

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments have made a commitment to ensuring the employment – related needs of citizens are addressed. This support is provided through referrals to jobs, counselling services, job coaching and financial support. Persons with Disabilities have full access to these services although sometimes eligibility for certain benefits is based on making contributions to the program fund. For example, eligibility for Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan – Disability benefits is based on contribution to these plans as an employed worker. Also, there may be no entitlement to one benefit if you are receiving another.

This document is intended to provide an overview of benefits and eligibility criteria of the various Federal, Provincial and Municipal programs that are available with a focus on persons with disabilities. More detailed information may be obtained by calling phone numbers provided below or by visiting the individual departments and ministries.

Municipal Government - Toronto



A variety of programs and services are provided to help eligible residents of Toronto find the shortest route to employment. Staff in 14 community-based offices deliver the **Ontario Works** program by providing short-term financial support including funds to cover basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Additional financial support for employment related expenses such as transportation or certification fees may be provided. A special financial support mechanism called the **Disability Access Fund** is available to cover items such as larger print materials, sign language interpreter services, escorts and transcription services (audio and Braille). Caseworkers also assist clients as they work toward their goal of finding paid employment.

Ontario Works program components are:

- Employment Supports.

- Community Participation.
- Employment Placement.

Employment Supports include:

- Referrals to community-based training programs.
- Help with career exploration.
- Assistance with upgrading basic education
- Support with job search.
- Guidance on English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes / programs.
- Each local office has an Employment Resource Centre onsite.

Community Participation allows clients to volunteer with non-profit and public community organizations. Clients are able to develop job-related skills, gain work experience and make contacts with persons or organizations in their field of interest.

Employment Placement involves:

- Referral to a job placement agency for assistance in improving job-search skills,

resume writing techniques, and developing interview skills.

- Matching to potential employers based on clients skills and qualifications and job opportunities.
- Access to on-going supports such as computers, the Internet and up-to-date job information.
- Training and support for clients who are interested in becoming self employed.

Who's Eligible:

To access information on eligibility for this program call (416 392-8623).

Province of Ontario



Ontario Disability Supports Program

(ODSP) – Employment Supports - provides goods & services to reduce or eliminate substantial disability-related barriers to competitive employment for people with disabilities. Competitive Employment is any full time, part-time, or contract employment, or self-employment in which minimum wage or more is received.

Supports to help reach your employment goal may include:

- Employment Planning & Preparation e.g., career exploration, specialized assessments, job trials.
- Employment Skills Training e.g. job skills training, on-the-job training, specialized computer training.
- Training Support Services e.g., uniforms, tutoring, licenses, supports coordination.
- Assistive Devices and Supplies; Adaptive Technology.
- Interpreter & Intervenor services.
- Transportation Assistance.
- Job Coaching.
- Job Placement.

Who's Eligible:

Applicants with a physical or mental Impairment which is continuous or recurrent, expected to last one year or more and that presents a substantial barrier to competitive work.

- The disability has been verified by a qualified professional.
- Willing and able to prepare for, accept or maintain competitive employment.
- Resident of Ontario and 16 years of age or more.
- Legally entitled to work in Canada.

Note: People receiving benefits from any of the following programs should access employment / rehabilitation services through them and not OSDSP:

- Ontario Works.
- Canada Pension Plan - Disability (CPP-D) benefit.
- Employment Insurance (EI).
- Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) benefit.
- Insurance Act benefit.
- Ministry of Health Drug & Alcohol recovery program.
- An Insurance Policy.

Information on eligibility and how to access this program is available by calling: (416) 325-0693 or 314-5701 (TTY / TDD).

The ODSP website is: <http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS/page/services/odsp.html>

Home and Vehicle Modification Program – in partnership with Ontario March of Dimes provides funding for modifications to homes and vehicles that enhance the independence of consumers with physical disabilities.

- Applications for up to \$15,000 of assistance in making modifications to homes and vehicles.
- Funding is not contingent on employment.

