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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Responsive Career Pathways

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Acknowledgements

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About Blueprint

[Blueprint](#) was founded on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change. Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization. As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively generate and use evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.

About The Future Skills Centre

[The Future Skills Centre](#) is a forward-looking organization that prototypes, tests and measures new and innovative approaches to skills development and training. It is passionate about building a resilient learning nation, backed by an agile and responsive skills ecosystem that equips everyone with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing economy and share in Canada's prosperity.

As a Pan-Canadian organization, FSC works with partners across the country to understand how global trends affect the economy, and to identify what skills working-age adults need to thrive within an ever-evolving environment. FSC is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program and was founded as a partnership between Ryerson University, Blueprint and the Conference Board of Canada.



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Executive Summary

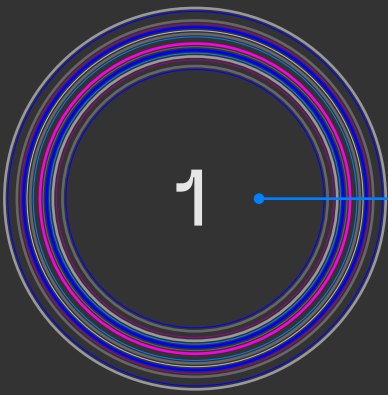
[Career guidance services](#)¹ can play an important role in supporting workers and individuals in finding meaningful and fulfilling employment and education opportunities. However, equity-seeking groups who are most likely to benefit from these services are also the least likely to access them due to structural inequities that entrench the labour market. Overall, equity-seeking groups tend to experience worse labour market outcomes, face labour market segregation and discrimination, and are disproportionately impacted by negative workforce trends. These patterns of workforce inequity manifest in broader socioeconomic impacts as equity-seeking groups are more likely to experience working poverty and have been differentially and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the [Future Skills Centre's \(FSC\) Responsive Career Pathways initiative](#), this paper engages in a review of academic and grey literature to explore the implications of the systemic exclusion, discrimination and inequity for [career pathways](#) in Canada, with a focus on the economic outcomes and experiences of racialized people, women and newcomers to Canada. It then considers opportunities to strengthen our publicly funded career and employment systems to effectively address labour market inequity and ensure equal career opportunities for all Canadians.

¹ Hyperlinked terms throughout the paper connect to the Glossary.

I Key Findings

Employers have an important role to play in advancing equity.	Employers can help advance equity by ensuring workers from equity-seeking groups have opportunities to re-skill and re-train, and by working with career services to support workers in proactively accessing career guidance services.
Workers must be heard and empowered.	The lived experience of workers from equity-seeking groups needs to be recognized and integrated into employment and career policy and design so that programs address their specific perspectives and needs.
Investment is needed in model career guidance programming.	Targeted programming is needed to address workforce inequity, but funding should also focus on replication and scaling of existing programs that have made progress or that show promise.
Extensive coalition-building is needed.	Employment and career services stakeholders should be supported in forming networks to advance equity goals at both agenda-setting and solution-formation stages; funders should also help advance political engagement and system change.
People are motivated to pursue career services by personal and structural factors.	Given the diversity of individual lived experiences and needs, career services should offer wraparound supports to help address the many layers of socioeconomic challenges individuals may face.
Equitable career services require skilled, competent and equity-driven practitioners.	Practitioners will need resources to equitably serve job seekers who face multiple barriers and consistent skills training informed by principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.
Data and evidence collection among employers and in the careers system needs to reflect complex realities.	Employers should be collecting data using a range of sociodemographic indicators, and career services should be intentional in integrating intersectional, anti-oppressive approaches in data collection design, implementation and evaluation.



Introduction



Introduction

Career guidance services can open up a plethora of education, employment and personal opportunities for all Canadians. However, access to and uptake of career guidance services can be uneven and sparse. At the national level, the use of career guidance services by adults in Canada is 17% (LMIC, 2021), compared to an average of 44% across six surveyed OECD countries (OECD, 2021). Of Canadian adults who did not use career guidance services, 24% cited that they did not know services existed, and 17% cited a lack of time to access services due to additional work and family responsibilities (LMIC, 2021). While there is currently no Canada-based data to clarify the sociodemographic breakdown of these statistics, data and evidence from international jurisdictions illustrate a consistent pattern: equity-seeking groups who are most likely to benefit from career guidance are also the ones who are least likely to access these services (OECD, 2021).

