

RIAL WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL)
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GUIDING QUESTIONS

Canada's Response

PANEL 1 - Public Employment Services (PES) and local development: linkages with productive environment to ensure access to quality and productive employment

Is there a process of decentralization of the PES in your country? If yes, how is this process taking place and how far has it progressed?

The objective of PES activities is to help Canadians enhance the skills they need to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. These activities include Employment Benefits and Support Measures, as well as measures and services provided by the national employment service.

Most Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSMs) are delivered through Labour Market Development Agreements with all of the provinces and territories. They are composed of four benefit programs: Targeted Wage Subsidies, Self-Employment Assistance, Job Creation Partnerships and Skills Development (Regular and Apprentices)—and a series of services commonly referred to as Employment Services. These services include job search assistance, résumé preparation, and other job search or employment-related activities.

While federal and provincial governments have a service roll to play, some services are provided to clients through a network of third parties, including community-based organizations, municipalities, employers, employer and employee associations, and public, private, and not-for-profit trainers. Provinces work closely with agencies to manage client flows between the third parties and track client activity, reporting and outcomes.

The national employment service is available to all workers and to all employers in Canada. The mandate of the national employment service is to collect and analyze labour market information, help workers find suitable employment, and help employers find suitable workers.

Useful Links:

2007 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/ei/reports/eimar_2007/toc.shtml

Labour Market Development Agreements:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/partnerships/labour_market_development/index.shtml

National employment service

http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/legislation/ei_regs_part2_1.shtml

What efforts are being made by the PES to address the needs of the productive environment and contribute to local economic development?

Because the federal government and provincial and territorial governments share jurisdiction over the delivery of PES, some programs are tailored at the provincial and territorial levels to address the local circumstances and can be adapted to target key industries and priorities.

PES do not have a mandate to directly contribute to local economic development. The three principal regional development agencies/departments are:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

<http://www.acoa.ca/e/en/index.asp>

Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

<http://www.dec-ced.gc.ca/asp/General/main.asp?LANG=EN>

Western Economic Diversification Canada

<http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/default.asp>

Are there strategies or initiatives in place to achieve closer coordination with local productive actors, in particular, closer ties with employers? If yes, what are the successful components of these strategies?

Through the Sector Council Program (SCP), the Government of Canada is working with the private sector to enhance adult workers' skills through activities such as increasing employer investments in skills development and promoting workplace learning and training. All major employment sectors are included in the SCP and bring together stakeholders from across Canada.

List of Sector Councils:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/sector_councils/listsectorcouncils.shtml

How can effective collaborative relations with employers be achieved? What services do the PES provide to employers?

There are a range of workplace partnerships that are in place and managed by the federal government (often through Service Canada) or by provincial and territorial governments. Collaboration with employers enables better service delivery to clients and contributes to improved employment outcomes.

Upon learning of any major lay-offs, the local Service Canada Centres immediately contact employers and employees to offer assistance. Assistance may include help to employees applying for Employment Insurance to accelerate claim processing and if appropriate, to provide information on our employment programs and services.

The Interprovincial Standards Red Seals Program is aims to make interprovincial mobility of skilled trades people easier by providing services and standards that are recognized across Canada. Apprenticeships are an important way to promote the skilled trades in Canada. The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) is responsible for the management of the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, it is an organization that regroups representatives from provincial and territorial governments as well as federal representatives from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The CCDA works with industry in the development of a skilled labour force, and in the facilitation of labour mobility throughout Canada. This is achieved by: developing, implementing and recognizing Red Seal occupations and credentials; promoting high standards in occupational training; fostering harmonization in training among jurisdictions; and increasing public awareness of apprenticeship training and certification.

Because of the quality training and certification, PES are able to encourage clients to become skilled trades people, and in some instances, clients receiving Employment Insurance can receive their benefits while retraining in a trade.

PANEL 2 - Articulation of PES with workforce development (training) systems and information systems

In your country, what is the role of the PES in vocational and job counseling? Is there any coordination with the workforce development (training) systems? If yes, how is this coordination taking place and what are its achievements and lessons learned?

In most provinces, vocational and job counseling services are voluntary. Clients who embark on job counseling are provided with resources and information on the labour market and training opportunities. These clients are monitored and their employment outcomes are evaluated.

Based on the available information, the outcomes of ESBMs vary across jurisdictions and intervention-types. Evaluations of ESBMs indicate that the most successful interventions include Skills Development initiatives and Targeted Wage Subsidies. EBSM evaluations are outlined in Chapter 5 of the 2007 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report - http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/ei/reports/eimar_2007/toc.shtml.

