

# **Evaluation of Career and Employment Services and the Skills Training Benefit**

## **Final Report**

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### **Submitted to:**

Saskatchewan Learning and  
Saskatchewan Social Services

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## ***Introduction***

Saskatchewan Learning<sup>1</sup> and Saskatchewan Social Services have commissioned an evaluation of Career and Employment Services (CES) and the Skills Training Benefit (STB). The purpose of this document is to summarize the key findings of the evaluation study from data that have been collected.

## ***Methodology***

The evaluation of CES and the STB was based on multiple lines of evidence, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Lines of evidence included:

- ❑ *Review of documentation and literature.* To provide context for the evaluation and to address study issues related to implementation and planning, a review of literature and documentation was conducted. This included, for example, prior and ongoing evaluative research conducted by the Department, documentation related to the development and implementation of the programs, regional needs assessment reports, and internal public opinion research and client and staff surveys. Analyses were also conducted of program administrative data.
- ❑ *Key informant interviews.* In total, 30 key informant interviews were conducted for this evaluation. Respondents included provincial officials from Regional Services (RSB), Programs and Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Branches and representatives from other government departments and community-based partners.
- ❑ *Survey of job seekers.* A telephone survey was conducted of participants in CES services and individuals who received financial support through STB. In total, 800 interviews were conducted with individuals who participated in a CES service and 453 surveys were completed with STB clients.<sup>2</sup> Participants were restricted to those who had begun their intervention since September 1999 and completed their intervention before June 2000. such as program satisfaction, perceived usefulness of interventions and impacts.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST).

<sup>2</sup> Apprenticeship students were excluded from the evaluation.

- ❑ *Focus groups.* Focus groups were used to examine the experiences of job seekers who are unregistered and who are strictly using self-serve services such as resource areas or the web site. Four groups were held in Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton and Meadow Lake.
- ❑ *Survey of employers.* A telephone survey was conducted of 150 employers who posted a job order with CES through SaskJobs in 2000/2001.
- ❑ *Staff survey.* An Internet-based survey of all central and regional staff involved in the delivery of CES or STB was conducted to solicit opinion on effectiveness and strengths and challenges of program delivery. In total, 116 completed surveys were collected.
- ❑ *Web-site user survey.* The views of clients of Career and Employment Services who access information through the Internet, SaskJobs and SaskNetWork were included through a web-based survey. In total, 262 surveys were completed, 228 through an on-line survey and 34 through a self-administered mailback approach.

## ***Findings and Conclusions***

Evidence was gathered to address the issues of rationale, design and delivery, impacts, and alternatives and suggestions for improvements. The results of this evaluation follow.

### ***Rationale***

#### **Addressing Labour Market Needs**

Both CES services and the income support provided for training by the STB are perceived to be relevant to the labour market needs of Saskatchewan job seekers. The broad array of CES services addresses the needs of those who are self-sufficient (e.g., through the resource rooms) and provides a gateway to more intensive services through referrals of higher needs clients to other interventions typically delivered through CBOs. The STB supports access to one possible employment strategy – training – by providing financial support to EI-eligible clients requiring skills upgrading. Additional training/education is the area identified most often by job-seekers in terms of what they need to achieve their employment goals.

Both the services offered by CES and the STB are well-utilized by clients. A significant proportion of CES participants, for example, are using the resources rooms and web-site and accessing counselling staff. SaskJobs is a particularly important tool for job seekers using the web-site. Web-site users themselves express satisfaction with the site, though some would like to see more diverse and up-to-date job listings and expanded information in some areas. The Career Information Hotline is used less frequently by clients and staff also cite a lower level of familiarity with this service. The STB has been fully subscribed since its inception.

CES services are somewhat weaker in terms of meeting the needs of employers, and staff also rate themselves less knowledgeable about employer supports (compared to the services that are available to job seekers). In fact, the services available to employers are quite limited. Few employers who are using the job posting system use any other services provided by CES. Development of employer services was recommended in such key areas as human resource planning and screening or matching of employee candidates to vacancies. Raising awareness of services among employers was also noted and greater outreach to employer clients could have the added benefit of boosting the number and variety of vacancies posted on SaskJobs.

The extensive use of partnerships in delivery of CES services is seen to be a key ingredient in meeting labour market needs. Partnerships have been particularly successful with other service deliverers (CBOs, other government departments), but less so with employers/industry. The collaborative approach is seen to improve outreach to clients, the quality of service to clients and preventing duplication of services. Duplication of services in itself is of only minor concern and the potential for overlap is largely limited to some areas where HRDC continues to have involvement (e.g., youth). Individuals are generally confident, however, in the level of communication and collaboration to avoid problems in this area. The minimal level of duplication was confirmed by the experience of participants who seldom used employment services supplied by other organizations in addition to CES or the STB.

### **Awareness and Targeting**

Sources of awareness of job seekers for both CES and the STB are often informal (e.g., word of mouth). Referrals from HRDC, particularly for STB clients, are surprisingly low given that this is the primary target group for this financial assistance program. Those involved in delivery say the devolution of responsibility for labour market programs for EI clients and consequent name and location changes continue to cause confusion for some clients. More active referrals and soliciting of clients through the HRDC office may be necessary in the short-term to remedy this issue. Other pockets of clients who were identified as being underserved are rural dwellers, multi-barriered clients, Aboriginal individuals and youth.

CES programs and services are available to EI-eligible, social assistance and community clients. The client group for the STB is somewhat narrower, with eligibility criteria that target EI-claimants or the reachback group. The profile of the CES client group suggests that CES services are being targeted appropriately with a fair representation of each of the three client groups. The STB client profile shows a greater representation of EI-eligible clients, as expected. The funds disbursed by the STB are highly incremental as reported by clients – the majority would not have taken training had the STB not been available.

Some key informants and staff had concerns about accessibility and appropriateness of programs and services for some client groups. For CES, some questioned the level of services to clients at each of the far ends of the spectrum – lower educated or multi-barriered clients for whom the self-serve approach is inadequate to meet needs and higher skill individuals for whom there are few opportunities appropriate to their level of education and experience. Some also noted that while CES services are broadly available for all clients, there are few intensive interventions for those who are not eligible for EI or SA. For the STB, the criterion that clients be unemployed was raised most frequently as a barrier to client

participation. In some cases, in fact, marginally employed individuals may be eligible for Part 1 EI benefits, but ineligible for the STB.

Lack of awareness is a particular barrier for employers. The sources of awareness listed by participants and the comments of staff suggest that the current employer client group represents a fairly shallow pool of firms who are long-time and recurring users of CES services. Staff acknowledge the need to reach out to new employers in new industries. The recommended approach to establishing relationships with employers is in-person contacts.

### **Linkages to Other Programs**

As mentioned above, there are few issues regarding overlap or duplication with respect to the programs and services offered by CES. This evaluation also examined the linkages between the STB and other income support offered by the Department for training. The link between the STB and Student Loans was raised as a particular issue, though there is no clear agreement on whether SL should be a required component of the STB (as is currently the case) or a recommended one. The evaluation data suggest that, in fact, clients who apply and are approved for a SL are in the minority (about one in five). There is greater consensus on restricting the STB to exclude those who are in default of a Student Loan (who represent about seven per cent of participants). In any case, the linkage between the STB and SL is an area where staff say they are not as knowledgeable. Guidance on the rationale for the linkage and the mechanics of the application and approval processes is an area for consideration for future training.

## ***Implementation***

### ***Satisfaction***

Clients' satisfaction with CES services and the STB is quite high, though STB clients provide substantially more positive ratings of their experience. For both client groups, the respect and courtesy of staff is the most highly rated aspect of service. Lower income clients, social assistance recipients and clients with a disability express less satisfaction and are less positive about the benefits of participation.

Discontinuation rates are low in both CES and the STB. Among CES participants, half developed a career action plan and, of these, four in ten have completed their plan and another five in ten are in progress. The completion rates for STB training are also very high (only six per cent discontinued). For both groups, the primary reason for discontinuing their action plan or training was to take a job.

Employers also express a high degree of satisfaction with the experience in posting vacancies with SaskJobs. Timeliness and responsiveness of staff are important strengths of the service. Even the paperwork is not perceived to be problematic by the majority of employers. The quality of workers referred through SaskJobs received a somewhat lower rating. This was a barrier to participation that was also noted by program staff.



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## ***Management and Organization***

Staff are seen as a key strength of both CES and the STB and, as mentioned above, the ratings of clients confirm a high level of satisfaction with staff interactions. Staffing challenges, where they exist, largely revolve around resources (too few) and training. With respect to the former, in some offices, lack of resources has led to delays in scheduling appointments (though timeliness of services is not a clear area of dissatisfaction, at least among STB clients). Lack of sufficient front end staff in these CSCES offices can have consequences for clients who are not job ready and in need of more assistance with the self-serve resources.

With respect to the issue of training, the move from a specialist to a generalist orientation in some CSCES offices has placed new demands on staff. Skill development needs depend on the experience of the individual, however, the key areas mentioned in the survey were income support, multi-media tools and contracting. For staff who deal with the STB, the Student Loan link and the administration of overpayments were voiced as areas where staff require greater guidance, and perhaps for some, training in negotiation and counselling skills.

## ***Administration of STB***

The evaluation included several questions related specifically to the administration of the STB, including consistency of delivery of the STB and STB policy development. In terms of the former, consistency of delivery of the STB across the province is perceived to be a problematic issue by many. There are believed to be inconsistencies ranging from negotiation of rates to administrative capturing of information to use of overpayments. The administrative and survey data indicate that there are indeed some regional differences in delivery (e.g., use of SL, use of exemptions). Some argue that uneven delivery is an acceptable result of flexibility of delivery, which is a highly valued aspect of the STB. On the other hand, inconsistency can raise issues of perceived equity and fairness among clients.

With respect to policy, the relationship between the STB unit and field staff is largely positive and staff are impressed with the responsiveness of the unit. Almost half of staff say they have raised a policy issue with respect to the STB, though fewer have had the issue addressed to their satisfaction. The process that is in place for policy development for STB is in the form of a Reference Group, which includes a varied representation. While staff are not wholly satisfied with the process, this may be at least partially a result of delays in responding to new policy issues due to the recent hiatus of the References Group.<sup>3</sup>

An analysis of the data related to STB exemptions indicated that exemptions are often sought when training programs exceed the 10-month restriction for course length. The living allowance guidelines are sufficient for the majority. Exemptions occur in particular circumstances where clients must travel to take training, incur medical-related expenses or have a change in income/reduced income during the training period (typically when EI is exhausted or the client is not eligible for a Student Loan). There is also

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<sup>3</sup> This hiatus was initially imposed during the development of the Integrated Income Support project (though the Group has now been resurrected).

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some evidence to suggest that in 2001 (but not in 2000), those seeking exemptions were overrepresented by women and those who are single with dependents.

### ***Monitoring***

Monitoring and accountability is an important issue for both CES and the STB. Both initiatives rely heavily on the OCSM system for case management and tracking. While there are significant difficulties with OCSM, there is also widespread acknowledgement that the system has improved over time. Issues that remain largely focus on delays/slow operation of the system and the link to the HRDC EI system. The poor “screen scraping” process has a negative impact on case management and causes delays in determining eligibility.

Neither CES nor the STB have regular follow-up of clients to track outcomes, nor for the STB is there a system of verification of expenses. Both tracking of outcomes and expenses are recognized as challenges by those involved in delivery. Lack of follow-up support was identified by some clients as a barrier and as an area that staff also identify as not meeting needs.

### ***Impacts***

Both CES and STB clients rate the usefulness of the services or training they received in a positive fashion (higher among youth). Again, clients who have used STB provide consistently more positive ratings of usefulness compared to clients who have participated in other CES services and, not surprisingly, benefits in the area of skill development are particularly highly rated by those who have taken STB-sponsored training.

Employment outcomes for job seekers in the post-program period are quite positive, particularly for STB clients. Seven in ten CES clients had worked during the post-intervention period compared to eight in ten STB clients. At the time of the survey interview, 57 per cent and 69 per cent of CES and STB clients respectively were employed. STB clients also experienced an increase in earnings between the pre-and post-program periods.

Reliance on public income support decreased between the time that clients started on CES or the STB and the time of the survey interview. Among CES participants, there was a substantial decline in the proportion receiving social assistance and EI. STB clients also experienced a decline in the use of EI. Individuals in both groups were more likely to name employment earnings as a source of income at the time of the survey interview compared to prior to starting their intervention.

About half of STB clients attribute getting their current job to the income support and training that they received through the STB. For CES participants, there is a more tenuous link between participation in services and finding employment (three in ten say services were very important in finding their current job and even fewer of those who have post-secondary education and prior work experience say the services were important in finding their current job).

The more positive results for the STB reflect the Department's greater investment in skills upgrading for this group. STB clients also have a stronger educational and work experience background that disposes them to better results. The labour market outcomes for both client groups appear to mature over time; those with a longer post-intervention period are more likely to be employed at the time of the interview and to have spent proportionately more time employed during the post-intervention period.

For both CES and the STB, the factor having the most consistent positive influence on employment outcomes in the multi-variate analysis is having had recent work experience prior to participation in the service or training. In general, better employment results are achieved by those with a post-secondary education, though *perceived* benefits are lower and this group is less likely to experience a positive impact on earnings (for CES). Being married improves outcomes for STB participants. Outcomes tend to be weaker for clients who are social assistance recipients and for STB clients who are Aboriginal.

The socio-demographic characteristics of participants tend to take precedence over service delivery variables (e.g., types of services, types or method of training) and region as predictors of outcomes. There are some significant, though not consistent, relationships (e.g., those with a career action plan and from Region Two rate usefulness of services higher, on-the-job training is associated with reduced joblessness, residents of Region Five are less likely to receive social assistance in the post-program period).

For employers, the primary benefit of their participation in CES through SaskJobs is access to an inexpensive and timely method of recruiting new employees. Not surprisingly, there are fewer benefits in areas such as human resources planning because relatively few employers have access to these services or programs in addition to SaskJobs.

## ***Implications***

The evaluation results and the comments and suggestions of those involved in the design and delivery of CES and the STB are pulled together in the following concluding observations.

- ❑ Clients are served to best effect when a *broad array* of services and resources are made available in a *timely* and *coherent* fashion. Both CES and the STB represent valid approaches to addressing the labour market needs of eligible job seekers. Individuals who are underemployed, rural dwellers and multi-barriered clients experience more barriers to participation in services. *Job search supports* (e.g., workshops, clubs) appear to be a *gap* in some offices.
- ❑ Development of the *employer* client base and programs and services for firms to address human resource issues would allow the needs of employers to be met more fully.
- ❑ The *partnership* approach, which sees collaboration around planning and delivery of employment supports, is a key factor of success and is perceived to support service to the client. Flexibility in service delivery to meet individual needs is also highly valued.

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- ❑ The *resource* rooms are well-used by clients and meet the needs of the majority of users. Yet, many clients require *additional attention*. Staff assistance is largely focused on providing technical assistance with the computers and equipment. More active approaches to engage clients would enhance benefits and ensure clients are properly referred where necessary.
  - ❑ The STB rate and negotiated financial assistance are *appropriate* and do not appear to place an undue burden on most clients. Discontinuation rates are low and only rarely due to financial reasons. As well, incrementality of assistance is high.
  - ❑ *Staff responsiveness* is an important strength of the Department and a key area of satisfaction for job seekers and employers. *Additional support and training* of staff who deal with the STB could remedy *issues of inconsistent delivery* and clarify issues related to the SL link and overpayments. For CES, staff development issues are more diffuse and depend on the areas where staff have had less prior training and experience (e.g., in dealing with social assistance clients or negotiating contracts). The evaluation data indicate that some client sub-groups express greater dissatisfaction with service, including those with disabilities and social assistance recipients.
  - ❑ *Employment outcomes are positive* and the more intensive intervention supported by the STB leads to stronger outcomes for clients. The employment outcomes for STB clients suggest that *training that includes a job placement component* can translate into positive employment outcomes for clients.
  - ❑ Use of a *strong action plan* is agreed by many to help to assess clients' needs or employment barriers and to develop a strategy to lead to long-term employment. In the context of the STB, action plans provide a *stronger link between training* and the labour market. Clients who have developed a career action plan rate the usefulness of services higher.
  - ❑ *Monitoring and follow-up support* of clients are current challenges. For the STB, financial controls around administration and repayment of overpayments and, less widely, verification of expenses were identified as issues. Currently, both availability of human resources and technical resources (i.e., OCSM) do not fully support this activity. The Integrated Income Support System will address issues around STB financial controls and repayment of overpayments.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

The Saskatchewan Department of Learning and Saskatchewan Social Services have commissioned an evaluation of Career and Employment Services and the Skills Training Benefit. The purpose of this Final Report is to summarize the key findings of the evaluation study from data that have been collected.

Briefly, Career and Employment Services (CES)<sup>4</sup> is the integrated delivery system of employment services and career planning and information in Saskatchewan. The system was formerly administered by the Regional Services Branch of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) and is currently administered by Saskatchewan Social Services.<sup>5</sup> The Branch oversees the development and operation of a network of 20 Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices located across the five regions of Saskatchewan. The offices are an important conduit for employment and training assistance services and products. CSCES offices have as their main goals to enable job seekers to make well-informed education, training, employment and career decisions, as well as to enable them to find work (e.g., job search assistance, find a posted job). Among the services

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<sup>4</sup> A list of acronyms is presented in Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> On April 1, 2002 the Saskatchewan Government reorganized its departments. The reorganization has an impact on both the Regional Services Branch and Skills Training Benefit Unit of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. The Regional Services Branch, which encompasses the twenty Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices, became part of the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services. This move is intended to cement the role that the CSCES staff and programs play in supporting the government's *Building Independence Strategy*. The *Strategy* is designed to assist individuals receiving social assistance or at risk of becoming

and products available to achieve these goals are: counselling, workshops, labour market information (SaskNetWork), use of a computer, job search and resumé-writing assistance, an Internet-based job matching service (SaskJobs), course calendars, education and training application forms, and other self-help resources. Provided as well are referrals to and delivery of the various employment and training programs and benefits offered by the province. In 1999/2000, CES served 18,297 clients. Clients include employment insurance (EI) recipients, social assistance clients, as well as members of the community.

This evaluation also considers services available through CES to employers in the province, specifically the SaskJobs job posting system. Outcomes of CES services for employers include filling jobs and addressing human resources issues. The CSCES offices also work in partnership with local organizations and agencies (e.g., education institutions, other government departments, community-based organizations) to develop and deliver services, with the ultimate goal of achieving an integrated and cohesive labour market services system.

The Skills Training Benefit (STB) is administered by the Student Financial Assistance Branch of Saskatchewan Learning.<sup>6</sup> The STB is part of the Skills Loans and Grants program, under the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) signed in 1998. The objective of the STB is to enable current and former EI clients to access education and training, allowing them to enter a job and contributing to their long-term employability. Under the STB, beneficiaries are provided with financial support for training. Program clients are job seekers who are current EI recipients or reachback clients.<sup>7</sup> Recipients must have a career action plan setting out the employment and training actions necessary for the client to return to work. In the first full year of operation (1999/2000), a total of \$11.6 million in financial assistance was provided to 2,876 job seekers. The amount received

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dependent on social assistance to move to employment. The program and service array provided through the CSCES will play a vital role in the success of *Building Independence*.