The Responsive Career Pathways (RCP) initiative is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in Canada's career and employment system. As part of ensuring that the project is deeply informed by and rooted in DEI principles, we have produced this report to review patterns of systemic exclusion, discrimination and inequity in the Canadian workforce and labour market that produce barriers for equity-seeking groups, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, women and newcomers. In addition, this report includes a scan of promising workforce development case studies and practices that embody an understanding and acknowledgement of these inequities in their approach. Finally, the report concludes by highlighting what these patterns of labour market inequities and promising workforce development opportunities mean for the RCP initiative. This exploration is only the beginning of an ongoing, challenging, but necessary journey toward ensuring that all Canadians can meaningfully participate in and effectively navigate the future of work.

The paper is organized around three key research questions:

What are the major patterns of workforce inequity in Canada and what are some key contributing factors?

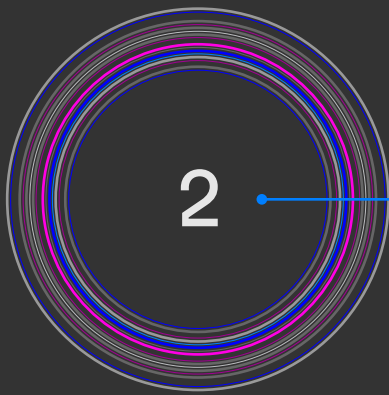
We review the existing research and data from academic and grey literature to highlight major workforce inequities, also highlighting the impact of COVID-19.

How could investments in our publicly funded systems effectively address labour market inequity and ensure equal career opportunities for all Canadian workers?

We draw inspiration from other workforce and skills development funders to identify leading practices and approaches to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.

What are the implications for the RCP initiative?

We analyze what these findings mean in the context of our RCP initiative.



Major Patterns in Workforce Inequity in Canada



Major Patterns in Workforce Inequity in Canada

We have identified five major workforce patterns that illustrate how equity-seeking communities fare in Canada's workforce and labour market. Overall, equity-seeking groups tend to experience worse labour market outcomes, which are largely driven by labour market segregation and negative workforce trends rooted in systemic discrimination. As a result, equity-seeking groups are more likely to experience working poverty and, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, have compromised resilience towards acute workforce shocks and reduced capacity to adapt to labour market disruptions. (Block et al., 2019; OECD, 2018; Devillard et al., 2019; Barak & Spotton-Visano, 2021).

I Equity-seeking groups have worse labour market outcomes

Race, gender, ethnicity and residency status can result in cumulative and uneven patterns of labour market participation, employment rate and income levels. Using data from the 2016 Census for Canadians over age 15, the *Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality* report finds that, although racialized Canadians have a slightly higher level of labour market participation (66.5%) than their non-racialized counterparts (64.8%), they continue to experience higher levels of unemployment (Block et al., 2019). Furthermore, among employed Canadians, there are also gendered and racialized income gaps. Based on the 2015 average annual income for Canadians in full-time and part-time employment as reported in the 2016 Census, for every dollar made by a non-racialized male worker, racialized male workers earned 78 cents, non-racialized female workers earned 67 cents, and racialized female workers earned 59 cents (Block et al., 2019). These statistics illustrate patterns of labour market marginalization along the lines of race and gender, and at their intersection.

Labour market inequities for Indigenous communities are particularly profound. Based on the 2016 Census, Indigenous peoples have lower labour market participation rates (61.4%) than non-Indigenous people (65.4%) (OECD, 2018). Gaps in labour market participation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are especially pronounced in Northwest Territories (20.7%) and Nunavut (29.3%) (OECD, 2018). Furthermore, different Indigenous peoples also experience labour market outcomes differently. For example, compared to non-Indigenous people (6.1%), unemployment rates in 2016 were 9.7% for Métis, 15.9% for First Nations, 20.6% for Inuit, and 49.6% for Indigenous peoples who live on reserves (Munro & Zachariah, 2021). Overall, labour market exclusions translate into an average wage gap of \$10,349 between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Munro & Zachariah, 2021). These figures suggest that the intersection of Indigenous identity, geography and socioeconomic opportunities can lead to complex and varied contemporary labour market exclusions of Indigenous peoples.

