

Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities

General Information											
Lead Department	Human Resources Development Canada										
Partners	<p>Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities works in partnership with organizations for people with disabilities, including the private sector.</p> <p>To carry out activities, eligible employers and coordinators include businesses (including federal crown corporations found on Schedule III, Part II of FAA) and comparable provincial crown corporations; organizations, including public health and educational institutions; band/tribal councils; and municipal governments.</p>										
Effective Date	April 1, 1997										
Expiry Date	Opportunities Fund was renewed to March 31, 2002 with the potential to be extended to March 31, 2005.										
Web Site	<p>http://www18.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/programs/opportunitiesfund/desc.asp</p> <p>http://www.drhc.gc.ca/epb-dgpe/ofpd-fiph/menu/home.shtml</p>										
Purpose	To assist persons with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and keep employment or self-employment.										
Roles and Contributions	<p>The objective of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities is to assist persons with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining and keeping employment or becoming self-employed, thereby increasing their economic participation and independence. The objective is achieved by working in partnership with non-government organizations representing persons with disabilities, the private sector and provincial governments in using innovative approaches that demonstrate best practices to promoting the economic integration of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>HRDC provides funding to eligible organizations, who in turn provide programs and services to integrate individuals with disabilities into employment or self-employment and to address barriers to an individual's labour market participation.</p> <p>The roles and contributions of each party are available via the web-site at http://www18.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/programs/opportunitiesfund/desc.asp.</p>										
Resources											
Funding	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%;">1997 to 1999</th> <th style="width: 20%;">1999/00</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2000/01</th> <th style="width: 20%;">2001/02</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>OF*</td> <td>\$30M annually</td> <td>\$30.8M</td> <td>\$30M</td> <td>\$30M</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Since 1997, \$3M annually has been made available for Persons with Disabilities/National Projects under E I Part II. These funds are used for Employment Assistance Services or Labour Market Partnerships activities targeted to persons with disabilities. The projects must operate in three or more regions.</p> <p>* Funding includes operating funds</p>		1997 to 1999	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	OF*	\$30M annually	\$30.8M	\$30M	\$30M
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Tracking and Reporting	<p>There is a results- based accountability framework for the program.</p> <p>For regionally delivered Opportunities Fund programs, responsibility for tracking and reporting on results resides either with a local HRCC or with a service provider who, as part of their contribution agreement, provide client data to HRDC for the purposes of program evaluation. Projected targets for participants employed are provided by the regions.</p> <p>For nationally delivered programs, tracking and reporting on results is also the responsibility of the contracted organization.</p> <p>Federal spending is reported in the annual HRDC Departmental Performance Report and also in the government's Public Accounts – Main Estimates.</p>
Measurement and Reporting	
Outcomes	<p>Opportunities Fund outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic self-sufficiency of Persons with Disabilities • Labour Force integration of Persons with Disabilities • maintained employability of Persons with Disability • Medium and long term outcomes will be reported as part of the 2004 summative evaluation to be conducted by Evaluation and Data Development, Strategic Policy Branch.
Indicators	<p>The two key indicators are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person With Disability obtained employment. • Person With Disability achieved enhanced employability. • <p>Opportunities Fund agreement Terms and Conditions include provisions for accountability. The Terms and Conditions are publicly available at: http://www18.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/programs/termsandconditions/of.asp</p>
Comparable Indicators	<p>Societal indicators of the well-being of Persons with Disabilities are available via Statistics Canada's Health and Activity Limitation Survey.</p>
Evaluation/Third Party Assessments	<p>A Phase 1 formative evaluation was completed in November of 1998 and a Phase 2 summative evaluation will be released by March 2002. These evaluations are coordinated by the Evaluation and Data Development division of HRDC. The formative evaluation is available at: http://www11.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/edd/OFPD.shtml</p>
Shared Information and Best Practices	<p>Information and best practices are shared through conference calls, an annual workshop and ongoing communication with the Regions.</p> <p>Opportunities Fund also shares information and best practices with the Office of Disability Issues and Canada Pension Plan - Disabilities.</p> <p>Information and ongoing developments are also shared with members of a sub-committee to the National Reference Group for persons with Disabilities.</p>
Public Reporting	<p>Performance Information is included in HRDC's Departmental Performance Report.</p> <p>See above for web address for formative evaluation.</p>

Involving Canadians	
Provisions for Citizens to Participate in Developing Social Priorities and Reviewing Outcomes	<p>A parliamentary sub-committee is currently soliciting feedback from representatives of the disabled community.</p> <p>As part of the renewal process, the Internal Audit Bureau is conducting an audit of Opportunities Fund participants. As well, they will be evaluating service delivery mechanisms for Opportunities Fund in selected Regions.</p>
Feedback Mechanisms to the Public	HRDC responds to queries through local offices through written correspondence and, in some cases, directly by e-mail.
Service Commitments	
Public Availability of Eligibility Criteria	See http://www18.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/programs/opportunitiesfund/desc.asp . This site provides detail on eligibility criteria for participants who wish to access the program as well as employers/coordinators who wish to apply.
Existence and Availability of Service Commitments	As most program delivery occurs at the local level, local service commitments at Human Resource Centres apply in the delivery of Opportunities Fund.
Measurement and Public Reporting	A formal mechanism is not in place.
Appeals and Complaints	
Existence, Availability and Communication of Mechanisms	Appeals or complaints on projects or individual interventions would generally be directed to the administering Human Resource Centres in the region. Complaints can also be directed to National Headquarters and elected representatives.
Tracking and Public Reporting	No formal mechanism for tracking appeals and complaints.
Mobility	
Existence of Measures	Not applicable ¹

¹**Not applicable:** when the section does not apply.