achievement of its expected outcomes. Reporting on the number of projects delivered is based on the program's administrative data from across Canada. However, reporting on participant characteristics rely on administrative data from Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia in 2014-15 and British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia in 2015-16.¹⁶ Reporting on participant outcomes rely on administrative data from British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia. It should be noted that the program performance data is limited in terms of its quality due to the significant number of missing responses.

5.1. Program Reach and Participant Profile

5.1.1. Projects Delivered

A total of 287 projects were delivered across Canada (including Quebec) by Project Sponsors between April 2014 and March 2016. Among them, 60 were new projects and 227 were renewed, generally un-amended projects.¹⁷

5.1.2. New Project Eligibility Criteria

The 2014 renewal of the program broadened eligibility criteria to include communities challenged by skills mismatches and/or an unfulfilled employer demand. For example, communities facing economic changes such as having their primary industry shift to another sector or industry (i.e. from coal mining to tourism) or anticipating changes to labour market needs (i.e. challenges in finding workers in the service sector) were eligible for funding. Of the 60 new projects 83 percent (50 out of 60) qualified under the new eligibility criteria.

5.1.3. Participant Profile

Based on available data, Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia delivered 148 projects between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2016, and reached 2,785 participants (2,336 participants in 2014-2015 in Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia and 449 participants in 2015-2016 in British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia).

The majority of participants in Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia were in the primary target age range, with 72 percent between the ages of 55 and 64, 22

¹⁶ At the time of analysis, Information Sharing Agreements were being negotiated with PTs and only Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia were ratified with ESDC.

¹⁷ Additional projects may have been approved since the time at which this evaluation was published.

percent between 50 and 54 years of age and six percent of participants were 65 years of age or older. Overall, there were more female (54 percent) than male (46 percent) participants. Most of the participants (54 percent) had at least some post-secondary education (see Table 1). These findings are similar to those of the 2014 Summative Evaluation.

Table 1 – The TIOW Program Participant Profile by Gender, Age and Educational Attainment

	Percentage of participants	Number of participants
Gender		
Male	46%	1,260
Female	54%	1,508
Total	100%	2,768
Age		
50-54	22%	593
55-64	72%	1,974
65 +	6%	176
Total	100%	2,743
Education		
High School or less	46%	1,254
At least some Post-Secondary Education	54%	1,488
Total	100%	2,742

Source: Administrative Data for Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia, where N=2,785. The non-response rate (percentage of missing values) is less than 2% which is not significant. The gender, age and education totals vary from N=2,785 due to the non-response rate.

5.1.4. Job Separation

A majority of the participants (56 percent) in Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia experienced their primary job loss within two years prior to their participation in the program.¹⁸ Participants aged 50-54 were more likely than other participants to experience a primary job loss within two years prior to their participation in the program. Women (60 percent) were more likely than men (53 percent) to experience a job loss within two years prior to their participation (see Table 2 below). There is also significant proportions of men (47 percent) and women (40 percent) who experienced their primary job loss more than two years prior to their participation in the program.

This speaks to the challenges unemployed older workers face in finding stable and good paying employment. The fact that the program reached a population unable to replace their primary job over an extended period of time suggests that it is fulfilling a need.

¹⁸ A primary job is the work a participant has done most in the last 10 years.

Table 2 - The TIOW Program Participant Primary Job Loss Experience by Gender and Age

Primary Job Loss							
Months	0-6	7-12	13-24	25-36	37-47	48+	Total
Subgroup	%	%	%	%	%	%	n
Gender (n=2,495)							
Male	5%	6%	42%	3%	2%	42%	1,135
Female	6%	6%	48%	2%	1%	37%	1,360
Age (n=2,491)							
50-54	5%	4%	49%	3%	1%	38%	538
55-64	5%	6%	44%	2%	2%	41%	1,794
65 +	4%	4%	43%	2%	2%	45%	159

Source: Administrative Data for Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia where N=2,785. The non-response rate (percentage of missing values) is approximately 10 percent. The gender and age totals vary from N=2,785 due to the non-response rate.

5.2. Outcomes

This section presents outcomes for British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia. It is based on administrative data from 646 participants from these three PTs.¹⁹ The outcomes of interest are employability, paid employment and self-employment. Supporting evidence was drawn from the program's administrative data available at the time of evaluation, key informant interviews and program documents.

5.2.1. Employability Outcomes

Employment assistance and employability improvement activities were provided by all Project Sponsors.²⁰ Overall the majority of participants from British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia expressed positive satisfaction regarding the employment assistance and employability improvement activities in which they participated as illustrated in Table 3.