I Occupational segregation is a driver in inequitable labour market outcomes

Occupational segregation describes the tendency for people to be employed in different occupations and industries due to historical and cultural associations, stereotypes and biases, as well as discriminatory policies and practices, regarding gender, racial and/or other identities. According to the “crowding” hypothesis (Bergmann, 1971), racialized workers, particularly women (for example, healthcare industry), are disproportionately crowded out of mid- to high-wage occupations and streamed into the most precarious parts of the Canadian workforce where jobs are not well-compensated, stable or resilient to forthcoming changes in the labour market (Rayside, 2007; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005; Bernhardt, 2015). Occupational segregation can occur both horizontally across industries and vertically along hierarchies of occupations (Reevse, 2010). Some prominent patterns of occupational segregation and crowding include the following:

- **Many sectors and occupations are disproportionately gendered.** In 2017, women represented 81% of the healthcare and social assistance sector but only 17% of plant and machine operator jobs; however, even in sectors where women are the majority, women, especially racialized women, mainly occupy lower-paying positions (for example, nursing and personal care), while men predominantly hold higher-paying positions (for example, family doctors and anesthesiologists) (Devillard et al., 2019). These gender gaps across sectors and occupations have implications for how men and women experience future economic and technological disruptions.
- **Women tend to have less career pathing mobility and fewer opportunities.** While there is equal representation of men and women at entry levels in large Canadian organizations (more than 500,000 employees), women are severely underrepresented in senior leadership positions and underpaid once they get there (Devillard et al., 2019). A study of the top 250 publicly-traded Canadian companies in 2017 showed that only four percent of CEOs and 10% of top Canadian executives are women (Macdonald, 2019).
- **Equity-seeking groups are more likely to be negatively impacted by occupational segregation.** People with disabilities and racialized peoples, especially Indigenous people, are less likely to hold managerial jobs and are more likely to be passed up for promotional opportunities (Luffman & Sussman, 2007). Indigenous peoples are also more likely to work in lower-skilled occupations in trades, service occupations and highly volatile natural resource sectors (Usalcas, 2015).

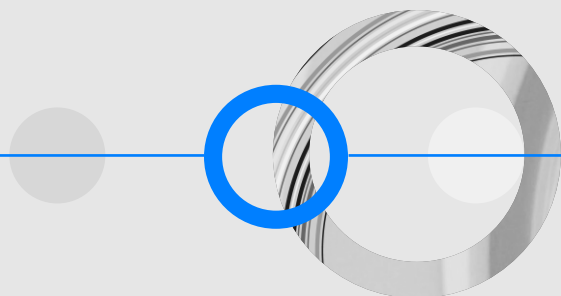
Notably, quantitative research on Canadian occupational segregation has traditionally focused on gendered segregation and has only recently begun to adopt racial and intersectional frameworks. This shift presents an opportunity to explore more innovative and inclusive data collection, analysis and reporting approaches that are more reflective of the labour market realities faced by equity-seeking Canadians (Rouhani, 2014).

I Equity-seeking groups are disproportionately impacted by negative labour market trends

Over the past three decades, we have seen a significant reduction in middle-class, well-paying and full-time jobs because of market deregulation and a shift toward a knowledge-based economy (Acemoglu & Autor, 2011). These jobs are being replaced by precarious, lower-paid, service-oriented jobs prescribed as lower-value. At the same time, there has been a shift toward a knowledge-based economy that favours highly rewarded professional, scientific and managerial occupations characterized by higher education and knowledge-based skills (Scott, 2013). Many equity-seeking groups, due to historic and systemic discrimination and exclusion, have been unable to enter these highly rewarded occupations, and have been left behind in the process of economic restructuring. As a result, they are left to shoulder the brunt of rising economic and labour market inequities (Beach, 2017).

This labour market restructuring has produced an unprecedented amount of precarious work characterized by low wages, uncertainty, insecurity and lack of benefits (Vosko, 2006). Jobs in this new “gig economy” can look like part-time shifts at a restaurant, independent and fixed-term contracts with a company, on-call care work for children or seniors, informal cash jobs and increasingly, platform gig work like Uber driving and food delivery. These less-desirable positions are also disproportionately occupied by women, racialized peoples, new immigrants and migrant workers (Barak & Spotton-Visano, 2021).

Importantly, while we notice the increasing social stratification and wealth polarization associated with the gig economy, there have not been substantial data collection initiatives or quantitative studies in the Canadian context to document gender and racial inequities in this new labour market order. The absence of such data represents a significant opportunity to innovate data collection and evidence generation processes that could inform more equitable economic and workforce development policies.