Are the PES in your country playing a more active role in job counseling and in follow-up after job placement?

Job counseling programs are not mandatory and are often built-in to other ESBMs. Employment retention is a benchmark of success for employment programs and the results of ESBMs are mixed. The success and effectiveness of programs are measured by client's use of Employment Insurance and Social Assistance programs subsequent to participation in ESBMs.

Is there any relationship between the labor market information system or the observatory (if one exists) and the PES?

Canada's Labour Market Information System provides workers and employers with information that allows people to make career decisions on training, mobility and skills development. For instance individuals may be motivated to migrate from provinces of high unemployment to provinces facing labour shortages. Inter-provincial labour mobility contributes to the overall productive environment of Canada and has a positive impact on earnings for inter-provincial migrants.

Provinces provide data to the labour market information system that includes the results of measures undertaken for people to find and keep work. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes is also compiled regularly.

Is the work of the PES receiving feedback in the form of information from the observatories or information systems? If yes, how is this feedback taking place and what have its effects been?

Labour market information is gathered, compiled and analyzed and can thus be used to assess the national labour market and provides comparative data for provinces and territories. PES are provided with up-to-date information to enable them to provide effective services to clients.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) - prepared by Statistics Canada - provides estimates of employment and unemployment which are among the most timely and important measures of performance of the Canadian economy. The LFS provides employment estimates by employment status (employed, unemployed and not in the labour force), industry, occupation, public and private sector, hours worked etc., all cross-classifiable by a variety of demographic characteristics.

Labour Force Survey:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/subjects-sujets/labour-travail/lfs-epa/lfs-epa-eng.htm>

PANEL 3 - Public Employment Services' approach to addressing vulnerable groups or persons with greater barriers to employment

Do the PES in your country work in some way with the social protection system to address the needs of vulnerable groups or groups facing serious difficulties entering the labor market? If yes, what are the lessons learned, difficulties, and results of this relationship?

Each province has jurisdiction over social services such as welfare and social assistance programs. Most provinces provide employment services for clients receiving social assistance who are seeking to enter or re-enter the Labour Force. Funds provided through the Labour Market Development Agreements are targeted to clients who qualify for Employment Insurance (which falls under the purview of the federal government). Depending on their mandate, third party service providers at the community level may provide services to clients receiving employment insurance and those who are receiving social assistance from the provinces.

At present there are federal programs that target the employment needs of youth, older workers, people with disabilities, aboriginals, veterans, and new immigrants.

Service Canada employment services:

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/subjects/employment/index.shtml>

A comprehensive program evaluation strategy is in place to assess the effectiveness of employment programs. Program evaluation supports policy and program development analysis and provides part of the rationale for the resources allocated to employment programs. Measuring the impact and effectiveness of employment programs allows stakeholders to better understand the value of programs funded through HRSDC.

Are there any successful experiences or good practices in your country for overcoming the discrimination faced by persons in accessing employment, based on their gender, race, ethnicity, migration status etc?

Employers must respect the dignity of their employees and must make sure that their actions and workplaces are free of harmful discrimination. The provinces, the territories, and the federal government all have slightly different laws - based on the jurisdiction within which the employer operates. Human Rights Laws apply at all stages of employment: before hiring, while on the job and when work ends. The federal government and the provinces all have Human Rights Commissions that deal with issues of discrimination in the workplace. Complaints can be lodged with the provincial Human Rights Tribunals and can be pursued up to the final recourse for issues of discrimination: the Supreme Court of Canada.

Since the mid-1980s, a number of cases on employment issues have been brought to the Supreme Court of Canada and decisions have been rendered on the interpretation and application of Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Section 15 (1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) states:

" Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. "

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/>

Which measures, programs, or strategies are being implemented by the PES to support groups facing serious difficulties entering the labor market?

There are a number of successful employment programs targeted at Aboriginal Canadians, people with disabilities, older workers, youth and recent immigrants. A few examples of these programs are:

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP)
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/aboriginal_training/index.shtml

The Opportunities Fund for People with Disabilities
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/disability_issues/funding_programs/opportunities_fund/index.shtml

The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/employment_measures/older_workers/index.shtml

Services for youth and students
<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/audiences/youth/employment.shtml>

Foreign Credential Recognition
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/credential_recognition/index.shtml