- Program ensures basic accessibility and facilitates independent living and reduces risk of injury to persons with physical disabilities.
- Occupational therapist's assessments or barrier-free consultations can be included in the costing of a modification.
- Families earning more than \$51,000/year are asked to make a contribution to the cost of modifications.

Application may be made in both official languages by calling toll-free 1-877-369-HVMP.

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)

Job Connect - provides three services designed to assist unemployed individuals, especially youth, gain the skills and knowledge they need to find and keep jobs.

Information and Referral Service includes career, local job market, and job search strategies information and training opportunities.

Employment Planning and Preparation includes clarifying short and long term goals and developing an action plan to prepare for employment.

Job Development Placement Support includes job trials, volunteer placements, subsidized on-the-job training and direct placements. Training incentives are provided to employers to support training costs if required.

Who's Eligible:

- Youth (ages 16-24).
- Adults who are receiving Ontario Works, ODSP benefits OR who have been unemployed for a minimum of 6 months.

- Individuals defined as insured participants under the EI Act or WSIB are **not** eligible.

More information on eligibility and access is available by calling the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at 1-800-387-5656.

Ontario Student Assistance Program, Bursary for Students with Disabilities - Financial support up to \$7,000 per academic year is available to help Ontario post-secondary students in meeting costs incurred for equipment and supplies (specialized chairs, hearing / vision learning aids, tutoring services, counselling, therapy, computers and software) related to their disability.

Application packages may be obtained from the special needs office of any post-secondary institution or down-loaded from the OSAP website at <http://osap.gov.on.ca>

Federal Government - Human Resources Development Canada

Canada

Federal Government - Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) provides a number of employment related services to job seekers. Job Banks, Kiosks and the Internet give access to information about job opportunities across Canada and to labour market information. Access to employment related resources, assistance in making career decisions, writing resumes and preparing for interviews is provided by projects funded through the Human Resources Investment Fund. A guide to the location of Employment Resource Centres and Employment Assessment Centres in Toronto can be found at: www.toronto-hrdc.sto.org.

In addition, Employment Insurance provides benefits to eligible contributors based on the number of hours worked prior to application.

Benefits include:

- Temporary income replacement.
- Targeted Wage Subsidies - for overhead costs related to the special needs of the client.
- Skills Development.
- Job Creation Partnerships.
- Self Employment Benefit.

Who's Eligible:

- Employment Insurance contributors.
- Based on the number of hours worked prior to application for benefit.

Employability Assistance for People With Disabilities (EAPD) - a federal-provincial cost shared program designed to help working age adults with disabilities prepare for, get and keep employment.

Who's Eligible:

- Delivered by the Province.
- See section on ODSP.

Income Security Programs - Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit - payable to persons prevented from working because of a severe and prolonged physical or mental disability.

Who's Eligible:

- Persons between the ages of 18 and 65.
- Persons with a severe and prolonged disability as defined by CPP legislation.
- Contributors to CPP for a minimum qualifying period.
- Must apply in writing.

Information: 1-800-277-9914 or 1-800-255-4786 (TDD / TTY)

Canada Pension Plan Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program:

- Helps selected recipients of CPP disability to develop a return-to-work rehabilitation plan.
- Must be motivated to return to work.
- Physicians must agree they can cope with a work-related rehabilitation program.

Information: 1-800-461-3422

Canada Student Loans Program Special Opportunity Grant

- Up to \$5,000 per year.
- Post-secondary study.
- For additional education-related expenses due to disability.

Information: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrrib/learnlit/cslp/common/search/faq.shtml> and from learning institutions.

Opportunities Fund

- Partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities.
- Access to paid or self-employment.
- Designed for people with disabilities who are not eligible for Employment Insurance.

Information: available from HRDC at: (416) 973-3510.

Programs, Services and Publications provided by other Federal Government Departments are summarized in a publication entitled Bridging the Gap. Copies are available in standard and alternate formats by calling:

1-800-788-8282.

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>