I Equity-seeking groups are more likely to experience working poverty

Patterns of occupational segregation and precarious work along the lines of race and gender are reflective of the **racialization and feminization of working poverty**, the phenomenon where poverty becomes increasingly prevalent and concentrated among women, racialized peoples and racialized women, despite their continuous participation in the labour market, as a result of systemic discrimination and exclusion (McKnight et al., 2016; Barak & Spotton-Visano, 2021; Galabuzi, 2008). Women, young people and racialized peoples are disproportionately represented in non-standard work, which is defined by the OECD to be temporary, part-time or self-employed work and is closely associated with wage penalties, lack of career progression and working poverty (OECD, 2015). In 2015, the OECD reported that, at 35%, Canada had the highest poverty rate for households with only non-standard working adult members among OECD countries (average of 22%) (OECD, 2015).

Working poverty intersects with broader social processes to produce vicious cycles that can put people in states of life crisis, further erode the capacity to work and reinforce economic and workforce polarization. To illustrate, unemployment, precarious work and experiences of discrimination can contribute to stress and produce negative impacts on health; a lack of employment benefits makes healthcare expensive and inaccessible, which makes it even more challenging to secure housing and food, let alone find stable employment or participate in training.

These feedback mechanisms are especially pronounced for Black and Indigenous communities. Intergenerational trauma associated with slavery and colonialism continues to be reinforced by social stigma and spatial segregation, among other things, and manifest as stress factors such as crime, substance abuse, physical disabilities and mental health issues. These factors have historically reinforced labour market inequities and continue to do so in the present (Kolahdooz et al., 2015).

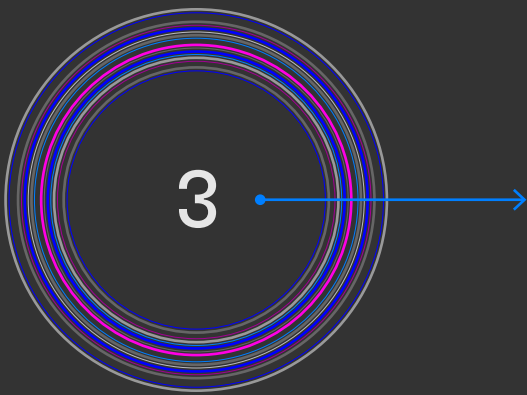


I The pandemic has differentially impacted equity-seeking groups

Workers of colour, women, immigrants and workers with a high school degree or less are overrepresented in jobs that have been hardest hit by the economic downturn and have suffered the greatest job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic (Langston et al., 2021c). In the first two months of the pandemic, highly gendered and racialized industries like retail, food services, education, healthcare and social assistance saw the job loss of 1.5 million women, many of whom were women of colour (Desjardins et al., 2020). Comparing data between February and March 2020, at the onset of pandemic lockdown measures, the Canadian Poverty Institute estimated short-term job losses to be 18% for lower-income workers, 17% for recent immigrant workers, and 14% for Indigenous people, as well as for lone-parents, compared to the national average job loss of 12% (Canadian Poverty Institute, 2020). These values indicate that the pandemic has produced disproportionate labour market impacts on Canada's equity-seeking groups.

While some work opportunities are returning, employment has been concentrated in jobs that require the least preparation and training, meaning that many workers may be “underemployed” as they re-enter the labour market. Furthermore, workers who are required to be in close proximity to other individuals are also at a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 (Robertson et al., 2020). The pressure to take on essential work during the pandemic in racialized communities, especially among Black and Indigenous people, has been cited as contributing to their disproportionately high COVID-19 contraction rates (Choi et al., 2021). There is, however, a lack of race- and residency-status-based data to truly illustrate the impacts of the pandemic on racialized peoples and migrant workers, whose lack of residency also makes them ineligible for emergency benefits (Bowden & Cain, 2020). Finally, women and single parents who shoulder home and childcare responsibilities face more barriers to seeking work and returning to employment and thus have to bear the risks of “falling out” of the workforce and enduring future wage penalties (Desjardins et al., 2020).

As the economy recovers through the pandemic and adapts to the future, workers in lower-skilled and lower-waged occupations, which are disproportionately held by equity-seeking groups, may be at the highest risk of disruption. A McKinsey study suggests that the pandemic may incentivize faster adoption of automation for lower-skilled work with higher physical proximity, which may negatively impact the availability of lower-skilled job opportunities in the future (Lund et al., 2021). As a result, the report estimates that over half of displaced low-waged workers may need to transition into higher-skilled occupations. As we chart toward economic and workforce recovery, special attention will be needed to support at-risk workers in accessing training, upskilling opportunities and career transition guidance to prevent increasing workforce inequity.



