COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO JOB DEVELOPMENT

esc Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex

Job Developers Network London-Middlesex

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ABOUT ESCLM

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR COUNCIL London-Middlesex was created as a result of community consultations conducted in the spring of 1992. ESCLM was London-Middlesex's response to the need for a more coordinated approach to labour market planning. Our members represent more than 40 public and nonprofit employment and training service providers, educators and representatives from all three levels of government. For two decades, our co-ordinated and collaborative approach to employment and training sector planning has resulted in a seamless, 'no wrong door' service delivery system, which continuously strives for reduced service duplication and maximization of resources, effective and efficient access to supports by job seekers and employers, and a sector-wide commitment to consistent, high quality service across the London-Middlesex region. ESCLM is our region's voice of the employment and training service sector.

DISCLAIMER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COLLABORATION BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT service providers in Ontario is a common but highly underreported phenomenon. While collaboration has occurred at the managerial and workforce planning levels for decades, collaboration between frontline workers from diverse agencies is a unique and emerging response to a complex service provision landscape. The last decade has seen significant changes in how employment services are delivered by the province. As such, many organizations have voluntarily undertaken collaborative initiatives to respond to a collective concern: that service provision often occurs in competition to the detriment of service quality and client support. Given the present challenges facing the workforce and service providers, organizations simply cannot afford *not* to collaborate. The process through which collaboration has emerged varies greatly across communities and stakeholder groups based on local client and agency needs. This report attempts to provide a comprehensive roadmap of collaborative initiatives between Job Developers (JDs) and employment service providers in Ontario. This paper describes not only *why* organizations must develop collaborative initiatives, but also *how* they can be supported to do so.

KEY FINDINGS

Collaborative Job Development Models:

» Increase in-house knowledge of employment service provider staff

» Increase the capacity of employment service providers

» Increase the ease and frequency of inter-agency referrals

» Contribute to more efficient employment outcomes

» Enhance the legitimacy of community employment service agencies

This paper seeks to evaluate the risks and benefits of collaboration between Job Developers in Ontario. It uses a case study approach to detail the experience of JDs and senior managers in the nonprofit sector in an environment that is characterized by both competition and collaboration. The paper highlights hubs of collaboration in the region, develops a typology to understand the various forms of collaboration, and identifies a series of best practices from those models. Our findings suggest that collaborative job development models increase the service capacity of nonprofits, provide a supportive environment for service providers, and contribute to more efficient employment outcomes.

Collaboration is habitually difficult to measure. This research draws on survey data from 65 participants and interviews with 70 key informants, to develop 28 case studies on collaboration in Ontario. This provides a more complete picture of both the narratives surrounding collaboration and the empirical success of these initiatives. Successful initiatives—although diverse in governance, vision and scope—all had a clear purpose and clearly defined roles for members, adapted to reflect agencies' changing needs, had dedicated human and financial resources, and were built on trust.

This research has compiled a set of benefits of collaboration between JDs through a combination of survey and interview data from diverse networks across Ontario. These benefits include increased organizational capacity, smoother service delivery and inter-agency referrals, and a more cohesive voice and vision for employment services in communities. These exist despite a number of barriers to collaboration, namely the inherently competitive environment in which JDs work. This is perpetuated by the target-based approach of most funders and the lack of recognition of collaboration in the metrics used to assess agencies. Low employer awareness of employment service providers continues to be a challenge but also represents a substantial opportunity for

greater education and engagement. For the nearly 400,000 Ontario small and medium enterprises,[1] increased access to Job Developer networks and their collective investment in client experience could have significant positive impacts.

Too often, collaborative initiatives are communities' best-kept secrets. One of the most significant findings of this report is the lack of awareness by funders of existing collaborative initiatives. This report attempts to recognize hubs of collaboration in the province, to understand how they have evolved, the context in which they work, and what can be learned from them. While this report focuses on collaboration in employment services there continue to be major gaps in service delivery between employment, literacy and essential skills, and apprenticeship. This report also highlights processes and initiatives that have attempted to bridge these gaps. This paper concludes with policy recommendations for funders to invest in collaborative models, namely by providing a supportive institutional environment for their development, and by pioneering more effective metrics to measure client outcomes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

COLLABORATION BETWEEN FRONTLINE workers from diverse agencies is a unique and emerging response to a complex service provision landscape, but is generally poorly understood. Collaboration ranges from the sharing of best practices to jointly hosting events and initiatives, from service coordination to agency co-location. The process through which collaboration has emerged varies just as greatly. This report seeks to provide a comprehensive roadmap of collaborative initiatives between Job Developers and employment service providers in Ontario. This report explores why the number and scope of collaborative initiatives have burgeoned over the last decade, as well as the challenges they face, their drivers of success, and how their members envision the employment services sector.

This White Paper is the first of four deliverables within ESCLM's Ontario Labour Market Partnership project. The results of this research will also be provided to employment agency leaders in a community resource package focused on developing and/or enhancing collaborative efforts. Phases Three and Four of the project will take place between May and November of 2015 and will deliver training for Job Developers and develop a marketing strategy for employers based on the benefits of collaborative service delivery. This project will: (i) promote consistent, high quality job development service delivery and professional standards across Ontario; (ii) substantiate and identify the benefits of collaboration among Job Developers; and (iii) develop and share a community-level collaborative network model for job development service delivery across Ontario through training and supports to nonprofit agencies that provide employment services.

The need for this project was identified by ESCLM's Job Developers Network (JDN), which was established in 2011 to provide a forum for Job Developers from diverse agencies to share information about job opportunities, resources, challenges, and best practices. The JDN is a subgroup of ESCLM, which is London-Middlesex's response to the need for a more coordinated approach to labour market planning. Today ESCLM is our region's voice of the employment and training service sector. This project will build on ESCLM's twenty years of network building as well as the success of the JDN by exploring the significant benefits of collaboration among JDs while also addressing the challenges that hinder the development of sustainable collaborative initiatives.

THIS PROJECT WILL:

1. **PROMOTE** consistent, high quality job development service delivery and professional standards across Ontario
2. **SUBSTANTIATE & IDENTIFY** the benefits of collaboration among Job Developers
3. **DEVELOP & SHARE** key learnings from community-level collaborative network models for job development service delivery across Ontario through training & supports to nonprofit agencies that provide employment services

STRUCTURE OF THE WHITE PAPER

After a note on methodology in Part II, Part III will overview the economic and institutional contexts for collaboration between service providers by drawing on labour market information and the existing literature on the role of nonprofit community service delivery agencies in enhancing employment outcomes.

Part IV will explore the benefits of and barriers to collaboration between service providers. Together with the literature review, this provides the

appropriate context with which to understand the case studies highlighted in Part V. Among these cases, the report explores ESCLM JDN's unique and innovative effort to collaborate as a sector, which has resulted in increased employment opportunities, enhanced capacity for service delivery and coordination, and greater responsiveness to employers' needs. It will also highlight successful collaboration models across Ontario, as identified by the 25 Workforce Planning and Development Boards (WPDB).[2] These cases afford a number of lessons learned and best practices on promoting consistent and coordinated job development service delivery, which are summarized in Part VI. They highlight the importance of relationship building, diversity and flexibility in the development of collaborative initiatives. The 31 case studies are found in Appendix II. A list of acronyms is found on page 38.

Based on this research, Part VIII provides a set of policy recommendations to funders on how they might better support existing collaborative initiatives. Supporting an enabling environment for greater collaboration between employment services will create significant return on their investment. While service provider networks (SPNs) have developed in a variety of contexts and have diverse mandates and objectives, there is a common recognition of the need for sustainability, value-added, and institutional support. The term service provider network refers to a group of either employment or literacy and essential skills service providers from a diverse range of funders that regularly exchange information and best practices, and engage in other forms of collaboration. While service provider networks may include networks of Job Developers, they may not be composed exclusively of Job Developers or related staff. This report concludes by reflecting on the prospects for a more ambitious collaborative network model for JDs and employment service delivery across Ontario, and identifies future areas for advancing our knowledge in collaborative service provision.

II. METHODOLOGY

THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN MEASURING collaboration in quantifiable terms because it requires a significant investment of time and organizational commitment. To date, very little research has attempted to measure collaboration between community employment service providers in Ontario. This research employs a mixed method approach to develop a more complete picture of both the narratives surrounding collaboration and the empirical success of these initiatives. Although quantitative metrics and targets are valuable in evaluating the general efficacy of service provision, they cannot comment on the context within which service providers are working. As such, this report uses a case study approach with both quantitative and qualitative indicators to detail collaborative partnerships, to gain insights into their evolution, and to identify a series of best practices from those models. While the regional focus is Ontario, several examples have been included in a national and international context for a comparative perspective.

Eleven of the 31 case studies are devoted to formal, membership-based networks such as ESCLM's JDN, the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-trained Persons (CASIP)'s Employers Services Network (ESN), and ATN Access Inc.'s former Employment Alliance network. These cases were selected because of the scope of collaboration, as well as their longevity and sustainability. They represent the diversity of programs, services, clients served and funders found in Ontario. There are 20 additional cases which examine many other models of collaboration such as informal and issue-based networks, online networks or communities of practice, and cross-sector partnerships. While the majority of these take place within a defined geographic region, the report also identifies several initiatives that have spanned multiple jurisdictions. Although collaboration between employment service providers and Job Developers is the focus of these collaborations, it is important to recognize initiatives that seek to connect three elements of Employment Ontario: apprenticeships, employment, and literacy and basic skills (LBS). These cases form the basis for a typology of collaborative initiatives which serves as a framework to better understand the evolution of collaboration in the existing landscape of service provision in Ontario.

An integral part of the case study methodology has been 70 informal interviews with 'key informants' on community collaborative approaches to employment service delivery. These were conducted with four groups of individuals: (i) Job Developers and frontline employment service providers, (ii) Workforce Planning and Development Board Executive Directors, (iii) managers of service providers, and (iv) funders and other community partners. The majority of interviews with Job Developers (13) took place with those in ESCLM's JDN and explored job placement strategies and their experience with the network. Seventeen other Job Developers and frontline employment service providers were identified (primarily by WPDB Executive Directors) as being actively engaged with collaborative service delivery. Interviews were conducted with 20 of the 25 Ontario WPBD Executive Directors to understand the scope of collaboration between service providers in their region, as well as the general context in which service delivery is taking place. 14 interviews were conducted with managers of service provider agencies to better understand strategic interests of organizations and the context in which member agencies are working. Finally, five interviews were conducted with funders and other community partners. Question guides were developed for each of the four participant categories. In all cases, the questions were open-ended and asked in a conversational form. The interviews were not recorded because of the nature of the information provided, but detailed notes were transcribed following each interview.

The quantitative data for this paper was primarily gathered through an extensive survey which was distributed to all members of ESCLM's Job

Developers Network which included both JDs and management. A draft of the survey was initially sent to key informants—identified by ESCLM's project manager—for their feedback and to identify questions that were unclear or not appropriate. The survey was designed to develop a better understanding of the Job Developer Network's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for growth. The services of Evidence Consulting[3] were utilized to ensure the survey was as accessible as possible. The survey consisted of 56 questions and took respondents an average of 20 minutes to complete. With a response rate of nearly 40 percent, data was collected on a total of 25 completed and 60 semi-completed surveys.[4] The surveys, interviews and case studies were triangulated and provide a significant body of evidence to draw lessons and best practices of collaboration between Job Developers and employment service providers. These results are contextualized with a literature review in the proceeding section.

III. CONTEXTUALIZING COLLABORATION

& THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVISION LANDSCAPE

THERE IS A PALTRY BODY OF LITERATURE analyzing collaborative job development initiatives in Canada. However, insights can be drawn from multiple bodies of related scholarship. As such, this literature review includes several fields of scholarship, namely nonprofit management, career development, and collaboration in nonprofit and service provision settings. Reviewed sources are composed of both peer-reviewed articles and books, as well as non-peer reviewed and includes publications from think tanks and private organizations, government and governmental services, and nonprofit community agencies.

This section overviews and seeks to build on this body of scholarship to provide a more complete picture of how collaboration has evolved and been influenced by multiple factors in employment service provision in Ontario. Accordingly, this section is subdivided into four parts: (i) the socio-economic context for collaboration, (ii) an overview of service delivery programming in Ontario, (iii) a brief overview of nonprofit job development, and (iv) what we know about collaboration between nonprofits. In combination with the primary research conducted by the principal investigator, this provides a strong evidence base to identify the benefits of collaboration between Job Developers, as well as the barriers to improved service coordination, outlined in Part V. This also provides the foundation for the case studies and lessons learned in Parts VI and VII.

i. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT FOR COLLABORATION

The employment services sector has seen significant changes over the last decade. In the wake of the post-recession period and slow economic recovery, the workforce is increasingly mobile, there are shifts in occupational demand, and there has been a rise in disconnects between job seekers' skills and employers' demands.[5] This has led to the evolution of employment recruitment and job seeker and developer strategies. Simultaneously, the provision of employment services and career development more broadly is undergoing transformation due to governmental and programmatic changes, and an increase in evidence-based practice. This takes place against a background of competition for limited financial and human capital.

Perhaps the most pejorative element of this shifting climate over the last two years has been the skills shortage.[6] The 2014 National Business Survey conducted by Career Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) found that nationally, the greatest challenge facing Canadian businesses will be a shortage of skilled workers (31 percent of respondents).[7] In Ontario, this was slightly less of a concern (23 percent) and the general state of the economy was perceived to be the biggest challenge by the 105 senior businessperson respondents.[8]

While the extent of a skills shortage in Canada is debated,[9] there remains a mismatch between workers' skills and employers' needs, which varies by region and industry. This is a very complex and nuanced public policy phenomenon that has been precipitated by global and national economic

and social factors. Although there is a lack of data to suggest an aggregate skills shortage,[10] there continue to be misalignments between job seekers' skills, qualifications or experience, and the needs of employers.

We can better understand this gap by looking at current hiring practices. The 2014 National Business Survey found that 29 percent of the 500 senior officials from Canadian businesses interviewed outsourced recruitment to search or personnel firms and 41 percent used community employment agencies in the past five years to find skilled employees. In Ontario, these figures are 42 percent and 49 percent respectively.[11] The vast majority of respondents (69 percent in Ontario) identified internal candidates in the last five years to find skilled employees. This trend is reinforced by the results of the 2014 and 2015 Employer One Survey. In all seven regions where the survey was conducted, the most common recruitment method (approximately 20-25 percent of respondents) is word of mouth, personal contacts, referrals and informal networks.[12] Few (between two and nine percent) businesses surveyed used a free employment service agencies which included non-government community employment service centers and government employment centres or websites.[13] Of those who received free employment service agencies, the majority received assistance to hire youth. Private agencies are used by only two to three percent of employers in the London, Sudbury and Manitoulin economic regions, and 19 and 22 percent in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin and Windsor Essex.[14] Although employers identify a lack of skilled candidates as a primary concern, which employment services providers are well-positioned to address, there is a widespread lack of awareness about their services which are free to employers. The relatively low utilization of community employer service providers by employers points to a lack of awareness of the services available.

Private recruitment agencies can be placed into three broad categories: (i) recruitment agencies which charge a fee for the employer; (ii) recruitment agencies which charge a fee for the job seeker, and (iii) private post-secondary institutions, predominately colleges. These organizations are less financially vulnerable than community

or government employment services.[15] There is a perception that they offer more qualified candidates;[16] however, this has not been substantiated.

There are no comprehensive year-to-year statistics across all regions in Ontario to gauge employer understanding of service agencies.[17] Many employers are not familiar with Employment Ontario (EO) or the services it currently offers, as evidenced by consultations through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU),[18] and in recent literature.[19] Our interviews with the Executive Directors of WPDBs also found that there was a general lack of awareness among employers of employment service supports.

> **While community employment agencies have the capacity to help reduce skills disconnects by clarifying employers' needs and ensuring job seekers are job ready, they remain a highly under-utilized resource.**

ii. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVISION: AN OVERVIEW

The field of employment services is incredibly diverse, not only in terms of the types of clients served, but also in the approaches used by each agency, the roles of their staff, sources of funding, and the institutional settings in which they work. Notably, there has been a movement towards certification both for Career Counsellors and for Career Development Practitioners in Canada. Several provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario) have either established a certification for career development practitioners (CDPs) or are in the process of doing so.[20] There is also national credentialing through the Career Professionals of Canada (CPC), and international certifications offered through such bodies as the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG).[21] While the Canadian Council of Career Development Associations (CCCDA) is designed to bring coherence to the field of career development, and has defined competencies for CDPs

through the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for CDPs (S & Gs), there is still an absence of a common language because of the diversity of the actors involved and the segregated nature of employment services.[22] For example, the term Service Provider is used to describe organizations who deliver Employment Services from Employment Ontario through MTCU. These agencies assist clients and employers through employment and training supports and services. The term service provider, when used in this paper, refers to any agency that delivers employment services or training, regardless of funder. Other career titles, such as Job Developer, also capture a range of positions or roles that are not uniformly understood across service providers.