<sup>6</sup> During the April 1, 2002 reorganization of Saskatchewan Government departments, the Skills Training Benefit Unit, which plays a significant role in framing policy and administering cheques for the STB, became part of the newly formed Saskatchewan Department of Learning.

<sup>7</sup> Human Resources Development Canada defines a reachback client as an unemployed individual: a) for whom an unemployment benefit period has been established or has ended within the 36 months prior to the date of requesting assistance; or b) for whom a benefit period that included a maternity or parental claim has been established within the 60 months prior to the date of requesting assistance, after which the individual remained out of the labour market in order to care for a newborn or newly adopted child and is now seeking to re-enter the labour force.

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under the STB is determined using a flexible negotiated approach, considering clients' need for employment assistance and their personal resources to contribute to the cost of training.

A more detailed description of the CES and STB is included in Appendix B.

## **1.2 Evaluation Objectives and Issues**

The evaluation of CES and the STB has two main objectives: to assess the effectiveness and impacts of CES and the STB and identify options for modification. In meeting these objectives, the evaluation is to address a number of specific issues. There are 18 evaluation questions grouped under four broad issues: (1) rationale; (2) design and delivery; (3) impacts; and (4) alternatives. Each of these is described briefly in turn below.

### **a) *Rationale***

Rationale issues include two questions related to usage levels and relevance. Usage level is a measure of the need and demand for services. A profile of participants provides an indication of utilization by different types of client groups and representativeness compared to all potential clients. The question of relevance is concerned with the extent to which programs and services are relevant to the needs of the client, including job seekers and employers, and possibly other partners involved in planning. The question also addresses whether or not the level of financial assistance offered by STB is sufficient for them to participate in training and to return to work.

### **b) *Design and Delivery***

The issue of design and delivery includes a wide set of issues, such as: overlaps/integration of programs and services, extent of development of partnerships, flexibility and responsiveness, strengths and challenges of program design and delivery, regional variation in marketing and awareness, various administrative processes, and linkages

with other income support programs. In this set of issues, the goal is to identify aspects of the program and services that are and are not working well, for purposes of suggesting possible modifications.

**c)     *Impacts***

In this set of issues, the goal is to measure actual outcomes of participation in CES and in the STB. There are a number of impacts that this evaluation has addressed: (1) *training outcomes*, that is, getting the training needed and the extent to which training leads to a return to work; (2) *employment outcomes* such as the number of job seekers finding employment and use of career action plans; (3) *other outcomes*, including the number of job seekers reducing reliance on income support and able to maintain employment, acquiring skills that are transferable and experiencing an increase in confidence and improved attitudes about work and learning; (4) *earnings outcomes* addressing the extent to which job seekers increased or decreased their employment earnings as a result of their participation in the services, the extent to which composition of job seekers' incomes was altered between employment income and income support, and the extent to which participants in STB-supported training contributed their own funds to the cost of the training (under Negotiated Financial Assistance); (5) *overpayment*, that is, the extent to which STB overpayments arise; (6) *role of information systems* and the how OCSM/CEIS affects service delivery and tracking of participants and the extent to which the system has been adapted to meet administrative needs; (7) *employer impacts*, including whether the various services employers receive meet their needs, their satisfaction with the services and perceived effectiveness of the services in addressing vacancies and skill shortages; and (8) *unintended outcomes* (positive and negative) experienced by job seekers, employers, and staff.

**d)     *Alternatives***

To address the issue of program alternatives, the available evidence is integrated to identify what approaches and design features best help job seekers to obtain employment and employers to find workers.



## 1.3 Methodology

The evaluation of CES and the STB was based on multiple lines of evidence, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Lines of evidence included:

- ❑ *Review of documentation and literature.* To provide context for the evaluation and to address study issues related to implementation and planning, a review of literature and documentation was conducted. This included, for example, prior and ongoing evaluative research conducted by the Department, documentation related to the development and implementation of the programs, regional needs assessment reports, and internal public opinion research and client and staff surveys. Analyses were also conducted of program administrative data.
- ❑ *Key informant interviews.* In total, 30 key informant interviews were conducted for this evaluation. Respondents included provincial officials from Regional Services (RSB), Programs and Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Branches and representatives from other government departments and community-based partners.
- ❑ *Survey of job seekers.* A telephone survey was conducted of participants in CES services and individuals who received financial support through STB. In total, 800 interviews were conducted with individuals who participated in a CES service and 453 surveys were completed with STB clients.<sup>8</sup> Participants were restricted to those who had begun their intervention since September 1999 and completed their intervention before June 2000. The interviews covered issues such as program satisfaction, perceived usefulness of interventions and impacts. A profile of CES and STB job seekers is included in Appendix C.
- ❑ *Focus groups.* Focus groups were used to examine the experiences of job seekers who are unregistered and who are strictly using self-serve services such as resource areas or the web site. The focus group methodology offered a way to include feedback from these individuals in the evaluation. Four groups were held in Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton and Meadow Lake.
- ❑ *Survey of employers.* A telephone survey was conducted of 150 employers who posted a job order with CES through SaskJobs in 2000/2001. Issues covered in the survey included satisfaction with the service, benefits for the firm and responsiveness of the service to labour force needs.
- ❑ *Staff survey.* An Internet-based survey of all central and regional staff involved in the delivery of CES or STB was conducted to solicit opinion on effectiveness and strengths and challenges of program delivery. In total, 116 completed surveys were collected.
- ❑ *Web-site user survey.* The views of clients of Career and Employment Services who access information through the Internet, SaskJobs and SaskNetWork were included through a web-based survey. In total, 262 surveys were completed, 228 through an on-line survey and 34 through a self-administered mailback approach.

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<sup>8</sup> Apprenticeship students were excluded from the evaluation.

While this evaluation of the CES and STB provides a strong combination of qualitative and quantitative research evidence, one caveat should be noted. Outcomes data presented for job seekers are not based on an analysis of *incremental* outcomes — that is, by comparison to what would have happened had the programs not been available. A comparison group analysis was not considered to be feasible for this study.

## **1.4 Organization of the Report**

This Final Report has six chapters in addition to this one. The chapters are generally organized by evaluation issue or theme, with separate sections for CES and STB. Chapter Two of the report presents findings related to the rationale and continued relevance of CES and the STB, from the perspective of those involved in the design and delivery of programs. Findings with respect to the implementation of CES and the STB are discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four describes the impacts of CES and the STB for job seekers. Chapter Five describes the perspective of employers. Suggested alternatives and avenues for improvements are explored in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven presents summary observations and conclusions.



## **2 RATIONALE**

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### **2.1 CES**

#### **a) *Relevance of Services***

Key informants generally agree that CES programs and services are relevant to the needs of job seekers, owing to significant variety in offerings and responsiveness to individual client needs. CSCES offices are of particular relevance for job seekers who are job ready and self-reliant, providing access to technology (e.g., computers, Internet), information (e.g., on community resources, job listings, job search skills, training and education) and equipment (phone, fax, copier). The relevance of CES for other job seeker groups (i.e., those clients who experience greater barriers to employment and need longer term ongoing support and assistance) is found through specialized services offered by community-based organizations (CBOs) (e.g., assessment, work placements, skills upgrading).

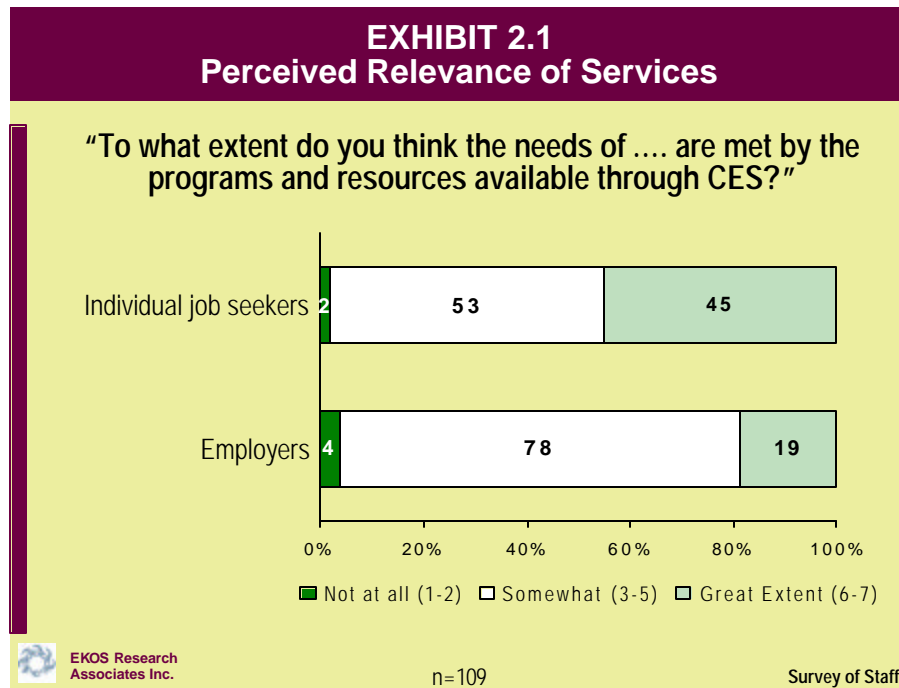
While there have been recent efforts to expand services to employers, most key informants believe employer services to be less developed. Responsiveness to employer clients is limited to job postings, though some offices are also offering some assistance in job matching and human resource planning. Wage subsidy and short course training programs are also available. These programs are perceived to be relevant to the employers who use them. Some key informants noted that relevance of services is improved to the extent that employers are involved in regional planning and CES staff participate in local business associations and councils.

The primary barrier to participation for job seekers that was identified by both key informants and program staff concerned eligibility. There are far fewer programs and services available to individuals who are neither EI-eligible nor on social assistance. Underemployed job seekers, for example, were identified as a potential client group. While these job-seekers can access Student Loans or PTA depending on their training program, some key informants felt this group could benefit from more services. The relevance of services to higher skilled individuals is also questioned by some key informants. Surveyed staff noted other barriers to participation such as lack of awareness of services and too few staff resulting in delays in service.

For employers, barriers to participation were identified by both key informants and surveyed staff as including lack of awareness of services and reticence among some employers in participating in government interventions. Surveyed staff also noted that in some cases a paucity of suitable and eligible employee candidates can be a barrier for participation of employers.

Employers who currently use the CES SaskJobs systems support the relevance of services. Eight in ten employers believe it is very important (rated 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) that CES continue to provide job posting services for employers. A similar proportion (75 per cent) rate the CES resumé posting service as very important.

Surveyed staff also provide a high rating of the relevance of CES services for job seekers (45 per cent believe programs and resources meet needs to a great extent) (Exhibit 2.1). A lower rating is provided for the extent to which services meet the needs of employers (19 per cent).



## b) **Awareness of Services**

Key informants are mixed in their perceptions of the extent to which communities are aware of CES services for job seekers. While some key informants believe that awareness is high due to visibility of offices, referral processes and marketing efforts, others believe that CSCES offices often have a low profile among job seekers. As mentioned above, some key informants and surveyed staff identified lack of awareness as a barrier to participation.

There is a consensus among key informants, however, around other issues related to awareness: 1) awareness is increasing as CSCES offices become more established in their communities; 2) awareness is generally higher for job seekers compared to employers; and 3) awareness is lower among certain groups, including: lower educated groups (social assistance recipients, marginalized populations, illiterate and computer illiterate individuals); multi-barriered, multi-generational social assistance recipients; clients located in rural or geographically remote areas; Aboriginal clients; and youth.

Surveyed staff are also somewhat mixed in their views about client awareness of services. Based on the survey, 43 per cent of staff agree that employers in their community are aware of CES programs and services and 66 per cent agree that job seekers in their community are aware of CES programs and services (responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). One in four (27 per cent) and 16 per cent respectively disagree that employers and job seekers are aware of services. Whereas staff recommended a variety of effective means for marketing services to job seekers (e.g., referrals from HRDC and CBOs, word-of-mouth, advertising, information sessions), by far the most effective approach for raising awareness among employers is perceived to be meeting one-on-one.

**c) *Development and Role of Partnerships***

***Partnerships in Delivery***

Partnership development has been a key aspect of delivery of CES, according to key informants. Partners are involved in regional planning and needs assessment (including community-based and industry partners) and program delivery (through CBOs, colleges and other training institutions). Partnerships with CBOs and with other provincial departments are perceived to have been very successful. Smaller communities and communities where there is a homogenous population and prosperous economy can be particularly successful in partnering.

According to key informants, less co-operation is evident with employers and industry organizations, and there remain some grey areas in the role of CES vis-à-vis the colleges.

The CBO framework for competitive tendering for service delivery was identified as a generally positive factor in enhancing partnerships with this sector. The tendering and contractual processes encourage both CES and CBOs to be more thoughtful and strategic in terms of program offerings to clients and contracts clarify the roles and responsibilities of the partners, as well as administrative processes such as reporting.

CBOs themselves report that CES has maintained a good working relationship with them, with strong co-ordination and communication. Where areas of difficulties occur, these were identified by CBOs as typically including: lack of clarity in what information can be released and shared among organizations; some divisiveness among CBOs due to the competitive process; and concerns around the funding mechanism (restrictive budgets, delays in funding, single-year contracts).

According to key informants, partnerships have had many positive benefits for delivery of services. In general, partnerships are seen to have improved awareness and visibility of services; encouraged a strong, effective network of CBOs; minimized duplication; allowed for the possibility of being seamless through effective and co-ordinated referral of clients; improved the accuracy of needs assessment (e.g., through the regional planning process); enabled delivery of services to remote areas of the province; enabled realization of efficiencies through pooling of resources; and provided of a greater variety of services, including specialized and long-term support to client groups.

### ***Regional Planning***

Regional planning is viewed as a rigorous and thorough process by key informants, though there are variations by region in the extent to which planning has been effective and the expected results obtained. Regional planning can involve numerous partners in local communities and reviews of demographic, survey/focus group data and industry trend data. Partners may include: CBOs, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and Regional colleges and training institutions, other departmental representatives (e.g., social services, economic development), CES staff, Aboriginal groups, community groups and employers/industry. Partners are typically involved through committees or councils designed to address specific issues (e.g., intersectoral committees, labour force development). Partners also provide information as requested on the local client base and labour market needs.

Planning should lead to more effective allocation of resources based on community needs. Co-ordination should also lead to identification of gaps, reduced duplication, and integration of sector-based information. Some regions have used the process to

plan for specific target groups (e.g., clients with disabilities), to develop training and education programs to meet identified skill shortages and to initiate specific projects. Some key informants believe that CES has become more adept at identifying local needs in a timely fashion and to use their scope for flexibility to good advantage in designing solutions. Other benefits include building relationships among organizations in the community and investments and general heightened attention to labour market information.

CES partners themselves generally support the regional planning process, though some suggested that more could be done to involve them in the planning process. In some regions, however, it has been difficult to secure local involvement because potential partners lack the time or resources to participate.

Surveyed staff who are involved in regional planning (about one in five of those surveyed) also provide generally positive ratings of their satisfaction with the process (e.g., appropriateness of partners, effectiveness for guiding activities, and communication of results). One-half of staff or more are very satisfied with these aspects (responded 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). A somewhat lower rating is provided of the time and resources available to conduct planning (34 per cent very satisfied).

#### **d) *Overlap and Complementarity***

Few key informant interview respondents perceive significant overlaps to exist between CES and the services that other organizations (e.g., CBOs, colleges) provide. Rather, CES was seen as developing and nurturing CBO services, in particular, to be strategic. This is particularly effective in smaller centers. CBOs themselves see their services as part of a continuum, with CES offering services to those who are largely job ready and CBOs providing more intensive, specialized services to job seekers who are experiencing barriers to employment. The perceptions of key informants were confirmed in a review of literature and other evaluative work in this area.

The overlaps that were reported by some respondents were of a fairly minor nature, and included some overlap in career counselling and assessment (with the colleges), job



search assistance, and resumé preparation. For employers, one respondent noted that employers can post job orders through a number of organizations and Internet sites, as well as CES.

Although not all respondents were able to comment on the existence of overlaps with other provincial initiatives, these too are generally perceived to be minimal.

One potential source of duplication mentioned by several respondents concerns Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC's) continued involvement with certain client groups (e.g., youth, Aboriginal clients and persons with disabilities). While there can sometimes be inefficiencies and duplication in delivery to these groups, in many instances there is pooling of resources (though some argued the involvement of the two orders of government causes confusion for clients).

## **2.2 STB**

### **a) *Relevance of Financial Assistance***

In general, key informants view STB as being relevant to the needs of job seekers by providing access to financial assistance for training to EI clients. Training itself is a key component of an effective labour market strategy. By removing financial barriers, STB is perceived to encourage participation in skills upgrading and addresses labour market needs in the province.

The counselling component of STB (i.e., participation in STB must be accompanied by a career action plan) is viewed by key informants as strengthening the relevance of STB by ensuring that training choices are compatible with labour market needs and that clients are able and willing to fully commit to and successfully complete the training.

Staff working with STB clients have a very high opinion of the extent to which STB meets client needs. The majority of staff who were surveyed believe the STB meets client needs to a great extent in terms of turnaround times (81 per cent), the amount of the benefit (72 per cent) and responsiveness to client questions or concerns (68 per cent). The area

identified as meeting clients' needs to a lesser extent is the design of the application form (only 50 per cent rate this aspect as meeting client needs to a great extent).

### **b) *Awareness and Eligibility***

Little formal information is available on the extent of awareness of the STB among job seekers. While some concerns were expressed about awareness among specific groups based on anecdotal information, some key informants also noted that the STB is fully subscribed and therefore awareness is sufficient in relation to the availability of funds.

Lack of awareness is perceived by key informants to be a particular issue among reachback clients and possibly higher skilled individuals with little prior experience with the Employment Insurance system. Those who are not using the CSCES offices are also believed to be less likely to be aware of the STB.

Surveyed staff also voice mixed opinions about the level of awareness of the STB among job-seekers. From the perspective of surveyed staff, 58 per cent agree that EI-eligible job seekers in their community are aware of the STB (responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). One in five (21 per cent) disagree.

One of the STB eligibility criteria – that recipients must be unemployed — was raised as a problematic issue by some key informants. These individuals pointed out that there is a segment of potential clients who are eligible for EI Part 1 benefits, but by virtue of a casual work arrangement, are technically employed and, therefore, not eligible for STB. This criterion should be revisited according to these individuals.

### **c) *Consistency of Delivery***

Key informants expressed concern around the consistency of delivery of the STB across the regions of the province. Most believe the STB is not consistently applied in a number of areas such as: application of eligibility criteria; rates and coverage of training costs; turnaround times; evaluation of action plans; recovery of overpayments; and administration and data entry of the forms. The lack of consistency is attributed in large part to the degree of

flexibility in the STB (which is also viewed by some as a key strength). As well, lack of consistency is attributed by key informants to insufficient training, the approach of individual Career and Employment Consultants (CECs) and lack of time for thorough assessment and negotiation of financial contributions and client action plans.

