



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

# Letter from our Executive Director and Board President

In 2023, the number of employed Canadians experiencing disability increased by 1.6% from 2022. The number of persons experiencing disability also rose by 1.5%, keeping their employment rate steady at 47.1%.<sup>1</sup>

While our sector has helped to increase employment inclusion, we still have a long way to go. Success depends on our ability to innovate and to collaborate with and learn from persons experiencing disability and employers, who are at the core of this work.

This past year was an important one for the Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) with a World Supported Employment conference, phase two starting for MentorAbility, new partnerships for the Innovation Lab, a growing library of learning and development opportunities and resources, and increased engagement in research and sharing of best practices.

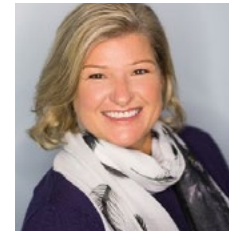
- **MentorAbility** launched phase two, secured Hub partnerships across the country, and partnered with industry associations.
- **Learning and Development** increased collaborations with partners and launched four new complimentary courses and one advanced certificate program.
- The **Innovation Lab** disseminated tools, resources, and best practices for ongoing quality improvement in the sector.
- **CASE Membership** has grown as we've expanded our reach and continued improving members' user experience.

At CASE, we are improving our internal processes and systems to keep pace with growth, including upgraded systems for knowledge management, human resources, and financial management. We are on a journey of learning as we explore diversity and intersectionality and improve policies to ensure all team members feel like they belong.

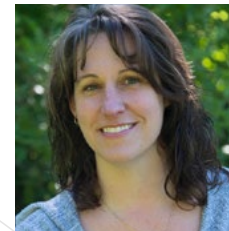
#### Reference

1. Statistics Canada. Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities, 2023. June 13, 2024.

As we strive for excellence, we are grateful for our partners and all the service providers and employers in our nationwide network who support our individual, organizational, and collective learning and growth—making our goal of workplace disability inclusion throughout Canada seem a little less daunting.



**Annette Borrows**  
Board President



**Joanna Goode**  
Executive Director

## WITH THANKS

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As service providers, employers, and organizations committed to supported employment and workplace inclusion, our path forward is not always clear. Where do we start? How do we manage the workload? Where can we find guidance? How can we navigate the changing landscape? Is this even the right way?

We thank you for embarking on the inclusion journey with us and for staying the course this past year. Our vision of a country where all persons experiencing disability have equal opportunity to secure and sustain relevant, purposeful employment is not easily achieved. Your passion to advocate for job seekers and employees experiencing disability and your motivation to support them to succeed in their jobs and careers are what propel our collective path to excellence.

### CASE STAFF

The CASE team continued to expand this year, a reflection of the growing movement to build workplace inclusion for persons experiencing disability. We are grateful for the members of our team who contribute their unique skills and experiences to ensure you receive the program opportunities, resources, training, events, and information you need to do the work.

You can find a list of [our current staff here](#).



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We value the stewardship of our dedicated Board of Directors, leaders from across the country who contribute their expertise and countless hours of hard work towards helping CASE and our members aim for excellence in supported employment and disability inclusion.

Annette Borrows – President (BC)  
Garth Johnson – Vice President (AB)  
Ernie Thiessen – Treasurer (MB)  
Shelley Andrews – Secretary (NFLD)  
Devon Broome – Director (PEI)  
Maureen Haan – Director (ON)  
Deb Hotchkiss – Director (ON)  
Jennifer Oliver – Director (AB)  
Jude Turner – Director (NS)  
Nicole Diakite – Director (NU)  
Lisa Smith – Director (BC)  
Cory Thibodeau – Director (NB)

To learn more about [our Board members](#), [click here](#).

# STRATEGIC PLANNING & FUTURE VISION

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The Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) is a national association of community-based service providers and stakeholders working toward employment inclusion of persons experiencing disability.



