

# Recognizing Community-Based Career and Employment Services



British Columbia  
**Career & Workforce**  
Development Alliance





This paper was prepared for **ASPECT (Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training)** and the **BC Career and Workforce Development Alliance** by **SPARC BC (Social Planning and Research Council of BC)**.

**ASPECT** is a non-profit association of community-based trainers that collectively strive to prepare people for the world of work. Our members are leading experts in the delivery of career training programs that lead to improved chances of employability and job retention.

ASPECT  
975 Alston Street  
Victoria, BC V9A 3S5  
Canada

Phone (250)382-9675  
Fax (250)382-9677  
Toll Free 1 888 87 4957  
Email [info@aspect.bc.ca](mailto:info@aspect.bc.ca)  
Web [www.aspect.bc.ca](http://www.aspect.bc.ca)

**BC Career and Workforce Development Alliance** is an coalition representing the concerns and interests of thousands of career development practitioners across the province of British Columbia. The Alliance is committed to building a productive and effective workforce that meets the demands of an ever-changing economy and provides an opportunity for all British Columbians to participate and benefit from the resulting prosperity. See <http://bclmda.ca> for more information.

**SPARC BC** is a non-partisan, independent charitable organization working with communities in building a just and healthy society for all. Currently, SPARC BC focuses its efforts on the key social issues of income security, accessibility, and community development.

Social Planning and Research Council of BC  
201 - 221 East 10th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V3

Phone (604) 718-7733  
Fax (604) 736-8697  
Email [info@sparc.bc.ca](mailto:info@sparc.bc.ca)  
Web [www.sparc.bc.ca](http://www.sparc.bc.ca)

Contributors: Larianna Brown, Nick Istanffy, of SPARC BC, Doug Preston of North Island Employment and Development Society  
Graphic design concepts: Design HQ Inc.  
Graphic design: Sunny Kooner  
Layout and editing: Lindsay Hindle





# 1 Introduction

A comprehensive system of programs and services has evolved in BC to meet the employment and skill development needs of unemployed people in a rapidly changing economy and labour market. These programs are supported by federal and provincial funding and delivered through public, private, and not-for profit agencies. Based on a review of literature and policies relevant to the BC labour market, the following key questions are discussed in this paper:

- What are the opportunities and challenges of supply and demand-driven approaches to career and employment services?
- What are the implications of regionalizing and corporatizing service delivery?
- What are the implications of using a 'cost-benefit analysis' to evaluate labour market policy development efforts?
- How could career and employment programs applied in other provinces and jurisdictions, inform the BC discussion?
- What are the best practices of effective career and employment service delivery?

## 2 Background

### The BC LMDA

In 1997 the province entered into a co-managed Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) with the federal government which defined separate responsibilities for each government. Under the current LMDA federal funding supports a service delivery model that addresses both the supply and demand sides of career and employment service, with a significant focus on skills development. The majority of the services are carried out by a broad network of non-profit, public, and private community based organizations providing employment services in almost every community in the province and ensuring that services are responsive to unique local needs.<sup>1</sup> The flexibility in the design and delivery of programs has been identified as a significant benefit of current initiatives under the LMDA.<sup>2</sup> The major principles supporting these programs have been equity and accessibility with the aim of providing individualized employment and training programs to all citizens. Programs often target specific populations that face significant challenges to employment, such as youth, persons with disabilities, and immigrants.

