



# Overview Disability in Canada

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# Overview of Disability in Canada

## According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability:

- 13.7%, or 3.8 million, Canadians aged 15 years or older reported a disability.
- Among working-age people 15-64, 10.1%, or 2,338,240, reported having a disability.
- **Employment:** 47% of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 to 64 were employed in 2012, compared to 74% of Canadians without disabilities.
- **Income:** Canadians with disabilities aged 15 to 64 was \$20,420 in 2010, compared to \$31,160 for Canadians without disabilities.
- **Education:** 16% of persons with disabilities had at least a university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor's level in 2012, compared to 31% of persons without a disability.



# Human Rights Framework

**Canada has a strong framework to support people with disabilities.**

- National:
  - Canadian Human Rights Act;
  - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
  - Employment Equity Act; and
  - Policy on the Duty to Accommodate Persons with Disabilities in the Federal Public Service.
- International:
  - *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)* ratified in 2010;
  - Marrakesh Treaty (June 2016). Canada's accession helped to bring the Treaty into force in September 2016.



# Key Challenges

Despite some successes, important challenges remain for Canadians with disabilities:

## Challenges

- **Persistent gaps** in employment, income security, education, accessibility and social inclusion.
- **The complexity of disability supports** within and across governments.
- **A gap in leadership capacity** in the disability community is emerging as current leaders retire.



# Emerging Trends

- Awareness of mental health-related disabilities has been growing over time and being reported and diagnosed with greater frequency.
- Recognition of the importance and need for timely disability related data to inform the development of programs and policies to benefit persons with disabilities.
- Youth engagement in discussions and initiatives that would impact persons with disabilities.
- Increasing awareness of intersectional forms of discrimination.
- Increasing attention to women and girls with disabilities, Indigenous persons with disabilities, and children with disabilities.



# Canada and Reporting on CRPD

- The Office for Disability Issues is the focal point for matters related to the Convention at the federal level.
- In February 2014, Canada submitted its first report to the UN Committee on the CRPD.
- In April 2017, Canada appeared before the UN Committee on the CRPD.
- Main points raised by the Committee in its concluding observations:
  - significant focus on intersectional forms of discrimination: women and girls, children and Indigenous persons with disabilities;
  - legal capacity and removing Canada’s reservation to Article 12;
  - Standard of living for persons with disabilities;
  - Designation of a formal monitoring body for the CRPD; and
  - training of officials on the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Canada is in the process towards possible accession to the CRPD Optional Protocol.
- April 2020: Canada’s second report to the UN Committee is due.





# Stakeholder Engagement

- Disability stakeholders were part of Canada's official delegation to the UN during the development and negotiation of the CRPD.
- Since ratifying the CRPD, Canada has supported the participation of stakeholders in all Conferences of States Parties.
- Stakeholders were consulted on the outline of Canada's first report to the CRPD, as well as prior to Canada's appearance before the Committee, and for the Optional Protocol.
- To inform the development of the federal accessibility legislation, the Government of Canada conducted an extensive consultation across the country:
  - Close to 6,000 participated through multiple fora ranging from in-person and online public sessions, round-tables, and a National Youth Forum;
  - Five national disability organizations and three Indigenous organizations received funding to engage through their networks.
- A summary report on the consultation, entitled, *Creating new federal accessibility legislation: What we learned* was released in May 2017.





# Key Developments



# Programs and Initiatives – Social inclusion

- **Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability**
  - Provides \$11 million/year funding to the not-for-profit sector for projects intended to improve the participation and integration of people with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society.
  - In 2017, the department launched a renewal of the program to enhance fairness and transparency, which was developed in collaboration with the disability community.
- **Enabling Accessibility Fund**
  - Provides funding to support the capital costs of construction, renovation or retrofit related to improving physical accessibility and safety for people with disabilities in Canadian communities and workplaces.
  - Until 2028-29, The EAF annual budget is set at \$20.65 million to support small and mid-sized projects, including youth driven projects.





# Programs and Initiatives - Employment

- **New Workforce Development Agreements**
  - Provides provinces and territories with \$5.23 billion in federal funding, over six years, for employment assistance and skills training.
  - \$1.38 billion earmarked for employment and training programs for persons with disabilities.
  - Provinces and territories have committed to contribute \$1.19 billion of their own funding towards programming for persons with disabilities over the same time period.
- **Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities**
  - A \$40 million/year federal program delivered by service providers.
  - Supports projects that help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain employment or self-employment with employment-focused interventions and assistance directed towards those who have limited or no workforce attachment.
- **Accessible Technology Program**
  - The Government of Canada launched the new Accessible Technology Program (ATP) in Budget 2017, as part of its Innovation and Skills Plan.
  - Canada will invest \$22.3 million over 5 years, to support the development of assistive and adaptive digital devices and technologies to make it easier for Canadians with disabilities to more fully participate in the digital economy.