Employment Service is the core of Employment Ontario's programs and services for employment and training. It has been the result of great change over the last decade. Taken collectively, the employment programs in Canada are known as Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSM) and are delivered through Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDA). The Canada-Ontario LMDA came into effect in 2007 and transferred responsibility for EBSMs to the government of Ontario (called Ontario Benefits and Measures [OBMs]) and required employment insurance (EI)-eligibility for participants.[23] In August 2010, Employment Ontario Services underwent significant transformation and integrated the federal programs with its community-based network of service providers and training partners.[24] Today, Employment Ontario Services have five interrelated components with services for apprenticeship, job seekers, employers and employees: (i) Client Service Planning and Coordination (CSPC), (ii) Resource and Information (RI) which can provide information for services such as the Second Career program,[25] (iii) Job Search, (iv) Job Matching, Placement and Incentives (JPMI), and (v) Job/ Training Retention. There are no eligibility requirements for both CSPC and RI, and EI-eligibility does not determine access to any component of Employment Service.[26] Other Employment Ontario programs include Summer Jobs Services (SJS) and the Youth Employment Fund (YEF) through Employment Ontario's Employment Service network.[27] In addition to the LMDA, there

is collaboration with the federal government through the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) which prepares EI-eligible older workers for new and immediate employment, and through the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) which is part of the Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement that supports non-EI eligible workers.

> *"The bulk of collaborative efforts occurs in an ad hoc manner—often un- or underreported—through Workforce Planning and Development Boards, regional literacy networks, and between employment service providers."*

Employment Service Providers are distinct from Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Service Providers which deliver the LBS program to learners to help adults develop and apply literacy and basic skills to five goal paths. These goal paths—employment, post-secondary education, apprenticeship, secondary school credit and independence[28]— show that while there is overlap between LBS and ES service providers, the purposes of LBS are not solely focused on employment as an outcome. Other Employment Ontario programs include apprenticeship training, supports and services, Labour Market Partnerships (LMP), and postsecondary education supports.[29]

At the time of this report, there were 171 EO-funded service providers, 200 literacy service providers, and 70 apprenticeship training delivery offices.[30] EO launched Ontario's Employment and Training Network in 2007 to bring together 20 programs and services for seamless delivery of training and employment systems. However, there are significant implementation gaps to ensuring consistent and equitable access in each community. A lack of coordination between government, employers and service providers is endemic to the labour market. [31] This issue is twofold: there is a lack of consistent integration of service coordination across EO agencies, and a lack of coherence among programs across the three levels of government and the numerous ministries that deliver employment and training

programs. Employment and training services are also provided through the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's (MCI) bridging, training and language programs, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) employment supports to social assistance clients through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW).[32] The Ministry of Health and Long-term Care funds the Canadian Mental Health Association, which deliver employment supports services to people with a mental illness.

In 2012, the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services (the Drummond Report) recommended that the Ontario government "streamline and integrate other employment and training services with Employment Ontario."[33] The Ontario Chamber of Commerce was less measured in its criticisms of the sector, stating in its 2014 report that, "the government is often inattentive to the market it creates, passive in market design and stewardship, and often fails to deliver value-for-money."[34] In response to the Drummond report, the government has attempted to integrate employment and training services across the government (known as the Employment Training Service Integration [ETSI] initiative) through budgetary commitments made in 2013. To support greater coordination among service providers, a province-wide consultation strategy was developed. The findings of the initial consultation, released in April 2014, found that the Employment Ontario model should continue to be strengthened, but must respond to the needs of local service delivery strategies and to the complexity of the phenomenon of unemployment.[35] MTCU has entered Phase II of the consultations, but details about the five priority areas or the timeline for action have not been released. In May of 2015 the Ministry released a call for proposals for a new Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation and an employment-focused common assessment framework for EO Service Providers.[36]

In the absence of a consistently coordinated approach to service delivery, there have been a host of pilot programs and consultations for new directions in the sector and across-sectors. The closure of Job Connect in 2010 and the transformation of Employment Ontario unintentionally precipitated a wave of collaborative initiatives between employment service agencies. Today, the Employment Ontario Information System (EOIS) is a comprehensive integrated case management system that supports all EO services. While this will help align the multiple EO services, this is but one approach for one funder, and other initiatives, for example through Essential Skills Ontario (ESO), have also attempted to better align job seekers and growing sectors. ESO's "Elevate" initiative will do exactly this and focus on integrated workforce literacy and essential skills models. While there is no clear action plan, ESO will use strategic communications to build awareness and support to facilitate a consensus among stakeholders.[37] However, the bulk of collaborative efforts occurs in an ad hoc manner—often un- or underreported—through Workforce Planning and Development Boards (WPDB), regional literacy networks, and between employment service providers.

In summary, the sector largely remains characterized by fragmented service delivery organizations with multiple and often diverse funding sources.[38] It is in this environment that Job Developers match job-ready clients with employers, provide training and post-employment supports.

iii. WHAT DOES THIS CONTEXT MEAN FOR JOB DEVELOPERS?

Job development is one aspect of employment service provision and is a central element of career development. The 2014 Employment Service (ES)—Service Provider Guidelines outline components for JPMI for service providers (SPs) which includes: (i) outreach and the provision of support to employers, (ii) identifying job-ready clients and matching their skills to employment opportunities, (iii) supporting workplace training and opportunities, and (iv) providing monitoring and supports for the placement.[39] As such, there is a diverse range of strategies based on their clients' needs. Job Developers often have a core group of employer contacts with whom they have pre-existing relationships, and also employ low-risk methods to develop new contacts with potential employers through job fairs, cold or "warm" calls, and word of mouth.[40]

In many community organizations, job development is but one aspect of an individual's job. As such, Job Developers are given a range of titles. For example, some organizations have combined job development and counselling roles, or sales and marketing and job development responsibilities, and thus have Business Liaison and Employment or Workforce Specialist positions.[41] For the purposes of this White Paper, the term Job Developer is capitalized because it refers to individuals who match clients to placement opportunities but who may also have other roles in their agency, and thus may not have the title of 'Job Developer'. Job Developers must also balance the needs of their agency's clients (job seekers) with their employer contacts who are also considered their clients. When polled by the BC Centre for Employment Excellence, 83 percent of respondents agreed that Job Developers must consider both the job seeker and the employer as their client. [42]

As with service providers generally, there is no standard certification process for JDs. There exist some opportunities for professional development, for example through the Job Developers Institute in Ontario,[43] and Life Strategies in British Columbia,[44] or less formally through annual conferences such as Cannexus or Futures,[45] or through self-organized service provider networks that invite guest speakers. There are also many online tools and resources or strategies for JDs, although these are mostly American.[46] There are comparatively few resources in the Canadian context, with the exception of the toolkit by the Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP).[47]

The benefits of job development are well defined, as evidenced by Employment Ontario reports and Labour Market Plans by regional planning boards, particularly for clients with barriers to employment. However, Job Developers often work in isolation (it is not uncommon for smaller community agencies to only have one JD) and in competition with other Job Developers for employer contacts. As defined in Part IV on barriers to collaboration, this is due to the funding structure of service agencies, but is an impediment to maximizing client outcomes.

iv. COLLABORATION BETWEEN NONPROFIT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Collaboration takes place in many forms and under many circumstances in the nonprofit sector. Literature on collaboration in the nonprofit sector developed most substantially in the mid-2000s, and has been devoted to the emergence of public service delivery networks,[48] their governance,[49] and how to manage them.[50] The literature, primarily from the United States, has also focused on collaboration in particular nonprofit settings, including in rural environments,[51] communities of e-learning practice,[52] and partnerships with labour,[53] across government jurisdictions,[54] and with private or for-profit organizations.[55] In terms of service provision more specifically, attention has been primarily devoted to synergistic or integrated models of career development[56] or service delivery.[57] It is within this context that we turn to the grey literature on case studies of collaboration by nonprofits in Canada.

The most comprehensive study of collaboration between nonprofits in the Canadian context was done by the Wellesley Institute in 2008, which focused on several cases in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The report found that collaboration already takes place in many contexts and is already embedded into the institutional fabric of nonprofit service delivery.[58] There have been attempts by nonprofits to provide resources on collaboration, for example by Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation in 2006,[59] and in providing tools for on collaborative nonprofit partnerships more generally in Canada,[60] and in the US.[61] There have been fewer resources for nonprofit service providers for integration or collaboration, a notable exception is some literature on making referrals across Literacy and Basic Skills SPs by the QUILL Learning Network (Quality in Lifelong Learning)[62] and Adult Basic Education Association.[63]

What tools are available to employment service providers interested in collaboration? To date, there has only been one case study on a collaborative service delivery model, that on JVS

Toronto, a EO Service Provider. Although it is an important contribution to Canadian academic literature, it offers little in the way of practical tools for interested community agencies. [64] However, collaboration is becoming increasingly well-established, and most recently, the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally Trained Persons (CASIP) is developing a toolkit for other community agencies,[65] and is in the process of disseminating information about their Employer Services Network model of job development coordination. However, the employment services sector lacks a systemic look at how collaboration has developed, drivers of success and barriers to collaboration between employment service providers.

> *"Job Developers often work in isolation and in competition for employer contacts."*

Despite this lack of well-developed literature or data, there is a common interest in collaboration across Ontario. In preparation for ETSI, the MTCU commissioned consultation report found many examples of collaboration: "[s]ervice providers [SPs] demonstrated familiarity with each other's services and indicated they often made referrals between different organizations,"[66] and that [SPs] "clearly see value in collaboration within their communities, as they dedicate a lot of time and energy to building these relationships."[67] This is not unique to Ontario: at a webinar on collaborative job development by the British Columbia (BC) Centre for Employment Excellence in March 2015, the 53 participants unanimously agreed that collaboration is possible in a competitive environment with regards to job development.[68]

But how do we measure collaboration? There has been a substantial body of literature devoted to measuring collaboration between nonprofit community agencies. This work has acknowledged multiple methods and concepts,[69] and has focused on evaluating their effectiveness,[70] results-based outcomes,[71] success factors,[72] and institutional impacts.[73] Some exceptional work has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of nonprofit service delivery, for example, in the American context, by Bin Chen and Elizabeth

Graddy.[74] However, this literature is quite dated, the cases used are difficult to generalize, and there has been an absence of comparative work and a lack of longitudinal data.[75] Despite the outcome-focused nature of MTCU, there is a lack of metrics for evaluating collaboration and little attention has been given to evaluating collaboration between employment services in the Canadian context. For Employment Ontario agencies, service coordination is a recognized service delivery category. Service coordination is but one outcome of collaboration and has four elements for LBS providers: active case management, inter-agency cooperation, integrated programming, and a community-wide planning process.[76] There are significant inconsistencies in service coordination due to the difficulties in making inter-agency referrals, as one example.[77] This particular issue will be explored in greater detail in Part IV. LBS adult literacy delivery agencies use the Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS) which complements the Information Management System. Essentially it "manages results" for efficiency and effectiveness in a cyclical process that includes planning, monitoring and measurement.[78] Although used in Job Connect, CIPMS is not used by employment service providers. The current rubric for employment services agencies is the EOIS-CaMs. Clients can be referred in from another organization or referred out by an agency for education, training or other services that support employability. Referrals are the principal indicator of service coordination, which is distinct from having an employed outcome. Although designed to integrate service delivery networks, neither system effectively measures collaboration in all its forms. Moreover, there is a disincentive to collaborate because of the perceived value of referrals as compared to employed outcomes.

Self-evaluation tools are the most common approach to understanding the effectiveness of nonprofit collaborative initiatives. Such tools have been developed by a number of organizations including Tom Wolff and Associates,[79] an American law firm, which uses written forms and self-assessment tools. Online tools have also been developed such as the survey by Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.[80] However, there has been difficulty in measuring success between

collaborative initiatives. This is because of: (i) the subjective nature of the subject (wherein organizations are closely involved with the project and the research or reporting), (ii) the seemingly intangible nature of the gains of collaboration, (iii) the "siloed" nature of the industry, and (iv) a tendency amongst the literature not to examine systems, compare multiple organizations, or compare pre-existing and current collaborative initiatives.[81] In addition, the time required for trust and collaboration to develop is often not aligned with the annual or project-based funding models commonly used in the sector. A recent report by the Elgin Middlesex Oxford WPDB attempts to respond to these concerns and suggests a Performance Measurement Model with several components including efficiency metrics, partnership evaluations and community consultations. These metrics are currently being used by the WPDB, and a report has been disseminated through the provincial Workforce Planning and Ontario Network to all of the boards in the province, although it is uncertain how these have been integrated into workforce planning initiatives.[82]

The theory of change (TofC) methodology has been utilized in several government and non-government publications as a way to approach service provision.[83] This model begins with the desired outcomes of a program or initiative and maps what is needed to accomplish them. This approach has been increasingly used in the services sector since the mid-2000s, and intends to meet long-term goals. The TofC is similar to Logic Models, but tends to look at the "bigger picture" while Logic Models are program-specific. Uniquely, TofC focuses on why and how outcomes and activities are linked and gives credence to the assumptions, external factors, and alternative perspectives on the program's function and design.[84] Although these do not create specific metrics, this approach is one that can be used as a framework to guide the development of both program and institution-based metrics for collaboration.

Despite extensive literature on developing community collaborative relationships, models of collaboration, and tools for building and assessing collaborative partnerships, there has been much repetition without a clear advancement in best practices for collaboration between employment service providers or improved client outcomes. A great deal has changed in the field over the last decade, but the literature has not reflected these evolutions. There is thus a pressing need for quantitative evaluation of collaboration, in addition to qualitative work, to understand the driving forces behind collaboration that cuts across different collaborative models and cases. In response, this report uses a mixed methods approach to understand the benefits and challenges of collaboration between employment service providers, as explored in the next section. Future research should endeavor to develop metrics for measuring collaborative initiatives in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Comparative and longitudinal research is also required to deepen our understanding of the evolution of SPNs and factors for network sustainability.

BARRIERS TO MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES:

1. SUBJECTIVE nature of the subject
2. SEEMINGLY INTANGIBLE nature of the gains of collaboration
3. "SILOED" nature of the industry
4. A tendency not to examine SYSTEMS, compare multiple organizations, or compare pre-existing and current collaborative initiatives

IV. UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATION

i. BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

THIS SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF collaboration between service providers has been developed by compiling research gathered through informal interview and case study consultations, and is consistent with the nonprofit management literature. While the extent of these benefits is determined by a number of factors—network cohesion and size, purpose, governance, and frequency of communication—there tend to be general benefits across network type. These pertain to service delivery coordination, the organizational capacity and knowledge of service provider agencies, professional development for individual staff, and engagement with community partners and employers to support employment outcomes for clients.

1. Working towards seamless service delivery: Duplication of service provision has been a recurring concern by funders.[85] Service provider networks ameliorate the replication of services and contribute to more accessible service delivery across communities and issue areas. When working in coordination, service providers become more aware of other community service agencies, the clients they serve, and the services they provide. Our survey indicated that 96 percent of respondents found that ESCLM's JDN increased coordination among job developers and employment service agencies.[86] Often JD networks share job postings when a position is difficult to fill or for large orders that require clients from multiple agencies.

Several networks have developed, or are in the process of developing, referral practices and integrated approaches to tracking clients. This was considered a best practice in the 2014 MNP LLP consultation report.[87] Networks of JDs increase opportunities for job seekers and employers by sharing job postings, which subsequently increases the likelihood of making an effective placement.[88] Networks increase the ease and frequency of referrals through networking events, site visits, information sharing, and

professional development sessions. These opportunities also allow staff to better understand services provided by other agencies and build the relationships necessary to more easily refer clients.

2. Increasing organizational efficiency and capacity: Service provider networks require agencies to collaborate in different capacities, which often involve sharing resources, whether they are financial or human. Beth Siegel et al. (2010) found, in their case study of the Non Profit Centre Network, that collaboration increases organizational efficiency and effectiveness for member organizations, reduces costs, and increases organizational capacity.[89] A 2008 report by the Wellesley Institute concluded that collaboration "can make existing organizations more efficient and effective, and can deliver better programs and services that benefit clients through shared resources."[90] This has certainly been the finding from our case studies and many interviewees with agency staff who identified that they have been able to 'do more with less,' particularly in a time of uncertainty and in light of programmatic and funding changes.

What does increased organizational capacity look like? In the most concentrated form of collaboration—co-location—the service providers of nine employment programs in the Niagara YMCA have experienced tremendous cost savings which allowed them to hire more frontline staff. In many other cases, sharing job postings is necessary to fill certain positions, which allow JDs to work with more clients. When JDs coordinate employer engagement strategies and jointly host hiring events or job fairs, not only are more clients marketed to employers, but there is the potential for new employers to become aware of the services of nonprofit employment agencies. In short, developing organizational capacity based on community needs will improve service quality and standards for delivery.

3. Development of trust between service providers: Trust cannot be easily measured but is one of the most commonly recognized 'prerequisites' for lasting collaboration. Eighty-seven percent of ESCLM's JDN members stated that trust among JDs was a significant factor in the development and current status of the network.[91] As identified by many WPDB staff, this leads to improved community partnerships for labour force planning. Trust was mentioned by nearly all interviewees as a driving force and requirement of SPNs.

Trust creates a more supportive environment for service provision and provides a foundation for lasting collaboration. When rapport develops between frontline staff, they are more comfortable being honest about their experiences and in exchanging job leads and information about employers. When there is trust between Job Developers that referrals will be reciprocated and that they will not damage their existing relationships with employers, the long-term benefits of collaboration include better employment outcomes for SPs and stronger employer engagement. Having in-person meetings at regular intervals which are set well in advance is instrumental to this process.

Not coincidently, networks that have seen greatest levels of collaboration have had partnerships that have pre-dated the network, or have been part of the network for several years. In the cases of some of the most well-formed networks—CASIP, ESCLM, or the Collaborative Partnership Network in Nova Scotia—they have been working together for over fifteen years.

"When working in coordination, service providers become more aware of other community service agencies, the clients they serve, and the services they provide."

4. Increasing in-house knowledge: SPNs provide a forum to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and best practices in their individual agencies and in their stakeholder partnerships. These networks have also become a source of valuable information for government programmatic and funding

changes, as identified by ESCLM's JDN survey.[92] SPNs are a way for agencies to receive the same information at the same time by external speakers such as funding representatives or employers. This can help clarify information about funding requirements, or can provide an opportunity to learn more about funding or placement opportunities. SPNs may also be a source of professional development for frontline staff and management.