About three-quarters of surveyed staff dealing with the STB also indicate that they are at least somewhat concerned with issues related to consistency of delivery (Table 2.1). Between one-quarter and three in ten are very concerned about consistency of interpretation of policy, consistency of the negotiated process and consistency of referrals to STB.

**TABLE 2.1**  
**Consistency of Delivery: Staff**

<b>“Following are a number of potential issues in delivery of STB in the province. Please indicate how concerned you are about each one.”</b>				
<b>Aspect of Delivery</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not concerned (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Concerned (6-7)</b>
Consistency of interpretation of policy	4	18	49	30
Consistency of STB negotiated process	4	23	45	29
Consistency of STB referrals	5	23	47	25

Source: STB/RSB Staff Survey, 2001 (n=56).

**d) *Effectiveness of Policy Development***

According to key informants, there are sufficient opportunities for staff input into policy decisions and development. Policy development is the responsibility of the STB Reference Group, which includes representatives from all regions and central and regional staff involved in the delivery of the STB. Changes to policy are made as necessary, based on staff input directly to the Reference Group or through other channels such as their supervisor or the STB unit. Issues that become apparent based on the use of policy exemptions authorized by Regional Directors can also drive changes to policy. The Reference Group had been in hiatus

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in the period leading up to the evaluation pending the implementation of the integrated Income Support System (IISS) Project.

Surveyed staff are not wholly satisfied with STB policy responsiveness. One in four staff indicate that they are concerned about the absence of existing policy to cover new issues. When asked what policy issues they are concerned about, a broad variety of responses were offered. These included, for example, clarification on eligibility criteria (definition of unemployed or special cases such as seasonal workers), the linkage to Student Loans, policy for non-Student Loan eligible training programs, assessment of assets and client contribution, and consistency in the application of policy.

Overall, almost one-half (45 per cent) of staff say they have personally raised an issue with respect to the administration of the STB. Issues were variously raised with individuals' direct supervisor (36 per cent), the STB Unit (24 per cent), other personnel (24 per cent) and the STB Reference Group (16 per cent). A minority (28 per cent) indicate that the issue was resolved to their satisfaction.

As mentioned above, one of the factors that drive policy development around STB is the use of policy exemptions.<sup>9</sup> Exemptions that were authorized in the last two years were examined as part of the evaluation to understand the profile of clients who are exempted and the reasons for exemptions. In general, STB clients receiving exemptions in 2000 are quite comparable to the profile of STB clients overall. In 2001, exempted STB clients are more likely to be women, have an "other" marital status (i.e., be separated, divorced or widowed) and to not be married/common-law, but have dependents. By region, exemptions in both 2000 and 2001 are more likely to come from Regions Two and Four (in relation to their share of the overall STB client population) and less likely to come from Region Three.

Table 2.2 presents a breakdown of the reasons cited in the files for the exemption request. The reasons driving exemptions are highly varied and the rationale for the exemption often rests on more than one circumstance (e.g., a client has no sources of income

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<sup>9</sup> Exemptions to policy are authorized by the Regional Director. In the year 2000 (January 2000 to December 2000) there were 262 exemptions and 211 exemptions for 2001 (January 2001 to February 2002).

and their training has been extended, or a client requires funds for both medical expenses and travel costs).

**TABLE 2.1**  
**Profile of STB Exemptions: 2000 and 2001**

Variable	Percentage	
	Exemptions 2000 (%)	Exemptions 2001 (%)
<b>Exemption Reason**</b>		
<b>Living costs exceed guidelines</b>		
Travel/transportation/accom.	12	15
Lack of income/change in income	18	14
Medical	10	9
Accommodation	10	5
Child care/support	1	5
Clothing	1	1
Other/unexplained	8	5
Course length	26	28
Payment prior to start date/after end date	4	9
Waive overpayment	0	3
Eligibility (employed, contacted after started training)	1	3
Exceeds signing authority	10	1
Course extended	5	1
STB living allowance only	0.4	1
Other	4	2

\*These data are based on a match with STB administrative data available from the evaluation study. In 2001, the match was not complete and therefore these data are based on 117 out of 211 cases that were matched successfully.

\*\*Multiple response possible (up to two)

\*\*\*Sample sizes are small: n=29 for 2000 and n=24 for 2001

The most frequently-noted exemption reason in the files is related to living costs exceeding guidelines, which occurs over half of the time. The reasons why living expenses exceed guidelines (where it is explained) most often has to do with expenses related to travel or transportation (12 to 15 per cent of the time) or is due to clients' lack of income/change in income during the training period (14 to 18 per cent). In terms of the former, travel/transportation expenses are most often associated with travel to participate in training that is located in another centre, resulting in incremental costs for transportation, accommodation (e.g., hotel, meals) or maintaining two residences during the training period. In terms of the latter, lack of income is typically the results of clients' EI being exhausted, lack of eligibility for a Student Loan or EI, or lower than expected family earnings.

After living expenses exceeding guidelines, the next most common reason for an exemption is that the course length exceeds the 10 month limit stipulated in the STB policy (26 per cent of the time in 2000 and 28 per cent in 2001). An exemption to cover payment prior to course start date or after the end date was indicated four and nine per cent of the time in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The remaining reasons such as waiving eligibility or an overpayment or an exemption as a result of the course being extended were mentioned five per cent or less of the time. While not technically a reason for an exemption, 10 per cent of the time in 2000 the reason cited for the exemption was that the contract exceeded the CEC signing authority (this occurs much less frequently in 2001).

**e) *Linkages with Other Student Financial Assistance***

The linkages among the various financial supports for training – STB, Student Loans and the Provincial Training Allowance (PTA) – are generally perceived to be satisfactory by key informants. The STB is most closely linked with Student Loans (SL). The STB rates are guided by SL rates, and a SL is described as a “required component” of STB – that is, while the STB will cover tuition and books, a SL should be used for living expenses. The requirement for STB clients to apply for a SL for living expenses is based on the expectation that clients will demonstrate commitment to training by contributing to the cost of their program and to ensure that the financial expectations of EI clients are consistent with the experience of the general public. The STB can be used for living expenses or as a top-up for living expenses when clients are not eligible for a SL (either by virtue of family resources or default status), when the course is not SL-designated or the amount available from a SL is not sufficient to cover expenses.

There are mixed views among key informants about the linkage between the STB and SL. Some key informants prefer that the programs be “de-linked” and that SL be considered a recommended, rather than a required component of the STB. The SL requirement is viewed as a barrier for some marginalized groups who are highly reticent to take on debt. Others question the fairness of providing STB for living expenses to those in default of a Student Loan. Finally, there are administrative issues around the timeliness of SL approvals and lack of staff familiarity with the SL administrative forms and requirements.

STB and PTA are considered to be quite separate programs. While STB is targeted to EI-eligible clients, PTA is available to social assistance recipients and low income earners. PTA is also targeted for participation in certain types of training programs (e.g., Basic Education and short course training). A PTA client taking Basic Education who is also eligible for STB can receive STB for tuition, books or supplies. Finally, the rate structure is different, with PTA having a flat rate based on the (much lower) social assistance benefit amount.







## **3 IMPLEMENTATION**

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### **3.1 CES**

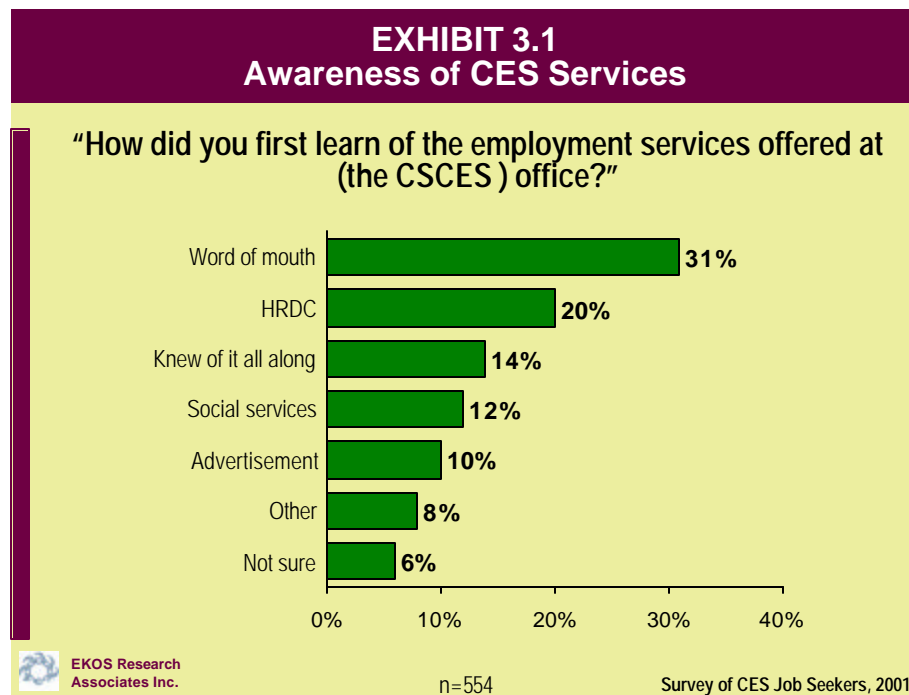
#### **a) *Program Participation***

##### *Awareness*

According to CES clients, the most important ways they became aware of Career and Employment Services were by word of mouth (31 per cent) and referral through HRDC (20 per cent) (Exhibit 3.1). Less frequently mentioned responses included: knew of it all along (14 per cent); social services referral (12 per cent); and advertisement (10 per cent).

- Older clients (45 years and older) and rural clients are more likely to indicate that they knew of the service all along (23 and 21 per cent respectively). Referral through HRDC was mentioned more often by non-Aboriginal clients and clients with recent work experience (i.e., within the last year) (25 and 23 per cent respectively).

Focus group participants similarly identified word of mouth as an important source of awareness of the CSCES offices. These participants suggested awareness could be improved through, for example, more advertising, participation in career fairs, billboards, bolder signage or information inserts with EI-related documents.



### *Use of CSCES Office*

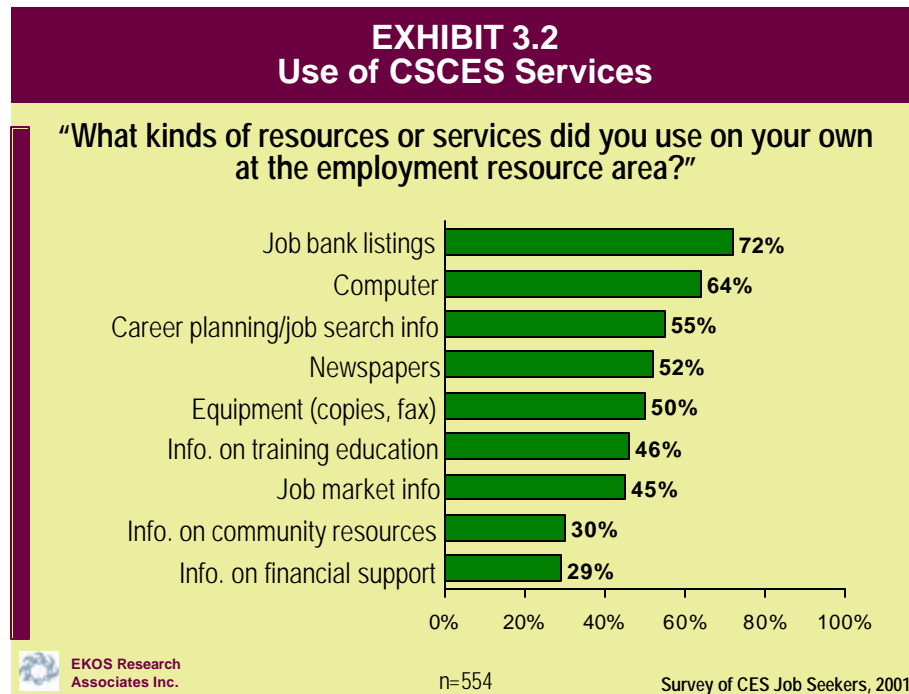
Over two-thirds of CES clients (69 per cent) had used the resource area at the CSCES office.

- Use of the resource area is higher among urban clients (72 per cent compared to 63 per cent of rural clients) and highest in Region Five (with 80 per cent of clients using the resource area).<sup>10</sup> Clients of CES who were employed in the week prior to being registered with CES are less likely to report using the resource area (57 per cent).

Clients use a wide variety of tools and resources available at the CSCES office. The most frequently used kinds of resources and services are the job bank listings (72 per cent) and the computers (64 per cent) (Exhibit 3.2). Less frequent use is made of career planning and job search information, newspapers, office equipment and information on training and the labour market (by between 45 and 55 per cent of clients). Clients are least likely to

<sup>10</sup> Regions within the province are: Region One (North), Region Two (Prince Albert and area), Region Three (Central), Region Four (Regina/SouthWest), and Region Five (Yorkton/SouthEast).

have accessed information on community resources (30 per cent) and information on financial support (29 per cent).



The majority of clients using the resource room (77 per cent) indicated that they had received assistance from staff in using the materials or equipment. Types of assistance that these clients received from staff in the resource area include: assistance in using the equipment (computer, printer, fax) (61 per cent); providing feedback on resumé or cover letter (28 per cent); general orientation to available resources (24 per cent); and finding out clients' needs and interests (12 per cent). Focus group participants also noted the staff role in monitoring use of the Internet for non-employment related purposes.

- Staff assistance was reported to be highest by clients in Region Four (84 per cent) and lowest by clients in Region Three (63 per cent).

Most clients – 87 per cent – say that they had found the information or help they were looking for in the employment resource area.

- SAR clients are somewhat less likely to indicate that they had found the help they needed in the resource area (80 per cent compared to 89 per cent of non-SAR clients).

### *Use of Other CES Services*

In addition to the resource room, CES clients were asked about their use of other available services such as counselling, the SaskNetWork web-site and the Career Information Hotline. Two in three clients spoke with a Career and Employment Consultant (CEC) to help them plan a strategy to get back to work (Exhibit 3.3).

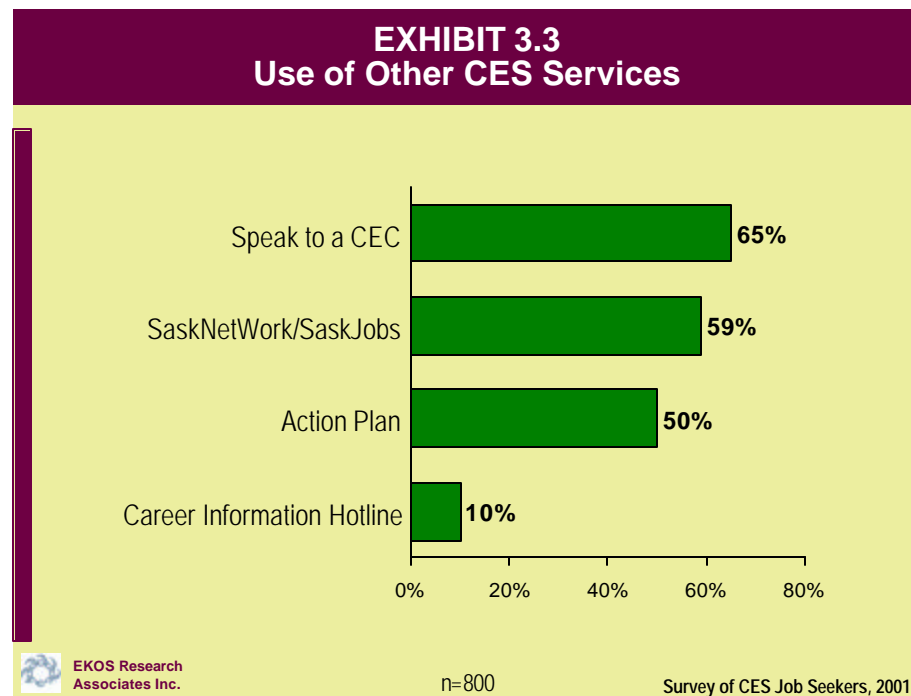
- Those more likely to have had contact with a CEC are clients in the middle and older age categories (35 years of age and older) (72 and 73 per cent respectively), individuals with a post-secondary education (72 per cent) and non-Aboriginal clients (68 per cent). Clients from Region Four are more likely to have spoken to a CEC (or at least to recall that they had) compared to other regions (74 per cent reported speaking to a counsellor in this region).

Contact with CECs is typically reported to be one-on-one (62 per cent) and another 26 per cent reported seeing a counsellor both one-on-one and in a group setting. Just over one in ten (12 per cent) indicated a group setting only.

- Again there were regional differences in type of contact with the counsellor. Clients in regions one and five are more likely to report one-on-one counselling only (79 and 77 per cent respectively compared to 62 per cent overall). Region Four clients are more likely to report seeing a CEC in both one-on-one and group settings (34 per cent compared to 26 per cent overall).

Eight in ten clients say they received the help they were looking for from the CEC (somewhat lower among clients with a disability and lower income clients).

Aside from CES, the majority of clients (85 per cent) did not receive any other services from other organizations to help them to find a job. The exclusive use of CSCES services was also confirmed by focus group participants. In those isolated instances where participants used or were able to identify other resources in the community, these were usually focused on an Aboriginal client base or involved a private employment agency.



### *Action Plan*

One half of CES clients reported developing (or recalled developing) a return to work career action plan (slightly higher among EI claimants – 57 per cent compared to 47 per cent of non-EI claimant clients).

Four in ten clients had completed all of the activities in their plan at the time of the interview. One-half of those who had developed a career action plan had finished some of the activities in their plan and one in ten had completed none of the activities. Among those who had a career action plan and had completed their activities, completing their action plan took, on average, six months.

- ❑ Clients most likely to have completed their action plan are older clients (45 years and older) (55 per cent). Less likely to have completed the activities in their plan are clients with lower levels of education (less than high school) (29 per cent) and SAR clients (20 per cent).

The reasons for not completing the action plan varied, with many clients citing being currently in progress (28 per cent) or being in school or training (14 per cent). Another 16 per cent had found a job. The remainder identified reasons such as: change of direction/lack of interest (11 per cent); financial difficulties (nine per cent); personal or health reasons (nine per cent); or no longer in the labour market (three per cent).

### *SaskNetWork/SaskJobs*

Six in ten clients visited the SaskNetWork/SaskJobs Internet site during the time they were looking for work. The job postings on SaskJobs are by far the most frequently mentioned reason why clients visit the web site (79 per cent). Information on specific occupations was the next most frequently mentioned reason for visiting the site (13 per cent).