¹⁹ Ontario did not provide any outcomes data compatible with employment assistance and employability improvement activities collected by ESDC.

²⁰ All employment assistance activities and at least two employability improvement activities must be provided by Project Sponsors.

Table 3 - Participant Rating of the TIOW Program Employment Assistance and Employability Improvement Activities

Activities	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
Employment Assistance¹			
Resume writing (N=350)	1%	13%	85%
Job interview techniques (N=349)	1%	18%	81%
Employment counselling (N=334)	1%	18%	80%
Job search techniques (N=345)	1%	19%	79%
Employability Improvement²			
Prior learning Assessment (N=298)	6%	24%	70%
Portfolio development (N=269)	5%	23%	72%
Other vocational or interest assessment (N=224)	3%	22%	75%
Monitoring (N=250)	2%	12%	86%
Short-term work placement with an employer (N=124)	11%	23%	65%
Assistance with starting a business (N=194)	10%	28%	62%
Work experience on a community project (N=101)	8%	28%	64%
Help obtaining new job (N=218)	5%	18%	78%

Source: Administrative Data for British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia. Note that totals do not add to 100% due to rounding.

¹Between 334 and 350 participants provided a rating for resume writing, job interview techniques, employment counselling and job search technique activities respectively.

²Between 101 and 298 participants provided a rating for employability improvement activities since fewer of these activities were offered by Project Sponsors.

Key informants interviews with participants and Project Sponsors indicated that technology training was much appreciated by participants. Many of the project activities included computer training that complemented certain job seeking activities. For example, by enhancing their computer skills (i.e. Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint) participants were able to develop their own resumes and by learning to browse the internet, participants were able to look for work on various websites and use social media.

5.2.2. Employment/Self-Employment Outcomes

The Evaluation evidence indicates that the program is relatively successful in helping older workers find employment or become self-employed. According to the service providers interviewed, most of the participants since 2014 from Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia found employment or became self-employed either at the end of or prior to completing their programming.

Employment data was also collected through Participant Project Feedback Forms filled out at the end of each project. A total of 323 responses were collected from projects in British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia. Of those, 53 percent either found paid employment or became self-employed prior to completing or immediately following their participation in the program. In comparison, findings from the 2014 TIOW Summative

Evaluation national survey indicated that 75 percent of participants reported finding paid employment when they were surveyed two years following their participation in the TIOW program. Many factors may have contributed to this positive outcome. It is worth noting that the 2014 evaluation carried out an incremental impact analysis that was used to determine how much of those outcomes can be attributed to the program. It concluded that TIOW program participants were more likely than non-participants to find employment by 6 percentage points.

According to key informants, many of the program participants who secured paid employment were working in sectors such as retail, sales and services, health and tourism. Participants were also hired in ‘big box stores’ such as Walmart and Sobeys or found secretarial work in local government, lawyer’s and doctor’s offices, hotels, community organizations, call centres and pharmacies. Some indicated finding full-time work and fewer indicated finding part-time work. Some participants secured employment with the same employer with which they completed their work placement. Key informants noted that factors such as high unemployment hindered participants’ ability to find and secure their employment of choice. Other factors such as seasonal employment (i.e. summer tourist destinations) did not create employment stability for those participants.

According to the document review more than half of the Project Sponsors anticipated providing self-employment activities to participants. Similarly, the information gathered during interviews demonstrates that certain jurisdictions have an interest in providing self-employment activities. The administrative data for British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia indicates that approximately 30 percent or 194 of 646 participants took part in activities that provided them with assistance in starting a new business.

6. Efficiency and Economy - Performance Measurement and Program Costs

This section examines how the TIOW program's performance is measured and the extent to which the data captured is valid, reliable and collected efficiently. It also estimates the average cost per program participant.

6.1. Performance Measurement Strategy

The program's Performance Measurement Strategy was updated in 2013 and outcome statements in the logic model were re-examined in 2014 in light of the new eligibility criteria.²¹ Overall program activities, outputs and general outcome statements remained unchanged.

The majority of the program performance data is gathered through three paper forms. Participant Information Forms (PIFs) are filled in by program participants prior to starting the program. Participant Project Feedback Forms (PEFs) are filled out immediately after the completion of the program. Follow-up Evaluation Forms are sent to former participants three to six months afterwards. Completed PIFs and PEFs are forwarded by Project Sponsors to PTs. Evaluation Forms are typically administered directly by PTs, where after conducting the analysis they may wish to do, PTs send the forms to ESDC. Program officials at ESDC manually enter data from the forms into a database. Most of the key informants from the PTs and Project Sponsors felt that capturing the PIF and PEF electronically would be more efficient.