<sup>1</sup> The British Columbia Career and Workforce Development Alliance (BCCWDA). LMDA Consultation: Preparing for the Canada - British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. Presentation. (June, 2007), 26

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO). Labour Market Development Agreements: Their Impact on Education and Training. CAETO Panel Discussions. (February, 2001). Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.caeto.ca/discussion/feb601.shtml>

## Federal employment programs

Some federally funded services are available to all British Columbians. There have traditionally been two distinctly different approaches to providing career and employment programs and services: supply driven (focusing on the needs of individuals, and demand-driven (focusing on the needs of employers and the economy). Supply side programs take an individualized approach to improve a client's capacity to find and retain employment via assessments, job search supports, counseling, and training and education to increase the quality for labour supply. In contrast, demand side programs may include offering targeted wage subsidies to employers to hire workers from under-represented populations, and working with employers to identify their human resource employment needs and provide better information about recruiting and retaining employees. Historically federally funded programs have focused on offering employment services, largely through small private, and non-profit organizations. The main goals of demand-driven employment programs are to address skill shortages and increase economic output through filling job vacancies.

At present both demand and supply oriented approaches are being used in BC career and employment programs and services. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) and Service Canada administer over 300 contracts with service providers across the province serving approximately 100 000 people annually.<sup>3</sup>

## Provincial employment programs

Under the co-managed LMDA, the provincial government manages programs and services primarily for clients in receipt of Income Assistance. The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance administers programs and services to people receiving income assistance or disability benefits. These programs include: 1) the BC Employment Program (BCEP), an umbrella program providing individualized employment services and supports to assist clients along the employment continuum;<sup>4</sup> 2) Community Assistance Programs, that support community group provision of services to assist persons facing multiple barriers to independence;<sup>5</sup> and 3) Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities, offering in-depth pre-employment services, job training and placement, disability management assistance, and workplace follow-up support.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Economic Development offer programs to assist immigrants and older workers. Information on career planning and recruiting and retaining of employees is available through the WorkBC Program operated by the Ministry of Economic Development.

<sup>3</sup> BCCWDA, 27

<sup>4</sup> BC Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. British Columbia Employment Program: BCEP Leading Practices Forum. Presentation. March, 2007: 1 - 19

<sup>5</sup> BC Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. BC Employment and Assistance, Additional Assistance for British Columbians in Need: Community Assistance Program. Retrieved November 12, 2007, from <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/PROGRAMS/other.htm#cap>

<sup>6</sup> BC Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved November 12, 2007, from <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/2007/EPPD.htm>





## Current trends in BC's economy

Today a number of factors are significantly influencing the booming BC economy. Over the next decade the economic growth is expected to continue, resulting in over a million jobs being created.<sup>7</sup> Many of these jobs will require skills training as a result of technological advancements, however a significant skills shortage is anticipated in BC as a consequence of declining birthrates in combination with an aging workforce. In addition, the competitive markets for goods and services, driven by globalization, force government agencies to favour policies that promote economic efficiency, competitiveness, and productivity.

In response to these pressures, demand-driven career and employment programming have become increasingly important. At the same time these changes are stimulating a demand-centred economy, the release of the 2007 Federal Budget included an announcement of full devolution of federal labour market funding and responsibilities to the provinces, including British Columbia. This shift entails transferring federal funds, projects, programs and staff to the province to deliver support measures and benefits to BC residents (as defined in Part II of the Employment Insurance Act). Such a shift in responsibilities will require provincial and federal agencies to negotiate a new LMDA. The negotiation process offers an opportunity for service providers to provide input on effective ways to enhance workforce and employment services delivery in the province and ensure these programs reflect provincial economic trends. With the emergence of a new LMDA, the career and service sector may also need to adapt service delivery models to fit the new paradigm.

## Purpose of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential implications of changes to the LMDA and to serve as an educational outreach tool. The paper will discuss the challenges and opportunities of supply and demand oriented programs, followed by a set of recommendations to encourage effective career and employment service delivery.

<sup>7</sup> BC Ministry of Economic Development (BC MoED). WorkBC: An Action Plan to Address BC's Critical Skills Shortages. Presentation. 2007: 1-11.