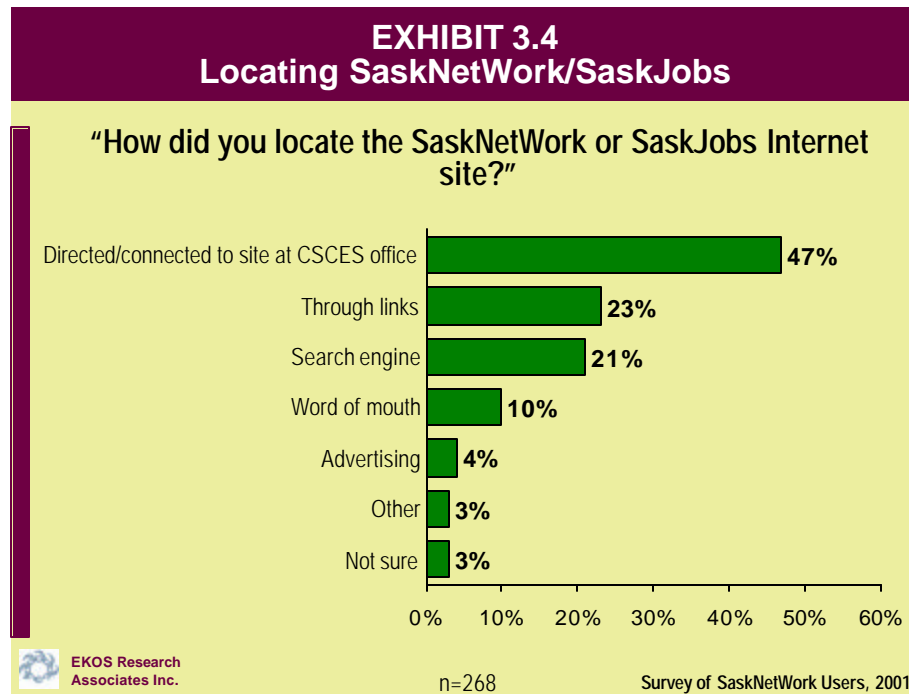
- Use of the web-site is higher among clients with a post-secondary education (66 per cent), urban clients (62 per cent) and those who were unemployed in the week prior to using CES (64 per cent). Greater use is made of SaskNetWork by Region Four clients (69 per cent) and less by clients in Region One and Region Five (46 and 45 per cent respectively).

A separate survey of SaskNetWork web-site users was conducted for this evaluation to gain a more detailed understanding of the use of the web-site and impacts of this information.<sup>11</sup>

A large proportion of web-site users first located the site through their use of the resource room at the CSCES office (Exhibit 3.4). Just under half (47 per cent) say they were connected to SaskNetWork this way. The next most frequently mentioned methods of locating the web-site were through links at another web-site (23 per cent) and using a search engine (21 per cent). One in ten heard of the web-site through word of mouth. Advertising of the site led only a small minority to use the site (four per cent).

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<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the number of employers using the site and responding to the survey was small (11 cases) and so separate analyses of the employer perspective (as opposed to job seeker) and results could not be completed.

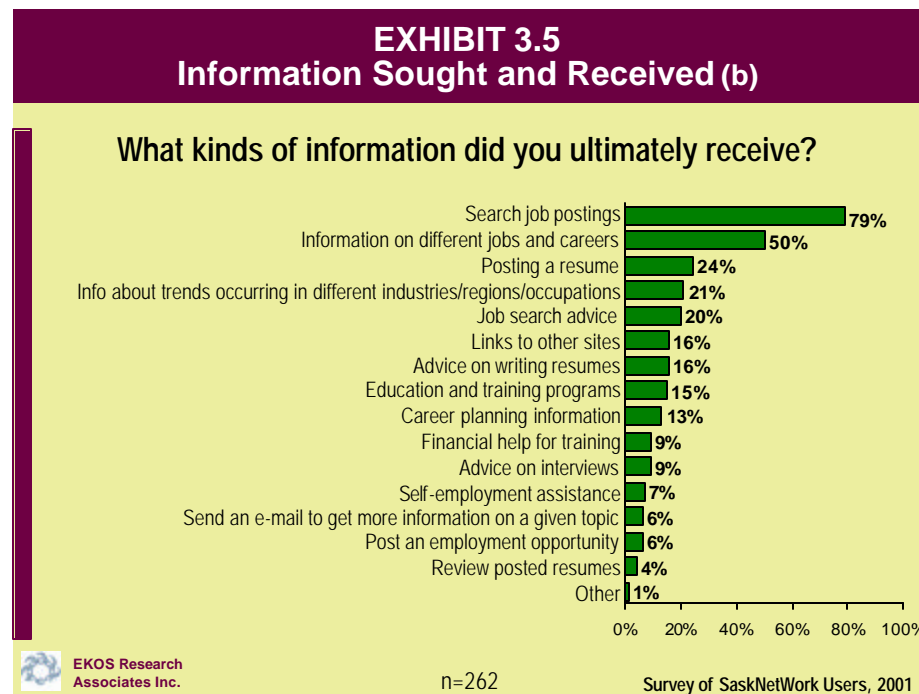
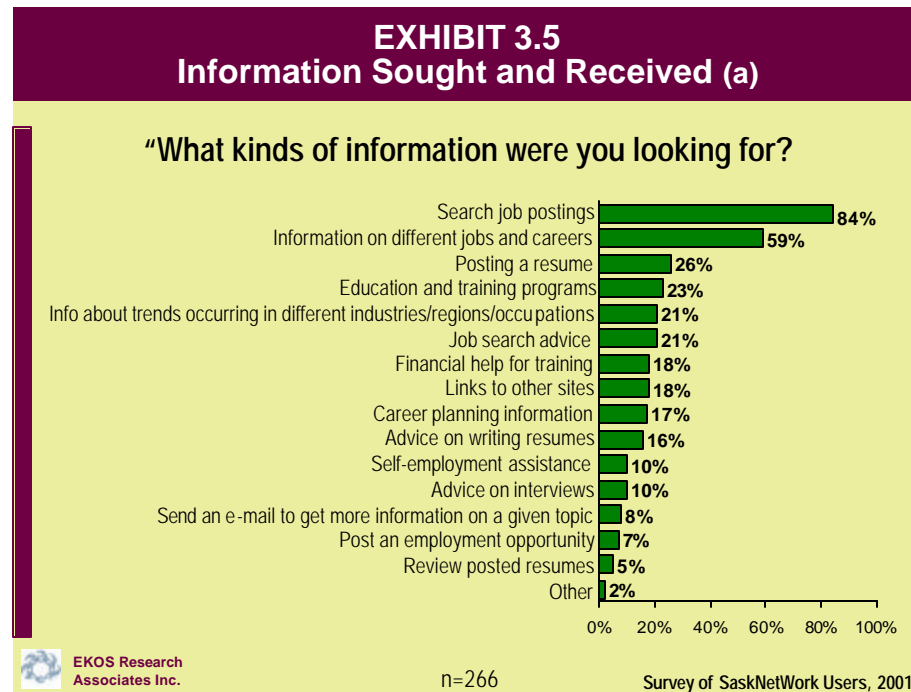


Exhibits 3.5a and 3.5b present the information that users said they were looking for at the site and the information that they ultimately received. There is a very close parallel between the two items, with the vast majority of users looking for and receiving information on job postings (84 per cent looked for this information and 79 per cent reported that they received it).

Six in ten users looked for information on different jobs and careers (59 per cent). About one-quarter sought information on posting a resumé or education and training programs. One in five users were looking for information on labour market trends or for job search advice. A middle tier of responses (mentioned by 16 to 18 per cent) include information on financial assistance, links to other sites, career planning, or resumé writing. The remaining items were mentioned by one in ten or fewer users.

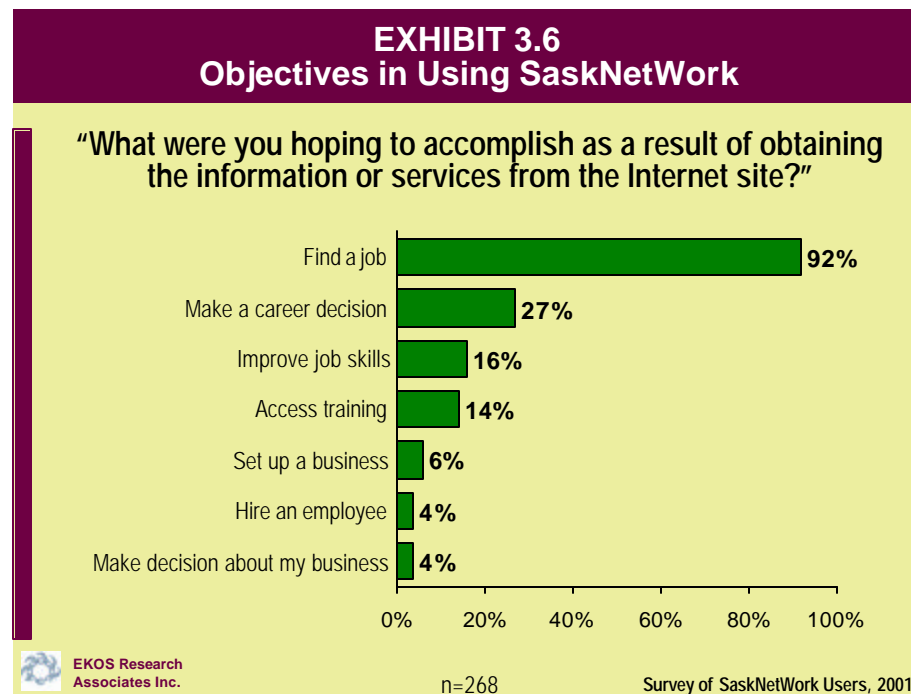
As mentioned above, there is a close parallel between the proportion who sought information on a specific topic and the percentage that reported ultimately receiving the information. Where the gaps are the largest (i.e., proportionately fewer receiving the information than seeking it – indicating that the information was either not available or not

easily found) are information in the areas of: 1) different jobs and careers, 2) education and training programs, and 3) student financial assistance.



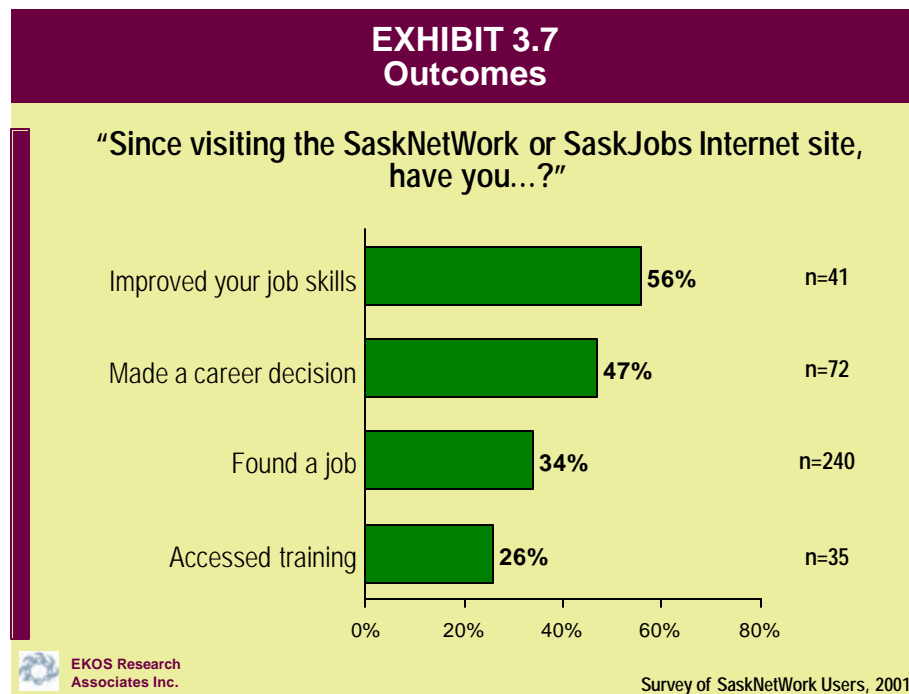


By far, clients' most frequently-mentioned objective in visiting SaskNetWork or SaskJobs is to find a job (92 per cent of users). Finding information to make a career decision was mentioned by 27 per cent. Other reasons for obtaining the information from the Internet site include to improve job skills (16 per cent) and to access training (14 per cent). Business-related reasons such as starting a business or hiring an employee were mentioned by six per cent or fewer.



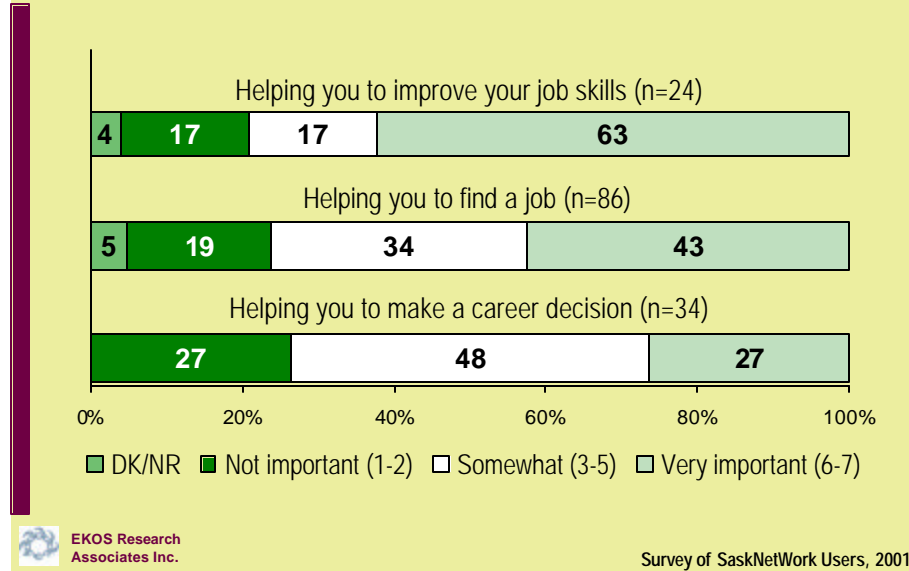
For each of the goals that web-site users were hoping to accomplish, a follow-up question was asked as to whether respondents had achieved their goal (e.g., found a job) and the importance of the Internet site in achieving their goal. Exhibit 3.7 indicates that over half of web-site users (56 per cent) feel they have improved their job skills since visiting the web-site (though somewhat paradoxically only one in four say they have been able to access training). Just under half have made a career decision (47 per cent) and one-third say they have found a job.<sup>12</sup> Note that the sample size for some items is small.

<sup>12</sup> Findings with respect to the other goals (i.e., business-related reasons for using the site) are not presented due to the small sample size.



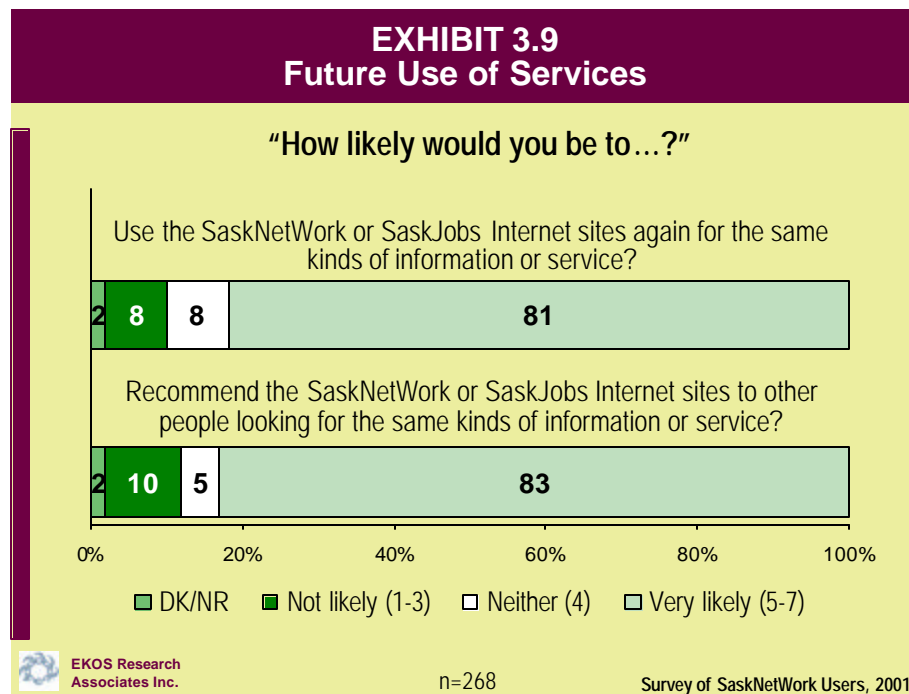
The perceived importance of the SaskNetWork/SaskJobs site in achieving web-site users' original goals is mixed and is dependent on users' original goals (Exhibit 3.8). The site is rated more important in improving users' job skills (63 per cent said very important) and less important in helping to find a job (43 per cent very important). The site is rated least important in helping those users who have made a career decision (27 per cent). Note that the sample size is small for some items.

### EXHIBIT 3.8 Rated Importance of SaskNetWork/SaskJobs in Achieving Goals



Satisfaction with the SaskNetWork/SaskJobs Internet site appears to be high. Over eight in ten current users (83 per cent) say they would be likely to use the site again for similar kinds of information or services and a similar proportion (81 per cent) would recommend the site to other people (Exhibit 3.9).

When web-site users were asked for suggestions to improve the web-site, 73 per cent did not offer a comment. The next most frequent responses included: improvements to job listings (e.g., more diverse listings, more frequent updates); addressing technical problems (access, navigation of site, delays); adjusting regional categories/searches or entering postings by location; and additional content (e.g., more job search advice, financial information, First Nations content).



### ***Career Information Hotline***

One in ten clients contacted the Career Information Hotline during the time they were looking for work. The most-often mentioned reason for calling the Hotline was for information on job postings (49 per cent). Other clients sought information on different occupations (23 per cent), on education and training (21 per cent), and job market trends (18 per cent).

### **b) *Client Satisfaction***

CES clients were asked in the survey to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of delivery. The overall results (presented in Table 3.1) indicate that participants are most satisfied with the respect and courtesy shown by the CES staff. Three-quarters of clients say they are very satisfied with this aspect of CES (responded six or seven on a seven-point scale). Six in ten clients are very satisfied with the hours of service at the employment resource centre and just over half are very satisfied with the timeliness of services.

Somewhat weaker ratings are provided for information and advice available to choose the most appropriate training or job (44 per cent very satisfied) and the referral process (42 per cent very satisfied).

- There are few significant differences in rated satisfaction by client sub-group, though clients with a disability express less satisfaction with services than other clients across many of the service delivery aspects.

**TABLE 3.1**  
**Program Satisfaction: CES Clients**

<b>“Please rate how satisfied you were with each of the following aspects of the employment services we have been discussing.”</b>				
<b>Aspect of Employment Services</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not Satisfied (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Satisfied (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Satisfied (6-7)</b>
The respect and courtesy shown you by the staff	2	2	22	74
The hours of service*	2	3	34	61
How quickly you were able to receive the services	3	10	36	53
The information/advice to choose training or job best for you	5	8	42	44
The extent to which you were referred to the best person	8	9	40	42

Source: Survey of CES Job Seekers, 2001 (n=800)

\*n=554 (Only those clients who reported using the CSCES resource area were asked this question).

When asked if they had experienced any difficulties in participating in their program, 82 per cent of program participants overall say they had not. Among those who indicated experiencing difficulties, the types of barriers that clients reported varied a great deal. Most frequently mentioned are lack of support/follow-up (six per cent), difficulties with “red tape”/application processes and lack of financial support (both at three per cent). Less common responses (mentioned by one per cent) included: transportation problems; lack of or cost of child care; lack of prerequisite qualifications; and difficulty finding information about programs.