## MISSION

CASE facilitates opportunities for supported employment service providers to increase employment inclusion for Canadians experiencing disability.



## VISION

All Canadians experiencing disability have equal opportunity to secure and sustain meaningful employment.

## VALUE TO MEMBERS

CASE's strong governance and management core ensures the provision of the following services to its growing number of members:

1. Access to relevant information
2. Targeted networking opportunities
3. Scaling of promising practices
4. Unified voice to decision makers

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2022-2025

Now at the midpoint of our strategic plan, we are proud of the progress we have made and our achievements to date, some of which are outlined in this annual report. We are excited to continue the important work of employment inclusion with our members, the supported employment sector, and Canadian employers.

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### Build Our Influence

Grow as an association to strengthen the voice of the supported employment sector.

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### Equip Our Members

Enhance the resources, training, and networking offered to members.

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### Strengthen Our Capacity

Ensure resilience through quality assurance and operational growth.

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## BUILDING OUR MEMBERSHIP

Over the past year, our membership has shown positive growth, reflecting the expanding reach and impact of our collective work for workplace inclusion.

<b>Individual Members</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Small Organizations</b> (1-8 members)	<b>274 members across 38 organizations</b>
<b>Large Organizations</b> (9+ members)	<b>40 members across 25 organizations</b>

This year, we continued to offer several exclusive members-only benefits designed to support our members' professional development and service delivery.

- **Conference Discounts:** Exclusive discounts on conference registrations to support professional growth and skill development, as well as an opportunity to network and partner with other like-minded colleagues in supported employment.
- **Co-Branded Resources:** Add your organization's logo to CASE resources, including toolkits, webinars, and materials for Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- **Discounts on Professional Development:** Discounts on specialized CASE training sessions and certification programs designed to advance each participant's career development journey.
- **Highlight Your Organization's Work Nationally:** Showcase your organization to the CASE community through the Member Spotlight and promote events, programs, services, and job postings in our blog.
- **Help Shape the Sector by Voting at the CASE AGM:** CASE members are invited to participate and vote at our annual AGM to influence the future of supported employment (one vote per member organization).
- **Automatic Inclusion in National Registry:** Members are automatically included in CASE's National Service Provider Registry, increasing visibility to supported employment service providers and employers across the country.



We are continuously striving to update our data management software to improve our members' user experience. Our recent enhancements to the MemberPress platform are a key part of this ongoing effort, ensuring that our members can easily access the resources, networks, and tools they need to succeed in the sector.

As we look forward to the coming year, we remain committed to supporting our members in their vital work and the continued growth of our CASE community.



## CASE Initiatives

# MENTORABILITY

MentorAbility Canada is an innovative national awareness project that strengthens the ability of employers to hire inclusively while empowering job seekers experiencing disability through meaningful career exploration.

This year, MentorAbility Canada is thrilled to have launched its second phase, expanding the network to all provinces and territories. In addition to facilitating unique and effective mentorships, MentorAbility offers networking and learning events and social media campaigns, and collaborates on research activities for deeper evidence building.

Through strategic partnerships, the network is engaging diverse communities to better understand whether all persons experiencing disability have access to mentorship and career exploration opportunities—and to ensure they do.

A Request for Proposals led to securing MentorAbility Hub partnerships across the country. Hubs are actively undertaking project activities and community engagement in their province or territory. MentorAbility Hubs and their community partners understand their local labour market and disability inclusion context and are adapting the initiative to best navigate regional needs.

New resources and onboarding activities were undertaken to set this phase of the project up for success. A new Activity Fund was launched to support MentorAbility Hubs and their Community Partners to engage in activities that strengthen outcomes.

We're learning that MentorAbility mentorships are positively impacting the lives of job seekers and are promoting positive change in Canadian workplaces. Partnerships and collaborations with chambers of commerce and industry associations strengthen our work with employers.

### In 2023-2024:

11 Hubs established

200+ mentorships facilitated

200+ events reached over 8,000 employers, service providers, community partners, job seekers, and advocates

MentorAbility Canada is grateful for the financial support of the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities.