Having representation from, and communication between, different service provider agencies (who would not otherwise be in communication) on a regular basis is valuable in creating new ideas and solutions to common problems. These discussions often develop into more formal partnerships outside the network based around a particular project. Innovative solutions often are a by-product of both formal and informal SPNs because they provide a rich environment for the exchange of ideas.

Service provider networks are also a valuable source of expertise. Members from diverse communities or agencies can share their experience tackling a particular problem or initiative which can be valuable to another member of the network. The support and expertise provided through these networks is invaluable to both the management and frontline level staff.

5. Enhancing the legitimacy of community employment services agencies: Research has indicated an absence of standards or best practices in the field of job development.[93] In 1995, it was identified that there is little empirical data on job development practices[94]; this was again highlighted in 2008.[95] The empirical data on job development practices is specific to the American context (for example, Leff et al. [2005] is the most comprehensive[96]) and remains largely out of date. Our research indicates that collaboration between Job Developers elevates the standard for service delivery. Although this is difficult to measure, a survey of ESCLM's JDN membership found that the network contributed to higher level of skills, knowledge and professionalism among Job Developers.[97] Developing standards among networks creates more consistency in service delivery across the network and collectively increases the profile of community employment

services. Employers are able to access much more talent through a network of service providers than with any one agency.

6. Presenting a unified vision for employment services: This is important in two respects: (i) being able to increase the profile of employment services for employers, and (ii) providing a unified voice to advocate on issues of employment service provision. First, having centralized employer connections through SPNs means that if there is high brand recognition, employers can use a JD network as a "one-stop-shop" for their placement needs. This single point of contact for employers helps ensure an efficient and effective experience working with a service provider. Collectively working with employers has reduced 'employer fatigue,' wherein employers are contacted by multiple organizations, which can damage the reputation of community employment service agencies.[98] Thus, and as the MNP LLP report found, collaboration between SPs "increase[s] the likelihood that they [employers] will remain a long-term client of Employment Ontario service providers."[99] By extension, the same should also be true for non-EO agencies. That being said, there are many more employers than SPs and coordinating employer engagement represents a significant opportunity for service providers.

Second, service provider networks have the ability to advocate on behalf of the sector. The advocacy function is often less developed among SPNs due to a lack of capacity and time. Service provider consultations with WPDB provide an opportunity to openly share concerns that can be addressed both through WPDB Local Labour Market Plans and programs, and by WPDBs acting as a communication channel to MTCU. This function is inconsistent across regions and SPNs can also directly advocate to government ministries on employment and training issues.

Providing coordinated employer engagement is an important asset of networks. Collaboration actually helps organizations become more competitive in the sense of enhanced service delivery, and in developing stronger relationships with employers. Job Developers are constantly adjusting their employer engagement strategy to respond to employers' changing needs and having the support of a network facilitates this process by exchanging best practices, sharing information about employer's hiring needs, inviting hiring employers to SPN meetings, or coordinating employer engagement events or marketing tools.

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION: A SUMMARY

I. Networks increase the *ease & frequency* of referrals

II. *More clients are marketed* to employers, new employers become aware of the services of nonprofit employment agencies

III. Development of *trust* & a more supportive environment for service provision

IV. Communication between service provider agencies provides a rich environment for the *exchange of ideas*

V. Developing standards among networks creates more *consistency* in service delivery and increases the profile of community employment services

VI. Presenting a *unified vision* for employment services

ii. BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

Using a service provider network or collaborative initiative is not a panacea, and there are many barriers to effective and sustainable collaboration. While the landscape of service delivery takes place through multiple funders, there are similar problems within and across organizations. While it is important to acknowledge the existence of both exogenous structural barriers (i.e. factors beyond the network such as funding requirements and targets, the local economy etc.) and endogenous structural barriers (i.e. factors within the network itself, such as governance or leadership), ESCLM's JDN survey found that exogenous factors were more significant barriers to collaboration, and as such, they are the focus on this section.[100] While structural barriers are the most significant obstacles to collaboration, it should be noted that the governance, leadership, and commitment on the part of members in SPNs are also important. They will be addressed more fully in ESCLM's forthcoming resource guide for community agencies interested in pursuing or enhancing collaborative initiatives.

1. Competition (or "the nature of the beast"): Employment service provision is seen to be delivered in an inherently competitive environment.[101] In part, this is due to competition between companies for recruitment in the private sector. This is exemplified by figures such as John Sullivan and his "hire to hurt" recruiting strategy which is designed to explicitly "hurt the competitor's business results"[102] or other approaches that encourage poaching talent from competitors and aggressive referral practices.[103] Recruitment is thus often seen as a zero-sum game.

How funders approach service delivery also contributes to the competitive nature of job development, something that was heard consistently across WPDBs. This makes sense given pressures on existing models of career development, namely, chronic underemployment, increased global competition, and constantly changing labour market needs.[104]

The Government of Canada, in its 2012 formative evaluation of the Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement, identified that some SPs were reluctant to make inter-agency referrals because of the pressure to meet targets and to garner further funding contracts.[105] Under the current EO system, agencies have consistently expressed concern that if or when they refer a job seeker to another service provider for a job opportunity, they will lose an employment statistic in the EOIS case management system (CaMS). Service Coordination (a referral in or out) and Employment outcomes are each worth 25 percent toward the overall Service Quality Standard. When two EO agencies collaborate to place a client, the agency receiving a referral for a placement gets twice as much credit (25 percent for receiving a referral plus 25 percent for the placement) as the agency making the referral. This is because only the agency that places a client with an employment opportunity is recognized in CaMS. At the same time, a minimum of 35 percent of client files are expected to have a referral (in or out) while 69 percent of files are expected to include an employment outcome. Given that Service Coordination is a relatively easier target to achieve, agencies are thus incentivized to focus their resources on Employment outcomes. As agencies are "justifiably more concerned about losing an employment stat than they are about gaining a referral stat,"[106] this discourages agencies from working together and can reduce the potential impact of services.

This concern is magnified for JDs who do not already work in collaboration because there is not the shared expectation or trust in place to reciprocate the referral in another case. A referral may mean that the employer contact goes to another agency. This is particularly difficult when the employer requires funding incentives. Thus not only are there are "few incentives for collaboration,"[107] but there is a systemic disincentive for collaboration with the current funding model.

Moreover, there is a lack of consistent understanding and application of service coordination. There are extensive rules for making formal referrals and a list of specific data sources or appropriate bodies that can accept or make referrals. The bulk of referrals are never 'counted' in CaMS because they are made informally (i.e., they did not have the appropriate paperwork or were not made using the appropriate data source).[108] As this information is not captured by the Detailed

Service Quality (DSQ) report, funders are largely unaware of the frequency and scope of collaboration. Agencies can only make one official referral that is counted in CaMS. Also, only when a client's Service Plan is closed are the outcomes populated in the DSQ report. This makes it difficult to accurately understand client outcomes unless an agency undertakes additional reporting measures to receive real-time updates. For these reasons, it is impossible to provide a clear picture of coordination between service providers with the current case management system.

2. Lack of shared metrics: For EO agencies, the current target-based approach and focus on quantitative outcomes obscures the reality that many organizations may have put time and effort into a client's ultimate employment opportunity. However, as this investment is not captured, there is no statistical evidence of collaboration as highlighted above. Outside of EO, there is no evidence of reporting mechanisms that appropriately capture collaboration between service providers, although several SPNs are in the process of developing them. There are no metrics to capture referrals between EO and non-EO agencies. Incidentally, it is easier for EO agencies to collaborate with non-EO agencies because they do not have a CaMS file that must be closed.

While collaboration has often been mandated by funders, there have not been the commensurate resources, including evaluation tools, to support these partnerships. Instead, the limits of the current system do not account for referrals between agencies for individual clients or for partnerships in general. Partnerships occur on an ad hoc basis and are only reported if they are funded and/or contain a pilot project or other measurable outcome. Partnerships or collaborations that no longer exist often have no publicly accessible documentation, thus making it difficult to learn from these experiences.

Without shared metrics, it is difficult to fund collaborative initiatives, because successful programs and initiatives must quantify improved client outcomes. In nearly all of the case studies, networks do not have core funding to coordinate service delivery and to support their member agencies' capacity to collaborate. While it is (and

has been) possible to introduce shared metrics on a case-by-case basis, organizations often do not have the capacity to develop these independently. Many SPNs attempt to share clients, which is very difficult given the aforementioned reporting requirements. CASIP's ESN shares employers under the expectation that the client's agency only uses the employer contact for that specific negotiation and to follow-up with the client. This arrangement is unique—as most SPNs share clients not employers—and reflects the level of trust developed through years of working together.

3. Segmentation of service provision: It has been repeatedly identified that service provision often occurs in a vacuum.[109] This phenomenon is primarily due to a lack of communication between agencies because of different mandates, funders and funding requirements, target client group(s), staff size and organizational capacity, and geographic region. This has also meant there is a lack of awareness among agencies about the services they provide. Although there are no eligibility requirements to access Resources and Information (RI) through ES, and while all EO agencies are required to provide information on all EO programs and services (regardless of who is contracted to provide them),[110] job seekers are often unaware of the services available or do not know where to start. As there is no standardized approach to mapping out services in communities,[111] there is no common understanding in each region about how to refer clients to the most appropriate service. The fragmentation of programs and services also contributes to poor employer literacy of available services.[112]

In 2014, Essential Skills Ontario found that in many regions, SPs were working in silos, meaning that they were not connecting with and learning from each other. This affects quality of service and how quality is being achieved.[113] While this is not a problem that is unique to Ontario, SPNs certainly have the capacity to address this issue because of their commitment to collaboration and information sharing. Service provider networks have grown to include agencies with different funders and a number of community partners that address issues facing specific groups of clients. SPNs provide employment service providers an opportunity to share resources and information

about their services, which can increase service coordination, and ultimately, service quality.

4. Low employer awareness: It has been commonly observed that within local business communities, that there is little awareness of services to assist in hiring, integrating, training and retaining workers.[114] Not only are employers largely unaware of employment services, but they do not know how to best access them. This is in part because employers may not be able to differentiate between community employment service providers.

Anecdotally, employers have expressed concerns that the "free" nature of employment services means that the quality of candidates is inferior to that of private, paid employment services, or that community employment services prioritize job seekers as "the client."[115] However, there is no evidence to support these fears. Utilizing service providers was considered a best practice in recruiting by a recent Ontario Labour Market Partnership.[116] It should be communicated to employers that they are funded through a number of sources and each employment service agency has a diversity of clients with a range of skills and qualifications. Job Developers ensure that clients are qualified when they are marketed to employers, and in some SPNs there are common standards for job readiness to ensure that member agencies provide a consistently high level of service to their employer partners. Poor awareness of employment services in these communities may contribute to the development of a stigma against SPs. It stands to reason that education and awareness among employers should have a win-win effect, complementing employers' hiring needs, and matching job seekers to employment opportunities.

IN SUM, THE CONSEQUENCES OF THESE barriers mean that there are fewer successful outcomes for both clients (job seekers) and employers. Poor coordination can result in duplication of services and multiple efforts by different agencies to contact the same employers. Collaboration not only improves coordination and communication between service providers but the relationships between individuals within different agencies. However, these efforts can

be better supported by current service provision funders and by the current programmatic landscape within the Ontario Government.

BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION: A SUMMARY

I. *Competitive* environment for funding

II. Lack of shared *metrics* for collaboration

III. *Segmentation* of service provision which makes inter-agency referrals difficult

IV. Lack of *employer awareness* of community employment services

V. COLLABORATION IN ACTION:

TYPOLOGY & CASE STUDIES

i. TYPOLOGY OF COLLABORATION

SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE INCREASINGLY developing networks and communities of practice to respond to collective challenges in service provision. But how can we understand the diversity of initiatives that have developed across Ontario, and Canada? This section outlines a typology to classify and better understand the structures and functions of various collaborative initiatives between service providers. This is designed to provide a framework for understanding collaboration and not all cases fit neatly or have all of the characteristics listed. However, collaborative initiatives can roughly be understood in four broad network types:

I.   membership-based networks,
II. decentralized and issue-based networks,
III. online platforms communities of practice, and
IV. cross-sector partnerships.

Below are brief overviews of their respective key features, benefits, considerations and examples. Inspiration for this typological approach was drawn from a 2012 report by Dorene Weston of Full Circle Consulting Inc.[117]

Type I. Membership-based networks

Key features: This network is a central hub with individual member agencies and requires active and formal participation of all members. Members often meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. The majority of membership in these networks, although not exclusively, is composed of frontline staff.

In terms of governance, there is a dedicated Program Director or equivalent (strategic team, steering committee or committee of executive leaders) to engage partners, maintain relationships and provide support to agencies. They will set annual priorities, identify ad hoc committees,

and guide the development of reporting, evaluation and communication of outcomes. In addition to or instead of a Project Director, the group may have a Project Coordinator to assist in communications and maintain a website, and ensure information is being communicated effectively. Multiple tiers of membership are not required, but can help in the strategic planning of the organization. Having a dedicated forum for frontline staff (without the presence of management) often means that members feel more comfortable to engage in information sharing.

These networks often have formal protocols and standards, which include, at a minimum, a Terms of Reference which outlines members' roles and responsibilities. More extensive standards and protocols can be developed to make inter-agency referrals, co-host events, and share information or opportunities.

Within this typology there is considerable variation in the purposes and sizes of networks formed, and thus these networks can also be classified by the member agencies involved and by regional scope. Often networks develop around a specific demographic of clients served by member agencies, for example, The Employment Alliance served persons with disabilities, and ALLIES primarily serves newcomers. These networks often form across a specific regional scope, for example across a county, or series of counties, such as the Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex. There are currently no province-wide service provider networks except the Collaborative Partners Network in Nova Scotia that serves persons with disabilities. There are few initiatives that occur with some consistency in different regions, with the notable exception of Local Immigrant Employment Councils (IECs).

Benefits: These networks primarily provide information and opportunities for members and

provide a forum to exchange best practices and identify gaps or duplication in service delivery. Having dedicated staff and resources increases the network's capacity to share resources and helps ensure value added for its members. With the appropriate human resources and structure, these networks can accomplish tasks and delivery services far greater than initially conceived.

Considerations: This type of model takes time to develop, as well as significant resources and commitment from member agencies. Often service providers have limited time which is a barrier to attendance. Thus, the value added to all members must be clear. This can evolve over the network's lifecycle, but having a core vision and set of values or objectives from the onset will provide a common ground for collaboration. Additional time and human capacity is needed for administrative and logistic tasks (setting meeting agendas, chairing meetings, providing minutes, organizing joint events etc.).

Another significant consideration is sustainability, and a crucial component of this is the financial support for a network. The network case studies reveal that they are most often completely non-funded, or they receive partial funding from pilot projects, or have a fee-for-service model. In the case of the latter, there must be a clear return on investment. Fees could be either flat or adjusted for organization's budgets, or they could be collected to recover costs on an event-by-event basis. While cost-recovery tends to be the most common approach, this places limits on what can be accomplished and is an additional consideration in strategic planning.

Examples: CASIP's Employment Services Network (ESN), ESCLM's Job Developers Network (JDN), Mississauga Employment Services Network, Grand Erie Job Developer Network, Job Developer's Resource Network, Collaborative Partnership Network, and Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES).

Type II. Decentralized, issue-based networks

Key Features: These networks are convened to either share information, or to address a common issue such as service coordination or client experience. Often these roundtable-style meetings

result in more formal partnerships that develop outside the network. These networks lack formal protocols and standards but meet on a regular basis (bi-monthly or bi-annually). Participation is voluntary and fluctuates depending on the time of year and member availability.

These networks may have a Project Coordinator housed either by one member agency, a WPDB, or a third party community agency. The network may take the form of an employment council, committee, or a community consultation (often led by a WPDB, or a municipal body). They tend to form around a common program or funder, for example, EO service delivery, or to address a concern affecting a demographic such as youth, persons with disabilities or new Canadians. The type of stakeholders brought to the table varies and commonly include employment services as well as agencies that address social services, mental health or legal issues. The majority of stakeholders are management or Executive Directors rather than frontline staff.

Benefits: These networks are based on clusters of shared interest. One of the primary benefits of the network is to share ideas, information and experiences. Informal networks still provide opportunities to develop relationships between agency staff, as well as to learn about service provision at various member agencies. This does not occur as consistently when compared to Type I networks. Type II networks are easier to develop than member-based organizations, and require fewer start-up costs and less complex governance. These networks are ideal for service providers in different regions that benefit from community updates but find it difficult to meet consistently.

Considerations: Depending on the objectives of the members, resources are required for joint events and professional development and networking activities. Core funding for these networks is extremely rare; in cases where they have been funded, it has been on the basis of a pilot project. Funding for events (i.e., professional development, shared job fairs etc.) is contributed by organizations as needed.

Examples: EO networks, Niagara Job Developers Network Committee, NewComer Organizations

Network, Employment Plus Network and Don Valley Employment Solutions. There are also many WPDB stakeholder consultations and committees such as Community Partners Meetings and the Bruce Grey Employment Committees in the Four County region.

Type III. Online platforms and communities of practice

Key Features: Online communities vary greatly in terms of scope, size and function. They may have a rotating committee of leaders or frontline staff to oversee operations, depending on their size and function. Online platforms and communities of practice leverage the use of social media tools, shared job platforms, and Labour Market Information (LMI). Online platforms are unique from job banks because they are more interactive and provide more opportunities for stakeholders to engage one another.