# 3 Opportunities and Challenges of Supply and Demand-Driven Career and Employment Programming

## Opportunities of supply-driven programs

Supply-driven career and employment programs have been recognized as offering a number of important benefits to clients. With the aim of providing individualized employment and training programs to all citizens, programs such as work search assistance, employment planning assistance, specific skills training, and job placement services can be tailored to meet the specific needs of clients assisting them in their transition to employment. In BC, supply-side programming has also been used to target specific populations that face significant challenges to employment such as youth, persons with disabilities, and immigrants. An evaluation of BC's Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSMs) in 2001 identified the flexibility in the design and delivery of these supply-oriented programs as a significant benefit of services offered under the BC LMDA.<sup>8</sup>

An individualized approach to employment services helps clients develop their employable skills, and helps to build client confidence. Clients are encouraged to develop networks intended to lead to employment opportunities, which in turn assists in easing feelings of isolation. Client-centred programs also assist in building the capacity of individual clients, which has positive spin-off effects contributing capacity development and social capital at the community level. It is also important to note that in times of intense pressure to meet employment demands, supply oriented programs still serve an important role assisting individuals in actively engaging and attaching to employment opportunities.

## Challenges of supply-driven programs

Supply oriented career and employment programs help support individuals to find appropriate employment opportunities but employers also need assistance to recruit and train employees. A significant challenge of offering supply-driven programs is to ensure that service delivery also meets employer's needs. This issue was identified in the 2001 Summative Evaluation of EBSMs where these programs were found to lack a strong connection to employers and were perceived by employers as offering limited benefits (p 54). This particular issue has been identified as a potential threat to the current career and employment service sector.<sup>9</sup> While employment agencies have historically not been mandated to record their engagement activities with employers, tracking such interactions, strengthening existing links, or fostering new partnerships, could serve to validate the important work these agencies undertake (p 14).

<sup>8</sup> Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). Summative Evaluation of Employment Benefits and Support Measures under the Terms of the Canada/British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. Retrieved October 7, 2007, from <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/5Ccs/5Csp/5Chrds/5Cevaluation/5Creports/5Csp-ah-666-04-04/5Cpage04.shtml>

<sup>9</sup> Neault, R. and D. Pickerell. Making the Case: Demonstrating the Impact of Career and Employment Services. Forthcoming. 2007: 1-19

## Opportunities of demand-driven programs

Demand-based programming is recognized as an important aspect of BC's career and employment interventions. In particular employers would significantly benefit from career and employment services that can help them meet their workforce needs in today's booming economy. The BC Ministry of Economic Development asserts that increasing funding and ensuring additional spaces in post secondary educational institutions, increasing the number of apprenticeship positions, connecting immigrants with skill development programming, and encouraging communication between individuals and employers are necessary demand based measures to tackle the impending skill shortage.<sup>10</sup>

In 2001 the Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations stated the development of a skilled workforce must be a long-term commitment and that the long term sustainability of labour markets hinges on the inclusion of industry incentives and programs to identify employment opportunities and required skill sets.<sup>11</sup> Additionally demand oriented career and employment services are needed to meet the last of the province's *Five Great Goals* "to create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada", defined to focus provincial service delivery over the next decade.<sup>12</sup>

## Challenges of demand-driven programs

While there are many benefits of implementing demand-based programs in labour markets, the narrowly defined economic goals on which such an approach is based are vulnerable to criticism.<sup>13</sup> Limiting the indicators of effective program delivery to productivity and growth excludes necessary measures of quality service delivery to people that are seeking access to employment. In particular, services for those who face multiple barriers to employment, or who reside in rural communities may be further reduced under an approach that focuses only on cost-benefit as a measure of success.<sup>14</sup> The fact that a significant proportion of people who are currently unemployed in BC's booming economy experience some kind of barrier to employment suggests that a demand side approach would be ineffective at finding them work without additional supply side supports.

