



**Innovation Lab**   
[supportedemployment.ca/initiatives/innovation-lab](https://supportedemployment.ca/initiatives/innovation-lab)

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# What is the CASE Innovation Lab?

The CASE Innovation Lab was created in 2021 to support, promote and share learnings from collaborations with partners across the country; to **remove barriers to employment faced by people experiencing disability.**



With a grant through the federal government's Sectoral Initiatives Program, we research, select, test, analyze and grow transformative solutions that facilitate the sustained and **valued contributions persons experiencing disability make to the Canadian economy.**

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# Meet our partners, who are working to promote:

- ✓ Enhanced employment opportunities / participation
- ✓ Transformative technologies
- ✓ New trends in employment supports
- ✓ Public education and awareness
- ✓ Engaged underserved / equity-deserving populations
- ✓ Raised profile of supported employment services

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## From Families to Families

Community Living Ontario and the Family Support Network for Employment advocate for employment for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

In middle and high schools in Ontario, families and self-advocates with lived experience will share their knowledge and offer advocacy skills and support to families and students who have an intellectual disability.

Through the sharing of knowledge, families will understand that employment is a realistic and reasonable goal for their youth/young adult while in school and after graduation.

[www.communitylivingontario.ca](http://www.communitylivingontario.ca)

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## **Transitional Employment and Return to Work Program**

Crocus Co-op is a non-profit, member guided co-operative in Saskatchewan that works on behalf of adults who experience mental health challenges.

Their transitional employment program will offer additional skills training as they expand from residential to commercial services. Outreach will broaden to job seekers transitioning from hospitals, incarceration or long-term unemployment.

Meaningful employment in a safe environment improves physical and mental health and gives people purpose and dignity.

**[www.crocuscooperative.org](http://www.crocuscooperative.org)**

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## Building the World's Leading Environmental Workforce

Eco Canada champions the end-to-end career of an environmental professional, including current or aspiring employees experiencing disability.

ECO Canada is undertaking 2 innovative projects:

- Developing video testimonials of people experiencing disability who are thriving in green careers and of employers who have benefitted from embracing inclusion.
- Conducting research that leads to innovative solutions addressing the challenges faced by young professionals with disabilities entering the environmental workforce.

[www.eco.ca](http://www.eco.ca)

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"The Right Fit" is a new program in Hope, BC that facilitates supported employment opportunities for people with diverse abilities to help create a more inclusive workforce.

The initiative brings together qualified job seekers experiencing disability with employers in rural BC who are looking for innovative and inclusive solutions to their hiring challenges. The program provides guidance in recruitment, retention and finding the best match.

[www.freereinassociates.ca](http://www.freereinassociates.ca)

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## Gateway to Digital Inclusion

Gateway is passionate about empowering people experiencing disability and their families to live fully authentic lives. Their vision with the Gateway App is to create a nationwide, online community in which individuals can share their unique gifts and expertise, as well as access tools to strengthen employment supports and digital literacy skills.

Unique aspects of this initiative include a video storytelling project and remote job coaching feature.

[www.gatewayassociation.ca](http://www.gatewayassociation.ca)

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## **L'Académie Convex**

Groupe Convex aims to promote an economy with human value at the heart of a committed community. One of the main barriers is the need for a more objective assessment process for recruitment.

L'Académie Convex is developing a new approach to assessing job seekers experiencing intellectual disability that focuses on the unique abilities and interests of the applicant. In this way, employers will be able to make more informed hiring choices. Applicants can also access digital, bilingual training modules to strengthen their skills.

**[www.groupeconvexpr.ca](http://www.groupeconvexpr.ca)**

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inclusion  
powell river



The inspiring story of the Diversa Collective promises to introduce an innovative, "on-demand" mentorship model for promoting self-employment within the supported employment sector.

Diversa is a start-up video production company being built by entrepreneurs who experience disability, in conjunction with local employers and industry experts. The goal is to provide the necessary technical, marketing and business training to offer viable digital media services to the community, as well as promoting awareness and inclusion.

[www.inclusionpr.ca](http://www.inclusionpr.ca)

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## Remote Job Coach

Remote Job Coach is an initiative to help individuals experiencing intellectual disability to become more independent in the workplace, as well as in other aspects of their lives.

Inclusion Winnipeg is demonstrating the possibilities of re-purposing existing technologies for use in other applications — one of the most common and successful approaches to innovation. The promising results of their initial pilot have sparked interest in organizations and businesses across the country; opening the door for widespread dissemination through partnerships.

[www.inclusionwinnipeg.org](http://www.inclusionwinnipeg.org)

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## **Independent Mindset Skills for Empowerment & Transition (ImSET)**

Independent Living Nova Scotia supports persons who experience disability through services that promote independent living at home, work and play within an inclusive community.