MentorAbility Canada is coordinated by CASE in collaboration with partners across the country, called MentorAbility Hubs.



### Strategic partners



[Visit our website](#) to learn more about MentorAbility.

## CASE Offerings

# LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

CASE Learning and Development provides e-learning programs and in-person training for career development professionals with a focus on supported employment. Our goal is to increase capacity within the supported employment sector to advance the inclusion of persons who experience disability in the Canadian workforce, entrepreneurship, and social enterprise.

- CASE now offers 10 progressive, complimentary e-learning offerings, four of which were added in the past year, that serve as value-added tools for employment professionals to share with employers.
- Five certificate programs are offered, including one new advanced program on the provision of intersectional employment services.
- Our new learning platform includes customized learning portals for employment service providers and employers, advanced accessibility and networking features, 24/7 access, and technical assistance.
- Partnerships with CERIC, MentorAbility Canada, and the Innovation Lab resulted in the development of new professional development offerings.
- Collaboration with Immigration Services Association Nova Scotia led to the creation of an in-person, three-day customized job development training to meet the needs of their staff.

As we move forward, we remain committed to the integration of intersectional perspectives and critical frameworks in our content and facilitation approach. We look forward to additional partnership opportunities. Development continues around the graduate community of practice to foster enhanced learning and networking opportunities.

The professional development of our learning specialists is ongoing to reflect current e-learning and design best practices and innovations, and to advance offerings with a learner-centric, accessible, and engaging user experience. We are continually enhancing the integration of evaluation metrics and impact measurement tools.

### 2023-2024:



**10** certificate program cohorts



**198** certificate program graduates



**500+** complimentary course graduates



**816** registered learners on the CASE learning portal



Visit our [website](#) for more information about our learning offerings.



## CASE Initiatives

# INNOVATION LAB

In 2021, CASE created the Innovation Lab to support creative, collaborative solutions to remove systemic barriers to employment for persons experiencing disability and to increase inclusion in the Canadian labour market. Since then, the Innovation Lab has been working with partners to research, select, test, analyze, and grow transformative solutions that can be disseminated and shared.

In 2023, the Innovation Lab supported provincial and territorial proclamations recognizing October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. Activities included media spots, recognition of champion employers, and a national webinar to raise awareness about employment inclusion.

A strategic shift towards more outreach and communications meant a greater focus on disseminating tools, resources, and best practices developed by CASE and Innovation Lab partners. An upgraded, more accessible CASE website was launched, and multiple promotional campaigns were released on national media

platforms, like Maclean's Magazine and ManageHR. A notable highlight was the Innovating Inclusion webinar series spotlighting Lab partners and their innovations, which reached over 172,000 employers, service providers, and members of the public.

Digital literacy courses were revamped based on user feedback, and a new course, the Nature of Innovation, was launched to support the development of innovative cultures, ideas, and proposals. These resources supported CASE's partners and contributed to continuous quality improvement across the sector.

In June 2023, the Innovation Lab co-hosted the 2nd World Supported Employment Conference in Vancouver, which earned a 91% participant satisfaction rate. A micro-credential was introduced, adding tangible value for attendees and encouraging professional development.

Through these activities, the Innovation Lab continues to push forward its commitment to inclusive employment, demonstrating the powerful impact that innovation and collaboration can have on Canada's workforce.

The CASE Innovation Lab is funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program.

Funded in part by the Government  
of Canada's Sectoral Workforce  
Solutions Program



### Innovation Lab Accomplishments



More information on our partners and projects can be found on the [CASE website](#).