10 BC MoED, 6-8.

11 CAETO, 3.

12 Province of BC. Strategic Plan Update: 2005/6 - 2007/8. Retrieved November 14, 2007, from [http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2005\\_Sept\\_Update/stplan/default.htm](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2005_Sept_Update/stplan/default.htm)

13 Association of Service-Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT). Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance on Behalf of ASPECT. (October 2007). 1-7

14 Leyne, L. Aid Programs Miss Their Best Target: Increasing Move to Privatization Misses Those Who Need Help Most. Times Colonist. (2007). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from [file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/lbrown/Local%20Settings/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/OLK2C8/Print%20Story%20-%20canada\\_com%20network.htm](file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/lbrown/Local%20Settings/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/OLK2C8/Print%20Story%20-%20canada_com%20network.htm)



## Building a comprehensive approach

Evidence discussed in the previous sections suggests that a booming economy with skilled labour shortages requires a comprehensive approach to career and workforce service delivery. Since the Summative Evaluation of EBSMs in 2001, the career and employment sector have introduced a number of measures to develop partnerships with employers and meet their workforce needs. Current federal funding models support a career and employment service delivery model that addresses both the supply and demand sides of the labour market with a significant focus on skills development.

# 4 Local Versus Regional Service Provision

Until recently the majority of services were carried out by a broad network of community based organizations responsive to local economic and employment needs. However, over the past few years there has been a shift in provincial allocation of contractual agreements away from community based small business and not-for-profit organizations to large private sector regional and international providers.

While such a shift may be driven by cost-benefit, the result may be limited access to career and employment services and programs. From a market perspective the greatest economic returns for career and employment service provision are available in urban centres assisting people who are easily employed. Critics warn that it is not often in the best interests of large private non-local firms to invest the extra time and energy in the people who face multiple barriers to employment.<sup>15 16</sup>

In contrast, locally based career and employment service providers are able to use local labour market information, conditions, and needs to develop and administer budgets and programs. Contracted services at the community level further ensure that services are able to respond to the unique and differing needs of urban and rural communities<sup>17</sup> as opposed to larger more globally oriented private firms. Additionally, the specialized knowledge and capacity that community-based organizations have developed over the past 30 years, and the comprehensive network of over 300 local service providers that have emerged, should be acknowledged as significant assets to BC communities and the province as a whole. BC is unique in Canada with the greatest number of contracted out career and employment services relative to any other province. Contracting services to community based agencies also facilitates a more equitable distribution of financial benefits flowing from provincial and federal agencies to local communities rather than corporate shareholders.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>16</sup> ASPECT, 3.

<sup>17</sup> BCCWDA, 24.







In addition, the career and employment sector recognizes the importance of reducing client isolation as an important employment attachment technique. The danger of regionalizing service provision is that clients are often required to use the internet to access such services, which may lead to increasing a client's sense of isolation and social exclusion. Programs that encourage social inclusion have a number of other benefits including contributing to community health, social capital, and development.

## 5 Implications of Using a 'Cost-benefit' Approach to Analysis to Evaluate Labour Market Development Efforts


Given the significant implications of labour market policies and the importance of government accountability to the public, it is essential to have effective evaluations of career and employment services and programs. 'Cost-benefit' analysis is an evaluation technique that can be applied to assess the costs and benefits of a program. To make this comparison monetary values are assigned to the program inputs (costs) and the program outputs (benefits). Programs are deemed beneficial if the benefits outweigh the costs.<sup>18</sup> Typical outcomes measured include increases in earnings, increases in hours worked, or reduction in social assistance or employment insurance use.

### The challenges of using cost-benefit analysis

While Mason and Tereraho assert that cost-benefit analysis is a useful method for measuring the monetary implications of employment and training programs, they warn that most studies assessing labour markets use inappropriate or incomplete measures (p 3). One particular challenge associated with the application of a cost-benefit analysis is the need for outcomes to be quantifiable and completely attributed to the intervention being evaluated. For example the reduction in social assistance or employment insurance use is a challenging cost-benefit measure. It is very difficult to prove that such reductions are a direct result of program participation and not confounding influences such as changes to external economic factors or eligibility policies (p 12).