# Programs and Initiatives - Income Security

- **Canada Workers Benefit (Disability supplement)**
  - Budget 2018 announced new benefit to replace the Working Income Tax Benefit making it more generous and making benefits more accessible.
  - increase the current disability supplement by \$160 for a total of \$700.
- **Employment Insurance**
  - Sickness Benefit - up to 15 weeks of income support to eligible claimants.
  - Compassionate Care Benefit - up to 26 weeks of income support benefits.
  - Benefits for Parents of Critically Ill Children - a maximum of 35 weeks support.
  - Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults - introduced in December 2017 to help families care for a critically ill adult.
- **The Canada Pension Plan - Disability (CPP-D)**
  - Provides earnings replacement to eligible CPP contributors who are unable to work because of a severe and prolonged disability.
  - In 2015, the Government of Canada launched a comprehensive renewal of CPP-D aimed at improving the overall efficiency of the CPP-D.
- **Canada Disability Savings Program**
  - A tax-assisted, long-term savings plan introduced in 2008 to help persons with disabilities and their families save for the future.
  - As of January 31, 2018, 169,968 registered disability savings plans (RDSPs) had been opened, into which the Government had paid \$1.81 billion in Grants and \$891.9 million in Bonds.
  - Total assets held in RDSPs exceeded \$4.1 billion.



# Economic and Social Inclusion

## The Marrakesh Treaty and the Production of Alternate Format Materials

- On June 30, 2016, Canada became the 20th nation to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.
- Canada's accession helped to bring the Treaty into force on September 30, 2016.
- The Treaty facilitates the exchange of alternate format materials among participating nations, thus enhancing access for people with print disabilities.
- Over the past decade, ESDC has invested significantly to support the production of alternate format materials, and has continued to do so with a recent Call for Proposals under the Social Development Partnerships Program—Disability.
- The Call for Proposals encouraged disability stakeholders to collaborate on joint proposals to produce materials in alternate formats. \$2.5M has been approved to Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB) and \$1M approved to BC Libraries Cooperative for 2017-18. A working group has been established as of December 2017 under ESDC's leadership to identify longer term solutions to the production of alternate format materials.





# Budget 2018 – Other Initiatives

**In addition to those mentioned previously the Government of Canada announced other measures in Budget 2018:**

- Funding for a comprehensive range of initiatives to prevent and address Gender-Based Violence;
- New Pre-Apprenticeship Program that Targets Under-Represented Groups. which includes persons with disabilities, to explore careers in the skilled trades;
- \$20 million over five years for two new initiatives to better support the needs of Canadians experiencing autism spectrum disorder and their families;
- \$20 million over five years to support Research to Address Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries for Public Safety Officers;
- \$23.6 million over four years to support breakthrough research in spinal cord injury care; and
- Expanding the Medical Expense Tax Credit for Psychiatric Service Dogs.



# Accessibility Legislation

- The Government of Canada is developing new accessibility legislation that will increase the inclusion and participation of Canadians who may have disabilities or functional limitations.
- Legislation was informed by an extensive public consultation and commitment to ongoing engagement with representatives from the disability community, Indigenous organizations, governments and other stakeholders.
- The goal of the legislation will be to promote equality by removing barriers and increasing accessibility in areas of federal jurisdiction.
- The Government plans to introduce the legislation in Parliament this spring.
- The legislation will build on Canada's strong human rights framework, including its commitment to the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.



# Other Provincial/Territorial Legislations

Over the past decade, four provinces have enacted or introduced accessibility legislation and a number have developed disability plans or strategies.

## Legislation:

- Quebec: An Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of their Rights with a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration (2004)
- Ontario: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)
- Manitoba: Accessibility for Manitobans Act (2013)
- Nova Scotia: Bill 59 (Accessibility Act) (2016)

## Strategies:

- Quebec: Equals in Every Respect (2009)
- New Brunswick: Disability Action Plan (2012)
- British Columbia: Accessibility 2024 (2014)
- Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Disability Strategy (2015)





# Disability Issues in the Government of Canada

- Within the Government of Canada, many Departments and Agencies administer and deliver programs, services and benefits in support of persons with disabilities
- ESDC has a unique role as the lead federal department on disability issues through the **Office for Disability Issues (ODI)**.
- ODI is the federal focal point on disability issues. It works with Government of Canada departments and agencies, and with external stakeholders, including representatives of other orders of government, the disability community, indigenous leaders and international organizations.
- In August 2017, ESDC announced that ODI's capacity would be augmented by a new Accessibility Task Team, with enhanced full-time Executive leadership.



# Contact

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