In partnership with Futureworx, an existing web-based program will be adapted to create Independent Mindset Skills for Empowerment & Transition (ImSET). ImSET will assist supported employment staff and job seekers experiencing disability to assess and learn a consistent set of skills needed to independently thrive; in both life and the workforce. Virtual and/or in-person training will be provided for supported employment caseworkers and employers across Canada.

<https://ilns.ca>

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**The Next Level  
of Supported  
Employment**

Gaining valuable work experience and connections through practicum and co-op placements is essential to post-secondary students, but many who experience disability find it difficult to ace an interview, showcase their talents and increase employer awareness of the benefits of inclusion.

Level It Up works in partnership with academic institutions to build the capacity of post-secondary job seekers, while at the same time engaging potential employers who are seeking skilled, professional staff. In this way, they are filling a much-needed resource gap in supported employment.

**[www.levelitupmb.ca](http://www.levelitupmb.ca)**

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## The Great EQualizer

Meticulon's initiative is based on a nationally-tested platform that enables youth experiencing disability and/or neurodiversity, their support networks and employers to "put the individual at the centre of an integrated service delivery model."

The assessment tool and associated capacity-building options are cost-effective, replicable and scalable and can serve as a lifelong guide for improvement for the user. Meticulon was the first enterprise in Canada to focus solely on employing neurodiverse consultants to create a profitable enterprise in the digital sector.

[www.meticulon.com](http://www.meticulon.com)

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MÉTIS FAAMII FOUNDATION INC.

## Building Blocks to Inclusion

Individuals who are both Indigenous and neurodiverse face multiple and unique barriers to employment. Moving toward increased inclusion and addressing these barriers requires innovation and new ways of thinking that are not grounded in conventional approaches.

The Building Blocks to Inclusion initiative is testing and showing promising results for a sustainable, culturally appropriate supported employment model that could have application in First Nations communities across the country.

[www.metisfaamiifoundation.ca](http://www.metisfaamiifoundation.ca)



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## The Successful Transition from High School Project

Munch is a non-profit social enterprise that offers catering and food related activities in Regina; to employ and train people experiencing cognitive disability.

Job trainers will offer cooking classes within Alternative Education programs in high schools to identify students interested in further training.

The development of a systematic process, including data capture and recordkeeping, will ensure a consistent, optimal transition from school to employment or independent living for all students experiencing cognitive disability.

[www.munchinregina.ca](http://www.munchinregina.ca)

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The Youth Success Strategy initiative was developed by ODEN after conducting extensive research on which strategies and service components lead to successful employment outcomes for youth —regardless of their abilities.

They found that stakeholders in the life of a child who experiences disability, including community partners, employers, educators and families, are all critical players in bridging gaps in the school-to-work transition. Promoting this awareness and empowering families, educators, service providers and businesses throughout the country is the goal of this national project.

[www.odenetwork.com](http://www.odenetwork.com)

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## On-Board: A Construction Inclusion Project

ONxpress is currently working on the design and construction of new GO rail services in Greater Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario.

The ON-Board Construction Inclusion Project will establish a multi-phase program to attract, include and support job seekers experiencing mental illness, post-traumatic stress or neurodivergent challenges for Canada's construction industry. Programs will be created with these unique worksites in mind and will respect lived experience. The program will reduce harmful stereotypes around mental health and promote the viability of construction-related careers.

[www.onxpress.com](http://www.onxpress.com)

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**Career  
Exploration  
Technology  
Project**

SaskAbilities Partners in Employment is a provincial non-profit in Saskatchewan that offers specialized pre-employment services and supported employment supports for persons experiencing disability and/or barriers to employment.

The first-of-its-kind Virtual Reality Career Exploration will allow job seekers in Swift Current and surrounding areas to experience interactive job-related scenarios in a safe and supported environment. The technology will inform career goals and build relationships with employers who could incorporate VR into training and hiring practices.

[www.saskabilities.ca](http://www.saskabilities.ca)

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## Minding the (Service) Gaps/ Meeting You Where You're At

SCE LifeWorks has developed an initiative — Minding the (Service) Gaps and Meeting You Where You're At — in response to identified systemic and organizational gaps in supported employment services.

Their focus is on young adult job seekers experiencing developmental disability who also face intersectional barriers (e.g. indigenous clients, newcomers, those experiencing trauma/ intergenerational trauma, clients lacking strong support networks and/or those living in poverty).

[www.lifeworks.mb.ca](http://www.lifeworks.mb.ca)

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## **Inclusion Enterprise Certification**

Vision-Travail is an employment organization in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Québec, that works to create an inclusive job market through the integration of a diverse workforce.

A renewable certification will be created in Abitibi-Témiscamingue to accredit and publicly recognize inclusive companies. A rigorous, comprehensive process will assess organizations and an optional action plan could help them achieve inclusivity and attain certification that they could promote to reassure under-represented job seekers. The certification could be exported to all regions of Québec and Canada.

**[www.vision-travail.qc.ca](http://www.vision-travail.qc.ca)**

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