## CASE Offerings

# COMMUNICATIONS

During 2023-2024, CASE prioritized the dissemination of evidence-based best practices through various communication platforms. We continued to expand our reach as we further strengthened our communications objectives:

- Advocate for employment inclusion through communication channels.
- Engage stakeholders through compelling and data-driven content.
- Share best practices – Be a platform where supported employment service providers can learn best practices and feel they are part of a community.
- Share resources, research, events, and stories relevant to the supported employment sector.
- Highlight CASE’s work – Promote and share updates, outcomes from CASE initiatives, and learning opportunities. Highlight opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

In 2023, CASE developed and launched three communication guidelines to maintain consistency in all CASE materials.

- A branding style guide that supports partners in better understanding the branding requirements associated with CASE projects.
- A social media style guide to support partners in better understanding considerations for CASE-related social media.
- A writing style guide in English and French to assist contractors/consultants and partners to understand the writing tone and inclusive language for CASE materials.



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## NEWSLETTERS

Over the years, our newsletter subscriptions have steadily grown, reflecting our commitment to keeping our community informed and engaged. CASE offers two monthly newsletters:

- **The CASE Connect** shares industry news, research, and important updates with supported employment service providers.  
Current subscribers: 3,250
- **Disability Inclusion Advantage** shares information with employers on how to diversify their staff and create a truly inclusive environment.  
Current subscribers: 1,097

## SOCIAL MEDIA

CASE actively engages on popular social media platforms, and our follower count has steadily grown across all channels over the years.

	 Facebook	 X	 Instagram	 LinkedIn
2020	1,405	1,442	291	1,091
2021	1,600	1,533	418	1,446
2022	1,877	1,700	568	1,901
Difference from previous year	<b>+17%</b>	<b>+10%</b>	<b>+35%</b>	<b>+31%</b>

## CASE Initiatives

### DEAM

In 2023, CASE proudly celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) for the fifth consecutive year. We showcased stories of disability employment inclusion from the community and highlighted the efforts of service providers and employers nationwide in diversifying the Canadian labour market. Our celebration included two impactful campaigns: #31DaysofDEAM and Cheers to Inclusion!

The DEAM Proclamation Toolkit, which was launched in 2022, was updated and shared through CASE's communication platforms. The toolkit contains information for service providers to approach their provincial representatives about proclaiming October DEAM.

#### Light It Up! For NDEAM 2023®

CASE's MentorAbility Canada partnered with the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) and JobsAbility Canada in support of ODEN's Light It Up! For NDEAM® campaign. Over 700 locations across the country were lit up in purple and blue! From big cities to small towns to rural areas, 150 Canadian communities participated in the DEAM campaign.

#### DEAM 2023 Webinar: A Recipe for Inclusive Workplaces

To recognize DEAM, CASE hosted an entertaining and informative webinar featuring CASE's latest DEAM resources and a captivating session with an esteemed guest speaker, Sydney Kidder, Apprentice Baker, sharing her employment story.



To find out about DEAM celebrations in your community, follow the CASE DEAM [page here](#).

## CASE Initiatives

# CONFERENCE & AWARDS

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Supported Employment Conference, Inclusion Works!, was held in Vancouver from June 6–8, 2023. This conference was hosted in partnership with the World Association for Supported Employment (WASE), Inclusion BC, and the British Columbia Employment Network. Our 632 delegates from Canada and 17 countries around the world were offered opportunities to learn, network, share, and socialize, and to visit exhibitors and the entrepreneur market.

With 114 speakers, one third of them international, sessions covered a variety of informative topics about supported employment in Canada, the US, and other countries. Our co-master of ceremonies and guest speaker, Wayne Herbert, and other presenters discussed how persons who experience disability can be leaders in their own right and are actively advocating for themselves and others.

**Thank you to our sponsors and to our volunteers without whom this conference would not have been possible.**



### CASE 2023 ART CONTEST

The winners of the 2023 Art Contest were Faim Poirier and James Lash.

Pictured is “Future Dream, Respect History, Peace on Earth – Keep Our Nation Canada Safe” by Faim Poirier.