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18 Mason, G. and Tereraho, M. "Value for Money Analysis of Active Labour Market Programs." *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. 22.1 (2007): 1-29.



The heterogeneous nature of clients and their diverse backgrounds and needs require special consideration when applying cost-benefit analysis to labour markets. Timing is of particular importance when designing evaluations. Clients facing greater barriers to employment often need more training and time investment to access employment. As such, longer term evaluations are required to develop a meaningful measure of the effectiveness of the programs they access. For example, clients who have recently become unemployed may take less than a month to find employment with job matching and counseling support. In comparison, clients with little education, limited employment experience, and/or dependent children may take much longer and require multiple employment services to find a job. An evaluation of the effectiveness of employment services provided should therefore include the longer term needs of clients facing multiple barriers to employment (p 11).

It is also inappropriate to compare unit costs of outcomes across disparate programs to determine cost-benefit, as most training programs vary to meet the needs of specific clients or client groups. For example, the cost-benefit of a three week resume writing course should not be compared to a two year upgrading program for people with limited education. In short, employment training is more expensive for some clients than for others (p 12).

## The value of comprehensive evaluations

An extensive study by Gaelle Pierre examining active labour market policy evaluations in the United States and the European Union argues that there is no single effective evaluative technique and suggests that a meaningful evaluation requires a combination of methods.<sup>19</sup> Pierre further asserts that measures of employment and earnings compose only half the lens from which to view the effectiveness of career and employment programs, social development indicators make up the remaining half (p 40).

In a currently unpublished paper examining research to support effective career and employment service provision in BC, authors (Neault and Pickerell) assert that career service providers should expand the measurables used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs.<sup>20</sup> The authors warn that if more comprehensive evaluation methods are not adopted by employment agencies they may be at risk of losing funding as current evaluations do not provide sufficient information to policy makers and funders (p 7). It is recommended that career and employment agencies adopt a framework for improved data collection and program evaluation developed by the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practices in Career Development (CRWG) (cited by Neault and Pickerell). Under this framework, expanded evaluation indicators include:

- Inputs – resources used to provide the program under evaluation such as staff, funding, facilities, and community resources;
- Processes – factors influencing the programs and services offered, such as basic working alliance skills, group activities, online and paper-based resources, measures of satisfaction, and other indicators of quality service; and
- Outcomes – measures of client change such as mastery of learning objectives, changes in attitude and interpersonal or intrapersonal skills, engagement in training, employment status, and independence from financial supports (p 8-9).

19 Pierre, G. "A Framework for Active Labour Market Policy Evaluation." Employment and Training Department, International Labour Office. Geneva. (1999): 1-42. Retrieved October 13, 2007, from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/publ/etp49.htm>

20 Neault & Pickerell, 9.

A number of additional measures that should also be considered in the discussion of broadening program evaluation measures include:

- Outcome differences between rural and urban areas;
- Training and skill development of employed and unemployed individuals; and those receiving and not receiving income assistance ;and
- Quality of work and work/life balance.<sup>21 22</sup>

## 6 Significant themes of labour market policies in other jurisdictions

### Lessons from other provinces

BC's employment and training programs could be improved by applying a number of initiatives undertaken through the Ontario and Quebec LMDAs. Employment services in these two provinces have comprehensive goals with both provinces identifying social and economic objectives as part of their career and employment strategies.<sup>23 24</sup> Since both provinces have fully devolved LMDAs they are able to offer one stop employment and training services available to all residents through multiple entry points. The 2006 Ontario Developing Skills Through Partnerships Symposium Report recommends that LMDA service systems should provide both one-stop shopping as a source for information, and at the same time, offer a variety of entry points (p 2).