Learning from
Existing Practices



Learning from Existing Practices

In order to support our understanding of how FSC's RCP initiative could address the structural inequities noted in the previous section, we looked at promising practices of other workforce and skills development funders primarily in the US. Our review focused on the work of prominent funders who have an explicit focus on addressing labour market inequity through targeted programming and innovative funding. The following section highlights common themes from our review.

I Supporting employers to advance equity

Engaging employers in [career development](#) initiatives is crucial to ensure that workers from equity-seeking groups have opportunities to re-train, re-skill and transition out of precarious work. In particular, employers can benefit from peer-to-peer networks, capacity-building opportunities and cross-sectoral partnerships with career service agencies. These initiatives can help employers recognize internal biases, meaningfully respond to emerging labour market trends that disadvantage equity-seeking workers and develop promising practices that lead to industry-wide solutions (McKelvy et al., 2018).

Proactively engaging with employers is particularly important for the working poor, who may not have the time, availability or awareness to access career programming directly through a service agency. Building greater ties with employers may enable these workers to access career guidance more readily through programs that are offered in partnership with their employers.

To this end, funders can target projects that test innovative tools and approaches that enable employers to:

- Explore new hiring and career progress practices, such as skills-based/competency-based hiring, and relax credential requirements in roles where required competencies can be demonstrated (Langston et al., 2021c).
- Better understand local labour supply and demand, workforce system infrastructure and capacity and future labour trends to inform their workforce planning (Coxen et al., 2016).
- Support their employees, potentially through partnerships with other service organizations, to offer supportive career guidance and training opportunities alongside wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and housing (Centre for Postsecondary and Economic Success, 2017).

Funded by the California Workforce Development Board, the **High Roads Training Partnership** has been developed to model partnership strategies that provide economic opportunities for equity-seeking groups across a range of industries. The initiative prioritizes private sector engagement to successfully model workforce strategies that are driven by industry demand and connect job seekers to quality jobs. One of its key partnerships brought together a number of California's leading janitorial service companies and worker associations to develop The Green Janitor Program. The program standardized the credentials, training and professionalized career paths for property service workers and increased upward mobility for immigrant workers with limited English proficiency (California Workforce Development Board, 2018).

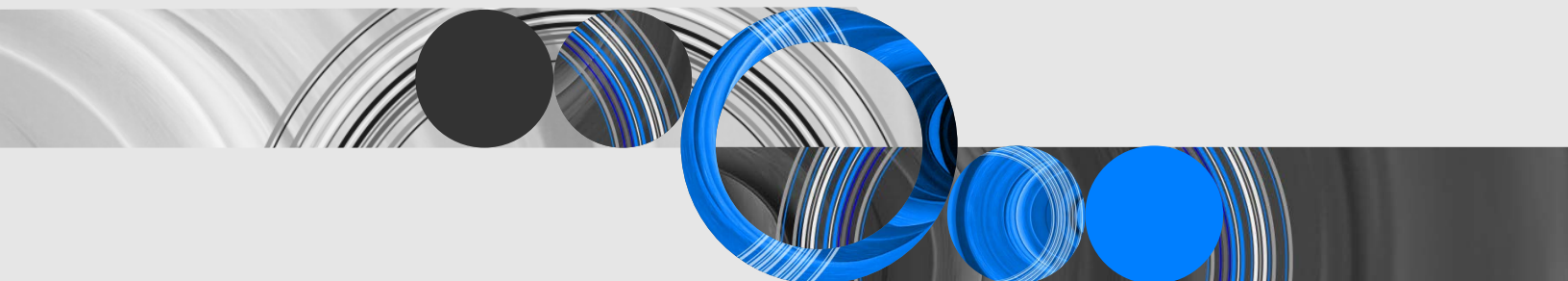
The **WorkLife Partnership**, created by the Jefferson County Workforce Centre and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce is an employer-assistance program in Denver that offers assistance with removing employment barriers and increasing employee retention, particularly for low-wage earners. The initiative offers employers education, support and case management resources to support their employees in addressing barriers such as childcare, transportation and housing (WorkLife, n.d).

I Empowering workers

In addition to working with employers, it is also important to amplify the voices and lived experiences of equity-seeking workers by, for example, targeting projects that document and share knowledge about the lived experiences of equity-seeking workers. Initiatives that train workers to understand their rights and benefits, replicate successful labour management partnerships and support community-based organizations that defend workers' rights are all important ways to ensure that the voices of equity-seeking groups are not only heard, but protected (Omidyar Network, 2020). This approach can be a powerful way to highlight existing inequities in the workplace and in worker power, identify existing gaps in service delivery and centre the voices of equity-seeking groups in workforce policy and design (Langston et al., 2021a).

