



## **Job Sharing as a Collaborative Strategy of the Job Developers Network (JDN)**

Key Research Findings and Recommendations for  
Employment Service Provider Networks and Collaborative Partnerships  
(May, 2018)



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*Ontario's employment service provider organizations (ESPs) and their staff are increasingly collaborating with each other to enhance service delivery and improve employment outcomes.*

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**For job development professionals in particular, whose service role is to connect employers and job seekers, collaborating with colleagues can provide valuable professional supports for their day-to-day work:**

- Making effective placements by sharing job postings
- Increasing referrals through networking and information sharing
- Increasing employer awareness of job development services through coordinated activities such as job fairs
- Accessing colleagues' support and solutions when facing challenges.<sup>i</sup>

**Job developer partnerships may also be constrained by:**

- The highly competitive nature of their work
- Low employer awareness of job developers' roles and resources
- Difficulty in measuring and describing the outcomes of collaborative strategies such as job sharing and cross-referrals.<sup>ii</sup>

Using the case of the Job Developers Network (JDN)<sup>iii</sup> which operates in the Southwestern Ontario region, we investigated the specific collaborative practice of sharing job postings over a 6 month period. JDN job developers from more than 20 member ESPs use an online portal to post job opportunities and refer candidates. Our results identify the value that job sharing provides for those involved, including job developers, employers, job seekers, and community employment service stakeholders.

### ***Key Research Findings:***

#### **A. The job sharing portal generates useful regional Labour Market Information.**

Analyzing shared postings provides a valuable LMI snapshot of the types of harder-to-fill job orders facing job developers, including:

- The industries and occupations which challenge job developers in finding candidates
- Job type: more secure (full-time, higher wage) or more precarious (part time, low wage)
- Education and skills requirements
- The location of available jobs and transportation availability, and much more ...

#### **B. Job Developers have complex motivations for sharing postings with their network:**

- Jobs where no suitable or interested internal candidate can be found
- Jobs requiring personal transportation
- Jobs with multiple vacancies and/or with an urgent need by the employer to fill
- Demonstrating value-add and increased exposure to employers

*"I saw several benefits to sharing jobs on the portal. There was a quick turnaround needed, we had several positions available, we didn't have enough internal candidates/or enough qualified candidates, plus I felt like it was a good opportunity to connect with other service providers and team up."*

*"I always tell employers about the JDN and the portal. I use it as a marketing strategy so that they always know they are getting the most visibility I can provide."*

**C. Job Developers identify the following benefits of sharing job postings (and candidates):**

- Increasing the likelihood of successful employer and job seeker matches
- Reducing stress of hard-to-fill positions
- Confidence that candidates referred by their colleagues are pre-screened and job ready to the professional standards of the JDN
- Leveraging resources, funding, and information to secure good matches.

*"Using the portal to share jobs helps to lift the pressure off of one person. When you feel isolated, you can get support from peers. The portal helps me to feel more confident."*

*"Fitting job seekers with jobs and employers is like fitting puzzle pieces together. You can't rush it. It has to be the right fit."*

**D. Employers appreciate that job developer collaboration increases their chance of finding good employees.**

- Increased exposure for their company and hiring needs
- Saves time by delivering candidates that are pre-screened and meet job requirements
- Candidates put forward by job developers tend to be higher quality and to work out longer-term
- Provides opportunities to job seekers who may have barriers to employers, and perhaps facing hardship.

*"This saves me a lot of time in searching for candidates and having to review applicant resumes that I receive online that are not relevant to the position."*

*"I like the idea of job sharing across organizations. We are pretty open because we have a lot of labour jobs. Newcomers, old, young, as long as their personality fits and they meet our requirements we want them. We need a broad outreach."*

**E. Community collaborative approaches to job development support an inclusive and diverse workforce, and remove barriers that limit employment opportunities for many.**

- Working together removes the stigma that can be associated with individual community organizations.
- Successful jobseeker – employer matches increase employer awareness of the services and strengths of community ESPs.

- Sharing job postings and candidates increases the talent pool to which employers are exposed, and supports hiring more non-traditional workers.

*“There are employers who are struggling to find appropriate talent and there are people in the community who are struggling to find work. The JDN helps to reduce this gap.”*

*“I use all the agencies that are part of the JDN. They are my first contact when a position becomes available. The people I have hired are still here. I love working with the community and I rely on these nonprofits.”*

#### **F. Very importantly, community collaborative efforts and employment service provider networks, such as the JDN, must be supported and funded by governments.**

Together, ESP networks are developing innovative and effective ways to improve our communities and economies, in spite of often competitive funding models that can pit ESPs and their job developers against each other. What more could be accomplished with government support for these collaborations which share expertise and opportunities to better connect Ontarians, their skills and talents, and the employers who need them?

- Designated resources to build and maintain platforms for collaboration, such as job sharing portals, improves understanding of labour market circumstances, tracks the evolving needs of employers and job seekers, increases job matching outcomes, and provides support for job developers.
- Funder recognition of shared employment successes which result when staff at more than one ESP work together, promotes and demonstrates real indicators of effective, collaborative service provision.
- Funder investment into collaborative ESP networks provides a much larger employer engagement reach than single organizations or staff working in isolation.
- Funding support for ESPs and their staff to participate in collaborative projects encourages leveraging of expertise and resources for greater collective service impact.

**Thank you for reviewing our Key Learnings. The full version of our Research Paper is available from OCWI ([www.ocwi-coie.ca](http://www.ocwi-coie.ca)) or by request: [info@esclm.ca](mailto:info@esclm.ca)**

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**Want to learn more, offer feedback, or propose a partnership? Please contact us:**

Carol Stewart, Employment Sector Council, 141 Dundas Street, 4th Floor, London ON N6A 1G3  
519.663.0774 ext. 224 ~ [info@esclm.ca](mailto:info@esclm.ca) ~ [www.ESC.network](http://www.ESC.network)

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<sup>i</sup> Wood, A. (2015) Community Collaborative Approaches to Job Development. London, ON: Employment Sector Council.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> The JDN is managed by Employment Sector Council (ESC), the larger network of community service providers and partners located primarily in the London Economic Region, including its surrounding counties and urban centres.