- Clients who are more likely to have encountered difficulty in participating in employment services include: clients with a disability and reachback clients (32 and 30 per cent respectively say they experienced difficulties).

The majority of clients – 61 per cent – indicate that the employment services and resources that they used met their expectations and the services exceeded expectations for 14 per cent. One in five feel the services and resources fell short of their expectations.

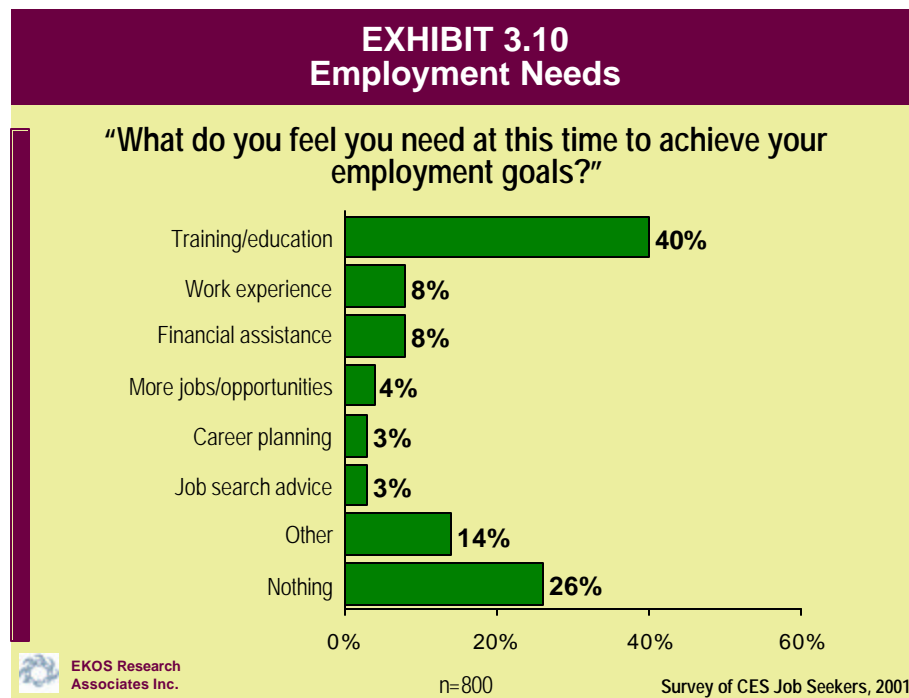
- ❑ Clients who expressed greater disappointment with services include those with a disability (40 per cent say services fell short of expectations).

Areas which some focus group participants felt could be bolstered included: availability of a staff contact or link for more personalized attention, access to information or skill development in a short seminar/workshop format, and more funds for training.

### **c) *Employment Needs and Barriers***

The greatest need identified by clients to achieve their employment goals is training and education (40 per cent) (Exhibit 3.10). This is followed by more work experience (eight per cent) and financial assistance (eight per cent). One-quarter of clients (26 per cent) believe they do not need anything further to achieve their employment goals.

- ❑ Younger clients are more likely to indicate needing additional education and training to meet their employment goals than older clients (49 per cent compared to 30 per cent). Those who believe they currently have the capacity to meet their goals (i.e., need nothing at this time) are older clients (34 per cent) and EI clients (33 per cent for current claimants and 30 per cent among reachbacks).



Difficulties anticipated by clients in achieving their employment goals include: financial barriers (32 per cent); lack of availability of training (e.g., such as in clients’ geographic area) or lack of knowledge of training opportunities (18 per cent); lack of job opportunities (nine per cent); personal reasons (health, lack of motivation or confidence) (nine per cent); and lack of time (six per cent).

#### **d) Staff Perspective**

##### ***Knowledge Levels***

Staff were asked to rate their level of knowledge with respect to a broad range of tools and delivery aspects of CES (Table 3.2). Staff feel they are most knowledgeable in the areas of direct service to clients, including employment program options and income supports for clients (over 70 per cent rate themselves very knowledgeable). A middle tier of responses includes: tools and resources available on-line and in the resource room, administrative systems, and services available through CBOs (61 to 63 per cent of staff rate themselves very knowledgeable). A lower proportion of employees rate themselves to be

knowledgeable in the areas of employer supports (53 per cent very knowledgeable) and the Career Information Hotline (28 per cent).

In the survey comments, several staff noted that the shift in staffing toward generalists positions (as opposed to specialists) has placed additional demands on them in terms of becoming familiar with new service delivery areas. When asked in what areas staff feel they need more guidance on or training in the delivery of CES, the most frequently mentioned areas were information on: income supports including Student Loans and the STB, on-line tools and multi-media resources available to clients (including the Department's own SaskNetWork web-site); contracting; and employment programs (e.g., Work Placement and Community Works).

**TABLE 3.2**  
**Extent to which Staff Feel Knowledgeable About Aspects of Delivery of CES**

<b>"To what extent do you feel knowledgeable about...?"</b>				
<b>Aspect of Delivery</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not at all (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Knowledgeable (6-7)</b>
Employment programs	1	4	21	75
Income supports for clients	1	6	23	71
SaskJobs	1	3	33	63
Resources and services from CBOs	0	2	35	63
OCSM/CEIS/PAG	0	1	36	62
Tools/information at resource rooms	0	2	37	61
Employer supports	2	6	40	53
Career Information Hotline	0	16	56	28

Source: RSB Staff Survey, 2001 (n=109).

### *Satisfaction*

Staff are largely satisfied that delivery of CES is meeting the labour market needs of Saskatchewan residents (Table 3.3). Six in ten believe that delivery of CES overall



meets labour market needs. Considering specific aspects of delivery, key strengths of CES, according to staff, are the CSCES resource rooms and referral processes (70 per cent and 60 per cent rating services as meeting needs to a great extent respectively). The services available to job seekers and employers, as well as the assisted self-serve approach are rated as meeting needs to a great extent by over half of staff. Staff rate labour market information, regional planning processes and client follow-up as somewhat less effective in meeting needs (about one-third or fewer rating these processes as meeting needs to a great extent).

**TABLE 3.3**  
**Extent to Which CES Meets Labour Market Needs: Staff**

<b>“To what extent do you feel the following aspects of delivery of CES meet the labour market needs of Saskatchewan residents?”</b>				
<b>Aspect of Delivery</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not at all (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat (3-5)</b>	<b>% Great Extent (6-7)</b>
Delivery of CES overall	2	4	34	60
CSCES resource rooms	1	3	27	70
The process for referral and directing clients	0	8	33	60
The assisted self-service approach	0	11	34	56
The array of services for job seekers	0	4	41	55
The array of services to employers	2	6	41	51
Services available from CBOs	1	4	49	47
Income support options	2	7	48	44
Labour market information	0	7	56	37
Regional planning and needs assessment	6	9	55	31
Follow-up with clients	3	11	55	31

Source: RSB Staff Survey, 2001 (n=109).

### **e) *Administrative Systems***

Virtually all surveyed staff (90 per cent) report having experienced difficulties with OCSM/CEIS. While staff identify a number of problems with OCSM, by far the most frequently mentioned are delays (including screen freezing, slow operation) and difficulties with the EI screen scraper. Examples of other issues with respect to OCSM include: perceived duplication in entry of information, limited capacity for notes, and inappropriate categories.

Key informants confirmed that there have been significant growing pains in the development of OCSM, while also acknowledging that there has been significant progress (albeit at a slower pace than hoped). Staff involvement and input in improving the system is perceived to have been adequate. However, staff perceive that gaps continue to exist in the information available on OCSM. A key gap identified is the recording of activity in areas of assisted self-service. Clients whose participation in CES is limited to the resource area and the more casual contacts with staff in the front-end area are typically not registered on OCSM and therefore there is no record of participation. A second gap identified is the lack of availability of outcomes data, which are still limited at this time. Also, there are perceived to be few active processes for client follow-up and recording of information on results of participation is poor. Finally, there were some complaints about awkward or cumbersome reporting formats that do not allow managers to access needed information (e.g., outcomes or completions by program).

## **3.2 STB**

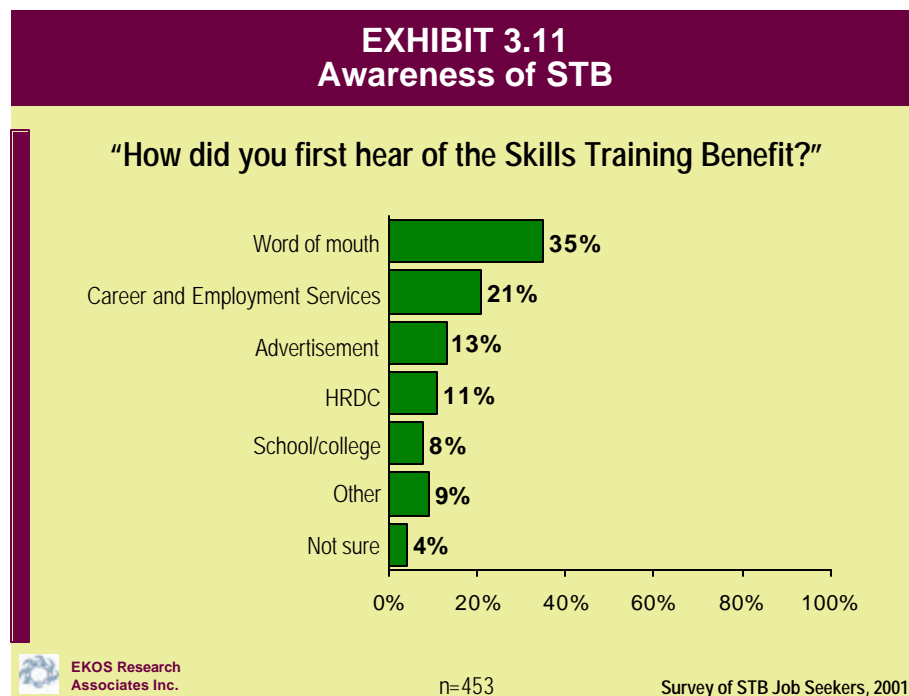
### **a) *Program Participation***

#### *Awareness*

Most frequently mentioned sources of awareness of the STB are word of mouth (35 per cent) and referral through CES (21 per cent) (Exhibit 3.11). A less frequently mentioned source of information about the STB is advertisement (13 per cent). HRDC is mentioned as a source of information by only one in ten (somewhat surprising given that the

STB is targeted to EI-eligible clients). Schools and colleges are sources of information for only eight per cent. “Other” responses included, for example, referral from social services, a community-based organization, or First Nations/Métis organization.

- Word of mouth is a more important source of information for youth (46 per cent) and less important for those in the 35 to 44 year age category (who are more likely to have heard of the STB through Career and Employment Services at 30 per cent).



### *Training*

According to the STB administrative data, 85 per cent of STB clients received one benefit during the period under study.<sup>13</sup> Fourteen per cent were involved in two STB-sponsored interventions and one per cent, three or more. A more detailed description of the training sponsored by the STB is presented in Appendix D.

<sup>13</sup> This period includes clients who began training after September 1999 and completed before June 2000.

Like CES participants, the vast majority of STB clients did not receive any other services through another organization to help them to find a job during the period under study (92 per cent).

### *Negotiated Financial Assistance*

Just under half of STB clients recalled being asked/required to contribute to the cost of their training using personal resources (Table 3.4). The proportion responding in the negative to this question could be at least partially a reflection of clients not recalling or not understanding their contribution (e.g., EI benefits, Student Loan funds or informal babysitting arrangements are considered to be client contributions but might not be recalled or viewed in this way by clients themselves). Among those who reported making a contribution, these participants contributed, on average, 38 per cent of the cost of training.

One in four say the requirement to contribute to the cost of training did not present difficulties for them in taking their training. Twelve per cent found the contribution created great financial difficulties for them and another 58 per cent indicated the requirement to contribute to the cost of training made it somewhat difficult for them to take the training. On the other hand, the majority (66 per cent) indicated that the support provided by the STB combined with their own resources was enough to meet their expenses during training.

- ❑ Women are more likely than men to say that their available resources were not enough to cover their monthly expenses while on training (59 compared to 72 per cent). Lower income clients also indicated that their resources were not sufficient to cover expenses during this period (48 per cent).

The costs typically covered by the STB were the direct of costs of training: tuition (69 per cent) and books/supplies (48 per cent). Four in ten also had some living expenses covered by the STB and one in five used the STB to cover transportation costs. Eight per cent used STB funds to cover child care expenses.

- ❑ As might be expected, women are more likely to report using their STB to cover child care expenses (14 per cent) and rural clients are more apt to use these funds to cover transportation costs (25 per cent).

Just over one-third of all STB participants (37 per cent) applied for a Student Loan to cover living and other expenses during training. The high proportion of clients not applying for a Student Loan (61 per cent) (given that application for a Student Loan is a required component of the STB) likely reflects a process of self-screening, where clients and perhaps the CEC feel they would not meet the SL eligibility criteria. Some clients may also simply not need the additional funds or may be taking training that is not eligible for SL funding. Indeed, the survey data show that the likelihood of applying for a Student Loan decreases as clients' personal income increases.

Of those who applied for a Student Loan, one-half had their application approved. The most common reasons a loan application was denied were due to family income being too high (64 per cent) and poor credit rating/outstanding debt (21 per cent).

- Student Loan applications were submitted more often by clients with a post-secondary education (45 per cent) and urban clients (47 per cent). The proportion applying for a Student Loan is higher in Region Three (46 per cent) and lower in Regions One and Five (26 and 24 per cent respectively).

**TABLE 3.4**  
**Negotiated Financial Assistance**

	<b>Total (%)</b>
<b>Asked or required to contribute to the cost of training</b>	
Yes	47
No	51
DK/NR	2
<b>Percentage of monthly training costs covered by own resources</b>	
<25%	25
25-49%	14
50-74%	16
75%+	12
Mean	38%
<b>Rated extent to which contribution made it difficult to take training</b>	
Not difficult (1-2)	24
Somewhat (3-5)	58
Very difficult (6-7)	12
DK/NR	5
<b>STB and own resources enough to cover expenses</b>	
Yes	66
No	32
DK/NR	2
<b>Costs covered with STB</b>	
Tuition	69
Books/supplies	48
Living costs	38
Transportation	19
Child care	8
Other	1
DK/NR	10
<b>Applied for Student Loan</b>	
Yes	37
No	61
DK/NR	2
<b>Application Accepted</b>	
Yes	49
No	50
DK/NR	1

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=453).

### *Program Completion*

At the time of the survey, 80 per cent of participants had completed their program and 14 per cent were still in their program. Only six per cent left their training before

completing. Discontinuation was typically due to taking a job (25 per cent), difficulty with/lost interest in the training (22 per cent), or personal reasons (20 per cent).

### ***Incrementality***

The financial support provided by the STB is largely incremental (as reported by participants) – that is, it provides assistance for participants to take training that they would not otherwise have taken in the absence of the benefit. Among surveyed participants, 83 per cent indicated that they would not have been able to take their training if the STB had not been available. Fifteen per cent responded that they felt they would have been able to take the training and two per cent were unsure.

- Differences by sub-group indicate that those most likely to say that the STB was incremental are older clients (45 years and over) (93 per cent), non-Aboriginal clients (84 per cent) and women (87 per cent).

### **b) *Client Satisfaction***

STB clients provide very high satisfaction ratings for all aspects and substantially more positive ratings than CES participants (Table 3.5). Highest ratings are for the respect and courtesy shown by staff (85 per cent very satisfied) and for timeliness of services (76 per cent very satisfied). Just under two-thirds of clients were very satisfied with education or training that they took. Slightly weaker ratings are provided for the amount of the financial benefit and for information or advice available to choose the appropriate training or career (57 and 52 per cent very satisfied respectively).

**TABLE 3.5**  
**Program Satisfaction: STB Job Seekers**

<b>“Please rate how satisfied you were with each of the following aspects of the employment services we have been discussing.”</b>				
<b>Aspect of Employment Services</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not Satisfied (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Satisfied (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Satisfied (6-7)</b>
The respect and courtesy shown you by the staff	1	2	13	85
How quickly you were able to receive the services	1	3	22	76
The education or training program that you took	1	5	29	64
The amount of financial assistance available for training	1	5	38	57
The information/advice to choose training or job best for you	8	5	36	52

Source: Survey of STB Job Seekers, 2001 (n=453).

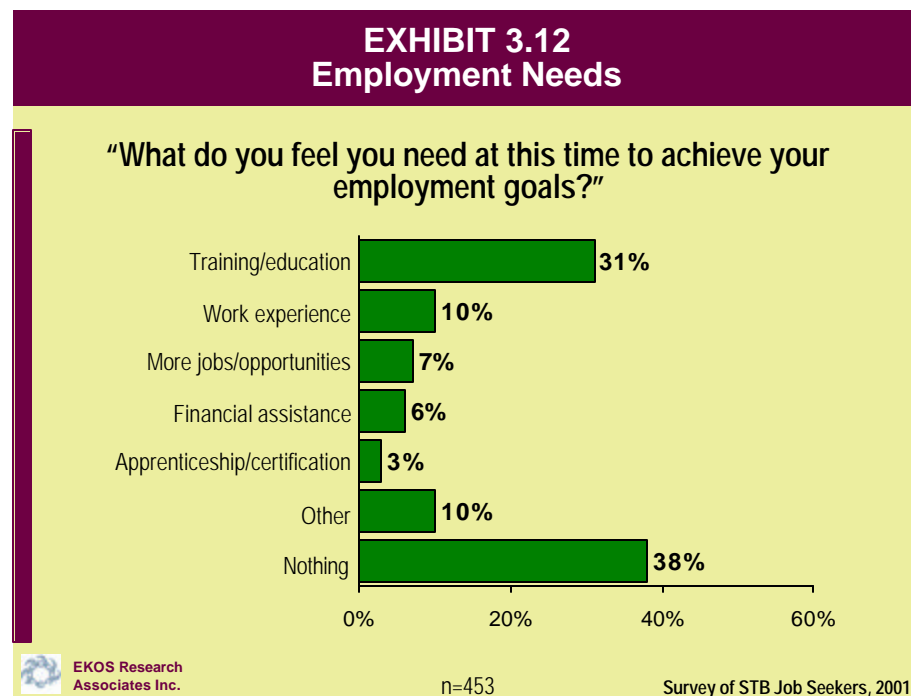
The majority of STB clients — 83 per cent — did not experience any difficulties in participating in their training program. Among the minority who indicated having barriers to participation, there was little consensus around the types of barriers. The most frequently mentioned were lack of support/follow-up (five per cent) and lack of adequate financial support (four per cent).

Almost two-thirds of STB clients (63 per cent) indicated that the financial assistance received through the STB met their expectations. About one in five participants (18 per cent) indicate that the STB exceeded expectations (higher among those with no recent work experience). The same proportion feel that the STB fell short of their expectations (18 per cent).



### c) **Employment Needs and Barriers**

Despite having participated in training, three in ten STB clients indicate that they need additional education or training to achieve their employment goals (Exhibit 3.12). One in ten feel they need more work experience. Less frequently mentioned responses include: greater job opportunities (seven per cent), financial assistance (six per cent) and apprenticeship or certification (three per cent). “Other” responses include, for example, job search advice, career planning, motivation, or an improvement in health. A significant portion of participants (38 per cent), however, believe they do not need anything more to achieve their current employment goals.