With funds from the Advancement Project and the National Immigration Law Center, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice conducted more than 700 interviews and surveyed the employment landscape to document the exploitation of Black and Latino workers, and highlight the structural racism and inequity faced by both communities. The resulting report, ***And Injustice for All: Workers' Lives in the Reconstruction of New Orleans***, was highlighted in briefings and town meetings. It also became a critical tool to build alliances between Black and Latino communities and foster joint action against companies that violated the Fair Labor Standards Act (Leung, 2021).

As part of its mandate to increase the influence of workers with the least power historically, the Ford Foundation supports projects that strengthen the technical capacities of worker organizations, test new funding approaches to organize workers and develop new pathways to collective bargaining. This included funding a program run by a non-profit, ***United for Respect***, to help laid-off employees engage in discussions with their employers to prioritize laid-off employees in rehires (Ford Foundation, 2021).



I Investing in model career guidance programming

The realities of today's labour market require new approaches to, and innovation in, career guidance models. Accordingly, many funders are starting to prioritize pilot projects that build a body of evidence around career guidance strategies and practices that advance DEI.

These funders are investing in innovative models that conceive, develop and test new methods to address workforce inequity, such as piloting new programs that extend the flexibility and efficiency of service delivery.

Designed to provide youth not in employment or education with an entry point to highly skilled jobs, **Jobs for The Future** provides technical training and work-based learning for youth.

The single comprehensive program model stretches from pre-apprenticeship training to apprenticeships, with assessments and decision points at the conclusion of each phase. It also offers wraparound supports such as tutoring, social-emotional coaching, transportation assistance, financial coaching and referrals for other services with partner organizations (Browning & Sofer, 2018). In addition to its emphasis on social and emotional development, a key component of the program's success is its focus on staff training. This includes a training program that focuses on a research-based, continuous quality-improvement process that is youth-centric and an accountability framework for instructors to assess their methods.

Importantly, in addition to investing in targeted programming, funders should attend to the potential for replication and scaling of existing programs. This could mean expanding the accessibility of tried and tested models that have demonstrated promise in supporting equity-seeking groups transition to high-skilled, high-paying jobs. Alternatively, it could also mean investing in prototypes that are designed with the intention to scale. This renewed emphasis on scaling can encourage the development of tools that are needed to replicate success at scale, generate evidence on program outcomes over time,² and advance our understanding of forward-looking, system-level models.

² Funding structures that rely on short-term performance indicators may not be best suited to measure programs that scale given their focus on measuring short-term outcomes. In order for programs to develop meaningful evidence on creating impact at scale, they require longer funding cycles. This means that funders need to be willing to take on longer-term projects, which may come with greater uncertainty.

I Leading the shift toward data disaggregation

Overlooking diversity-based nuances in data collection and analysis can undermine the experiences of equity-seeking groups in the workforce and perpetuate inequitable evidence generation. Accordingly, employers and career-oriented programs should collect data on a range of sociodemographic characteristics including race, ethnicity, ancestry and nativity. This can help to identify instances of over-representation of equity-seeking groups in different segments of the labour market, target career-oriented interventions and develop a greater body of evidence for practices and strategies that are most effective in reducing disparities (McKelvy et al., 2018). Given that funders are often in a unique position to lead systems-level shifts, they can:

- Make data disaggregation a requirement for grant reporting;
- Fund programs that build the capacity of employers, service providers and other stakeholders to collect, disaggregate and analyze demographic data (Langston et al., 2021b);
- Develop, distribute and use data-informed resources to inform system-wide discussion and share data related to funding gaps and skills gaps in segregated industries and occupations (Leung, 2021).

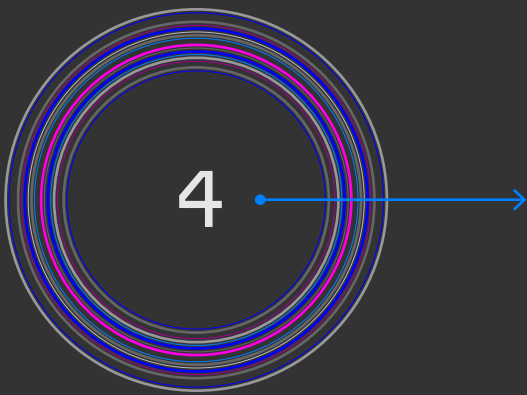
In partnership with JPMorgan Chase & Co, the **Corporation for Skilled Workforce** developed a workforce data system toolkit for policy-makers and local stakeholders in Detroit as a way to increase access to, and use of, workforce development data. The toolkit identifies existing local and regional resources that can be used to map regional workforce development systems, support data collection and analysis and help answer questions about local labour markets and emerging talent pipelines (Williams et al., 2019).