“ I felt so inspired and re-fell in love with my job. It really helped shift me back into the passion that I had when I started. ”

– Conference Participant

### 2023 AWARDS

Each year, CASE celebrates outstanding contributions to the promotion of inclusive employment in Canada. Award recipients are leaders and role models who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to reducing barriers to employment for persons experiencing disability and to building diverse workforces.

#### The CASE Wiltshire Award of Excellence in Supported Employment Connie Polman Tuin

In Powell River, BC, Connie was a driving force behind successful employment programs that have propelled persons experiencing disability to full inclusion. A service provider at Inclusion Powell River, she adapted services to reach a broader population and built strong relationships with employers. Connie helped to set benchmarks for success that go beyond helping people to find and keep jobs.

#### The CASE Mark Wafer Award for Business Excellence Humboldt Sobeys

For 18 years, Dave and JoAnn Doepker, owners of Humboldt Sobeys in Saskatchewan, have partnered with Humboldt and District Community Services. The Doepkers hired 17 persons experiencing disability, and many became long-term employees. They focus on developing the full potential of all employees, support inclusive community events, and act as mentors to staff, service providers, and other business owners.

#### The CASE Phillip Emerson Award for Employment Excellence Narine Dat Sookram

For over 20 years, Narine Dat Sookram has championed equality and inclusion for all people in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. Through past roles and in his current position as a Clinical Social Worker and Psychotherapist, he supported job seekers in finding meaningful work by identifying their unique experiences and strengths. As a DEI trainer and advocate, Narine helps local employers to understand the importance and benefits of inclusive workplaces.

## GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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To stay informed and to share research and best practices, CASE engages with organizations and initiatives involved in supported employment and disability inclusion around the world. These cross-border relationships support our own learning, create opportunities for international partnerships, and help to strengthen the position of supported employment on the world stage.

### World Association for Supported Employment (WASE)

CASE is a proud member of the World Association for Supported Employment (WASE) and serves as a voluntary member of the WASE Board of Directors. CASE strives to leverage collaborative opportunities with WASE and to share best practices to strengthen Canada's supported employment sector and to encourage employment inclusion worldwide.



### 2023 World Supported Employment Conference

In June of 2023, CASE co-hosted the second World Supported Employment Conference with WASE, British Columbia Employment Network, and Inclusion BC. This conference saw 632 delegates come together from Canada and 17 other countries to network, learn, and support one another in our shared work.

### Global Leadership Exchange 2024

CASE attended this biannual event in Utrecht, the Netherlands, and connected with leaders in mental health, disability, and substance use from countries around the world. The next Global Leadership Exchange will be held in Canada in 2026.

### 15<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Supported Employment (ECSE)

At the 15<sup>th</sup> ECSE in Tarragona, Spain, CASE was pleased to present a session on "Innovating Success: Seeding and Supporting Innovative Inclusive Employment Models in Canada."



**Join our mailing list** to receive updates on our ongoing international efforts and partnerships.



# FINANCIALS

CASE's success would not be possible without our valued members and broader CASE community. We sincerely thank each of you for your continued support this year, and we look forward to the exciting initiatives and opportunities that lie ahead for the CASE community.



## REVENUES



**85.99%**

Government  
Funding



**11.34%**

Conference



**1.57%**

Training



**0.36%**

Membership



**0.74%**

Other

## EXPENSES



**93.41%**

CASE Initiatives



**5.17%**

Administration



**1.42%**

Capital

## GET INVOLVED

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CASE reflects the voices of our members and the supported employment sector in Canada.

Get involved and make sure your voice is heard.

**Join a proactive community that is moving the needle forward on supported employment.**

[Become a CASE Member today](#)

**Learn about supported employment or deepen your knowledge.**

[Learning and development opportunities for service providers and employers](#)

[Free resources for service providers and employers](#)

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**Enhance supported employment in your community!**

[Participate in MentorAbility to help job seekers and to introduce employers to inclusion.](#)

[Learn about innovations that could improve how you work.](#)



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## CONTACT US

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