

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget 2023



**Canadian Coalition of Community-Based Employability Training (CCCBET)/
Coalition canadienne des organismes communautaires en développement de
l'employabilité (CCOCDE)**

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Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government establish funding to support the development of a Federal Employment Strategy Framework that supports career development and employability training to meet the current and future labour market needs outside political cycles.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government continue to support and build on existing community-based employment and training agencies' programs and supports. These agencies are delivering on-the-ground support in response to labour market demands.
- **Recommendation 3:** That the government should provide funding for the Future Skills Centre for another three to five years to support this country's changing labour market and economic needs.

About CCCBET

The CCCBET is a national, non-profit organization whose membership is comprised of representatives from provincial and national employment and training associations and organizations. We represent the approximately 1,000 community-based training organizations across Canada that deliver workforce development programs primarily funded through the Workforce Development Agreements, the Labour Market Development Agreements, and direct funding such as the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy.

CCCBET provides pan-Canadian leadership for the community-based employment and training sector. Our vision is to ensure that the employment and training sector offers recognized professional services and that all people have access to community-based services that support their pursuit of meaningful employment and social inclusion. We are a conduit for information to and from the government to help citizens seeking employment. Because of our national scope, enhanced by community-based services, we offer a community perspective on issues as they arise regionally. We are closely connected with the needs of clients and employers in our communities and committed to meeting the needs of both.

As experts within their communities, our members bring an informed perspective to the national discussion around community-based employability and training support programs.

Recommendation 1: Invest in a Federal Employment Strategy Framework

Currently, much of the employment services funding is project-based and relies on employment service providers to create individual programs to address labour market needs.

Project-based funding fills gaps and provides political capital but does not support a system breaking under the demands. It also creates funding silos that can compete or overlap with other federally and provincially funded initiatives and does not always meet the labour market demands within the community, especially within the current volatile labour market.

Service providers are under increasing pressure to deliver more for less, relying on funding from other funding streams to compensate for shortfalls in program funding. This funding deficiency has created an environment where multi-national employment agencies have the fiscal capacity to deliver services but are removed from the community and local labour market intelligence. A "big-box store" model of employment services undermines our communities and the fabric of Canada.

A Federal Employment Strategy Framework would:

1. Reduce funding overlap
2. Support crucial employment service infrastructure by supporting local agencies delivering services such as core funding and increased wages that reflect the current labour market.
3. Encourage various government bodies to share information and reduce duplication of services by partnering with community-based training and employment organizations.
4. Encourage various government bodies to continue funding successful initiatives in each province rather than allow successful programs to perish because of emerging political or funding priorities.

Therefore, we ask that the government establish funding to support the development of a Federal Employment Strategy Framework that supports career development and employability training to meet the current and future labour market needs.

Recommendation 2: Continue to Support & Build Existing Programs

Community-based employment & training service providers are experts on the ground and are valuable partners to the government. We work within all aspects of the labour market: the unemployed, underemployed, and transitioning workers, along with local economic development corporations and employers.

We see the successes firsthand associated with:

- Wrap-around services for people entering the workforce
- Language training grants
- Housing
- Mental health
- National daycare program
- Mid-career upskilling in response to changing local market needs.
- Work integrated and paid internships (not limited to those under age 30) to assist in onboarding barriered groups, e.g., Indigenous, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, first-time entrants, women returning to the workforce, etc.

We are mindful that too many effective community-based projects' programs and services have proven their success in addressing the workforce development of barriered individuals; however, many times the government has discontinued these successful programs. Then, a while later, the government funds other projects similar to the original ones. As a result, the funder expends still more funds to start and rebuild programs and services that were successful in the first place. It is a misuse of the taxpayers' money.

Canada's economic growth and the need for businesses to secure previously untapped domestic labour pools to support better the administrative work required by project agencies is critical to the economic future of Canada. The new changes to actual cost offsets are creating an increase in the volume of administrative work with strict limitations of cash flow for base operational requirements, which further limits the insert here community-based organizations' projects' ability to serve clients directly. We ask that the government implement baseline operational funding providing a fulsome administrative cost calculated by percentage rather than a cost offset for community-based employment and training agencies.

Recommendation 3: Continue to Support Programs that Support Employment and Career Development

The Future Skills Centre's work has significantly impacted the challenges of the volatile labour market, and their work must continue. They bring together all the perspectives and stakeholders and provide creative and innovative solutions through research, pilot programs, communications, and leadership. Their work to identify the value and development of under-represented workers through justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives has helped shift labour market in the right direction to meet the needs of the national economic development, both now and in the future.

Conclusion

Employment service and training organizations across Canada are proud to be part of the solution to meeting Canada's labour market and economic needs. However, our collective work is challenged by siloed and overlapping funding, inadequate funding, short-sighted programming, and the inability to address Canada's long-term needs. For these reasons, CCCBET is asking that the federal government invest in a National Employment Strategy Framework, fund community-based employment and training organizations to adequately meet the current and future labour market needs, and to re-fund the Future Skills Centre for another three to five years.

In Canada, a valuable and underutilized resource of community-based career development and service professionals exists that, with an overall employment strategy, increased administrative funding, and ongoing leadership from the Future Skills Centre, can thrive and meet the labour market needs now and in the future.