When asked what difficulties, if any, they expected to encounter in achieving their goals, the most frequently mentioned barrier was financial (39 per cent). Other barriers mentioned included: lack of job opportunities (14 per cent); lack of awareness/availability of training (nine per cent); personal issues such as confidence, health or family issues (eight per cent); lack of time (eight per cent); and lack of practical job-related skills (three per cent). One in five (22 per cent) do not expect to encounter any difficulties in achieving their goals.

**d) Staff Perspective**

***Knowledge Levels***

Table 3.6 presents staff ratings of their knowledge levels with respect to various aspects of delivery of the STB. Staff rate themselves very knowledgeable in areas of STB administration related to eligibility guidelines, the negotiated process, the application forms and rates (two-thirds or more provide a rating of very knowledgeable for these aspects). Areas where employees rate themselves less knowledgeable pertain to linkages to other training allowances (46 per cent very knowledgeable and only one in five very knowledgeable about the SL application process) and calculation and administration of overpayments (39 per cent very knowledgeable).

**TABLE 3.6**  
**Rated Knowledge Levels of Delivery of STB: Staff**

<b>Aspect of Delivery</b>	<b>% Not At All (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Knowledgeable (6-7)</b>
STB guidelines for eligibility	9	14	77
The STB negotiated process	7	21	71
STB application form/system	9	22	70
STB rates	9	25	67
How STB is linked to other training allowances	14	39	46
Calculating/administering overpayments	22	40	39
Student Loan application form	2	50	21

***Satisfaction***

In terms of satisfaction with the STB, again staff survey ratings are generally favourable (Table 3.7). Just over half are very satisfied with the delivery of the STB overall. By far, staff are most pleased with the STB unit's responsiveness to questions (68 per cent very satisfied). Weaker ratings are provided for availability of the STB Reference Group (perhaps in response to the recent hiatus of this group), training on the STB, and linkages with other training allowances and input into policy development. One-quarter or fewer are very

satisfied with these aspects of STB administration (though note also that some items such as the availability of the Reference Group and opportunities to have input into policy also have a higher proportion responding “don’t know”).

**TABLE 3.7**  
**Satisfaction with STB Delivery: Staff**

<b>“How satisfied are you with the following aspects of delivery of the Skills Training Benefit?”</b>				
<b>Aspect of Delivery</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not Satisfied (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Satisfied (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Satisfied (6-7)</b>
STB administration overall	4	8	36	54
Availability of STB Unit to respond to questions	1	7	25	68
Criteria for who is eligible	2	11	44	45
Clarity of STB Manual	2	10	52	35
Workload during peak season	4	14	48	34
Information available to update policy changes	0	9	39	32
Communications between STB and RSB management	14	7	48	31
Availability of STB Reference Group	13	12	51	25
Training on STB administration	2	18	57	24
Links with other training allowances	4	22	54	21
Opportunities to have input into policy	9	22	50	19

Source: STB Staff Survey, 2001 (n=56).

Further to the issue of training, almost two-thirds of current employees working with the STB (64 per cent) say they have received training on the administration of the STB. Seven in ten (69 per cent) rate the training as adequate.

When asked what areas they feel they need more information, guidance or training, the most frequently mentioned area by staff is the link between the STB and Student Loans (consistent with the ratings above of knowledge levels and satisfaction). Other areas that were mentioned included, for example, information on overpayments, general updates as policies and procedures change and training on negotiation with clients.

**e) *Monitoring and Accountability***

Monitoring and accountability were identified as weaknesses in the STB by key informants. Little information is available on outcomes for clients (e.g., completions, employability). As well, there are no formal verification procedures related to expenses and coverage of costs. The latter issue is expected to be addressed in the new IISS project. Finally, there was a suggestion that there should be enhanced evaluation of institutions that are providing training to STB clients (e.g., effectiveness, recognition/certification of training, links to the labour market).



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## **4            IMPACTS**

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The purpose of this chapter is to assess the effectiveness of CES and the STB in meeting objectives, particularly with respect to the employment outcomes for individual participants. The survey of job seekers is primarily used to address these issues. The perspective of employers on the impacts of CES services, particularly the job order system, is examined in the next chapter.

### **4.1            Impacts of CES on Job Seekers**

#### **a)            *Perceived Usefulness***

Job seekers were asked to rate the usefulness of the CES services they received in terms of providing them with a variety of different skills and experiences (Table 4.1). Overall, the ratings are positive, particularly in terms of the softer outcomes such as improved attitude or confidence (41 per cent rate the services they received as very useful in this regard).

Just over one in three participants (37 per cent) thought the services they received helped to upgrade their education or skills and one in four say the services were not useful at all (perhaps not surprising given that interventions under CES do not focus on skill development per se). A similar proportion rate CES services as very useful in making them more marketable to employers (36 per cent). Thirty-five per cent say the services assisted them to make well-informed decisions about a long-term career plan.

The link to employment and skills received a lower rating. One-third rated the services as very useful in helping them to find employment and a similar proportion rated the services useful in gaining skills in demand (35 and 33 respectively).

Some focus group participants expressed a similar pessimism about employment services translating into a job. While appreciative of the access to equipment, computers/Internet and job search materials, some individuals noted that employment success often involves cracking the “hidden” job market which is a matter of networking and, often, good fortune. CES is seen to be less relevant in particular to helping clients to secure employment in professional/ managerial occupations.

**TABLE 4.1**  
**Perceived Benefits of CES Services**

<b>“Please indicate the extent to which you have personally experienced each of the following benefits as a result of your participation.”</b>				
<b>Benefit</b>	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not useful (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Useful (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very useful (6-7)</b>
Improve attitude/self-confidence	4	15	40	41
Upgrade education or skills	6	24	33	37
More marketable to employers	6	19	39	36
Make well-informed decisions about career	5	15	44	35
Find employment/self-employment	6	21	38	35
Gain skills in demand	6	24	37	33

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

Sub-group differences in the survey responses on rated benefits of services included:

- Youth (under 25 years of age) rate the services they received as more useful than older clients on all of the aspects tested.
- Clients with a disability provide consistently lower ratings of the benefits of services across all of the aspects included in the question battery.
- Non-Aboriginal clients and non-EI eligible clients indicate that services are less useful in upgrading their education or skills.
- Clients from Region Two rate the services more useful in terms of gaining skills that are in demand compared to residents of other regions. The services are rated less useful in terms of gaining skills in demand by clients with a post-secondary education and non-Aboriginal clients.

When survey respondents were asked if there were any other benefits of participation that were not mentioned in the scale, a minority of surveyed clients mentioned aspects such as networking, access to office equipment and support. These benefits were also echoed by focus group participants.

## **b) *Employment Outcomes***

Another measure of the effectiveness of an intervention is the rate at which participants are able to find employment following completion. Looking at actual employment outcomes for CES participants (as opposed to perceived usefulness of services), the results are again positive (Table 4.2). Overall, 68 per cent of CES clients had actively looked for work since the end of their last CES intervention. Clients looked for work for 15 weeks on average (up to the time they found a job or the time of the survey interview).

- Men and EI-claimant clients are more likely to report having looked for work since the end of their last intervention (both at 73 per cent). The job search period was shorter for youth (under 25 years of age) (nine weeks) and longer for clients with a disability (27 weeks).

The survey data indicate that seven in ten clients had worked (full-time, part-time or self-employed) since the end of their last CES intervention. At the time of the survey, 57 per cent were still employed. One-quarter classified themselves as unemployed and

looking for work. The remainder (19 per cent) are out of the labour force (e.g., student, homemaker, on maternity or disability leave). One in ten are actively involved in pursuing additional education or training.

**TABLE 4.2**  
**Employment Outcomes of CES Clients**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
<b>Actively looked for work since last intervention</b>	
Yes	68
No	31
<b>Average weeks looked for work since last intervention</b>	<b>15 weeks</b>
<b>Worked since last intervention</b>	
Yes	70
No	30
<b>Mean number of employers</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Current employment status</b>	
Employed:	57
Self-employed	4
Employed full-time	30
Employed part-time/contract/casual/seasonal	23
Unemployed and looking for work	24
Unemployed and not looking for work	5
Student	11
Homemaker	1
On leave (maternity, disability)	2

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

- ❑ The most positive employment results are for clients with higher levels of education and greater work experience. For example, 78 per cent of clients with a post-secondary education found employment following the end of their last intervention compared to 58 per cent of those with less than a high school education. Clients who had been employed in the year prior to registering with CES are more apt to have found employment than those who had not worked during this period (73 vs. 60 per cent). Non-SAR recipients, and particularly EI-claimant clients are more likely to have found work in the post-intervention period (78 per cent). Clients with a disability and First Nations clients are less likely to have found employment (54 and 41 per cent respectively).
- ❑ More apt to be unemployed and looking for work at the time of the survey are men (31 per cent), those without a high school diploma (33 per cent), First Nations



individuals, (35 per cent), rural residents (31 per cent), those without recent prior work experience (33 per cent) and SAR clients (33 per cent).

**c) *Job Characteristics***

Table 4.3 summarizes the job characteristics of those who found employment in the post-intervention period. More than half of participants had had one employer since the end of their last CES intervention (57 per cent), with the average number of employers being 1.5 during this time. The first job that participants had (for those who had more than one job) lasted five months on average.

In terms of their current job (or most recent job for those who had subsequently become unemployed), about one-quarter of clients (27 per cent) had returned to a job that they had before becoming involved with CES (higher among men). The majority of clients are working in full-time (78 per cent) and non-subsidized (90 per cent) jobs. While most are working year-round (64 per cent), one in three are in non-standard employment (seasonal or casual/contract). The average hourly wage for clients in their current/most recent job is \$11.90. This does not represent an increase in clients' wages between the pre- and post-intervention period.

**TABLE 4.3**  
**Current/Most Recent Job Characteristics of CES Clients: Post-Intervention**

<b>Job Characteristic</b>	<b>Participants (%)</b>
<b>Same job as before first CES service</b>	
Yes	27
No	73
<b>Type of employment</b>	
Year round	64
Seasonal	17
Casual/contract	18
<b>Job subsidized</b>	
Yes	8
No	90
DK/NR	2
<b>Weekly hours</b>	
<30	19
30 or more	78
DK/NR	2
<b>Weekly earnings</b>	
<\$250	23
\$250-499	38
\$500+	34
DK/NR	6
Mean hourly wage	\$11.90
<b>Rated importance of CES in getting job</b>	
Not at all important (1-2)	43
Somewhat (3-5)	26
Very important (6-7)	29
DK/NR	2

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=416-559).

Differences among sub-groups in terms of job quality often parallel the differences highlighted above with respect to probability of employment. Sub-group differences include:

- Those most likely to have year round jobs are those without a disability (65 per cent), non-Aboriginal clients (68 per cent), those with recent prior work experience (66 per cent) and urban residents (70 per cent). Women and clients with a post-secondary education are more likely than others to be working in casual or contract positions (23 and 26 per cent respectively).

- ❑ Women and SAR clients are more likely to be working in part-time positions (32 and 27 per cent respectively).
- ❑ Hourly earnings are higher for men, non-SAR and EI-claimant clients. Earnings are generally lower for youth.
- ❑ Those more apt to be working in a subsidized job are youth (14 per cent), those with lower levels of education (16 per cent), clients without recent prior work experience (17 per cent), First Nations clients (18 per cent), and those obtaining services in Region One (27 per cent).

Three in ten participants rate CES as very important in helping to obtain their current job (responded six or seven on a seven point scale). Another one in four clients rate the services as somewhat important. Forty-three per cent of clients say the services they received were not important in obtaining their current/most recent job.

- ❑ Clients most likely to rate services as not being important in obtaining their current/most recent job are post-secondary school graduates (54 per cent), non-Aboriginal clients (50 per cent) and non-SAR clients (50 per cent). Clients from regions one and two provide a more positive rating of the importance of services (56 and 55 per cent).

#### **d) *Extent of Joblessness***

Table 4.4 presents the extent of joblessness and job search of CES clients during the post-intervention period. On average, the time period between the end of the last recorded CES intervention and the time of the survey interview was 53 weeks. The table shows the number of weeks not working and looking for work during this period, as well as the proportion of weeks during the post-intervention period that individuals spent not working and looking for work. Just over half of clients (52 per cent) spent little time not working during the post-program period - between 0 and 24 per cent of the time during this period. One in five clients (19 per cent) were not working 25 to 49 per cent of the time and one in ten were not working between 50 and 74 per cent of the time. One in five were not working for most of the period (75 per cent or more of the time). On average, clients were not working one-third of the time.

- ❑ Proportionately longer periods of joblessness in the post-intervention period are experienced by those with lower levels of education (less than high school) (43 per

cent compared to 34 per cent overall), clients with a disability (51 per cent), First Nations clients (45 per cent), and SAR clients (45 per cent).

During the same post-intervention period, participants were looking for work about 20 per cent of the time. Seven in ten clients were looking for work between 0 and 24 per cent of time during the post-intervention period.

- Those having proportionately longer periods of job search are older clients (45 years and older) (34 per cent), those with lower levels of education (high school or less) (32 per cent) and First Nations clients (30 per cent).

**TABLE 4.4**  
**Joblessness and Job Search Since Last Intervention: CES Clients**

	Total (%)
<b>Number of weeks not working since last intervention</b>	
Zero	24
1-12	34
13-24	16
25-52	17
53+	18 weeks
Mean	
<b>Number of weeks looking for work since last intervention</b>	
Zero	39
1-12	36
13-24	11
25+	13
Mean	9.7 weeks
<b>Proportion of weeks not working since last intervention</b>	
0-24%	52
25-49%	19
50-74%	9
75+%	19
Mean	33.6%
<b>Proportion of weeks looking for work since last intervention</b>	
0-24%	71
25-49%	15
50-74%	5
75+%	8
Mean	19.5%

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

### e) **Use of Public Income Supports**

Decreased use of public income supports such as social assistance and EI is often used as a proxy for increased self-sufficiency of participants. Tables 4.5(a) and 4.5(b) present these results. The proportion of clients accessing EI and social assistance at any time since the end of their last CES intervention was 25 per cent and 27 per cent respectively.

**TABLE 4.5 (a)**  
**Use of Public Income Support: CES Clients**

	<b>Total (%)</b>
<b>Collected social assistance since last intervention</b>	
Yes	27
No	73
<b>Collected EI since last intervention</b>	
Yes	25
No	74

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

- ❑ Most apt to have collected EI in the post-intervention period are men (31 per cent), those with recent prior work experience (39 per cent) and those who were EI claimants at the time they contacted CES (44 per cent). The propensity to claim EI is a paradoxical indicator in that, for some, establishing or re-establishing a claim can reflect some measure of success in the labour market in accumulation of insurable earnings.
- ❑ Clients most likely to have collected social assistance during the post-intervention period have lower levels of education (less than high school) (45 per cent), those without recent prior work experience (45 per cent), First Nations clients (53 per cent), clients with a disability (44 per cent) and those in receipt of social assistance at the time of contacting CES (63 per cent).

Changes in reliance on public income support are reflected in clients' sources of income prior to and following participation in CES. The proportion of clients reporting employment earnings as a source of income, for example, increased from 20 per cent in the week prior to participating in CES to 55 per cent at the time of the survey interview. Conversely, the proportion of clients mentioning EI as a source of income at the time of the interview has decreased from 32 per cent to 10 per cent. Similarly, the proportion reporting

social assistance as a source of income decreased from 28 per cent in the week prior to participation to 16 per cent at the time of the survey interview.

**TABLE 4.5 (b)**  
**Prior and Current Sources of Income: CES Clients**

	<b>Week Prior to CES (%)</b>	<b>At time of Interview (%)</b>
<b>Sources of income</b>		
Employment earnings	20	55
Social assistance	28	16
Spouse/family	11	11
EI	32	10
Student loan/grant/PTA	5	8
Savings	8	3
Spousal/child support	2	3

Source: CES Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

#### **f) *Multivariate Analyses***

The above data have provided employment results for CES participants overall and also highlighted any differences based on sub-groups within the client population. The multivariate analysis further examines the relative importance of various factors in influencing positive employment outcomes. Multivariate analyses permit a determination of the relative importance of each individual variable by holding all other (measured) conditions constant.

In these analyses, variations in the outcome variable of interest (e.g., employment, earnings, use of public income support) are analysed in terms of the relative influence of service delivery or intervention variables (participation in CES services) plus variables capturing the characteristics of participants (described below).

Seven dependent variables representing employment, earnings and income outcomes were tested: employed/not employed at time of interview; ever had a job in the post-program; weeks working as a percentage of weeks since intervention; per cent change in

weekly wage rate; receiving EI or social assistance since end of intervention; and perceived benefits of CES.<sup>14</sup>

A common set of explanatory (control) variables was introduced into the analysis for each dependent variable to assess their relative influence. These variables included:

- length of time between end of intervention and time of interview;
- socio-demographic variables (age, sex, education, marital status, family status, constitutional status, region);
- prior labour force experience (employed or not in year before intervention);
- prior use of EI and social assistance; and
- service delivery/participation variables (use of CSCES resource room, action plan, counselling).

Considering, first, participants' own subjective rating of the benefits of their involvement with CES, clients of Region Two have a more positive rating of benefits, as do clients who developed a career action plan and those who went on to participate in STB-sponsored training. Older clients and those with a post-secondary education provide a lower rating of perceived benefits.

Interestingly, variables that influence clients' subjective rating of the benefits of CES are not generally significant predictors of clients' actual employment outcomes. Employment outcomes are influenced by:

- prior work experience* – those who were employed in the two years prior to participating in CES are more likely to have ever found a job and to be currently employed.
- length of the post-program period* – a longer time period between the end of the last intervention and the time of the interview leads to a greater likelihood of ever having found a job and proportionately fewer weeks spent jobless or looking for work;
- socio-demographic characteristics* – having a post-secondary education increases the chances of ever having found a job in the post-program period. On the other hand, weeks spent looking for work are higher for older clients and for those who were unemployed in the week before participating in CES. The proportion of time spent

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<sup>14</sup> Logistic (logic) regression was used for categorical dependent variables and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression was used for continuous variables.

jobless is also higher for those who were unemployed prior to participating in CES and for social assistance clients.

In terms of use of public income support, the variables that decrease the likelihood of relying on social assistance in the post-program period are being married, having a post-secondary education and being a resident of Region Five. Region Five, in the south-eastern portion of the province, is an area where the oil and gas sector plays a significant role, and while the labour market tends to fluctuate with commodity prices, this region is currently in a period of prosperity. More likely to be receiving social assistance in the post-program period are those who were in receipt of social assistance prior to participating in CES.

CES clients most likely to have collected EI in the post-program period are those with a longer period of time between their intervention and the time of the interview and reachback clients. Those who were social assistance recipients prior to participation in CES are less likely to have collected EI since the end of their last CES intervention.

Considering earnings outcomes, an increase in the amount of employment earnings between the pre- and post-program period was more likely to have occurred for younger participants. Men and those with higher levels of education had a reduced likelihood of experiencing an earnings increase.

