

The Economy and Employment

In the 2013 Speech from the Throne, the government called on the private sector to increase the number of people with disabilities in the Ontario workforce and announced that the Accessibility Directorate will move to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment in an attempt to help reach this goal.

CHS Employment Services (ES), currently funded by Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), provides personalized employment counselling and works with employers to ensure workplace accessibility for culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing employees. This program includes job-related counselling, job leads and referrals, interview set-up, interpreters for interviews, and job accommodations and supports (TTYs and other communication devices) to maintain employment.

In 2012/13, **225 jobs** were found for Deaf and hard of hearing people through CHS Employment Services. This saved the Ontario government $225 \times \$16,850 = \$3,791,250$ per year in income supports and generated about \$1.6 million per year in tax revenue.

CHS ES provides an invaluable service to consumers and where it is available, this service has waiting lists.

Unlike other consumers with disabilities, most culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals cannot access mainstream employment services because mainstream providers cannot communicate effectively with them. As a result, assessments, interventions, service plans and outcomes are poor and inappropriate.

In Ontario...

...the number of Deaf and hard of hearing on ODSP income support has increased to 87% in 2012 since 2002

... In 2002, there were only 2,882 ODSP recipients who were Deaf and Hard of Hearing

... In 2012 there were 5,121 ODSP recipients who were Deaf and Hard of Hearing at a cost of more than \$90 million

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services Ontario Disability Support Program Branch, 2012)

Challenges currently facing CHS Employment Services

- **Selection of clients:** Some service providers are selecting only the clients most likely to succeed in obtaining employment. As a result, many of the clients who come to CHS have complex needs and require a significant amount of support to assist them in securing employment.
- **Funding for access:** An increased number of agencies are asking CHS for “free” access support for their consumers given they don’t have the access funding. For example, students who are about to complete their studies would like to register with CHS ES before their graduation to ensure they have a smooth transition from school to work, but Employment Ontario eligibility prevents them from accessing CHS ES.



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Challenges currently facing CHS Employment Services continued

- **Service inconsistency:** Service deliveries vary among the regions and are determined based on local planning approved by local MTCU. For example, CHS Durham provides a full menu of employment services, whereas CHS Ottawa only offers job development and CHS Peterborough must work with Northern Lights for some of its employment service suites.
- **Boundary issue:** A number of clients try to access CHS ES but are unable to due to boundary issues. For example, York residents who live right next to Toronto cannot use Toronto ES for job searches.
- **Consumers with complex needs:** Increased numbers of consumers with complex needs that require more program support to ensure appropriate employment supports are given. For example, a consumer with complex needs would be a Deaf-blind person or a deaf person with autism.
- **Gap of services:** We are currently unable to provide employment services in York Region, Peel and Halton Hills region, Hamilton and Burlington Region, Windsor and district and regions outside of the City of Ottawa.

Recommendation:

- CHS Employment Services requires additional resources to continue to work with our consumers to find them secure, stable employment. We would like to work closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities under their new mandate to continue to provide this essential, specialized service and support to our consumers.
- **\$2 million increase for CHS Employment Services, specifically for additional staff resources in Job Development areas in 10-12 key regions across the province.**

Did you know that...

... Over 55% of working-age adults with disabilities are currently unemployed? For women with disabilities, the rate is almost 75%.

... The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is five times that of people without disabilities?

Source: PALS Survey 2006: Labour Force Experience of People with Disabilities in Canada, Statistics Canada

... Only 20.6% of Deaf Canadians are fully employed (compared with 61% of all Canadians)?

... 42% of Deaf Canadians are under-employed?

... 37.5% of Deaf Canadians are unemployed (compared to 8% of all Canadians)?

Source: Roots, J., & Kerr, D. (1998). The Employment and Employability of Deaf Canadians, Canadian Association of the Deaf



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