6.2. Data Quality

The program uses employability outcome measures that are similar to those found in the literature, but they may not provide the most accurate measures of employability. For example, program participants are asked to respond yes or no as to whether the TIOW project improved their confidence in finding a job. However, there are several measurement instruments developed and used by scholars which would more accurately measure employability outcomes.²² For example, one such tool measures re-employment self-efficacy where respondents are asked to indicate their degree of confidence in being able to find paid employment on four prospect statements using a five-point Likert scale. Another measures job search self-efficacy and asks respondents to indicate their degree of confidence in being able to successfully perform six job search activities using a five-point Likert scale. Given it is the only program in the department to collect data directly from its participants before and after their participation, there is an opportunity to capture informative pre and post observations on behaviours and outcomes of interest.

²¹ Unfulfilled employer demand and skills mismatches.

²² Lee, Shawyna J. and Vinokur, Amiram D. (2007) Work Barriers in the Context of Pathways to the Employment of Welfare-to-Work Clients. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 40:301-312.

The completeness of the compiled data was relatively good for demographic variables (age, gender, education, and region). However, outcome variables were poorly populated. For example, more than 50 percent of the records for the employment variable were missing. Other variables related to earnings (i.e. number of Employment Insurance collections, number of months on Social Assistance or on Employment Insurance) also have many missing values. Participant feedback variables (i.e. participant auto ranking of self-confidence) have approximately three quarters of the values missing, which limits the usefulness of some of the data. In addition, outcome variable data was only accessible for three PTs. In the end, this constrained the analysis evaluators could undertake with the administrative data.

6.3. Program Costs

A cost-benefit analysis was not conducted for the TIOW program interventions and services since the evaluation design did not include an incremental impact analysis. Also, it was not possible to calculate the average cost for the overall program because participant data was not available nationally. However, it was possible to make a more limited calculation of the average cost per participant based on contributions made by the federal government for four jurisdictions.

In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Ontario, Nova Scotia, British Columbia and the Yukon claimed \$15M from the federal government and 2,785 individuals participated in program in those PTs. The estimated average cost per program participant is \$5,386 (see Table 4 below). The previous evaluation estimated the average cost at \$7,000 per participant.

Table 4 – TIOW Program Client and Costs Summary

Fiscal years	Actual Expenditures	Total Clients	Cost per client
2014-2015	\$10,690,867	2,336	\$4,577
2015-2016*	\$4,308,234	449	\$9,595 (excludes Ontario)
Total	\$14,999,101	2,785	\$5,386

Source: *Program budget and administrative data for Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia however excludes Ontario for 2015-2016 since participant data was not available.

Since the analysis in Table 4 excludes Ontario for 2015-2016, the difference in the cost per client between 2014-15 and 2015-16 may be explained by varying project delivery costs within a PT.²³ For example, costs within a PT can be driven by the availability of existing labour market programming infrastructure that can be leveraged by a Project Sponsor in an eligible community. In particular, costs may be higher in more remote communities. In addition, participant allowances may be higher in some PTs or not offset by wages paid from an employer-based work experience or through EI.

²³ This was confirmed by excluding data from Ontario from 2014-2015, which yielded a cost per participant of \$15,979.

7. *Conclusions*

The TIOW program was implemented as planned. Projects were delivered in all of the participating PTs and the majority of participants were in the primary age range of 55 and 64 years of age. The evaluation also confirmed that the two new community eligibility criteria added in 2014 were used by PTs to expand the reach of the program into small communities that may not have been eligible in the past.

Program outcomes relied mainly on the administrative data from three PTs (British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia), program documents and to a lesser extent on views from key informants from three provinces (Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia). Outcome findings for the three PTs indicate that overall, participants expressed positive satisfaction regarding the program's job seeking activities and viewed employability activities as helpful overall. Together, this complementary evidence endorses the programs' principle outcome: to effectively assist unemployed older workers to improve their employability and transition into employment.

The evaluation found that overall program interventions and activities align with evidence based approaches proposed in the literature. It highlights key features of the program that support PTs as they target, design, and deliver projects. It also identifies some gaps that could be addressed in the future when designing labour market programming for older workers.

Evaluation findings also point to lessons learned and include three recommendations to improve the design and delivery of the program. These recommendations propose improvements to services and interventions provided to participants, participant recruitment and assessment and data collection for performance measurement and evaluation purposes.

Recommendations

Overall the program interventions align with evidence-based approaches. The projects provide many types of relevant interventions such as occupational training, job search training and techniques, job development, assessment facilities and community outreach. However, not all Project Sponsors consistently offer interventions to improve job search behaviours.