Online communities of practice form for many reasons: (i) to connect people who might not otherwise be connected due to geography or resources; (ii) to disseminate knowledge, opportunities and information, and/or (iii) to provide services to connect job seekers with employment opportunities.

Other partnerships may occur for the purposes of training and research. One example is the Job Developers Institute, which is partnered with First Work and Life Strategies Ltd. to provide training for JDs.

Benefits: Online platforms provide opportunities to disseminate information without the time commitment associated with in-person meetings. With appropriate marketing, these platforms can greatly increase efficiency in the job development process. They also address skills gaps in innovative ways because they can target particular demographics and provide timely labour market information.

Online communities of practice may still provide opportunities to develop trust and relationships but this is not their primary purpose. Instead, these forums offer a different point of access to connect people than physical meetings. For this reason, communication may occur faster and across a greater geographical scope.

Considerations: Given that these networks do not often have a face-to-face component, it may be more difficult to develop trust or expand the network. While this does not necessarily translate into less value added for members, if members are not engaged with the network or "buy into" its purpose, they will be unlikely to share information or opportunities, which could greatly reduce the network's efficacy. For communities of service providers to share postings electronically, there must be a history of collaboration through in-person meetings and events.

These networks require start-up funding for online infrastructure and staff to maintain the website or platform's operations, depending on their scope and function. These tools may also require significant amount of staff time to monitor and update—this is certainly the case for shared databases of job postings. Having up-to-date postings is crucial and networks must be prepared to regularly add and remove postings.

Examples: BC Centre for Employment Excellence, London Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council's (LMIEC) Job Match Network, Ottawa's Job Match Network (OJMN), Magnet Today, and the Job Developer's Resource Network LinkedIn group.

Type IV. Cross-sector partnerships

Key Features: These partnerships develop either voluntarily through existing formal or informal collaborative efforts, or are funder-driven collaborations. These partnerships often occur between the three legs of employment services: literacy and essential skills, employment, and apprenticeships. For example, learners with employment goals may be referred to Employment Services either during LBS programming or upon exit,[118] and initiatives have reflected the need for more streamlined service delivery and effective referral processes.

Partnerships can even occur across public and private institutions, as in the case of Charlotte Works in California (see Appendix II). Although public-private partnerships in employment services in Canada of this scale are rare (a notable

exception is the evolution of ATNs Employment Alliance to Ability First in London-Middlesex), more informal partnerships exist between nonprofit community service delivery agencies and private recruiting or staffing agencies. While this phenomenon is underreported, community agencies may find it appropriate to make referrals to recruiting agencies when their ultimate goal is an employment opportunity for their client.

Benefits: Structural change to integrate service delivery can streamline a client's experience and ensure that resources are being used as efficiently as possible. Bringing diverse stakeholders to the table for a common purpose can create powerful change. In the case of Charlotte Works, bringing employers to the table directly allowed service providers to maximize their employment outcomes.

Considerations: Learning to work together in this capacity take time—both to develop a common purpose, and to understand each stakeholder's processes and needs. Non-voluntary initiatives must be supported with resources and materials to ensure that all stakeholders have the capacity and tools to engage in a collaborative or integrated model.

Examples: Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs), Charlotte Works, and several pilot projects with regional literacy networks.

ii. CASES OF COLLABORATION

This research identified 31 collaborative initiatives between service providers in Ontario. The cases were gleaned through conversations with Executive Directors, managers and WPDBs staff. The three major case studies were the Job Developers Network in London, Ontario, the Employer Services Network in Toronto and the Employment Alliance in London, Ontario.

This section is designed to map out and provide a snapshot of the diversity and breadth of collaboration taking place in communities across Ontario. Three of the selected cases are organizations from outside Ontario—the Job Developer's Resource Network, the Collaborative Partnerships Network and Charlotte-Works—for a comparative perspective.

The cases are divided according to the aforementioned typology and are further subdivided for ease of readership based on scope or stakeholders present. While collaboration has existed between central managers or between EO staff, this project sought to identify collaboration between frontline staff and JDs, which is appropriately reflected in the cases. The length of the study is typically a reflection of the information available to the primary investigator. The information was gathered primarily from informal interviews with those connected to the network—either JDs, managers or Executive Directors.

As this report is not intended to be an exhaustive description of all service provider networks, there are service provider networks and hubs of collaboration that are not treated here. In particular there are many EO service provider networks; however, as the majority have a similar structure and function, not all were included. Also of note are Local Immigrant Partnerships (LIPs) which bring together community stakeholders and all three levels of government to integrate newcomer needs into community planning, and develop strategies to meet the needs of this population. Finally, the Apprenticeship Network in London, although beyond the scope of this paper, is noteworthy as a unique resource for service providers looking to promote apprenticeship as a first choice career option and to provide information to employers and job seekers about apprenticeship opportunities in London and surrounding communities.[119]

OVERVIEW OF APPENDIX II CASE SELECTION

Type I. Membership-based networks

Job Developers' Networks:

1. Job Developers Network—London, Ontario
2. Employer Services Network—Toronto
3. The Employment Alliance—London, Ontario
4. Employment Connections Toronto
5. Grand Erie Job Developer Network
6. Job Developers Network—Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin
7. Job Developer's Resource Network (JDRN)—Victoria, BC
8. Mississauga Employment Services Network (MESN)
9. Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP)—Toronto

Provincial Networks:

10. Ontario Disabilities Employment Network
11. Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)—Nova Scotia

National Network:

12. Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES)

Type II. Decentralized, issue-based networks

Frontline Staff Networks:

13. Employment Plus Network—Thunder Bay
14. Niagara Job Developers Network Committee
15. Niagara Employment Network (NEN)
16. Quinte Employment Network (QEN)

Management Networks:

17. Don Valley Employment Solutions (DVES)
18. Employment and Literacy Partners Sault Ste. Marie
19. Coordination in the Four County Region
    19a. Bruce Grey Community Partners
    19b. Network Huron
    19c. Partners for Resources in Employment Perth (PREP)

Managers and frontline staff:

20. Timmins Area Network Group (TANG)
21. NewComer Organizations Network (NCON)—Peel Halton

Type III. Online tools and communities of practice

Job Matching:

22. Magnet Today—Toronto
23. Job Match Network—London, Ontario

Online Community of Practice:

24. BC Centre for Employment Excellence (CfEE)—Vancouver

Type IV. Cross-sector Partnerships

25. Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs)—Toronto
26. Charlotte Works—North Carolina

Regional Network:

27. Regional Literacy Networks

Co-location of service providers:

28. YMCA of Niagara Employment & Newcomer Services

The 31 cases can be found in Appendix II.

No.	Title	Year Established	Location	Size	
TYPE I. MEMBERSHIP-BASED NETWORKS					
Job Developers' Networks					
1	ESCLM's Job Developers Network	2011	London, ON	Medium	
2	CASIP's Employer Services Network	2007	Toronto	Medium	
3	The Employment Alliance	1999	London, ON	Medium	
4	Employment Connections Toronto	2013	Toronto	Medium	
5	Grand Erie Job Developers Network	2007/2008	Grand Erie	Medium	
6	Job Developers Network	2010	Waterloo, Wellington, and Dufferin	Medium	
7	Job Developers Resource Network (JDRN)	2010	Three locations in British Columbia	Large	
8	Mississauga Employment Services Network	2011	Mississauga	Medium	
9	Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP)	2000	Toronto	Large	
Provincial Network					
10	Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)	1999	Nine locations in Nova Scoria	Small	
11	Ontario Disabilities Employment Network	2009	Over 60 agency locations in Ontario	Large	
National Network					
12	Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES)	2007	Agency locations across Canada	Large	
TYPE II. DECENTRALIZED, ISSUE-BASED NETWORKS					
Frontline Staff Networks					
13	Employment Plus Network	2012	Thunder Bay	Large	
14	Niagara Job Developers Network Committee	2010	Niagara Region	Medium	
15	Niagara Employment Network		Niagara Region	Large	
16	Quinte Employers Network	2007	Quinte	Medium	
17	Prince Edward County (PEC) Employment Network	2013	Prince Edward County	Medium	
Manager Networks					
18	Don Valley Employment Solutions (DVES)	2010	Don Valley area	Small	
19	Employment and Literacy Partners Sault Ste. Marie	2007	Sault Ste. Marie	Medium	

*This summary matrix is intended to be read as a two-page spread, from left to right.

Formal Protocols	Membership	Funded	Funding Source	Clientele	Currently Active
Yes	FS	Yes	City of London	Varies	Yes
Yes	FS & Tiered	Yes	CIC	Skilled Immigrants	Yes
Yes	FS	Yes	ESDC and MCSS	Persons with disabilities	No
Yes	FS	No		EO Clients	Yes
Yes	FS	No, but was previously supported by the WPDB		Varies	No
Yes	FS	No	Agencies contribute on a case-by-case basis	Varies	Yes
Yes	FS	No		Varies	Yes
Yes	FS	No	Agencies contribute on a case-by-case basis	Varies	Yes
Yes	FS & Tiered	Yes	City of Toronto	Youth	Yes
Yes	Managers	Fee-for-service model and projects funded on a case-by-case basis		Persons with disabilities	Yes
Yes	FS, Managers & employers	Fee-for-service model and projects funded on a case-by-case basis		Persons with disabilities	Yes
Yes	Managers	Yes	Maytree and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	Immigrants	No
Yes	FS	No, but support by the WPDB		EO Clients	Yes
Yes	FS	No		Varies	Yes
Yes	FS	No		Varies	Yes
Yes	FS	Yes	ECOTB	Varies	Yes
Yes	FS	Yes	ECOTB	Varies	Yes
Yes	Managers	No		Varies	Yes
Yes	Managers	No, but in-kind support by MTCU		Varies	Yes

No.	Title	Year Established	Location	Size	
20	Bruce Grey Community Partners	N/A	Bruce and Grey Counties	Medium	
21	Network Huron	N/A	Huron County	Medium	
No.	Title	Year Established	Location	Size	
22	Partners for Resources in Employment Perth (PREP)	N/A	Perth County	Medium	
23	Kingston Employment Network Committee*	N/A	Kingston	Medium	
Managers and Frontline Staff					
24	Timmins Area Network Group (TANG)	2004/2005	Timmins	Medium	
25	NewComer Organizations Network (NCON)	2006	Peel Halton	Large	
TYPE IV. CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS					
26	Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs)	2006	Toronto	Large	
27	Charlotte Works	2011	North Carolina	Medium	
Co-location					
28	YMCA of Niagara Employment & Newcomer Services	2011	Niagara	Small	

LEGEND

Size:
» Small: <10 agencies
» Medium: <20 agencies
» Large: >21 agencies

Membership:
» FS: Frontline Staff
» FS and Tiered: separate committees for FS and Managers
» Both: Frontline Staff and Managers

*Not included in Appendix II

	Formal Protocols	Membership	Funded	Funding Source	Clientele	Currently Active
	Yes	Managers	No, but support by the WPDB		Varies	Yes
	Yes	Managers	No, but in-kind support by the WPDB		Varies	Yes
	No	Managers	No, but in-kind support by the WPDB		Varies	Yes
	No	Agency representatives	No, but in-kind support by the WPDB		Varies	
	Yes	Both	No		Varies	Yes
	No	Both	No		Newcomers to Canada	Yes
	Yes	FS	Yes	TRIEC	Immigrants	Yes
	Yes	Both	Yes	Government	Diverse	Yes
	Yes	Both	Yes	MTCU	Primarily to EO clients	Yes

OUR RESEARCH HAS IDENTIFIED LESSONS learned and best practices as they pertain to collaborative approaches to job development. A best practice is a technique or approach that has been empirically proven to be successful and may be applied in other organizational contexts to increase outcomes or produce desirable results. Best practices are an important element of performance management which feeds into organizational drivers (i.e. mission, culture, values, competencies, strategy or objectives).[120] Not all attempted standards or methods for service delivery have been empirically successful, and from the experience of collaborative efforts that have had less success there are a number of lessons learned that can be drawn upon. As this section consists of both best practices and lessons learned, they have been both compiled under the heading of 'key learnings' to reflect the insights from our research.

As this report highlights, service provider networks have extremely diverse memberships. When forming a collaborative initiative, thought must be given to how each member will access, contribute to, and draw value from the meetings, initiatives, or events. Thus, there is no one model that should or could be exported to other community agencies. Rather, there is a series of lessons learned that can guide the development of new initiatives, described in turn below.

1. CLARITY OF PURPOSE

Different networks serve different purposes and network models must adequately reflect the needs of local agencies and be developed with a specific objective, vision or issue to be addressed. This clarity of purpose can help bring diverse agencies to the table and provide a common ground for discussion. Often, having the common understanding that the ultimate outcome is a job or career for a client drives employment SPNs.

While each entry point for networks varies, many SPNs emerge as a response to a competitive service delivery environment and concern for the quality and efficiency of services for their clients. In many cases, the focus of the network is enhanced service delivery for clients. Other networks of Job Developers, for example, also treat employers as clients, and the network is equally concerned with exchanging best practices in sales or coordinating employer engagement strategies. Once this purpose has been set, annual priorities can also be developed and the value-added of the network is clear.

2. CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Defining each member's or stakeholder's role in an SPN will ensure that everyone has a common understanding and that members' expectations can be met. This requires that agencies have a working knowledge of what services their fellow members provide, and their roles within the network. Another consideration is what resources (either human or financial) organizations can contribute to the network. Determining this in the network's initial phases can also help guide its needs and capacity.

3. DEDICATED RESOURCES

Collaboration requires persistence, significant in-house resources, and financial support. A common concern in nearly all case studies was network sustainability. Sustainable networks are able to provide value for their members. However, this requires both human and financial capital. Having a dedicated staff person is not essential but may help ensure continuity, effective communication, and consistent value-added in terms of coordinated events, services or professional development opportunities. A staff person must be 'neutral' and broker relationships between member agencies, which can be difficult given that these tasks are normally done by someone from a member agency. In many cases, WPDB staff provided administrative and logistical support to coordinate and host meetings. This was usually on a temporary basis. In several cases,

once the WPDB stepped back from the network, formal collaboration was greatly reduced.

In terms of funding, our case studies show that networks are capable of forming without funding incentives, but a stable source of funding is required for them to be maintained. However, it is difficult to get funding that is not project based or directly related to client outcomes. In several cases, SPNs were launched with funding as a pilot project but have since had to operate without funding, which often led to a change in the level of support provided to members.

All collaborative initiatives, like nonprofits, have a lifecycle. When a tipping point is reached (either after a period of time, or a particular event), collaboration becomes easier. However, there are a number of factors that can also derail dedicated collaborative efforts such as changes in agency staff, or changes in government funding.

4. GOOD GOVERNANCE

There are several essential issues which should be considered when SPNs develop their initial governance. These are:
  i.   having an appropriate distribution of tasks and administrative duties, and
  ii. determining who will chair the meetings.
While the governance of SPNs can take many forms as the typology in Part V indicates, some common elements include:
  i.   a host organization responsible for administrative duties (often a third party such as local planning board),
  ii. a meeting chair or co-chairs selected for a set term, and
  iii. in more advanced networks an independent staff person (i.e. a Project Manager or Coordinator) to oversee the network and coordinate activities.
Of all of these roles, a network coordinator or manager is perhaps the most crucial as they are the primary means of communication between job developers, managers and community partners.

While collaboration is initiated because of a specific purpose, the future of the network depends on results. Having a coordinator is often needed to maintain the flow of communication and ensure activities are carried out. Having a full-time staff designated to a network helps ensure continuity, transparency and sustainability. While all job developers engage with employers, a coordinator provides a single point of access for other community partners to liaise with the network and develop projects or initiatives based on need. It is important, however, that there are clear protocols in place for job sharing so that there is no confusion of member roles, and that the coordinator is neutral and open in communicating between members and partners.

Good governance in collaborative arrangements requires multiple levels of collaboration between parties. Again, it takes time and trust to develop the requisite foundation from which to build a solid network. More cohesive networks require process mapping to plan for future integration, which is made easier through the development of tiers of governance or sub-committees. This is contingent on the needs and willingness of the members.

Good governance does not need to be complicated. Networks with a simple governance structure (co-chairs only) might be effective if the purpose of the network is to share information and best practices. This is most often the case in Type II models (de-centralized or issue-based networks). However, for more extensive membership or activity-based networks (Type I), more staff time is required.

SUMMARY

Successful service provider networks often have (a):
  » Clearly defined purpose
  » Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
  » Consistent communication
  » Dedicated human and financial resources
  » Good governance
  » Trust
  » Flexibility
  » Realistic outcomes
  » Protocols and standards

5. MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS

There are multiple services offered through SPN membership and they often have diverse membership. Agencies draw on some services or participate in some programs and not others. For example, some member agencies receive value from the informal networking events, while other agencies do not have the time or capacity to attend. Some agencies (primarily those that serve persons with disabilities) have job placement strategies that focus on creating placement opportunities for individuals and thus do not frequently share job postings, while other agencies regularly share postings and benefit from a greater pool of qualified, job-ready clients. In networks with a broad range of stakeholders, such as the Niagara Employment Network, members receive regular e-blasts on employment and training but meet quarterly to share updates. These examples are illustrative of the need for flexibility and for multiple points of access for member agencies in a network.