I Coalition-building

In addition to centring goals of racial equity in funding calls, grant reporting and outcome metrics, funders are in a unique position to build networks among employment and careers system stakeholders using an equity-based agenda, and engage in solution-building activities to make the workforce development system become more accessible and culturally responsive.

However, to facilitate greater system-wide change, coalition-building needs to exist beyond the initial consultation stages. Thinking strategically about co-designing solutions with practitioners and employers will require national champions to lead the discussion, and funders are often in a unique position to encourage political engagement while facilitating system-wide dialogue (McKelvy et al., 2018).

The **Danish Disruption Council**, a national council that was created to advance the government's commitment to work equality and prosperity, has been pivotal in supporting the Danish government advance its commitment to DEI. The Council's efforts enabled the Danish government to enter into a landmark labour-management agreement with a digital platform company. This was considered an important step toward providing greater social security and stability to workers in non-traditional work arrangements such as temporary/part-time/gig work (The Danish Government, 2019).



Implications for Career Guidance Systems and Services



Implications for Career Guidance Systems and Services

With consideration for major patterns of workforce inequity and existing equity-oriented funding initiatives, we conclude by reflecting on the role of career systems and career guidance services in addressing challenges around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

I Personal and structural factors impact people's motivations and incentives to pursue career services

While career guidance services can help individuals who are marginalized in the workforce bridge the distance to a future-proof labour market, these services also tend to be less visible and/or accessible to equity-seeking workers who already experience such marginalization. For example, racialized women who need to take on multiple part-time positions to make ends meet may not have the time and resources to reach out to a career development practitioner for support. More fundamentally, exclusionary workforce patterns such as occupational segregation can limit the career consciousness of equity-seeking communities, as well as reduce their motivation to engage in career exploration.

To better support equity-seeking groups in career development, career guidance policies and practices, as well as practitioners themselves, will need to acknowledge and reflect on deep-rooted historical exclusions, cultural expectations and stereotypes that contribute to clients' unique circumstances. Given the diversity of individuals' lived experiences, career guidance services should also proactively offer wraparound support to ensure that clients who face multiple layers of socioeconomic challenges can have the capacity to access and meaningfully engage in career guidance.

I Equitable and inclusive career guidance services require skilled, competent and equity-driven career development practitioners

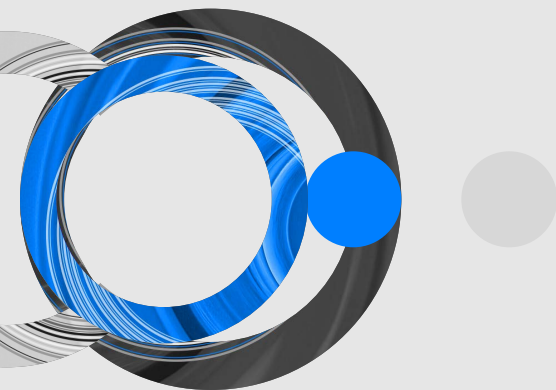
Conventional approaches to career development often operate with the assumption that lifelong, stable and secure jobs are available in the labour market. However, the labour market has become increasingly dynamic and flexible, producing disproportionate and unprecedented precariousness for equity-seeking groups. Given these realities, career guidance services will need to become more attuned to rapid labour market shifts. In addition, the career development field needs to continue confronting deep-rooted assumptions that associate identities with occupations, as well as adopt equity-based and culturally sensitive frameworks in the everyday delivery of career guidance services.

To drive more equitable and inclusive career guidance services, practitioners who interface with job seekers who have diverse lived experiences will need extensive support. These supports can come in the form of resources and information to help interpret workforce trends, tools and processes to eliminate discrimination, and opportunities to engage in consistent skills and competencies training informed by principles of DEI. Such efforts to instill DEI in the field of career development can support more just representation of equity-seeking groups in growth sectors and future-oriented careers.