Recommendation #1:

First, Project Sponsors provided many activities that strengthened job seekers self-efficacy beliefs. However they did not consistently clarify and set job goals for participants. When goals are clearly defined, a focused search strategy generally produces the most positive outcomes.

Secondly, while some Project Sponsors linked participants with employers, others did not. The marketing of participants to employers, which may include linking participants with employers, could help improve access to labour markets.

Finally, providing ongoing formal peer supports during the entire time participants are actively seeking employment is a critical design element. Project Sponsors created supportive environments for their participants and the participants acknowledged this value. Participants indicated forming informal groups to support each other following the end of their participation in programming. However, evaluators observed little by way of formal ongoing group sessions facilitated by Project Sponsors. Providing ongoing support is key given that almost half of participants were not employed following the end of their participation in the TIOW program.

It is recommended that ESDC work with the provinces and territories to develop guidelines for projects to include activities that:

- 1.1. Clarify and set job goals for participants.**
- 1.2. Improve access to labour markets by linking participants with employers.**
- 1.3. Provide facilitated ongoing group sessions for participants following the end of their formal programming.**

Recommendation #2:

One of the design features that labour market programs for older workers should include is the careful identification, screening and selection of participants. This allows program coordinators to stream participants into targeted and tailored programming that meets their specific strengths and addresses their specific weaknesses. However, Project Sponsors do not consistently assess all potential participants. Where they do, the processes and tools used for assessment vary from one jurisdiction to another and some assessments are more robust than others.

The literature suggests that individuals with high levels of education tend to be more self-directed learners and may not respond favourably to TIOW programming. Individuals lacking in social support, that demonstrate symptoms of anxiety and possess lower levels of education benefit from a more structured and formal programming that offers assistance and ongoing support.

Consistently robust assessments of participants would assist in streaming older workers into labour market programming that is more responsive to their needs.

It is recommended that ESDC work with the provinces and territories to develop recruitment guidelines for projects through the careful identification and screening of older workers so that they may be streamed into the most appropriately designed labour market interventions. This may translate into providing less intense programming (i.e. less than 12 weeks) to more highly educated participants through the TIOW program or referring them elsewhere within a PT where other, more

relevant labour market programming is available.

Recommendation #3:

The ongoing monitoring of participant demographic characteristics and outcomes between program evaluations is paramount to effectively managing any program. For example, deviations from recruiting the most suitable participants can be identified using data collected on an ongoing basis from participants. If deviations are detected, Project Sponsors can be alerted to ensure program implementation is in keeping with key policy requirements. However the ongoing monitoring of performance requires the systematic, timely and efficient collection of reliable data.

The TIOW program performance data is captured through paper based forms completed by participants immediately before and after program participation. The completed forms are expedited in batches by the PTs to ESDC program officials where they are manually entered into a database. The process is time consuming and prone to input error. The profile variables (age, gender, education, and region) were suitably captured, but the outcome variables were poorly populated, suffering from non-response errors. Furthermore, though the employability and employment outcomes measures captured by the program are relevant, there are more reliable measures which could capture more informative data for both performance measurement and evaluation purposes.

Also, the absence of Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) from participants limits the scope of future evaluations. The collection of the SINs from program participants would allow ESDC to conduct a more thorough analysis of program performance and incremental impact analysis by facilitating participant identification and linkage of the program's administrative data to other administrative data (e.g. Canada Revenue Agency).

The current system as it exists limits ESDC's ability to perform adequate monitoring and produces challenges in terms of analysis for the evaluation of the TIOW program.

It is recommended that ESDC improve the quality of the data collected from all Project Sponsors and participants for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of outcomes by:

- 3.1 Capturing more reliable employability and employment measures on the Participant Information Forms, Participant Feedback Forms and follow-up Evaluation Forms.**
- 3.2 Examining the feasibility of implementing the electronic capture of its data collection forms from the provinces and territories.**
- 3.3 Engaging key stakeholders to explore the feasibility of collecting participants' Social Insurance Numbers in future years.**

Appendix A – Evaluation Matrix

TIOW Evaluation Questions				
		Lines of Evidence	Literature Review	Document Review
			Administrative Data	Key Informant Interviews
Design and Delivery				
1. To what extent is the design of the program appropriate to achieve the expected results? Are program activities logically linked to the production of the expected outputs and results?		X	X	X
2. How have provinces and territories implemented the program in communities experiencing skills mismatches and/or unfulfilled employer demand?	a. How have they identified and engaged potential employers? b. What are the employment outcomes for program participants?		X	X
Achievement of Expected Outcomes				
3. To what extent have the expected outcomes of increased employability and/or re-integration into employment been achieved?	a. Have participants increased their employability? b. Have participants obtained employment? c. Are there increased employment opportunities in vulnerable communities (i.e. as a result of new businesses being created by participants)?		X	X
Demonstration of Efficiency and Economy				
4. Is the Performance Measurement Strategy generating valid and reliable performance data that supports ongoing performance monitoring and decision making?		X	X	X