6. MULTIPLE PLATFORMS FOR ACCESS

While in-person meetings are needed to build trust, online tools can increase accessibility and typically require less time because they do not require travel. These may include platforms for exchanging information or employment placement opportunities, or monthly webinars such as those that are offered through the BC Centre for Employment Excellence. As JDs have limited availability for tasks that are not directly related to sales, marketing or client placements, having multiple platforms for access helps ensure they can participate in a SPN. As participation and levels of commitment may vary depending on the life cycle of an organization, as well as the time of year, online tools helps bridge gaps in consistency of participation and commitment across the membership. The increased use of online tools can help mobilize knowledge, increase efficiency and provide more opportunities for clients. Social media tools can also be of value to reach out to geographically diverse stakeholders or to build their profile (for example through LinkedIn or Twitter) but they are currently used in a very limited capacity by SPNs.

Despite the proliferation of communication media and web conferencing tools, in-person meetings are highly valuable if the participants are prepared, and the meetings are focused and have an effective process. It takes time to build relationships and regular meetings allow for the creation of rapport and trust. Many SPNs meet monthly, bi-monthly, or as needed to exchange best practices, troubleshoot, tackle issues they are facing or identify gaps in service delivery. Rotating meeting locations showcases agencies and promotes a sense of collaboration and shared ownership. Ideas for collaborative projects often develop organically through roundtable discussions in decentralized networks. However, having themed meetings was a best practice identified by several interviewees in informal networks as it provides a specific and clear purpose. These agendas also allowed time for networking and roundtable updates.

Having a centralized host to coordinate the meetings is valuable. In the case studies, this was often the WPDB or MTCU, although the network members were not all necessarily EO-funded. Meetings should be regularly scheduled and in advance to ensure maximum participation.

7. PARAMETERS FOR COLLABORATION

It is important that SPNs develop feasible objectives or parameters for collaboration. For example, it is not realistic for JDs to share employer contacts in initial meetings, or to immediately begin co-hosting employer engagement events. Once a framework for the network has been developed, and trust begins to form between members, the network can evolve and grow. It should be made clear that collaboration does not have the same meaning across, or even within, networks. This is something that should be the matter of an early and ongoing discussion. Collaboration could mean anything from simply sharing experiences and best practices, to co-hosting events, sharing job postings, or even co-location of service providers.

There are limits to collaboration. This is not necessarily negative; these limits are different for every network and can help provide the framework or common understanding with which to work. As networks are constantly evolving and shifting

in response to changes in both the external and internal service provider environments, these parameters may also change.

8. PROTOCOLS AND STANDARDS

In the early days of a network's formation, it is important to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU), Terms of Reference or Commitment Agreement for members. This is important to revisit at intervals to ensure that the purpose is still relevant.

While a MOU may be initially required to clarify members' roles and responsibilities, the introduction of more rigorous standards or protocols requires trust and a strong and active network. In 2013, the BC Centre for Employment Excellence identified partnership agreements (for co-hosting job fairs, employer forums and employer speaker series) between service providers as an innovative practice in its Community Consultation Summary Report.[122] Forty-six percent of responses to a

survey from the Lake Huron Learning Centre indicated service providers required greater tools to support coordination.[123] These may include an overview or map of service providers and the services they provide, support for coordination of case management, and joint-marketing supports.

Common standards must be introduced at an appropriate time, and the value must be clearly communicated to the membership. Given these conditions, networks could develop processes for:

i.   referring clients,
ii.   sharing job postings, and
iii. collaborative activities such as job fairs.

If done successfully, SPNs can introduce performance measures and more consistent evaluation, a need identified in MTCU's 2014 consultations with service providers.[124]

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES SPOTLIGHT

This list is not exhaustive but provides a snapshot of some of the best practices developed by community service provider networks in the identified case studies.

Practices	Examples
1. A centralized job board that brings awareness to service providers	» Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Planning Board
2. Conferences for frontline workers on common issues	» NewComer Organizations Network (NCON), or Bruce Grey Community Partners
3. Co-location of service providers	» YMCA of Niagara Employment & Newcomer Services
4. Coordinated job fair protocols	» Prince Edward County Employment Network
5. Coordinated marketing for employer engagement	» Don Valley Employment Solutions
6. Electronic platform for sharing job postings	» CASIP's Employer Services Network (ESN)
7. Integrated service planning	» ESCLM and Literacy Link South Central
8. Inter-agency referral resources for Job Developers	» Employment and Literacy Partners Sault Ste. Marie, Literacy Link Niagara, and the Timmins Area Network Group (TANG)
9. Job matching technologies	» Magnet Today, London-Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council (LMIEC) Job Match Network, Ottawa Job Match Network, or Skills International
10. Joint employer events	» Mississauga Employment Services Network (MESN)
11. Funded network coordinator	» ESCLM's Job Developers Network (JDN), ESN, or the City of Toronto's Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP)
12. Rotating meeting locations to showcase agencies	» Niagara Job Developers Network Committee, or NCON
13. Scenario planning	» Job Developers Resource Network, British Columbia

9. ROOM FOR GROWTH

Networks are never stagnant; rather, they are constantly evolving and shifting based on a combination of endogenous and exogenous factors. While networks may develop given the success of past events or experiences, the growth of the network must be relative to its available resources (human and capital). For networks with few human and financial resources, having a limited number of events will prevent fatigue of frontline staff who often have demanding schedules. A series of small successes with low transaction costs will contribute to the stability of the network. Conversely, organizing large events without the requisite trust and resources may strain networks and discourage participation from its members.

There are also common areas for future growth. These include marketing and coordinated employer engagement, expanding opportunities for clients, and greater professional development opportunities for frontline staff.

10. TRUST

At a minimum, for any network to be successful, there must be a safe environment to encourage open communication. Developing a culture of collaboration requires trust and time. As evidenced by many conversations with SPNs, each network has taken years, not months, to develop, and has evolved given the needs of member agencies.[121] In many instances, several service providers in a network had a history of working together which led to the initial network's formation; the network then expanded to include other necessary stakeholders. The grassroots nature of SPNs is then maintained by a network coordinator, whose role is to respond to concerns and issues of the network.

While this has been the norm, there have been examples of successful initiatives which have developed through a top-down model, as organized by WPDB or funders. The purpose of these networks tends to focus on purely information exchange, rather than the sharing of resources or employment placement opportunities. In rare cases, such as CASIP, more fulsome collaboration is built into performance measurement indicators.

THE CASES HAVE IDENTIFIED THE INCREDIBLE diversity and unique nature of each collaborative initiative. These lessons learned reflect the experience and expertise of dozens of collaborators in communities across Ontario. The proceeding section explores how funders can best support the continued development of SPNs and other collaborative initiatives.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES HAVE BEEN CREATED in a competitive environment with a focus on quantitative measures of success. As a result, agencies have reduced the potential opportunities for clients by working in relative isolation. In the many collaboration initiatives that do take place, the outcomes are inadequately captured in current reporting methods.

> ## Service delivery has been fragmented and collaboration—not competition—will enhance client outcomes.

There are also many ways that SPNs can be strengthened internally. There is a continued need to develop resilient networks to weather changes in the external environment. The 'lessons learned' section provides a valuable starting point, as do the cases in Appendix II. A more detailed guide for community agencies interested in greater or new forms of collaboration is currently being developed and will be available in the summer of 2015.

This set of recommendations is directed towards funders for their role in understanding and supporting collaborative initiatives. These recommendations aim to supportive collaborative initiatives through sustainable funding, the development of metrics for collaborative success, and a more enabling environment for collaboration. They are intended for governmental initiatives that support employment services, primarily MTCU, but also in other ministries that are engaged in training and employment services, such as Citizenship and Immigration and Community and Social Services. These recommendations will ensure that the benefits of collaboration as outlined in Part IV will become a reality in more communities, so as to support them more efficiently deliver services and develop responsive community solutions.

1. Sustainable funding: Service provider networks accrue significant return on investment for funders because they increase the efficiency and effectiveness of job development, and the capacity of community employment organizations.

Collaboration is not free. Costs for SPNs may include: staff support, meeting costs, research and analysis, overhead, branding and communication, website development and maintenance, program design and implementation, and legal and/or financial services.[125] As identified by the case studies, SPNs are seldom funded, and yet they still require staff support for administrative and logistical roles which have typically been absorbed by member organizations. In these cases, funding on a project-by-project basis makes it difficult to support the long-term development of the network and continuity of its staff. Although there have been projects funded by the government that have received longer-term funding, this is the exception rather than the norm. There is shared responsibility between the funder and the recipient agency to develop a sustainable funding model. With sustained funding networks can reach their potential.

2. Shared metrics for success: Funders are largely unaware of the extent of collaboration that is currently taking place between service providers in communities and regions across Ontario. MTCU has been engaged in a series of stakeholder consultations which will influence ETSI. While this is a positive first step, there are many networks and non-EO agencies that have not been consulted, and the questions asked do not necessarily reflect the systemic nature of service coordination.

The current metrics used to measure client outcomes do not take into consideration collaboration between service providers. Despite a focus on outcomes, the current reporting method used by EO agencies has not provided the type of information needed to create more seamless service delivery and maximal quality of service delivery. Reviewing the current reporting methods would

be a first step to redressing this concern. Funders should support inter-agency referrals by re-considering their value as service coordination targets. In a more conducive environment for collaboration, a client could be referred from another agency to a Job Developer to be marketed for an employment opportunity. This would mean that both involved agencies would be equally recognized for their role in the client's service delivery, and that there is no longer a systemic disincentive to refer clients. With more accurate and inclusive service coordination guidelines, EO could track how clients move through and access employment services and better understand how clients are accessing services in regional and aggregate contexts. These metrics could then be used comparatively to develop a more complete picture of service provision. The requirements for referrals should also be clearly communicated to all EO and non-EO agencies. For example, the Timmins Area Network Group has created a resource guide describing each service provider's referral protocols. This is a best practice that could be replicated in other communities and supported by funders.

A common concern identified by several WPDB staff was the inability to measure collaborative partnerships. The only known reporting mechanism is the Continuous Improvement Performance Measurement Tool (CIPMS); however it is not used consistently by WPDBs. Developing metrics for collaborative success will illustrate the benefits of collaboration in more concrete terms. Not only is this desirable from a funder point-of-view because it provides a more accurate picture of the service provision landscape, but it also increases individual agencies' profiles and may allow them to be more successful in acquiring funding. Funders, in consultation with stakeholders, should jointly develop metrics that adequately reflect the state of service provision when it occurs collaboratively. This could capture collaboration beyond inter-agency referrals such as joint funding proposals, joint event coordination, or joint employer engagement. These metrics could then be used comparatively to develop a more complete picture of service provision. Our forthcoming community resource guide will provide guidelines for developing metrics for coordination.

3. Supportive environment for collaboration: It has been recognized that a client-centric approach is a best practice by EO agencies. However, this must be paralleled by MTCU and other ministries that provide employment services.[126] This can be done in several ways.

First, leveraging Workforce Planning and Development Boards is central in supporting collaborative initiatives. WPDBs are uniquely positioned because they engage both employers and service providers. This ability—to bridge both groups of stakeholders—allows them to provide 'the big picture' of the service provision landscape and to liaise with many stakeholder groups. WPDBs in each region also frequently work together, which make them an excellent resource to disseminate information and innovative initiatives.

> *"Funders, in consultation with stakeholders, should jointly develop metrics that adequately reflect the state of service provision when it occurs collaboratively."*

WPDBs have and can support SPNs in a number of ways: providing administrative or logistical support, facilitating connections to employers, tailoring LMI for service providers, facilitating opportunities for professional development, or providing research on specific issues. Many WPDBs have service provider committees but there are inconsistencies in service supports to SPs. These committees are mutually beneficial because this support feeds into the WPDB consultations required for their business plans which, in part, are designed to support EO agencies. However, it is important to understand that most WPDBs have piecemeal funding from a number of sources, limited staff, and project-based initiatives that are usually one year in length. Additionally, while many WPDBs also support non-EO agencies, they are not required to do so; this prevents them from being a comprehensive source for employment supports. At this time there is no mechanism for more integrated involvement in SPNs. MTCU could also support service provider meetings; however, they must

be open to all community employment agencies regardless of funder.

Second, while WPDBs raise the profile of SPs in the business community, they should not be the only ones doing so. Partnerships to develop employer engagement strategies, although commonly done through WFPB, can be done with the Chamber of Commerce or other municipal level bodies. Ultimately, SPNs themselves should have the capacity to develop marketing for employer-focused strategies.[127] This is seldom a priority and requires funding and expertise. Awareness is created on an ad hoc basis and through word of mouth in the business community. A more concerted strategy benefits not only individual service providers but also their collective reputation. For example, service providers could partner with Chambers of Commerce to develop marketing tools for SPNs as employment service agencies are client-centred and their messaging is usually designed for job seekers, not employers.

NONPROFIT SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE A HIGHLY underutilized resource in communities across Ontario. This paper has responded to the lack of a systemic examination of coordination between SPs in hopes of casting light on the scope and extent of collaboration that has emerged over the last decade by organizations with diverse clients and funders. Given the potential changes in how services are delivered in Ontario, and unprecedented interest in local labour market planning and collaboration between services providers, these contributions are particularly timely.

Collaboration is a key driver of benefits for service providers. It is not only necessary in today's service provision landscape but it is also an attractive option for service providers for a host of reasons. This White Paper has attempted to evaluate the benefits of collaboration between service providers and Job Developers in Ontario. It has used a case study approach to detail the experience of JDs and senior managers in the nonprofit sector in an environment that is characterized by both competition and collaboration. This paper suggests that collaborative job development models contribute to more efficient employment outcomes, namely increased coordination, and greater opportunities and improved services for clients. Mapping the current landscape of collaboration between service providers has allowed us to identify a series of best practices from these models.

It is has been established through this White Paper that collaborations have come of age. Discerning SPs understand this opportunity and have already embarked down this path. It is now time to recognize and support them at a systemic level. Placing greater trust in networks of collaboration on the part of funders will help ensure smooth service delivery. But where do we go from here? In order for more efficient models of collaboration, agencies first need more representative metrics (i.e. in CaMS and EO data). Developing a streamlined process for inter-agency referrals should be a priority, as is modifying the case management system to better recognize service coordination. We recognize that this requires significant investment and infrastructure. In the interim, funders should leverage and support existing network partnerships, such as those through the WPDBs.

> *"Employment services providers are well-positioned to address the mismatch between workers' skills and employers' needs; however, there is a widespread lack of awareness about their services for employers."*

What are the prospects for an Ontario-wide SPN? Currently there is only anecdotal evidence to suggest that service providers refer clients to agencies in different communities, and this is not a common or well-established practice. However, given the increasing mobility of the workforce, there is an opportunity for employment service agencies to support this. In 2013 a project was piloted by the Northern Literacy Networks (Literacy Northwest) to explore the concept of an Employment Ontario Network to support the work of employment service agencies, build expertise within and awareness of EO-funded agencies, and enhance access to services.[128] More responsive community solutions can occur within a performance management framework; however, this requires consistent support from funders. First, the employment services sector needs more even collaboration in different communities, and a hub to support this collaboration. Agencies have different needs, particularly if they have different funders, which must be considered in developing a responsive community network. An initiative of this scale requires time and resources to develop with strong and dedicated leadership. The development of the Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation may be a first step in this process.

In short, employers in Ontario often cite a lack of skilled candidates as a key recruitment challenge. Our White Paper identified that employment services providers are well-positioned to address this mismatch between workers' skills and employers' needs; however, there is a widespread lack of awareness about their services which are free to employers. When employment service providers collaborate, not only do they increase outcomes for job seekers and employers, they jointly raise the profile of community service agencies. Collaboration can provides these agencies with competitive advantage over for-profit recruitment and employment staffing agencies. However, the process by which employment service providers collaborate is complicated by the competitive environment in which they work. Learning how to best coordinate employer engagement strategies across agencies is essential to optimize job development but is seldom recognized by agencies or funders. This report contributes to a deeper understanding of collaborative approaches to service provision through collaboration between Job Developers and provides a starting point to foster greater levels of intentional collaboration between service providers.

ACRONYMS	
ALLIES	Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies
BC	British Columbia
CASIP	Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-trained Persons
CaMS	Case Management System
CCCDA	Canadian Council of Career Development Associations
CDP	Career Development Practitioner
CERIC	Career Education and Research Institute for Counselling
CfEE	BC Centre for Employment Excellence
CIPMS	Continuous Improvement Performance Management System
COJG	Canada-Ontario Job Grant
CPC	Career Professionals of Canada
CPN	Collaborative Partnership Network
CPSC	Client Service Planning and Coordination
DSQ	Detailed Service Quality
DVES	Don Valley Employment Solutions
EBSM	Employment Benefits and Support Measures
ECOTB	East Coast Ontario Training Board
EI	Employment Insurance
ENC	Kingston Employment Network Committee
EO	Employment Ontario
EOIS	Employment Ontario Information System
EPBC	Employment Program of BC
ES	Employment Service(s)
ESCLM	Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
ESN	Employment Services Network
ESO	Essential Skills Ontario
ETSI	Employment and Training Services Integration
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
IAEVG	International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
IEC	Immigrant Employment Council
JDN	Job Developers Network
JDRN	Job Developer's Resource Network
JPMI	Job Matching, Placement and Incentives
LBS	Literacy and Basic Skills
LIP	Local Immigrant Partnership
LiNDR	Literacy Network of Durham Region

ACRONYMS	
LLSC	Literacy Link South Central
LMDA	Labour Market Development Agreements
LMIEC	London Middlesex Local Immigrant Employment Council
LMP	Labour Market Partnerships
MCI	Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MESN	Mississauga Employment Services Network
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
NCON	NewComer Organizations Network
NEN	Niagara Employment Network
NEW	Northwest Employment Works
OBMs	Ontario Benefits and Measures
ODEN	Ontario Disability Employment Network
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OJMN	Ottawa Job Match Network
ONESTEP	Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects
PEC	Prince Edward County
PIN	Professional Immigrant Network
PREP	Partners for Resources in Employment Perth
QEN	Quinte Employment Network
QUILL	Quality in Lifelong Learning
RI	Resource and Information
S & Gs	Canadian Standards and Guidelines
SJS	Summer Jobs Services
SP	Service Provider
SPN	Service provider network
TEA	The Employment Alliance
TIOW	Targeted Initiative for Older Workers
TofC	Theory of Change
TRIEC	Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
WPDB	Workforce Planning and Development Board
YEF	Youth Employment Fund
YEP	Youth Employment Partnerships

APPENDIX I—ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MET BI-MONTHLY to review the status of the project, providing invaluable feedback, guidance and direction.