I Employers can play an active role in building equitable and inclusive responsive career pathways

Ensuring equity and inclusion in workers' career development and career pathways is an imminent concern for industries that are disproportionately racialized and/or gendered, as well as sectors that will face significant workforce disruptions due to labour market and technological changes. There are, however, several challenges associated with improving equity in workplace career development. In some cases, career mentors in workplaces, such as coworkers and managers, do not have DEI-informed career guidance training, which may result in unintentional, but nevertheless harmful career advice being given to equity-seeking workers.³ In other cases, employers and industry leaders are keen to reduce occupational segregation in their organizations and industries, but do not have the appropriate resources or expertise to do so. Furthermore, there is the added challenge of supporting equity-seeking groups in accessing career guidance, training and education to enter and succeed in growth sectors.

This situation presents a fertile opportunity for partnership between employers, industries and career development practitioners. As career experts and front-line service providers, career development practitioners are in a strategic position to coordinate more inclusive and equitable career pathing processes among employers, employees and job seekers. These efforts may include supporting employers in developing and adopting tailored inclusive hiring, training and retention practices, helping at-risk workers plan their future career directions or mediating partnerships between public, private and social actors to advance workforce and labour market inclusion.

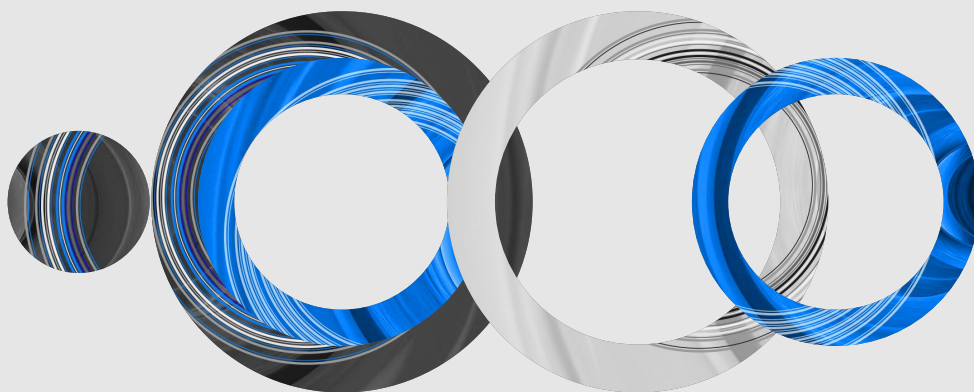


³ This emerged from discussions in the RCP roundtable series

I Data and evidence practices in the career system need to reflect inequities

Finally, a significant barrier to achieving a responsive, equitable and effective careers system is the lack of disaggregated data and evidence generation processes that can reflect complex and intersectional realities of workers who are at the margins of the labour market. To this end, career guidance services and interventions will need to be intentional in adopting anti-racist, anti-oppression and feminist approaches in their design, implementation, data collection and evaluation. These measures can look like meaningfully engaging the perspectives of equity-seeking communities to co-design programs, collecting and analyzing disaggregated socioeconomic data to illuminate the impacts of intersectionality and explicitly addressing the outcomes of diverse forms of marginalization, including mental health, cognitive and physical disabilities, sexuality and age, along with race and gender.

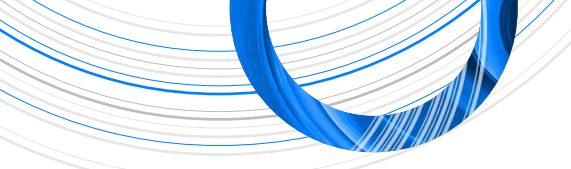
Innovating data collection processes in career guidance services will require funders, service providers, governments and other stakeholders in Canada's careers system to come together, engage in dialogue about equitable data collection and analysis, and build coalitions. Ultimately, effective evidence generation and interventions based on data that is representative of the diversity of Canada's workforce will serve as the basis for impactful knowledge mobilization and successful scaling in career guidance services (Bernhardt, 2015).





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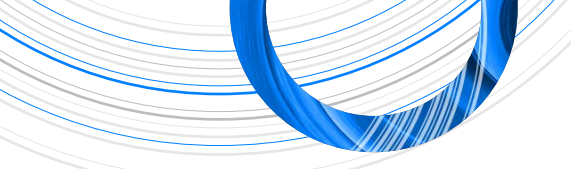
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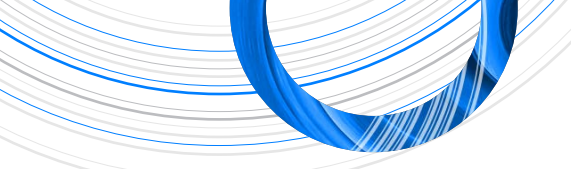
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