In British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec and Ontario employment and training services are delivered by a range of service providers including the private and community sectors. In Quebec and Ontario there is a strong emphasis on working with community organizations and not-for-profit providers, recognizing they can enhance employment services by incorporating local needs.<sup>25 26</sup> Alberta, on the other hand, provides initial employment services through one stop government offices but refers to community based service providers for specific services.<sup>27</sup>

21 Hughes, D. Investing in Career: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfalls for Government. Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.(2004): 1–24. Retrieved October 13, 2007, from <http://lifework.ca/UK%20Investing%20in%20Career%2005-04.pdf>

22 Coats, D. The Work Foundation. An Agenda for Work: The Work Foundation's Challenge to Policy Makers. 2.1 (2005):1–54. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from [http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/Agenda\\_for\\_work.pdf](http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/Agenda_for_work.pdf)

23 Emploi-Quebec. The Public Employment Service, its Partners and Clients. Opportunities 2007, Panel on LMDA. 2007.

24 Colleges Ontario, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ontario Chamber of Commerce & Onestep, Developing Skills through Partnership: Symposium Report. (2007): 3. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from [http://www.cprn.org/documents/48200\\_fr.pdf](http://www.cprn.org/documents/48200_fr.pdf)

25 Ibid, 3.

26 Emploi-Quebec, 6.

27 Willis, L. Alberta's Experience with LMDA. Presentation at the Partnerships for Success Opportunities Conference. (April, 2007): 1–12.



The transition from Federal to Provincial responsibilities can pose major challenges including combining services, transferring staff, and harmonizing systems while ensuring quality service provision. The experiences of Provinces that hold fully devolved LMDAs highlight the need for provincial agencies to undertake responsive planning, engage with staff and stakeholders, and remain flexible to facilitate a smooth transition.<sup>28</sup>

## Lessons from other jurisdictions

Many countries have skilled labour shortages and are seeking to address ways of raising skills, productivity and participation in the workforce. In the UK, New Zealand, and Canada common themes influencing labour market policies focus on developing people's employment and life skills and improving the quality of employment.

There is strong evidence that individualized, quality skill development can lead to better jobs and improved health while reducing social exclusion.<sup>29</sup> The impetus for providing skill development is linked to changes in the work environment, including a shift to more short-term contracts. This in turn forces people to change career paths several times, contributing to feelings of uncertainty at work, in addition to not realizing their real potential. While career and employment agencies in BC recognize the need to tackle skills shortages in the province, a report by the UK's Guidance Council suggests skills development starts with increasing education information to support clients to make wise and informed career and training choices. Hughes argues that in order for clients' to have "intelligent careers" they require five key sets of information: 1) knowing why - their values and motivation; 2) knowing how - identifying their knowledge, skills, and experience; 3) knowing whom - identifying who is available to offer support; 4) knowing where - understanding current employment and economic trends; and 5) knowing when - identifying ideal timing opportunities for planning career opportunities and changes (p 12). This approach may be useful in the BC context as it is supply-side oriented (supporting individuals), offering a complementary alternative to the demand oriented programming often identified as appropriate to deal with skill shortages.

There is also growing recognition that job quality has significant implications for employees and their likelihood to stay and feel committed to a job, which in turn affects employers, and the economy. Offering flexible work hours, investing in child care and improving wages are just a few of the factors influencing job quality that New Zealand's career and employment policies are responding to<sup>30</sup> and Canadian employees are increasingly demanding.<sup>31</sup>

28 Colleges Ontario, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ontario Chamber of Commerce & Onestep, 4.

29 Hughes, 3

30 Nelson Regional EDA. Nelson/Tasman Work Force Development Group Strategy. (2006): 1-18. Retrieved October 13, 2007, from [http://eda.co.nz/documents/documents/Strat\\_001.pdf](http://eda.co.nz/documents/documents/Strat_001.pdf)

31 Lowe, G. 21st Century Job Quality: Achieving What Canadians Want. (2007): 1-109. Retrieved October 12, 2007, from <http://www.longwoods.com/product.php?productid=19213&page=1>





# 7 Effective Labour Market Policies – Best Practices

In 2006, one year after the province of Ontario and the federal government signed the Canada–Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement, stakeholders including clients, delivery agents, and government met to identify how to improve the delivery of labour market programs.<sup>32</sup> The findings of this symposium report offer valuable insight as to the best practices of labour market policies. Key concepts identified in the symposium report as well as salient themes discussed previously in this paper are listed below.