Members include:

- » Jamie Burns, Prospectrice at Collège Boréal
- » Wilma de Rond, Executive Director at WIL Employment Connections
- » John Griffiths, Director Workforce Development at Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes
- » Carol Stewart, Project Manager at Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex
- » Anthony Wilson, Manager at Ontario Works

APPENDIX II—CASES OF COLLABORATION

TYPE I. MEMBERSHIP-BASED NETWORKS

JOB DEVELOPERS' NETWORKS:

1. Job Developers Network—London, Ontario

A project of Employment Sector Council London-Middlesex (ESCLM), the Job Developers Network (JDN) is a forum for JDs from 17 organizations to meet, discuss and share information, problem-solve issues, and strategize solutions that promote collaborative service delivery to job seekers and employers.

The JDN was established in 2011 to coordinate employer and job seeker services. The network formed with the recognition that employment services could be delivered more effectively through collaboration, rather than competition. The 17 member agencies have diverse client groups and funders. The JDN is governed by ESCLM and has two co-chairs and a Project Manager. The network is supported by its community partners and is currently funded by the City of London's Prosperity Plan to provide additional coordinated service delivery across employment agencies.

Over the last four years their successes include: measuring and sharing collective results as a network; sharing hundreds of job postings; professional development and networking for members; integrated planning with employer partners with large and small hiring needs; JDN-coordinated job fairs; increased profile with the municipality, workforce board, and economic development agencies; and commitment to standards for optimal and consistent service delivery.

In March 2015, a survey was developed and distributed to all members of the JDN to gain a deeper understanding of how the network functions, its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. The survey found the network to be highly effective. The large majority of survey respondents (81 percent) found the JDN to be an effective tool for JDs in London-Middlesex.

There is a high degree of variation in the JDN services accessed by each member, largely due to the diversity of the member-agencies in terms of their clients served, agency size, type of services delivered, and funding source. The most valued elements of the network are shared postings, networking opportunities, and information on government funding. Ninety-six percent of respondents said the JDN increased coordination among job developers and employment service agencies. Also important to members was the role of the JDN in presenting a unified message to employers and funders about the state of employment services in London-Middlesex.

In general, this survey found that the JDN has significantly contributed to improved coordination between Job Developers and to agencies' strategic interests. Members are committed to collaboration and see the value in the network as a model for other employment service agencies, and 95 percent of respondents suggested that the JDN could and should be replicated by other communities in Ontario.

The JDN's success is driven by trust and goodwill among Job Developers, and support from member organization's staff. ESCLM has over 20 years of experience building networks. The relationships and common processes developed through ESLCM helped form the foundation for JDs to connect, share information, develop relationships and to advocate on behalf of the sector. The network however, did not develop without overcoming challenges—namely navigating a competitive industry, ensuring continuity of leadership, determining its governance structure, and ensuring value-added for all members despite differences among agencies. The network has successfully brought together diverse agencies, which was only possible with trust, organizational support and dedicated resources.

2. Employer Services Network (ESN)—Toronto

CASIP was formed in 1998 as a consortium of independent, community-based agencies and colleges who deliver employment and training to internationally trained persons in the GTA. Through collaboration, CASIP's mission is to drive innovation, advocacy and excellence in

employment services for skilled immigrants and employers. The Employer Services Network (ESN) emerged in 2007 as a partnership between CASIP and the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). The ESN attempts to bring employer services together and provide coordinated employer engagement. CASIP is funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada to further develop the services provided to employers.

Through the ESN, the 11 EO-funded member organizations provide the full suite of human resources, recruitment and retention services to employers. Member agencies provide pre-screened, job-ready professional candidates, and a coordinated access point to a diverse and qualified talent pool. Among the benefits of the ESN is the development of more effective service delivery for clients, and being able to provide more opportunities for clients to be matched with employer placements (i.e. career opportunities for newcomer professionals). At the same time, ESN's members also increase employer awareness of the skills of immigrants across the GTA. CASIP also contributes to capacity-building for organizations, professional development and networking opportunities for Job Developers. The sharing of best practices supports service excellence both within the network and across its partner organizations. The ESN's Job Developers meet monthly, and regularly share job postings on a publicly accessible website.[129] The website tracks the number of employers, job postings, resumes submitted, and referrals to Partner Organizations. These targets are built into performance review of JDs.

The ESN's governance structure is tripartite consisting of: (i) Governance Committee (Executive Directors and Senior Leaders from Partner Organizations), (ii) Steering Committee (Directors and management from Partner Organizations), and (iii) Lead Organization (Project Team/Staff) at ACCESS Employment which coordinates the activities of the JDN, manages the Project Funds, and employs the Project Team (which consists of Project Manager and Coordinator). The ESN Partnership Agreement and Job Sharing Protocols were designed to engage employers in a coordinated approach, circulate job postings, and develop partnerships with appropriate Networks

to maintain a high level of service.

The value of collaboration drives the organization and is supported through coordination by the dedicated Project Team/Staff. There is a consistent level of quality expected and achieved from Partner Organizations. Trust is required to share information, dedicate time and resources to collaborating and sharing job postings. Because of these conditions, the network has expanded their number of external partners, maintained the job-sharing website and provided a larger-pool of pre-screened candidates to employers. CASIP is developing resources for communities to set up a similar model and is dedicated to sharing best practices and expertise with other organizations within the nonprofit sector.

3. The Employment Alliance (TEA)—London, Ontario

The Employment Alliance (TEA) was a coalition of 15 agencies that provided employment support services for persons with disabilities. TEA formed in 1999 with a mission to improve job development through cooperation among the SPs, and the creation of strategies and resources for increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities.[130]   The Alliance formed through collective recognition by London and area service providers that resources could be used more effectively through collaboration. TEA was supported by both Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

TEA member agencies connected with local employees to create job opportunities for people with disabilities by matching qualified candidates to available positions. The Alliance was formed as a hub to provide employers with human resource supports. TEA provided pre-screened applicant resumes to employers and shared job postings to its member-agencies. They also provided employers with interview accommodations, job training, assistive devices, job coaching, sensitivity training, and information about incentives and wage subsidies.[131]

TEA launched a public awareness campaign in 2002 to educate London employers about the benefits of hiring disabled employees and draw

them to TEA with job postings appropriate to their clients. At the same time they developed the concept of "employer champions" who were recognized monthly with the Ability First Employer award which consisted of a letter of recognition and news articles in local papers, employer education workshops and employer breakfasts. This campaign allowed TEA to establish its own identity through a concerted marketing effort.

Through TEA, Job Developers worked collectively to carve out opportunities with employers to accommodate persons with disabilities, and targeted employment sectors not traditionally involved with employing people with disabilities. The standard of program delivery was set and maintained through coordinated staff training and ongoing program evaluation. Member agencies endorsed and supported the TEA mission through collaborative efforts and promotion of their membership. The management committee was responsible for general management and operations of TEA and the TEA network manager chaired Job Developer meetings and facilitated communication with community partners.

TEA evolved into the Ability First Coalition in 2006, which is a business-to-business partnership which brings employers together to share best practices and experience related to hiring and retaining persons with disabilities.[132] The Coalition showcases local employers through the annual Ability Champion Awards.

TEA's experience provides valuable insights for other Job Developer networks. Although the system had the appearance of a single agency for all accessing services in the labour market, each agency was responsible for employer engagement, but with established protocols and consistent messaging. Having a manager that clearly delineated responsibility for new employer contacts ensured both equity and efficiency. A source of sustainable funding was crucial to maintain the TEA manager position year-to-year. These lessons contributed to the current structure and expression of the program.

4. Employment Connections Toronto

This network brings together Job Developers from 17 employment services agencies to provide

seamless services for employers and clients. The network, which has been active since 2013, is composed of Employment Ontario agencies, not all of whom use a case management system. The monthly meetings provide an opportunity for JDs to share information, common challenges and best practices. They also routinely share job postings and collaborate on one or two hiring events each year. Employment Connections was instrumental in developing a toolkit for job developers with ONESTEP.

One of the biggest values of the network is its hiring events. Coordinating across member agencies attracts a larger pool of qualified candidates and lowers the cost for each agency. After each event, job developers share with the network how many clients were interviewed and hired.

The network has seen success because of the support from managers who have set standards and protocols for the network, which became the Terms of Reference for the group. For the JDs, their primary goal is leveraging connections with employers rather than ownership over them. For this reason, they have developed protocols on sharing clients to other employers. Having a member agency taking the lead for the initial stages of the network's formation (six months to one year) was also an influential factor in its success.

5. Grand Erie Job Developers Network

The Grand Erie JDN started in 2007-8 as a partnership with the region's WPDB to support underrepresented and underemployed populations in Grand Erie.[133] The network was designed to build connections between service providers, share resources and increase placement options for both job seekers and employers. The monthly, and then quarterly, meetings with 18 member agencies were a venue to make inter-agency referrals, to access relevant professional development information and to develop a coordinated employer outreach strategy. The network used a social networking site ("Ning") to encourage information sharing.

The Grand Erie JDN developed organically to address a lack of coordination among Job

Developers. In the early years of the network, they provided training in addition to the monthly meetings. The geographical distance between of service providers in four communities (Brantford, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk) was also a barrier to collaboration. Job Developers now maintain an online connection where they regularly share job postings and request support for specialized employer needs through BrantJobs, an online portal and job board. The competitive nature of the industry was and continues to be the greatest barrier for the network.

The most important lesson offered by this case is adaptability. While the WPDB offered invaluable logistical support, this relationship was not sustainable given the funding and staff capacities of the region's WPDB. Given the demanding schedule of JDs (which often already required significant travel time), the network evolved to meet their needs and work towards their objectives. The trust developed through the initial in-person meetings is a necessary prerequisite for online information sharing in this capacity.

6. Job Developers Network—Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin

The Waterloo JDN formed in 2010 to provide more effective services and to avoid service duplication by sharing employer contacts. Like several other SPNs, this was precipitated by the transformation from Job Connect to Employment Ontario. Membership is comprised primarily of job developers from EO agencies, but mental health agencies are also included because they provide wrap-around services. Even though there is no formal leadership or funding, all members are committed to the network's vision and its fulfillment.

Through dialogue the JDs realized that their employer contacts are relationship-based and are not exclusive. They have developed common understandings over five years and codified in a Terms of Reference. Today the Job Developers actively share job postings through an email distribution list.

The greatest value of the network to the JDs is sharing expertise, experiences and best practices.

The JDN meets bi-monthly at different agency hosts to showcase each SP's employment and training services. There is a standard agenda and the WPDB provides administrative support for organizing meetings. The JDs also collaborate on employer engagement events as they identify the need.

"We [Job Developers] realized there was no such thing as exclusive ownership of employer contacts."[134]

7. Job Developer's Resource Network (JDRN)— Victoria, BC

The JDRN was launched in 2010 by Job Developer Jayne Barron. She was having difficulty filling a job order for her organization; she wanted to maintain the relationship with the employer so she developed a network to find qualified candidates. The first meeting initiated the discussion on how JDs could collaborate without giving up job leads. Today, JDs share job postings openly. They continue to meet monthly in three different centres in Vancouver and surrounding communities.

The JDRN provides a supportive environment for JDs to exchange experiences and common concerns. The value of the network for many members is discussing strategies for multiple client groups (i.e. job seekers, employers, funders and other frontline staff). The meeting chair may also invite members to engage in scenario planning—a method used to create long-term, flexible plans—or to troubleshoot difficult cases.

Through the JDNR there are opportunities for formal training for JDs. The JDRN has also been a valuable tool for employers as it provides a forum to share recruitment needs and help JDs learn about their company culture and hiring needs.

A best practice is having consistent leadership (rather than rotating chairs) to ensure continuity, communication and sustainability. The network requires considerable in-kind logistical support which has been difficult to sustain without a source of core funding.

8. Mississauga Employment Services Network (MESN)

The MESN was formed in 2011 with the vision of keeping the best interest of clients at the center of service provision. Its formation was also a response to the EO transformation in August 2010 and the concern amongst members about how services could be coordinated.

The network brings 11 EO agencies together monthly with the common purpose of providing a supportive environment for JDs. The network meets monthly to share information and best practices. They also share job postings and have developed a protocol for sharing job postings and clients between agencies.

The network is unfunded and members contribute on an event-by-event basis. In 2012-2013, the MESN held a joint employer event to raise the profile and awareness of EO agencies. One third of the employers who attended had no previous knowledge of EO supports so the event was an excellent opportunity to showcase EO supports for employers. However, the event required intensive staff resources. As the network does not have a formal chair to provide direction for the network, the MESN has struggled to maintain momentum. This was exacerbated by changing government priorities and new funding for youth and training programs that stretched JDs' time even further.

From this network's experience, we learn that the networks must grow at a sustainable rate. While buy-in from JDs and their managers is crucial to the network's viability, external obligations can be a barrier to their participation. Without the requisite supports and framework in place, the network's core functions can become compromised.

9. Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP)—Toronto

YEP, a program of Social Development, Finance & Administration with the City of Toronto, began in 2000—two years after the amalgamation of six municipalities and the regional municipality in Toronto—to fill the gaps in targeted employment services for youth. The network brings together 34 service providers from across Toronto. Together they have developed protocols and procedures to help connect youth to employment and training opportunities.

The YEP network developed a Commitment Agreement—terms of reference signed by all members—as a starting point for the network. The network now regularly exchanges information on employers and job opportunities and coordinates job fairs.

The network has a dedicated staff person funded by the City of Toronto who has been the Coordinator for 13 years. Resources for a full-time staff person are necessary for YEP to provide logistical support, expertise, research and accountable leadership. The Coordinator is the first point of entry for community partners. Hiring a Coordinator has also allowed the network to develop a marketing and communications strategy, and provide more programs and training.

The network provides support for sharing challenges unique to JDs. Many of these pertain to challenges that youth—especially those with existing barriers—are facing to employment. The Coordinator responds to these collective concerns, in part, by making the appropriate connections in the community. In the past this has involved: developing relationships with partners to build placements opportunities for youth; training for JDs specific to identified needs; piloting a job fair for youth in the criminal justice system; and outreach to secondary school boards to coordinate and facilitate an annual school-to-work job fair. The Coordinator also brings these issues to the group of managers who meet monthly. The role of the managers is important in supporting their job developers, as well as ensuring there is a smooth transfer of clients from job counsellors to job developers.

The Job Developers meet on a monthly basis, and the managers meet on a quarterly basis. These meetings ensure that all staff are consistently aware of challenges, activities and are in agreement on needs. This also ensures there is a smooth transfer of clients between agencies if applicable. The Advisory Group also meets quarterly and provides further guidance and strategic

direction for the YEP network.

One of the strengths of the network is the supportive environment for Job Developers. This is not possible without trust and commitment. Trust requires time to develop, buy-in from managers and frontline staff, and commitment from other service providers.

"To have a successful network the number one thing you need is trust. 101 percent."[135]

PROVINCIAL NETWORKS:

10. Ontario Disabilities Employment Network (ODEN)

The ODEN began in 2009 and has over sixty member agencies that provide employment services for persons with disabilities. ODEN is "a professional body of employment service providers united to increase employment opportunities for people who have a disability."[136] This is done by addressing barriers to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, coordinating marketing and education for employers about the benefits of hiring their clients, and recognizing employers who have made strides in supporting employees with a disability. ODEN also advocates the government about issues that affect service delivery.

The Board of Directors meet monthly, while the members meet for training activities, the Annual General Meeting, and occasional round-tables on specific topics and issues. The members are primarily ODSP-ES providers, but there are some Development Services Ontario agencies and EO agencies. The benefits of the network for its member agencies are accrued through information sharing, networking, and the promotion of best practices. There are also many materials, presentations and reports for Job Developers and related staff shared through the ODEN website and its LinkedIn group.

11. Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)— Nova Scotia

The CPN is a provincial body with nine nonprofit employment service agencies serving persons with disabilities in nearly every region in Nova Scotia. Developed in 1999, the CPN is one of the oldest collaborative efforts in Canada. The member agencies came together to respond to a gap in service delivery for persons with disabilities, and the joint recognition that "specialized services need best practices."[137]

The CPN brings together the Executive Directors of employment services agencies serving persons with disabilities to shares best practices and updates at monthly meetings. The group is a forum for EDs to test ideas and receive advice on their initiatives, policies and programs. They also provide a united voice to advocate on behalf of their services for persons with disabilities.

The network is governed by two co-chairs and a Board of Director. The network is sustained through a fee-for-service model; funding for additional projects is sought on a case-by-case basis. For example, CPN was recently funded for short-term skills training coordinated by an individual through the network. All members are funded individually by the Career Nova Scotia Centre Management Program, a support measure delivered through the provincial government.

Incredibly, there is virtually no competition between service providers. This is because locations are strategically placed geographically so there is no competition for targets. Unfortunately, this is often not the reality for many employment service networks in densely populated communities. For more remote communities, this network approach ensures there are no gaps in service delivery for targeted client groups.