## **4.2 Impacts of the STB on Job Seekers**

### **a) *Perceived Usefulness***

Like the CES participants, STB clients were asked to rate the usefulness of the STB and the training they took in terms of providing them with a variety of different skills and experiences (Table 4.6). Again, the ratings are quite positive and generally surpass the ratings of CES participants.



Two-thirds of clients rate the STB as very useful in terms of acquiring skills that are in demand (66 per cent) and in upgrading their education and skills (65 per cent). Six in ten clients rate the STB very useful in increasing their marketability to employers and improving their attitude/self-confidence. The STB is perceived to be somewhat less useful in terms of clients making informed career choices and in actually finding employment (56 and 49 per cent rate the STB as very useful in these respects).

**TABLE 4.6**  
**Perceived Usefulness of STB**

<b>“Please indicate the extent to which you have personally experienced each of the following benefits as a result of your participation.”</b>				
	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not useful (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Useful (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very useful (6-7)</b>
Gain skills in demand	2	4	27	66
Upgrade education or skills	2	4	29	65
More marketable to employers	3	4	32	62
Improve attitude/self-confidence	2	7	29	62
Make well-informed decisions about career	2	5	38	56
Find employment/self-employment	7	10	34	49

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=800).

## **b) *Employment Outcomes***

Looking at actual employment outcomes for STB clients (Table 4.7), three-quarters of clients (74 per cent) actively looked for work since the end of their last training program. The average number of weeks spent looking for work (up to the time of finding a job or the time of the interview) was 8.6 weeks.

- ❑ Youth, those with recent prior work experience and residents of Region Five looked for work for a somewhat shorter period of time compared to other clients (four, seven and five weeks on average respectively).

The results indicate that 83 per cent of STB clients had found work (full-time, part-time or self-employed) in the post-program period. At the time of the survey interview, 69 per cent were employed and 15 per cent were unemployed and looking for work. A portion of clients were continuing in education or training (13 per cent) and another four per cent classify themselves as being out of the labour force.

**TABLE 4.7**  
**Employment Outcomes of STB Job Seekers**

	Total (%)
<b>Actively looked for work since last intervention</b>	
Yes	74
No	22
DK/NR	3
<b>Average weeks looked for work since last intervention</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Worked since last intervention</b>	
Yes	83
No	14
DK/NR	3
<b>Mean number of employers</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Current employment status</b>	
Employed:	69
Self-employed	7
Employed full-time	37
Employed part-time/contract/casual	25
Unemployed and looking for work	15
Unemployed and not looking for work	2
Student/still in training	13
Homemaker	1
Other	1

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=453).

- ❑ Non-Aboriginal clients are more likely to have found work during the post-program period (85 per cent compared to 70 per cent of Aboriginal clients). Clients with prior work experience are also more likely to have found work during the post-program

period (86 per cent). Students of private vocational schools are also more likely to have ever found work during this time (94 per cent), though there is no difference in terms of current employment status based on where clients took training.

- ❑ In terms of current employment status (at the time of the interview), those who had prior work experience are more apt to be working full-time (41 per cent). Women are more likely than men to be employed on a part-time (14 per cent) or casual basis (10 per cent). Consistent with this finding, those who obtained training in social/health/education fields (who are more likely to be women) are also more apt to be employed in part-time and casual positions and less likely to be unemployed and looking for work. More likely to be currently unemployed and looking for work are clients with lower levels of education (less than high school) and Aboriginal clients (both at 32 per cent).

### **c) Job Characteristics**

Just over half of STB clients (51 per cent) have had one employer since the end of their last training intervention. The average number of employers during this period is 1.7. The average duration of the first job clients had following completing their training (for those who had more than one) is 6.4 months.

Table 4.8 summarizes the job characteristics of those who found employment in the post-intervention period. One-quarter of STB clients (24 per cent) returned to a former employer that they had prior to their STB training.

Two-thirds of clients are working in year-round jobs, while 16 per cent are in seasonal job and 17 per cent in contract or casual positions. More than eight in ten are in full-time employment (somewhat lower among women, but higher among those who had recent prior work experience). Average hourly earnings in STB clients' current job are \$13.30. This represents an increase of \$1.40 from \$11.90 in participants' pre-program job. The vast majority (88 per cent) are in non-subsidized jobs.

- ❑ Men are more likely than women to be in seasonal jobs (23 vs. eight per cent). Those with less than a high school education are also more apt to be in a seasonal job, particularly compared to clients who have completed post-secondary education (30 vs. eight per cent).
- ❑ Wages are generally higher for men than they are for women, however, female clients experienced a greater increase in earnings between the pre- and post-program period compared to men (\$2.20 compared to \$0.90).

One-half of clients rate the training that was sponsored by the STB to be very important in helping them to get their current job (again, substantially higher than the parallel rating provided by CES participants). One in four say that the financial assistance they received to take training was somewhat important in getting their current job. A similar proportion (23 per cent) say that the training was not at all important.

**TABLE 4.8**  
**Current/Most Recent Job Characteristics of STB Job Seekers**

<b>Job Characteristic</b>	<b>Participants (%)</b>
<b>Same job as before STB Training</b>	
Yes	24
No	75
<b>Type of employment</b>	
Year round	66
Seasonal	16
Casual/contract	17
<b>Job subsidized</b>	
Yes	8
No	88
DK/NR	4
<b>Weekly Hours</b>	
<30	15
30 or more	83
DK/NR	2
<b>Weekly earnings</b>	
<\$250	12
\$250-499	36
\$500+	47
DK/NR	5
Mean hourly wage	\$13.3
<b>Rated importance of STB in getting job</b>	
Not at all important (1-2)	23
Somewhat (3-5)	25
Very important (6-7)	51
DK/NR	1

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=297-363).

**d) *Extent of Joblessness***

Table 4.9 presents the extent of unemployment and joblessness of STB clients in the post-intervention period. The length of time between the end of STB client's training and time of the interview was 51 weeks on average. During this period, most clients were working the majority of the time - 73 per cent of clients were not working less than 25 per cent of the time. One in ten clients were not working 25 to 49 per cent of the time. A minority were not working more than half of this time (7 per cent not working 50 to 74 per cent of the time and eight per cent not working 75 per cent or more of the time). On average, STB clients were not working one week in five.

Considering extent of job search during the post-intervention period, STB clients were looking for work 13 per of the time on average. The majority of clients, 84 per cent, were looking for work between 0 and 24 per cent of the time during this period.

- The proportionate time spent looking for work was less for youth (six per cent), those with recent prior work experience and for clients in Region Five (seven per cent).

**TABLE 4.9**  
**Joblessness and Job Search Since Last Intervention: STB Clients**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of weeks not working since last intervention</b>	
Zero	41
1-12	33
13-24	13
25+	11
Mean	9 weeks
<b>Number of weeks looking for work since last intervention</b>	
Zero	54
1-12	30
13-24	8
25+	7
<b>Mean</b>	<b>6 weeks</b>
<b>Proportion of weeks not working since last intervention</b>	
0-24%	73
25-49%	11
50-74%	7
75+%	8
Mean	19.4%
<b>Proportion of weeks looking for work since last intervention</b>	
0-24%	84
25-49%	7
50-74%	5
75+%	4
Mean	12.5%

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=453).

### **e) Use of Public Income Supports**

Tables 4.10(a) and 4.10(b) present the results pertaining to use of public income supports in the post-program period. Fewer than one in ten STB clients (nine per cent) used social assistance since the end of their training. This is somewhat higher among Aboriginal clients at 22 per cent and those who did not have recent work experience prior to starting STB.

One in five STB clients reported collecting EI during this period. The probability of collecting EI in the post-intervention period is higher for STB clients who were active EI claimants at the time of receiving their benefit and for those with recent prior work experience.

**TABLE 4.10(a)**  
**Use of Public Income Support: STB Clients**

	Total (%)
<b>Collected social assistance since last intervention</b>	
Yes	9
No	88
DK/NR	3
<b>Collected EI since last intervention</b>	
Yes	18
No	78
DK/NR	3

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=453).

Like CES clients, the proportion of STB clients citing employment earnings as a source of income increased between the pre- and post-program period from 16 per cent to 64 per cent. EI as a source of income decreased from 56 per cent in the week prior to starting training to 13 per cent at the time of the interview. Reliance on social assistance decreased only slightly (though the proportion is small to begin with) from eight per cent prior to training to six per cent at the time of the interview.

**TABLE 4.10(b)**  
**Prior and Current Sources of Income: STB Clients**

	Week Prior to STB (%)	At time of Interview (%)
<b>Sources of income</b>		
Employment earnings	18	64
Spouse/family	17	16
EI	56	13
Social assistance	8	6
Student loan/grant	8	6
Spouse/child support	4	5
Savings	7	4

Source: STB Job Seeker Survey, 2001 (n=453).

## f) **Multivariate Analyses**

The approach to the multivariate analyses described above for the CES survey data was replicated for STB. The only changes in the approach pertained to the variables related to program intervention. For the analysis of outcomes of the STB, the variables that were included to represent program delivery included:

- source of training (i.e., regional college/SIAST vs. not and private vocational school vs. not);
- length of training;
- whether the training included an on-the-job training component;
- whether asked to contribute to training;
- whether applied for a student loan; and
- total STB benefit.

Based on the multivariate analysis, the key significant predictors of employment outcomes for STB clients include:

- length of post-program period.* The benefits of STB-sponsored training appear to mature over time. Those with a longer post-intervention period are more likely to have found employment and to be employed (full-time) at the time of the survey interview. They also spend proportionately more of the time working than jobless during the post-program period.
- prior work experience.* Prior and recent attachment to the labour market is a positive influence on many of the outcomes examined (i.e., ever found a job in the post-program period, employed full-time at time of interview and likelihood of collecting social assistance).
- socio-demographic variables.* Being married has a positive influence on most of the outcomes examined in this evaluation. Being Aboriginal reduces the likelihood of ever having had a job, as well as being currently employed. A post-secondary education has a positive impact on being employed at the time of the interview and reduces the likelihood of receiving social assistance in the post-program period. Younger clients rate the benefits of participating in the STB higher than older clients.
- prior use of public income support.* Reliance on social assistance in the period leading up to participating in the STB is linked with receiving social assistance in the post-program period. Similarly, use of EI just prior to receipt of the STB is a positive predictor of reliance on EI in the period since completing training.
- training delivery variables.* There are few delivery-related factors that significantly influence outcomes (e.g., length of course or source of training). Having an on-the-job



training component, however, has a positive influence (i.e., reduces) the extent of joblessness in the post-program period.

### **4.3 Unintended Impacts**

Few key informants named any unintended impacts of CES. Unintended impacts of CES mentioned by a minority of key informants included: 1) competitive and divisive impact of CBO tendering process and some concerns around conflict of interest and transparency in awarding of contracts; 2) frustration among clients who are not eligible for services; 3) confusion on the part of clients and staff around distinguishing federal and provincial roles in income support and employment support. The latter issue is attributed to the transition from federal to provincial government responsibility for employment training for EI-eligible clients under the LMDA.

Few key informants also mentioned unintended impacts of the STB. According to these few key informants, unintended impacts include: 1) perceived unfairness related to the level of income support received by PTA clients which is significantly lower than the amounts available to STB client and related to this, perceived unfairness among STB clients based on differences in benefits resulting from the flexible negotiated approach; 2) enhanced activity in the training sector in response to the availability of training funds (e.g., regional colleges, SIAST, private vocational schools).





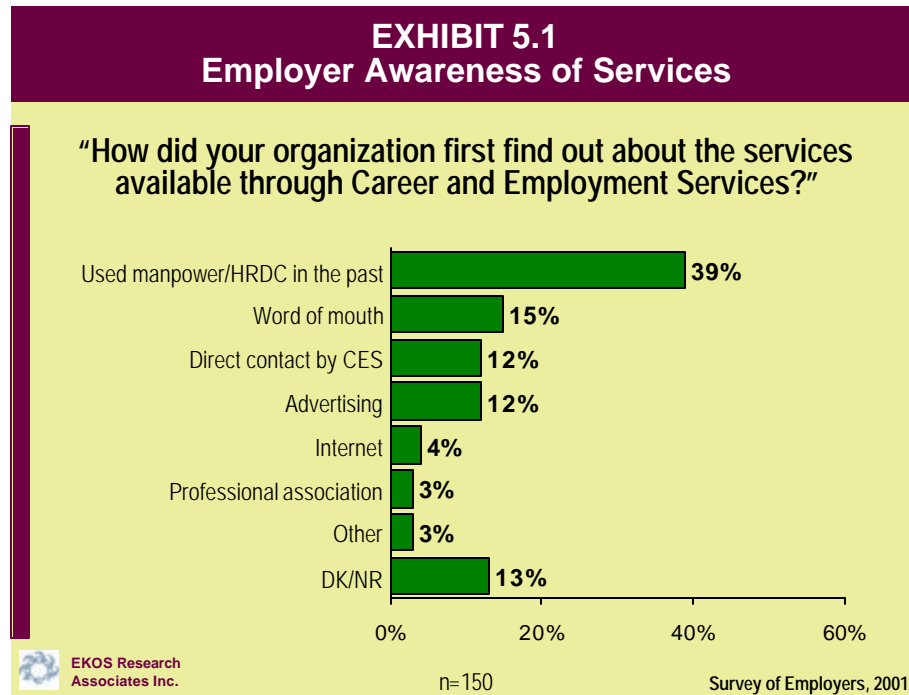
## **5 EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE**

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In this chapter, we provide information on the perspective of employers using CES services, in particular, the job posting system. These data are based on the survey of employers. A profile of organizations using the system is presented in Appendix E.

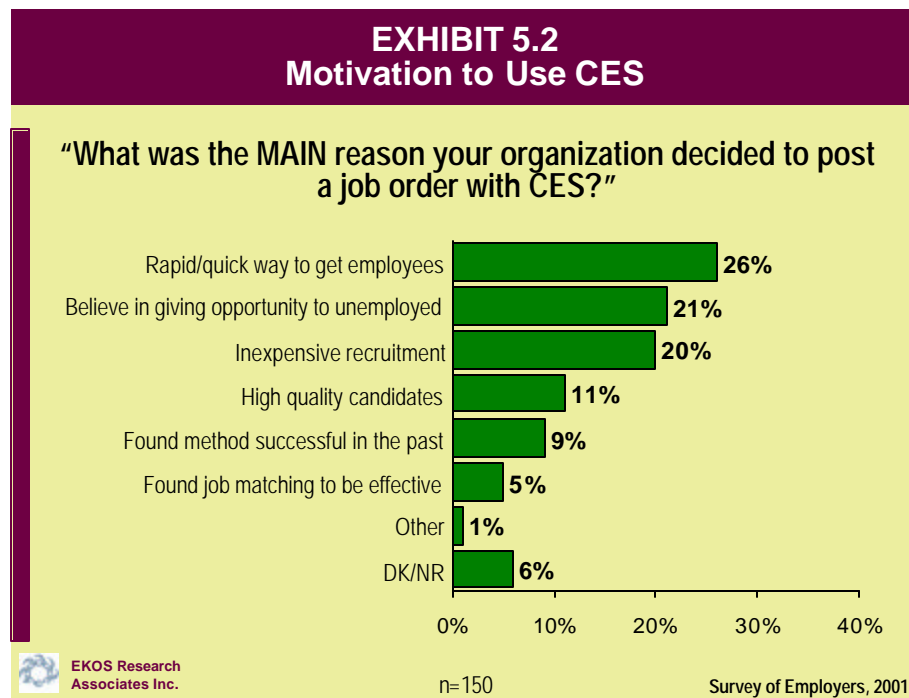
### **5.1 Awareness and Motivation**

The most frequently mentioned source of awareness of job posting services available through CES was use of HRDC employment services in the past (39 per cent) (Exhibit 5.1). This is followed by word of mouth (15 per cent), direct contact with CES and advertising (both 12 per cent).



The main reasons employers were looking for employees when they approached CES were due to turnover (e.g., retirement, quit) (59 per cent) or, somewhat less frequently, due to an up-turn in business (33 per cent).

The most appealing aspects of CES services for hiring employees are quick response (mentioned by 26 per cent) and inexpensive recruitment (20 per cent) (Exhibit 5.2). One in five employers also mentioned more altruistic reasons in using CES to provide an opportunity to work for those who are unemployed. Less frequently mentioned responses (by one in ten or fewer) include: high quality candidates, prior successful experience and effective job matching services.



Had CES not been available as a hiring tool, the majority of employers would have advertised through the newspaper (77 per cent) or recruited through word of mouth (25 per cent).

## 5.2 Characteristics of Job Postings

Employers used a variety of means to post their job order: over the phone (51 per cent); in person (23 per cent); by fax (20 per cent); and over the Internet (nine per cent). Total average number of vacancies posted by employers during the period of study (since September, 1999) was 3.4 (Table 5.1). Of these, about half are full-time year round jobs and the remainder are non-standard forms of employment such as part-time, seasonal or short-term positions. Many employers characterize jobs as being in the sales and service sector (47 per cent). Other occupations that were mentioned with lesser frequency were clerical and transportation (both at 10 per cent) and processing/manufacturing (nine per cent).

Two in three employers received applicants as a result of their job posting. The sources of applicants were: SaskJobs (29 per cent); JobBank kiosk (27 per cent); employers' on-line search of resumés (13 per cent); and posting on the telephone response system (nine per cent).

Of those who did not receive any applicants, employers went on to hire through word-of-mouth (62 per cent) or through the newspaper (30 per cent).

**TABLE 5.1**  
**Characteristics of Job Vacancies Posted per Organization**

<b>Characteristics of Vacancies Posted</b>	
<b>Number of postings</b>	
Total (mean)	3.4 vacancies
In full-time, year-round jobs (mean)	1.8
In part-time, year-round jobs (mean)	0.6
In seasonal, short-term jobs (mean)	1.2
<b>Occupations (top four)</b>	
Sales and service	47%
Clerical	10%
Transportation	10%
Processing/manufacturing	9%
<b>Average days between placing order and posting</b>	2.4 days*
<b>Received applicants through CES</b>	
Yes	66%
No	27%
DK/NR	7%

Source: Survey of Employers, 2001 (n=150).

\*Note that 42 per cent of employers indicated "don't know/no response" to this item.

### **5.3 Use of Other CES Services**

The majority of employers who had posted a vacancy through CES (91 per cent) did not use any other services offered to employers (e.g., job matching, human resource planning). Four per cent of employers indicated being involved in regional planning.

One in four had had occasion to use a wage subsidy or work experience program.

### **5.4 Satisfaction**

Overall, 57 per cent of employers are very satisfied with the services and resources available through CES and another 36 per cent are somewhat satisfied (Table 5.2). Most highly rated are timeliness of the service and responsiveness of staff (63 to 66 per cent are very satisfied). The paperwork to post a job order is not problematic for the majority of employers (62 per cent very satisfied). Timeliness of service is also an aspect of service with which employers are very satisfied (61 per cent). Weaker ratings are provided of flexibility of services and the information available about CES (40 to 42 per cent very satisfied). The quality of workers is the lowest ranked aspect of CES (39 per cent very satisfied). Employers express similar levels of satisfaction with workers' attitude and motivation, overall job readiness and work skills. About one-third of employers are very satisfied with the quality of workers referred to them in terms of these aspects. When the "don't know" responses are removed, the proportion very satisfied increases to about four in ten.