The goal of career and employment services and programs should be to:

- Ensure workers have the best possible employment opportunities and employers have the best possible employees to fill current and future jobs to ensure regions have prospering industries and businesses and people have meaningful employment
- Identify both social and economic development objectives<sup>24</sup>

The service delivery system should:

Be comprehensive

- Be coordinated to provide comprehensive services that address supply and demand side opportunities and needs
- Offer programs to encourage high quality of work standards<sup>13</sup>
- Provide services to businesses, particularly small businesses, to assist them to develop human resource strategies and
- Provide services to support

Be accessible

- Provide a “one-stop-shop” model making all career and employment programs available to clients in one location
- Provide a variety of entry points for clients to access “one-stop-shop” programs and services

Be client-driven

- Offer client centred programs and services serving both employees and employers
- Serve people according to their needs regardless of funding source
- Apply a case management approach to meet client’s individual needs
- Have clear outcomes for clients
- Offer targeted programs for people with multiple barriers to employment who have historically been under-represented in the workforce

Labour market policy evaluations should:

<sup>32</sup> Colleges Ontario, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ontario Chamber of Commerce & Onestep, 4–10

#### Be community based

- Be driven by local level planning that is coordinated across all sectors and government ministries to be flexible, responsive, and inter-connected
- Be flexible and responsive to clients and local community needs taking into account local capacities, resources, and economic and social circumstances
- Take into consideration the disparity between urban and rural areas

#### Be responsive

- Address both current and future needs by utilizing adaptive frameworks that rapidly respond to changing economic and labour market cycles
- Respond to and anticipate labour market changes at a provincial, regional, and local level
  
- Apply cost-benefit analysis in combination with measures of social development indicators
- Design the evaluation to measure the impacts of skill and training programs on:
  - Urban and rural areas
  - Employed and unemployed individuals
  - Individuals receiving and not receiving income assistance<sup>5</sup>
- Design evaluation frameworks to account for the extended period of time it takes clients with multiple barriers to complete employment and training services
- Evaluate programs based on the individual objectives of that program as opposed to comparing programs that have varying objectives and serve clients with dramatically different needs

British Columbia is at a crossroads in determining future labour market policy objectives and implementation.

## 8 Conclusion

While factors such as an aging population, increased demand for skills and globalization are driving labour market policies towards demand oriented intervention it is important to identify the unique benefits offered by supply side programming. Given the trend towards market based delivery and evaluation of career and employment programs, care should be taken to ensure that individuals facing multiple barriers to employment and those living in rural areas have access to quality employment and training programs.

Evidence suggests that effective employment and workforce development programs require a combination of supply and demand based interventions. Further, in allocating employment and training contracts it is important to acknowledge the significant benefits community based organizations provide, namely the ability to understand local social and economic conditions and adapt to the needs, resources, and capacities of local clients.

Successful development and delivery of the services relies on strong partnerships. Within the framework of provincial policy, the service is based on local-level planning and partnership involving a full range of partners including employers, unions, training institutes, provincial and Federal government and local organizations. This helps the services to respond with flexibility and innovation to the needs of clients, the labour market and communities on a local level.



# Recognizing Community-Based Career and Employment Services

This paper explores:

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- What are the implications of using a 'cost-benefit analysis' to evaluate labour market policy development efforts?
- How could career and employment programs applied in other provinces and jurisdictions, inform the BC discussion?
- What are the best practices of effective career and employment service delivery?