NATIONAL NETWORK:

12. Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES)

The ALLIES network developed in 2007 to support local efforts in cities across Canada to adapt and implement programs to employ skilled immigrants. The organization was first developed in Toronto with financial support of Maytree and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. Presently, there are Immigrant Employment Councils (IECs) in communities across Canada

with multi-stakeholder initiatives to address the challenges of integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market. ALLIES and IECs support organizations by bringing leaders together, providing professional development opportunities and sharing best practices. ALLIES hosts joint conferences and provides institutional support from the network through coaches, coordination and information sent by the six full-time staff.[139] ALLIES strives to position itself as the national voice for policy change, and as a hub of innovation to develop better programming.[140]

In 2012, a consultant was engaged to explore a more structured and sustainable community of IECs. The report found that although IECs are united through their goal of "supporting employers and integrating skilled newcomers into the labour market," the strategic priorities, organizational structure and programming of each IEC organization vary.[141] A lack of coordination and a lack of awareness among employers were the primary challenge to IECs. These are not unique IECs but have been endemic to nonprofit employment services. Member organizations then embarked on a discussion of how to best profile and position IECs for optimal results.

There are important best practices to be drawn from this case. ALLIES learned from other organizations such as the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and the Vibrant Communities initiatives in developing a national structure. Second, ALLIES has maintained its focus on skilled immigrants. This has increased understanding of how to optimize service delivery to this client group. ALLIES has brought "well-informed, actionable ideas to the table, ensuring efficient update and application."[142] Lastly, there have been consistent efforts through the IECs to engage employers and to increase the visibility and credibility of employment services.

TYPE II. DECENTRALIZED, ISSUE-BASED NETWORKS

FRONTLINE STAFF NETWORKS:

13. Employment Plus Network—Thunder Bay

Since 2012, the network routinely collaborates and meets on a monthly basis to share resources, information and opportunities, and to collaboratively plan professional development events for employment or training and career services professionals.[143] The 26 members participate in an annual workshop and three additional professional development opportunities.

The North Superior Workforce Planning Board provides administrative support to coordinate the meetings and event planning is done by different members. There have been many benefits to the JDs as well as the WPDB. For the WPDB, the discussions through the Employment Plus Network feed into their annual Labour Market Plan. The JDs have also been a key partner in engaging employers in the Employer One survey, which has been mandated in the six northern WPDBs. Together, the JDs and the WPDB are attempting to involve more employers in workforce development by hosting employer engagement events to raise the profile of EO-funded services.

The value of the meetings for SPs are the opportunities to share information and exchange best practices on issues as they arise—this year there has been a particular emphasis on supporting apprenticeships. Representatives to the meetings are responsible for reporting back to their respective organizations. Because of the geographical diversity of some stakeholders, there is a concerted effort to coordinate meeting schedules with other groups to accommodate their travel to the network's meetings.

The experiences of this network demonstrate that diverse groups can come to the table if there is a pertinent and coherent set of values. The Employment Plus Network is building on their success by creating an environment to support inter-agency referrals.

14. Niagara Job Developers Network Committee

The Niagara Job Developers Network Committee is a grassroots initiative developed by Community Living in 2010 following the EO transformation. Initially, only EO agencies participated in the meetings, but the network was soon expanded to include agencies with other funders. The committee's purpose is to exchange information and best practices but the network will also share job postings if an agency is struggling to fill a position. This is fulfilled through bi-monthly meetings with representatives from its member agencies who are all frontline staff. There are rotating chairs and locations for each meeting.

The primary value of the network is its guest speakers. They include, for example, an employer who is hiring, or members of the Chamber of Commerce. This ensures that individuals are accessing the same information and can help provide opportunities for employer engagement or client support. The network also engages in case conferencing to troubleshoot challenging situations. Discussing common situations is a benefit of the network as most JDs work in isolation.

The network has maintained its focus on individual supports for Job Developers, not the interests of their member agency. For this reason, managers do not participate in the meetings. This allows the network to maintain its focus on improving frontline service delivery, rather than becoming agency-centric which may produce tensions or increased competition.

15. Niagara Employment Network (NEN)

Niagara region has seen collaboration between service providers for many years. With the arrival of EO, the NEN reemerged with its current name as a forum for employment service providers from the different municipalities across Niagara region to share information and best practices.

The network is chaired by Literacy Link Niagara and brings together a range of agencies including EO employment and LBS services, OW, and wrap-around services such as mental health and housing. While any staff representation from an agency is welcome, the network is primarily composed of frontline service providers who range from 25-50 in number, depending on the meeting. It should be noted that the NEN is unique from the Job Developers Network Committee because of its broader focus on employment and in the composition of service providers present. Although the governance of the network is simple, it is highly effective for its purposes.

The themed meetings take place quarterly at various agency hosts. While the agenda is informal, there is always time for roundtable updates and networking. One of the principal benefits of the network is to connect different community service providers. Between meetings, members stay updated through regular e-blasts which may contain information on upcoming events, job opportunities or other updates. Providing multiple ways for members to connect with the network ensures that they stay connected even if they cannot attend the in-person meetings.

16. Coordination in the Eastern Ontario

The Quinte Employment Network (QEN) is a monthly meeting of frontline staff to share information and opportunities between service providers. It is organized by the East Coast Ontario Training Board (ECOTB) and hosts guest speakers on various themes. There are consistent LMI updates provided by the ECOTB, as well as roundtable introductions and sharing. Attendance varies between 15-40 SPs per meeting, depending on the theme.

The ECOTB supports SPs on projects such as training for frontline staff, conference for frontline staff from all service agencies, panel discussions, and networking in both Quinte and Prince Edward County. Members of the network have found it easier to make referrals because they have an opportunity to learn about and meet frontline staff from other service providers. Other counties in the ECOTB region also have service provider meetings. While these are not as fully developed as the QEN, they are piloting other practices. For example, in Prince Edward County (PEC), the PEC Employment Network has started to bring employers to the table.

A best practice from the PEC is its coordination of job fairs and the model they have developed to do so. There are many unique elements to their model. For example, service providers are in a separate room supporting job seekers and providing them with resources to support on-the-spot hiring. Only employers that are hiring may attend. All job seekers are entered into the database and are followed up with by a service provider. This model, although only in its second year, has seen great success and the network is seeking to implement it in neighboring communities.

MANAGEMENT NETWORKS:

17. Don Valley Employment Solutions (DVES)

DVES began in 2010 as a group of three employment service providers funded by Employment Ontario to address the needs of the large immigrant and unemployed or underemployed population in the Don Valley area. The network has grown to include several more partners such as Toronto Employment & Social Services, the Ontario Science Centre, the Toronto Community Benefits Network and the Local Immigration Partnership. Establishing common norms for the group and developing an understanding of each stakeholder have been invaluable to support this evolution. Collaboration occurs primarily between managers on employer engagement initiatives such as recruitment events and panel discussions.

A focus of network has been engaging employers in workforce development and hiring unemployed or underemployed persons. The network created a DVES DVD to be handed out to employers, to highlight the benefits of hiring local immigrants and provide knowledge about the local DVES agencies.

Key to the success of DVES has been recognizing and responding to the time and resource constraints of the network. The members are dedicated to organizing one or two hiring or networking events a year. The members have developed protocols to increase the success of these events, for example, clearly communicating to service providers that they must pre-screen

their clients before attending. The managers take turns organizing events, communicate mostly through email, and meet on an as-needed basis. They are starting to develop more regular meeting schedules given the growth of DVES. The network is not funded and event costs—which are relatively low—are shared between all agencies.

18. Employment and Literacy Partners Sault Ste. Marie

The committee was originally developed in 2007 following the transfer of EBSM to the provincial government. Their purpose is twofold: "to act as a Network of Employment and Literacy related service providers committed to excellence in employment services for people living in Sault Ste. Marie and local areas; and to continually improve and sustain service quality standards by developing organizational capacity based on community needs and best practices."[144]

There is representation from 16 service providers and organizations which include all agencies within the Sault Ste. Marie Employment Ontario network (including Employment Services, Literacy and Basic Skills, Self-Employment Benefit Coordinator,[145] Employment Assistance Service provider, and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program coordinators), the WPDB, and Labor Adjustment Committees. Ontario Works and ODSP are a recent addition, and their participation has been mutually beneficial to customer service. A representative from MTCU acts as chair and the team provides direction, sets goals, and follows through on activities for the committee. While MTCU chairs and facilitates the meetings, they are not exclusively for MTCU agencies.

The committee meets on a monthly or bi-monthly basis depending on need and member availability. Throughout the year, sub-committees are formed to address specific activities or events, which are often the priorities that have been set by the Team. Some examples include: open houses for frontline staff from other service providers and community organizations; a quarterly newsletter featuring programs and services, success stories, upcoming events, etc.; an electronic referral system and a referral directory tool; a contact list for job developers; guest speakers; and LMI

updates. Committee members now have enough knowledge and understanding of the services and programs offered through each service provider that they reach out to one another individually as needed.

"The model has been effective because it is approached from the perspective of a common interest such as exemplary customer service or improving service coordination for customers."[146]

19. Coordination in the Four County Region

The Four County region is comprised of the Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties. Community Partners Meetings take place quarterly with (primarily) the management of literacy and employment service providers. There are three different sets of meetings focused on supporting employment outcomes: Bruce Grey Community Partners, Network Huron, and Partners for Resources in Employment Perth (PREP). These meetings provide a forum to discuss updates, available supports for employers, and are a sounding board for new ideas. Each of these three networks is discussed in turn below.

19a. Bruce Grey Community Partners

The Bruce Grey Community Partners committee meets with the purpose of enhancing service delivery collectively. They also act as a communication channel to champion employer services to employers. Members can use the email distribution list to communicate between meetings. There are also other forms of collaboration which develop organically through these meetings. One example is the partnership with the WPDB which provided Social Networking for Social Services—several agencies worked with the Board and developed a half-day workshop for frontline staff with presentations on various community initiatives as well as a 'how to' session for inter-agency referrals. They have also hosted a conference in Bruce and Grey counties for frontline workers on common issues facing SPs.

One of the challenges to meeting is getting all stakeholders around the table and ensuring all members are receiving value. Having a specific purpose and creating a Terms of Reference (and revisiting it at regular intervals) ensure the meetings are relevant and effective. This is coupled with an awareness of each member agency's services to prevent duplication of services and make appropriate referrals.

"[The success of the network is] based on willingness and readiness to engage—to start building relationships together."[147]

19b. Network Huron

Network Huron brings together a diverse range of stakeholders from school boards, rural businesses, literacy and employment agencies, and representatives from MTCU. The 25 members meet quarterly in a roundtable format to discuss information and share updates, and to identify issues and solutions for service delivery. The network is also a forum for managers to learn about the landscape and stay up-to-date. Partnerships are often formed through these meetings which result in collaborative initiatives or events that take place outside the formal auspices of the network.

The biggest barrier for the network is the competitive environment in which service providers operate. Consistent focus on supportiveness and sharing information helps to overcome this challenge. Logistical support is provided by the WPDP (for example, circulating minutes and convening meetings) as an in-house staff contribution. The WPDB receives value from the meetings because the feedback and discussions contribute to their consultation process in the development of their annual LMP and Business Plan.

The group has evolved based on the needs of its members. The group is flexible, and expects flexibility from all agencies, which allows the group to develop organically; this fits within the goals and mission of the group. One tool to help ensure the meetings are reflective of agency interests and needs is a feedback form. This short questionnaire collects information about the project and initiatives members are working on, barriers they are facing and suggestions for future guests or discussion topics at meetings.

19c. Partners for Resources in Employment Perth (PREP)

This umbrella group brings together management from approximately 10 agencies in the Perth County. PREP meets every six weeks for the purpose of information sharing or event planning.

Perth County has a four percent unemployment rate which is significantly below the provincial average. For this reason employers often have a difficult time finding employees and regularly contact one of the five Partners in Employment Centres for their services. Due to the geography of the region and the placement of the Centres, there is very little competition for service delivery, making them a unique case.

MANAGERS AND FRONTLINE STAFF:

20. Timmins Area Network Group (TANG)

TANG was developed in 2004-2005 as a way to improve service coordination in the Timmins region. Both managers and frontline staff meet monthly to share their experiences, concerns and challenges. This network is remarkable in bringing together both managers and JDs, two groups that seldom meet in SPNs. The agenda is focused on information sharing and reflects the interests and needs of the members. The 10 participating agencies have diverse funders, and include several organizations serving aboriginal persons.

The network has served as a springboard for coordination of job fairs between several service providers. TANG has also worked hard to understand the service coordination requirements and processes of each member agency and have communicated this in the form of a booklet to service providers with details on how to make referrals for each agency. This has proven to be a great resource and has ensured all members are on the same page and can more easily coordinate. The meetings build rapport between service providers which increases the likelihood and frequency of referrals. This has also been useful for new members or for agencies where there have been staffing changes. The network as a whole also

contributes to the continuity of service delivery in this regard.

The network also connects service providers to other opportunities in the community related to employer engagement and recruitment in particular, for example with relevant 'Lunch and Learns' hosted by the Chamber of Commerce.

21. NewComer Organizations Network (NCON)—Peel Halton

NCON was founded by the Peel Halton Workforce Development Group in 2006. It is a forum for all frontline staff as well as management from any service provider to support newcomers with all aspects of their settlement.

The network has 165 members which meet quarterly to share experiences, connect, create partnerships, and learn about other community agencies. Meetings are hosted at different agencies, giving members an opportunity to learn about one another. The size and scope of organizations varies greatly. As a result, there are no requirements for participation. Because the membership is so large, it takes more time for trust to develop because there is less accountability and commitment to collaboration.

A focus of the network is professional development: NCON hosts monthly networking breakfasts with guest speakers and pertinent themes to the sector, as well as two annual professional development and LMI conferences. NCON is currently supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation for its professional development series to promote collaboration among newcomer organizations and develop the capacity of frontline staff serving newcomers to Canada. The network also shares job postings through emails sent by the WPDB. It should be noted that this is not the primary purpose of the network and there are no standards or requirements for sharing postings.

The biggest barrier the network faces is the lack of employer awareness. However, it also provides an excellent opportunity to engage employers collectively, which the network has seized by hosting employer events. These events are also used to

counter possible misperceptions by employers that newcomers are less qualified than Canadian born applicants, and by showcasing NCON's champion employers.

TYPE III. ONLINE TOOLS AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

JOB MATCHING:

22. Magnet Today—Toronto

Magnet is a nonprofit social initiative developed by Ryerson University in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in 2014. The network emerged as a response to underemployment of youth and new immigrants. Through the Magnet platform (a 'network of networks'), job seekers are connected with employers based on their fit to the job posting through a digital search agent, and then provided lists of screened applicants. Although in a nascent phase, Magnet is quickly growing and the technology platform is available to 160 Chamber members across the province.

Magnet is an innovative solution that brings together employers, labour, educational institutions, government representatives, membership-based organizations and associations. By using a common framework, partners can access real-time labour market information to better understand individual's and employer's needs and trends to make workforce development and service provision decisions.

> Similar job match technology is being used in other platforms in other communities, for example, Skills International, which is an online searchable resume database used to profile Ontario's internationally educated professionals.[148] This project was created in 2006 by the Waterloo Region District School Board, WIL Employment Connections and COSTI Immigrant Services in Toronto, and supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

23. Job Match Network–London, Ontario

London-Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council's Job Match Network was launched in 2012 as an integrated job matching service for internationally trained immigrants and employers.[149] The network is a community response to the lack of centralized access to talent in the London area. This initiative is funded primarily through Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The Job Match Network uses trained staff to match the pre-screened candidates to job orders. The network connects 14 regional agencies with job orders from a multitude of employer entry points. The network builds on the resources of other community employment service agencies by providing an additional tool to connect clients and employment opportunities, particularly in the case of 'hard to fill' job orders.[150] Any regional agency can partner with the LMIEC and refer clients to the network without closing or transferring their file.

The network has seen incredible growth and has greatly increased the number of job orders filled, employers' satisfaction, and newcomers' engagement in the labour market. The network has connected over 260 immigrant job seekers with commensurate employment opportunities in or related to their field in London.[151] The Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN) also performs a similar function as the LMIEC Job Match Network. These platforms have provided centralized forums to profile the skills of unemployed or underemployed persons in Ontario.[152]

> Another innovative platform was launched by the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Planning Board in 2015. Job Central Simcoe Muskoka is a project developed by the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board in partnership with the County of Simcoe Economic Development Office. The job board is a "free one-stop shop for employers to post employment opportunities and for job seekers to find those opportunities within the region."[153] The WPBD responded to employers' difficulty finding talent, and job seekers struggling to find work. The website provides resources for employers by linking them to service providers in their area.

Social media has been an important but un-der-used tool for collaboration between Job Developers. For example, a LinkedIn group predated the Job Developer's Resource Network to connect JDs from communities across Canada and internationally from 22 different countries. The majority of the 4,400 JDs are from Ontario. However, other attempts to use social media have been less successful, for example Facebook groups where confidentiality was difficult to maintain. The vast majority of SPNs do not have a social media or communications strategy.

ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

24. BC Centre for Employment Excellence (CfEE)—Vancouver

In addition to online platforms, there are also online communities of practice. This is perhaps implemented most effectively in Canada by the BC Centre for Employment Excellence (CfEE). The Centre is a national nonprofit social policy research organization established as a division of the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation and funded through the Canada-BC Labour Market Agreement. The CfEE generates research on employment services and career development and facilitates learning opportunities through its webinar series, events and conferences, and online professional development resources.

The Centre is also the hub for the 100 WorkBC Employment Services Centres [the Employment Program of BC or the EPBC]. There is an online tool to help employment services staff to refer clients to non-EPBC nonprofit employment programs.