TIOW Evaluation Questions

Lines of Evidence	Literature Review	Document Review	Administrative Data	Key Informant Interviews
a. Are adequate data collection and reporting systems in place to support the summative evaluation?				
5. What are best practices and lessons learned with respect to efficiently delivering the program and economically achieving outcomes?	X	X		X

Appendix B – Methodology

Introduction

The following presents the methodologies used for the Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program. This Appendix describes the scope of the evaluation, data sources, data collection methods and constraints and limitations.

Scope and Breadth

This evaluation is outcomes based and examined the period covering April 2014 to June 2016. It focused on the issues and questions identified in Appendix A. It includes all provinces and territories with the exception of Québec, which carries out its own evaluations, and Nunavut, as it did not participate in the program. However, due to the limited availability of administrative data, the scope related to reporting on program outcomes was restricted to British Columbia, Yukon and Nova Scotia.

Methodologies

The following methods were used to respond to the evaluation questions. All methods were carried out in-house by ESDC Evaluation Directorate staff.

- *Document and literature review* - This included previous evaluation technical and final reports, a review of national and international literature and program documentation provided by the program.
- *Administrative data* - Program performance data was generated from the TIOW program Access database. Data captured included information from the Participant Information Forms, Participant Feedback Forms, Participant Evaluation Forms and Project Sponsor information.
- *Key informant interviews* – Interviews were carried out by telephone or in-person. Respondents included representatives from ESDC National Capital Region program administration (n=5). It included randomly sampled respondents from three provinces (Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia) that consisted of PT program representatives (n=3), project sponsors (n=8), participants (n=10) and employers (n=4) from those provinces. Interviews were carried out by ESDC evaluators between January and February 2016.

Analysis

The data analysis strategy included the triangulation of multiple lines of evidence. The table below describes the proportional and frequency terms used in the report to quantify the extent of agreement amongst interview respondents to specific questions and issues.

Proportional and Frequency Terms		
Proportion Terms	Frequency Terms	Percentage range
All	Always	100%
Almost all	Almost always	80-99%
Many / Most	Often, usually	50-79%
Some	Sometimes	20-49%
Few	Seldom	10-19%
Almost None	Almost never	1-9%
None	Never	0%

Constraints and Limitations

In 2015, the program was putting in place Information Sharing Agreements between ESDC and the PTs in order to access participant data (PIF and PEF). By February 2016, data from four PTs (Ontario, British Columbia, Yukon and Nova-Scotia) was available for evaluation purposes. Readers should be mindful when interpreting findings citing administrative data since it may not be representative of the other provinces and territories participating in TIOW. Furthermore, Social Insurance Numbers are not collected for TIOW program participants. Evaluators were unable to link the TIOW program administrative database (PIF and PEFs) to the Canada Revenue Agency and ESDC databases and apply incremental impact modelling.

Appendix C – Government of Canada Funding Contribution

Province/Territory	Allocation (2014-2015)	Allocation (2015-2016)	Allocation (2016-17)	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$853 792	\$853 792	\$853 792	\$2 561 375
Nova Scotia	\$791 923	\$791 923	\$791 923	\$2 375 768
Prince Edward Island	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$720 000
New Brunswick	\$841 418	\$841 418	\$841 418	\$2 524 253
Québec	\$6 545 736	\$6 545 736	\$6 545 736	\$19 637 207
Ontario	\$8 339 936	\$8 339 936	\$8 339 936	\$25 019 807
Manitoba	\$507 325	\$507 325	\$507 325	\$1 521 976
Saskatchewan	\$334 092	\$334 092	\$334 092	\$1 002 277
Alberta	\$1 917 938	\$1 917 938	\$1 917 938	\$5 753 813
British Columbia	\$2 907 841	\$2 907 841	\$2 907 841	\$8 723 523
Yukon	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$720 000
Northwest Territories	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$720 000
Nunavut	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$240 000	\$720 000
Total	\$24 000 000	\$24 000 000	\$24 000 000	\$72 000 000

Of the \$25,000,000 a year allocated for the TIOW program, \$24,000,000 is allocated to PTs while the remaining \$1,000,000 is retained by ESDC to support program management, operational, evaluation, and communication activities.