In Ontario there is a call for proposals for a new Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation to drive evidence-based service delivery and develop a common assessment framework to be developed in fall of 2015.

TYPE IV. CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

25. Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs)—Toronto

The Professional Immigrant Networks (PINs) is a program of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) which brings together community partners to help clients access resources and increase support job readiness, by connecting immigrants with professionals in their sectors.[154] To do so, the network brings together employers, community agencies that serve newcomers, and government bodies in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The PINs program fosters collaboration by supporting their community of partners and sharing information about employment resources. This helps build the profile of professional immigrant associations. Participating employers are able to better understand the challenges this population faces, as well as their potential.

This initiative also provides opportunities for mentors through professional development opportunities (for example, workshops and e-learning opportunities). Mentors are also encouraged to make referrals and "93 percent of PINs leaders acted on connections and referrals made through PINs."[155] Outcomes such as these are measured to understand employment outcomes of clients (for example, whether they were employed in their field of interest). Job postings are circulated and sent to mentors' PINs coaches.

26. Charlotte Works—North Carolina

Charlotte Works is a public-private partnership that prepares clients for employment, and provides Charlotte-area employers with pre-screened, qualified candidates and supports them throughout the hiring process. In 2011, CEO Steve Partridge transformed the business model of Charlotte Works—a nonprofit employment service provider—to enhance employer engagement. Although still government funded by the Workforce Investment Act, this unique partnership allows greater flexibility and more rapid response to changing employer needs.

The Charlotte Works Employer Engagement

Center is a workspace that provides LMI for local area employers, and a full suite of services for clients. Clients can connect to employers and job postings through North Carolina Works Online which aggregates postings from all major career posting websites with a virtual recruiter to match to qualified candidates.

The Center's JDs support employers through training and hiring with funding and human resources supports. Charlotte Works connects with community employment services agencies to make placements with employers—each partner is chosen for a job order based on their fit with the employer's requirements. Staff from Charlotte Works ensures the quality of matches by contacting all of the individuals being referred to ensure they are pre-screened and a good fit for the role. These services are designed for large-scale employers. Job Developers regularly meet to share information and are in the process of developing a shared database to archive employer contacts. The vision for this is ultimately to develop sector experts from JDs of different employment services. Charlotte Works is also currently in the process of developing intensive training for JDs in recruitment practices.

Charlotte Works is driving innovation in the sector. They are a key partner in the transformation to a pathways model to develop matriculation agreements in public and high schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to ensure easier credit transferability. Through the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement students from community colleges will be more easily able to transfer their credits to other institutions, and students will be able to count apprenticeships as work experience. Charlotte Works is supporting this process by focusing on five key sectors to become the pipeline for talent in the region. They are also advocates of the Career Ladders approach as a best practice to career development.

"We are able to provide customized solutions to employers by listening to their needs."[156]

REGIONAL NETWORK:

27. Regional Literacy Networks

Literacy and employment services are intimately linked—yet there are few inter-agency referrals.[157] There are 16 regional literacy networks in Ontario that provide support to Literacy and Basic Skills agencies. One of these networks is Literacy Link South Central (LLSC), a registered charity. LLSC has provided services to a six-county area (Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk) since 1991. LLSC has been supported by Service Canada and by other funders to undertake many projects on making literacy more accessible. In 2011, they became engaged in a process called the Integrating Literacy and Employment Project with ESCLM, the first local initiative of its kind. LLSC and ESCLM, along with other community partners, are working together to more effectively plan for services that cut across both the employment and literacy sectors through an integrated service plan for clients who have both literacy and employment needs.[158]

As a starting point, the integrated service plan focuses on the employment and literacy sectors and how these two service systems must work together to meet the needs of clients with both literacy and employment needs. Together, they envision a system that is more responsive, coordinated, and accessible. Ultimately, integrated case management allows a client with both literacy and employment needs to move through their plan more effectively. The plan outlines a number of potential models which include: (i) the co-location of services with Literacy Link (ii) integrating literacy and employment programming, and (iii) centralizing the case management system (stand-alone programs that develop informal protocols), or some combination of these. One option for concurrent clients with LBS and ES are boutique sessions (12 week programs with a specific focus and attainable targets) which are currently being piloted to support literacy clients entering the job market. LLSC, along with Essential Skills Ontario, the Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR) and Literacy Northwest (LNW) are also piloting the Career Ladder approach[159] in three communities—Durham; the Grand Erie Region and Thunder Bay—which is designed to help clients

fully participate in the labour market through flexible training and wrap-around supports.

There are also less formal mechanisms for collaboration in rural communities. For example, the Northern Literacy Networks frequently make inter-agency referrals. However, in communities such as these where SPs serve a large geographical area, it is difficult to formalize these relationships or to meet regularly to share information or best practices. There is an opportunity for the WPDB (as in this case) to connect service providers annually to review the annual EO report, and identify gaps in service delivery and opportunities in the coming year.

There is also considerable overlap between literacy and social services as 65 percent of social assistance recipients in Canada have low literacy skills.[160] While "many studies show that literacy is a better prediction of employment success than education," this is "often not widely embraced" by case managers.[161] To address this reality, Literacy Link Niagara sought to better understand this relationship through its Project Ontario Works initiative. In 2012, Literacy Link Niagara shared best practices between LBS and OW providers. Lessons learned included understanding OW resources and literacy information, explaining referral processes, having regular meetings, co-locating SPs, using employment outcomes language, having a dedicated contact person at an OW office, and involving representatives from OW in Literacy Service Planning. The project piloted several resources including: an indicators checklist to identify clients with low literacy in OW; a quick assessment tool that reflects the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework; a common referral form; and a sensitive language tip sheet to help case managers.[162] Although not all of these have been implemented they provide important avenues for further integration that could benefit other communities.

However, there are continued difficulties with choosing a single assessment tool and additional challenges developing long-term strategies and designing programming that can meet the needs of both. Literacy Link Niagara is working with Ontario Works and Employment Ontario to develop Referral Protocol and literacy assessment tools.[163]

There are some similarities in approaches with literacy service providers connecting to OW and EO—for example, constant communication, understanding other service providers, being sensitive to their clients' experience, and realizing that agencies may have different priorities and work at different speeds.

There are also important linkages between apprenticeship and literacy services. Literacy Northwest has explored barriers to apprenticeship and created curriculum resources to support clients on the apprenticeship goal path. A recent report by Stewart Kallio in April of 2015 reframes problems with apprenticeship as solutions to apprenticeship for small and medium enterprises. The report reaffirmed that adopting boutique training to allow apprentices to continue working was a best practice.[164] Literacy Northwest also found that employers are not aware of community service provider.[165] Many barriers for employers to apprenticeship can be mitigated by community employment service agencies, including hiring, training and retaining employees.[166] Employers need help understanding financial incentives, and agencies can be better supported to referrals for literacy and essential skills by educating them through service provider networks.

CO-LOCATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS:

28. YMCA of Niagara Employment & Newcomer Services

The YMCA (the 'Y') of Niagara is one of the largest YMCA locations in Canada and has served job seekers since 1985. In 2011, shortly after the advent of Employment Ontario, the Niagara Y's Employment Services also underwent a transformation. They obtained a new building in St. Catherines and opened their doors to clients. Within this building there are nine agencies, 18 programs and eight different funders. The agencies came together with the goal of seamlessly service delivery for shared clients. This project was largely funded by MTCU.

The Y's co-location of employment services has made the one-stop vision a reality for

clients. Together, their services include a single staffed resource area, public access computers, workshops, certifications, career assessments, financial supports for employment and hiring incentives for employers. From intake to counselling to job development to skills upgrading (including literacy), all services are provided in the same building. The multi-purpose rooms allow for integration of programming. Agencies do not have individual offices; instead, space is allocated for supports and agencies work together to provide them. At the YMCA the employment coaches are JDs and thus clients only work with one person. This truly embodies the concept of seamless client service delivery.

Co-location makes it much easier for the YMCA or partner agencies to attain and exceed its targets. Their service coordination targets were integrated into the Y's business plan and have been an important element of the co-location for all agencies. The other agencies have seen impressive increases in referrals. Groups that had trouble meeting their targets before the co-location are now are exceeding them.

This initiative has seen significant cost savings for the agencies—they do not pay rent or pay for fixed costs such as phone services, printing, the Internet etc. as there is one photocopier, one resource centre, and one receptionist. The fixed costs are absorbed by the YMCA; the social return on their investment is access to employment services and counsellors who bring more efficient service delivery for their clients.

While there was an initial risk for agencies to come on board, they have seen more efficient use of their resources and an increase in the number of clients served and positive outcomes. The cost savings have allowed them to hire more frontline staff. Most recently, the Niagara Regional Literacy Council has moved into the space which was newly renovated to accommodate the higher than expected demand. The co-location has been a huge success and they are now proudly telling their story to funders.

"[Since the co-location] referral rates have skyrocketed and agencies find it much easier to meet their targets."[167]

ENDNOTES[168]

[1] Government of Canada, "Key Small Business Statistics—August 2013," *Industry Canada*, 2013.

[2] The acronym WPDB refers to any Workforce Planning and Development Board or Local Board in Ontario. Most Local Boards have individual acronyms but for consistency and ease of readership, WPDB is used.

[3] For information on Evidence Consulting see evidenceconsulting.org.

[4] Semi-completed surveys mean that the respondent answered at least one question.

[5] See, John R. Graham and Susan M. Graham, "Literature Review Exploring Job Mismatch and Income, and Labour Market Outcomes for People with Disabilities," Submitted to *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)*, March 25, 2013.

[6] See for example, Ed Komarnicki (Chair),"Labour and Skills Shortages in Canada: Addressing Current and Future Challenges—Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities," *Government of Canada*, December 2012.

[7] "Career Development in the Canadian Workplace: National Business Survey—Regional Comparison: Ontario," *Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC)*, March 2014.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Carol Goar, "How the myth of a Canadian skill shortage was shattered: Goar," *The Star*, Commentary, May 13, 2014, and Daniel Tencer, "Tory Budget Fighting A Problem That Doesn't Exist?" *The Huffington Post*, February 4, 2013.

See also Derek Burleton, Sonya Gulati, Conner McDonald and Sonny Scarfone, *Jobs in Canada: Where, What and For Whom?* TD Economics (October 22, 2013), 18-43.

[10] Ibid., 26.

[11] "Career Development in the Canadian Workplace: National Business Survey—Regional Comparison: Ontario," *Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC)* (March 2014), 11.

[12] The survey was conducted in 2014 and/or 2015 in regions of Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford, Sudbury and Manitoulin, Grand Erie, Sarnia Lambton, Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin and Windsor Essex. See Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, "Employer One Survey—2015 Results," 2015; Reggie Caverson,"Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts, 2014 Employer One Survey Results," *Sudbury and Manitoulin Workforce Planning*, February 2015; Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, "Summary—2014 Employer One Survey Results; Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, "Employer One Survey—2015 Results," 2015; Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, "Summary—2015 Employer One Survey Results, 2015; and Workforce Windsor Essex, "Employer One Survey—Community Report," 2014.

[13] Ibid.

[14] See Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, "Employer One Survey—2015 Results," 7, Caverson, "Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts, 2014 Employer One Survey Results," Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, "Summary—2015 Employer One Survey Results," 2015, and Workforce Windsor Essex, "Employer One Survey—Community Report," 2014.

[15] Matthew M. Hodge, and Ronald F. Piccolo, "Funding Source, Board Involvement Techniques, and Financial Vulnerability in Nonprofit Organizations: A Test of Resource Dependence," *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 16, no. 2 (December 1, 2005), 171–90, doi:10.1002/nml.99. Cited in Bindu Arya, and Zhiang Lin, "Understanding Collaboration Outcomes from an Extended Resource-Based View Perspective: The Roles of Organizational Characteristics, Partner Attributes and Network Structures," *Journal of Management* 33, no. 5 (2007), 697–723, doi: 10.1177/014920630730556.

[16] This was a common theme in interviews with WPDB however, it should be noted that the interviewees did not agree with the accuracy of this perception.

[17] The Employer One survey is currently used in the Northern and Western regions in Canada and will also be used in the Eastern region, most likely in 2016. The central region WPDBs use a different annual survey tool for their employers.

[18] Andrea Holmes and Josh Hjartarson, "Moving Forward Together: An Employer Perspective on the Design of Skills Training Programs in Ontario," *Essential Skills Ontario and Ontario Chamber of Commerce* (2014): 9.

[19] Stewart Kallio, "Increasing Employer Support for Hiring Apprentices and Supporting Apprentices' Completion," *Employment Ontario and Literacy Northwest* (April 2015), 66.

[20] "Certifying bodies and options in Canada and Internationally," *Canadian Council for Career Development (CCCP)*, 2014.

[21] In addition to the Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner Certification through the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), there is also the Global Career Development Facilitator through NBCC International and Career Management Certification through the institute of Career Certification International. More information available at "Certifying bodies and options in Canada and Internationally," *Canadian Council for Career Development (CCCP)*, 2014.

[22] This problem has been identified several times, for example in a 2010 report by Life Strategies Ltd., "Information Gathering and Analysis of Employer Engagement and Needs in Career Development Activities, Pan-Canadian, International, and Research Projects—Final Report," Aldergrove, British Columbia, March 31, 2010, and most recently in Brian Hiebert, and Roberta Neault, "Career counselor competencies and standards: Differences and similarities across countries," in *Handbook of career development:*

International perspectives, edited by G. Arulmani, A. J. Bakshi, F. T. L. Leong, and A. G. Watts (New York: Springer, 2014), 689-708.

[23] The programs were Ontario Skills Development (OSD) Ontario Targeted Wage Subsidies (OTWS), Ontario Self Employment Benefit (OSEB), Ontario Job Creation Partnerships (OJCP) and Ontario Employment Assistance Services (OEAS). For more information see Government of Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. "Formative Evaluation: Provincial Benefits and Measures Delivered under the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement, June 2012," April 23, 2013.

[24] Government of Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, "Formative Evaluation: Provincial Benefits and Measures Delivered under the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement, June 2012," April 23, 2013.

[25] Government of Ontario, "Second Career (SC) Guidelines," June 1, 2012 (Last modified on June 5, 2012): 4.

[26] Government of Ontario, "Employment Service—Service Provider Guidelines" (April 2014): 7.

[27] YEF was a two year funding commitment by the Government Ontario and ended March 31, 2015.

[28] Literacy and Basic Skills—Service Provider Guidelines, Effective 1 April 2014, *Government of Ontario*, 2010.

[29] For a complete list of Employment Ontario programs and services see Government of Ontario, "Programs and Services," *Partners' Gateway*, last modified November 13, 2014.

[30] Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, "Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation—Call for Proposal" (May 4, 2014): 3.

[31] Burleton et al. *Jobs in Canada: Where, What and For Whom*, 35.

[32] Ontario Ministry of Finance, "Chapter 9: Employment and Training Services" in *Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services*, 2012.

[33] Recommendation 9-2 in Ontario Ministry of Finance, "Chapter 9: Employment and Training Services," in *Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services*, 2012.

[34] Ontario Chamber of Commerce, "Unlocking the Public Service Economy: A New Approach to Public-Private Partnership in Services" (2014): 5.

[35] MNP LLP, "Employment and Training Services Integration—Broader Consultation," *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities*, April 25, 2015.

[36] David Fulford, Letter to Employment Ontario Service Providers, May 4, 2015.

[37] Essential Skills Ontario, "Elevate: Testing new delivery models to better meet the needs of adults," 2014.

[38] Jennifer Gold and Matthew Mendelsohn, "Better Outcomes for Public Services: Achieving social impact through outcomes-based funding," *Mowat Centre*, 2014.

[39] Government of Ontario, "Employment Service—Service Provider Guidelines" (April 2014): 15.

[40] See Ellen S. Fabian, Monica Simonsen and Richard G. Luecking, "Technical Report: Job Developer Types, Placement Practices and Outcomes," *Transcen Inc.*, December 2012; and Chicago Jobs Council and Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC), "Capacity Building for Chicago Job Development: An Assessment of Chicago Job Developers' Needs and Emerging Solutions for Today's Tight Labor Market," *IssueLab*, May 1, 2002.

[41] This was evidenced in the survey results and was also identified by the MNP LLP report, see "Employment and Training Services Integration—Broader Consultation," 17.

[42] 43 respondents were polled, the majority of whom were Job Developers. See Irene Vaksman and Sadia Khan, "Webinar: Employer Services Network—A Model of Job Development Coordination," *BC Centre for Employment Excellence*, February 18, 2015.

[43] See the Job Developers Institute website firstwork.org/wp/2011/05/professional-development-for-job-developers/.

[44] Training is offered primarily by Jayne Barron through Life Strategies in British Columbia, see lifestrategies.ca/services/courses/job-developer.cfm.

[45] See more about the Cannexus conference at cannexus.ca or Futures at firstwork.org/wp/2014/03/futures-conference-2015-fees/.

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[53] "Labour-Community Training Collaborations: A Summary and Synthesis Report to the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre" (Labour Education Centre and the Toronto Training Board, March 2009).

[54] See for example, Bryan Hiebert. "Who will step forward? The need for multijurisdictional leadership for increased accountability," *Career Developments, Canadian Career Development Foundation* 2, no. 1 (2011), 1-5.

[55] This has not been treated comprehensively in terms of service provision, but Sandfort and Milward make an inroads in this discussion in their survey of the literature. See, Jodi Sandfort and H. Brinton Milward, "Collaborative Service Provision in the Public Sector," in *The Oxford Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relationships*, ed. Steve Cropper, Chris Huxham, Mark Ebers and Peter Smith Ring (Oxford Handbooks Online, June 2008), 148-174.

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