Nine in ten employers indicate that they did not have any difficulties in using the resources or services offered by CES.

Virtually all employers (97 per cent) say they would hire workers through CES in the future. Almost nine in ten (88 per cent) would recommend hiring workers through CES to other employers.

**TABLE 5.2**  
**Program Satisfaction: Employers**

<b>“How satisfied were/are you with Career and Employment Services (and) the worker(s) that were referred to you”</b>				
	<b>% DK/NR</b>	<b>% Not Satisfied (1-2)</b>	<b>% Somewhat Satisfied (3-5)</b>	<b>% Very Satisfied (6-7)</b>
CES overall	5	2	36	57
<b>Service Aspects*</b>				
How quickly workers were referred to you	9	2	22	66
Responsiveness of CES personnel	11	3	23	63
Amount of paperwork to post a job order	13	3	23	62
How quickly your job order was posted	17	2	19	61
The flexibility of the resources and services to meet needs	18	4	36	42
The information available about what CES has to offer	17	4	38	40
Overall quality of workers referred	13	3	44	39
<b>Applicant Aspects**</b>				
Attitude and motivation	16	7	40	36
Overall job readiness	16	4	48	32
Work skills	19	5	46	30

Source: CES Employer Survey, 2001  
\* (n=150)

\*\* (n=100)

## 5.5 Impacts

### a) *Hirings*

Employers filled about two vacancies through applicants generated through CES (representing 62 per cent of total vacancies posted) (Table 5.3). The average number of weeks between the time employers posted a vacancy and filling the position is three weeks. The types of jobs that were filled were distributed roughly equally across the three categories of full-time year-round jobs (0.7), part-time (0.5) and seasonal or short-term jobs (0.7). At the



time of the survey interview, employers reported that on average one-third of the workers hired through CES were still with their firm.

One in four employers (26 per cent) could not fill any of their vacancies through CES. The most often mentioned reasons why employers were not able to fill vacancies through CES (even after receiving applications for the position) were: applicants not qualified (37 per cent); or the employer found another candidate through other means (28 per cent).

**TABLE 5.3**  
**Characteristics of Job Vacancies Filled per Organization**

<b>Characteristics of Vacancies Filled</b>	<b>Mean Number of Vacancies Filled</b>
<b>Mean number of vacancies filled through CES job posting</b>	2.1
<b>Type of Jobs Filled</b>	
In full-time, year-round jobs	0.7
In part-time, year-round jobs	0.5
In seasonal, short-term jobs	0.7
<b>Mean weeks between job posting and filling the position</b>	3.3 weeks
<b>Number still employed with organization</b>	0.6 workers

Source: Survey of Employers, 2001 (n=150).

#### **b) *Rated Benefits***

Providing an inexpensive avenue for recruitment of new employees was the most highly rated benefit of CES services for employers (43 per cent indicate this as a positive benefit of CES) (Table 5.4). About one in four or fewer indicate benefits in other areas (such as access to other programs, addressing skill shortages or human resource planning).

**TABLE 5.4**  
**Impacts of Project Participation: Employers**

**“Following are some IMPACTS participation in Career and Employment Services may have had on your organization. [Please rate each....].”**

	<b>%DK/NR</b>	<b>% Negative impact (1-3)</b>	<b>% No Impact (4)</b>	<b>% Positive Impact (5-7)</b>
Reducing expenditures on recruitment and hiring	8	3	44	43
Improving knowledge of available training/subsidy programs	15	3	53	27
Addressing skill shortages	15	4	53	26
Improving long-term HR planning	15	5	59	20

Source: CES Employer Survey, 2001 (n=150).

Employers were asked to compare the effectiveness of CES with other methods of recruiting employees. Just over half (55 per cent) indicate that CES is more effective and another one in four rate the service about the same as other methods. Fourteen per cent of employers rated CES less effective compared to other methods of recruiting employees.



## **6 STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES**

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The purpose of this section is to highlight suggestions for improvements to CES and the STB. Key informants and program staff involved in design, implementation, management and delivery of these initiatives offered observations concerning key lessons learned in the development and delivery of both the CES and STB.

### **6.1 CES**

#### **a) *Strengths and Challenges***

Key informant interview and survey staff identified a number of strengths of CES that contribute to successful delivery. By far the most frequently mentioned strength mentioned by staff is the experience, expertise and dedication of employees themselves. Related to this is the importance of respectful and open communication with CES clients. Key informants too noted the importance of staff in the effective delivery of services. CES employees are viewed as being particularly strong in soft skills and able to access appropriate support and training when necessary. Management and administrative processes that lead to flexibility in job descriptions and blending of skills were also mentioned as strengths in the staffing area.

Other strengths that were mentioned by key informants and surveyed staff include:

- focus on partnerships.* This broad strength was reiterated in a number of different contexts. Among the most important partnerships identified are those with CBOs. The community-based service delivery provided by these organizations is perceived to lead to more creative, responsive, efficient and flexible programming. CBO partnerships are perceived to be most successful when supported by a set of effective contractual processes which include three-year funding arrangements, clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, guidance in staffing, and access to CES support and resources. Community consultations through the regional planning process and partnerships with other orders of government and other provincial government departments were also noted in the context of program strengths.
- broad array of programs and services for clients.* The services offered by CES range from CSCES resource areas available to all citizens to more intensive training and work placement programs, offered in a “one-stop shopping” format. Technology-driven assistance such as the web-site are viewed as effective and particularly useful for rural clients;
- flexibility of services* to respond to individual needs and the availability of discretion in responses; and
- results-focused orientation* to service delivery.

Key informants and surveyed staff were also asked to identify the challenges in delivery of CES. For staff, factors mentioned most frequently that undermine the successful delivery of CES have to do with staffing issues (understaffing or poor organization of staff) and the eligibility criteria or lack of funds for some programs and services that limit what is available to clients. A second tier of challenges included: lack of awareness among clients, difficulties related to systems or paper burden, lack of guidance or vision; and lack of sufficient staff training. Challenges that were mentioned by key informants included:

- operating in a period of transition which has seen offices change locations and change names causing both confusion among clients and fatigue among staff;
- underdeveloped services to employers;
- accountability requirements which can be time-consuming for both CES staff and CBOs and, related to this, continued frustration around OCSM and rules governing sharing of information between the provincial and federal governments. Yet at the same time there is a perceived lack of effective monitoring and tracking of clients and knowledge of program effectiveness;
- referral processes which sometimes see bottlenecks at the CSCES office and delays in referrals to CBOs;

- 
- lack of staff expertise and attitudinal barriers in dealing with some client groups (e.g., social assistance clients, multi-barriered clients);
  - the need to have more accurate labour market information that can be integrated into decision-making; and
  - barriers for rural clients.

### **b) *Suggestions for Improvement***

Suggestions for improvement to CES come largely from key informants and from staff responses to the survey. Among staff, by far the most frequently mentioned suggestion to improve delivery of CES was to increase staffing resources (representing about one-fifth of responses). The comments of staff and key informants tended to focus specifically on front-end staff. The suggestion for more resources directed in this area seems driven by the observation of some that the self-serve approach is not appropriate for all clients that use the resource areas. Higher needs clients or clients who are older or have literacy difficulties, for example, are less successful in responding to the self-serve model. Some key informants echoed this observation, arguing for more *active* approaches in assisted self-service to ensure clients are engaged and their needs are adequately identified so appropriate use can be made of more intensive service where necessary. Yet, some staff and key informants also noted that there are significant waiting times in some offices now that must be addressed through additional staff or organizational changes. Finally, related to staffing, both key informants and staff mentioned the need for attention to staff skills and abilities including, for example, sensitivity to marginalized groups and openness to more holistic and creative interventions.

A number of other suggestions for improvement were brought forward during the evaluation. These were variously mentioned by at least two or more key informants and roughly one in ten or fewer staff.

- promotion of services to job seekers;
- bolstering employer services (including appropriate marketing tools, increased personal contact with and participation of employers, services such as job matching, and diagnostic capabilities for recruitment and retention of workers). Attention to employer services would also improve job postings and access to more and a greater variety of vacancies for clients;

- ❑ revisit eligibility criteria, particularly with respect to services for underemployed clients and clients not eligible for social assistance or employment insurance;
- ❑ improvements to CSCES offices (e.g., improve parking, children's areas, expand hours of operation);
- ❑ improved follow-up, monitoring and tracking of clients;
- ❑ supports for multi-barriered clients (e.g., that cover areas such as transportation, child care, life skills and career planning, as well as employment skills upgrading and work experience);
- ❑ job search supports for clients (e.g., more workshops on resumé preparation and interviewing, as well as ongoing supports such as job search clubs);
- ❑ more attention paid to predict skill shortages and retention of trained workers in Saskatchewan; and
- ❑ innovative approaches for outreach and services to rural clients.

## **6.2 STB**

### **a) *Strengths and Challenges***

Among the most important strengths of the STB identified by both key informants and staff who work with the STB is the flexibility of the STB to address individual needs through negotiated financial assistance. Those involved in this income support program value the ability to tailor assistance based on clients' unique circumstances which are reviewed during the negotiated process. The availability of exemptions provides a further means to ensure that the resources of the program meet the needs of individuals, based on the discretion of staff and managers.

Similar to the comments around CES, the quality of staffing was frequently mentioned by staff and key informants as another strength of the STB. The negotiation and counselling skills of field staff, STB unit responsiveness and support, and positive relations between CECs and the STB unit were all identified under this broad category.

Other strengths of the STB that were raised in the evaluation include:

- the link with CES that includes a counselling component and use of action plans to provide a strong linkage to employment and to contribute to successful completion of the training;
- policy development and processes for staff input through the STB Reference Group which brings together different perspectives to address issues; and
- STB rates which are perceived to be fair and adequate to address financial barriers to training and provide financial assistance in a timely manner.

While the flexibility of income support and the negotiated process were mentioned as key strengths of the STB, this same flexibility gives rise to challenges within the program. The broad scope for interpretation and application of policy can and has led to inconsistencies in delivery across regions. The uneven amounts and terms of benefits can also lead to a perceived lack of fairness among clients who may compare experiences.

Other challenges that were mentioned by key informants or surveyed staff are: 1) lack of accountability and monitoring practices and unclear expectations around expected results; 2) vague understanding and inconsistent practices regarding overpayments; 3) lack of awareness of the STB among some groups; 4) the link to Student Loans (particularly delays in approvals and inclusion of defaulters); 5) lack of adequate communications and training; 5) challenges during peak periods to meet demand and avoid delays for clients in securing training; and 6) administrative burden related to OCSM.

## **b) *Suggestions for Improvement***

In terms of suggestions for improvements, there was little clear consensus among surveyed staff about priorities for improvements, with many issues being raised by two or three staff. These suggestions for improvements recommended by key informants and surveyed staff who deal with the STB included:

- need for training on financial needs assessment and in-depth counselling (though interest from regions has been somewhat tepid);

- clear monitoring and accountability practices, including definition and communication of expected results, and tracking of client outcomes;
- revisit criterion that excludes casually employed who are eligible for Part 1 benefits;
- program promotion, particularly to underdeveloped client groups such as reachback clients;
- policy development around overpayments;
- easing of administrative burden, possibly through on-line applications; and
- increase signing authority at the regional level to reduce delays.

There was little consensus regarding improving the Student Loan linkage. There seems to be agreement around excluding those in default of a SL from the STB. However, views on whether to continue the approach to Student Loans as a required (as opposed to a recommended) component of the STB are highly mixed. Those who favour a change in policy argue that the SL requirement imposes undue difficulties and may even deter some (low income) clients who are unwilling to take on debt. They prefer that CEC discretion be used to decide the appropriateness of a SL.

The tension between the flexibility of the STB (a highly valued aspect that provides discretion to meet individuals needs) and inconsistency in delivery is similarly not easily resolved. Some supported flexibility, while at the same time recommending that supports such as staff training be used to encourage consistency. On the other hand, a view was also expressed to move to a more “rules-based” system replacing negotiated financial assistance with a flat rate to ensure greater consistency and perceived fairness on the part of clients.





## 7 SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

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This evaluation study has examined issues related to relevance, delivery, impacts and effects and alternatives for Career and Employment Services and the Skills Training Benefit. The following summary observations are organized thematically by evaluation issue.

### 7.1 Relevance

#### a) *Addressing Labour Market Needs*

Both CES services and the income support provided for training by the STB are perceived to be *relevant* to the labour market needs of Saskatchewan job seekers. The broad array of CES services addresses the needs of those who are *self-sufficient* (e.g., through the resource rooms) and provides a *gateway* to more intensive services through referrals of higher needs clients to other interventions typically delivered through CBOs. The STB supports access to one possible employment strategy – *training* – by providing financial support to EI-eligible clients requiring skills upgrading. Additional training/education is the area identified most often by job-seekers in terms of what they need to achieve their employment goals.

Both the services offered by CES and the STB are *well-utilized* by clients. A significant proportion of CES participants, for example, are using the resources rooms and web-site and accessing counselling staff. SaskJobs is a particularly important tool for job seekers using the web-site. Web-site users themselves express satisfaction with the site, though

some would like to see more diverse and up-to-date job listings and expanded information in some areas. The Career Information Hotline is used less frequently by clients and staff also cite a lower level of familiarity with this service. The STB has been fully subscribed since its inception.

CES services are somewhat weaker in terms of meeting the needs of *employers*, and staff also rate themselves less knowledgeable about employer supports (compared to the services that are available to job seekers). In fact, the services available to employers are quite limited. Few employers who are using the *job posting* system use any other services provided by CES. Development of employer services was recommended in such key areas as human resource planning and screening or matching of employee candidates to vacancies. Raising awareness of services among employers was also noted and greater outreach to employer clients could have the added benefit of boosting the number and variety of vacancies posted on SaskJobs.

The extensive use of *partnerships* in delivery of CES services is seen to be a key ingredient in meeting labour market needs. Partnerships have been particularly successful with *other service deliverers* (CBOs, other government departments), but less so with employers/industry. The collaborative approach is seen to improve outreach to clients, the quality of service to clients and preventing duplication of services. Duplication of services in itself is of only minor concern and the potential for overlap is largely limited to some areas where HRDC continues to have involvement (e.g., youth). Individuals are generally confident, however, in the level of communication and collaboration to avoid problems in this area. The minimal level of duplication was confirmed by the experience of participants who seldom used employment services supplied by other organizations in addition to CES or the STB.

## **b) Awareness and Targeting**

Sources of awareness of job seekers for both CES and the STB are often *informal* (e.g., word of mouth). Referrals from HRDC, particularly for STB clients, are surprisingly low given that this is the primary target group for this financial assistance program. Those involved in delivery say the devolution of responsibility for labour market programs for EI clients and consequent name and location changes continue to cause confusion

for some clients. More active referrals and soliciting of clients through the HRDC office may be necessary in the short-term to remedy this issue. Other pockets of clients who were identified as being underserved are rural dwellers, multi-barriered clients, Aboriginal individuals and youth.

CES programs and services are available to EI-eligible, social assistance and community clients. The client group for the STB is somewhat narrower, with eligibility criteria that target EI-claimants or the reachback group. The profile of the CES client group suggests that CES services are being targeted appropriately with a fair representation of each of the three client groups. The STB client profile shows a greater representation of EI-eligible clients, as expected. The funds disbursed by the STB are highly incremental as reported by clients – the majority would not have taken training had the STB not been available.

Some key informants and staff had concerns about accessibility and appropriateness of programs and services for some client groups. For CES, some questioned the level of services to clients at each of the far ends of the spectrum – lower educated or multi-barriered clients for whom the self-serve approach is inadequate to meet needs and higher skill individuals for whom there are few opportunities appropriate to their level of education and experience. Some also noted that while CES services are broadly available for all clients, there are few intensive interventions for those who are not eligible for EI or SA. For the STB, the criterion that clients be unemployed was raised most frequently as a barrier to client participation. In some cases, in fact, marginally employed individuals may be eligible for Part 1 EI benefits, but ineligible for the STB.

Lack of awareness is a particular barrier for employers. The sources of awareness listed by participants and the comments of staff suggest that the current employer client group represents a fairly shallow pool of firms who are long-time and recurring users of CES services. Staff acknowledge the need to reach out to new employers in new industries. The recommended approach to establishing relationships with employers is in-person contacts.

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**c) *Linkages to Other Programs***

As mentioned above, there are few issues regarding overlap or duplication with respect to the programs and services offered by CES. This evaluation also examined the linkages between the STB and other income support offered by the Department for training. The link between the STB and Student Loans was raised as a particular issue, though there is no clear agreement on whether SL should be a required component of the STB (as is currently the case) or a recommended one. The evaluation data suggest that, in fact, clients who apply and are approved for a SL are in the minority (about one in five). There is greater consensus on restricting the STB to exclude those who are in default of a Student Loan (who represent about seven per cent of participants). In any case, the linkage between the STB and SL is an area where staff say they are not as knowledgeable. Guidance on the rationale for the linkage and the mechanics of the application and approval processes is an area for consideration for future training.

## **7.2 Implementation**

**a) *Satisfaction***

Clients' satisfaction with CES services and the STB is quite high, though STB clients provide substantially more positive ratings of their experience. For both client groups, the respect and courtesy of staff is the most highly rated aspect of service. Lower income clients, social assistance recipients and clients with a disability express less satisfaction and are less positive about the benefits of participation.

Discontinuation rates are low in both CES and the STB. Among CES participants, half developed a career action plan and, of these, four in ten have completed their plan and another five in ten are in progress. The completion rates for STB training are also very high (only six per cent discontinued). For both groups, the primary reason for discontinuing their action plan or training was to take a job.

Employers also express a high degree of satisfaction with the experience in posting vacancies with SaskJobs. Timeliness and responsiveness of staff are important strengths of the service. Even the paperwork is not perceived to be problematic by the majority of employers. The quality of workers referred through SaskJobs received a somewhat lower rating. This was a barrier to participation that was also noted by program staff.

### **b) *Management and Organization***

Staff are seen as a key strength of both CES and the STB and, as mentioned above, the ratings of clients confirm a high level of satisfaction with staff interactions. Staffing challenges, where they exist, largely revolve around resources (too few) and training. With respect to the former, in some offices, lack of resources has led to delays in scheduling appointments (though timeliness of services is not a clear area of dissatisfaction, at least among STB clients). Lack of sufficient front end staff in these CSCES offices can have consequences for clients who are not job ready and in need of more assistance with the self-serve resources.

With respect to the issue of training, the move from a specialist to a generalist orientation in some CSCES offices has placed new demands on staff. Skill development needs depend on the experience of the individual, however, the key areas mentioned in the survey were income support, multi-media tools and contracting. For staff who deal with the STB, the Student Loan link and the administration of overpayments were voiced as areas where staff require greater guidance, and perhaps for some, training in negotiation and counselling skills.

### **c) *Administration of STB***

The evaluation included several questions related specifically to the administration of the STB, including consistency of delivery of the STB and STB policy development. In terms of the former, consistency of delivery of the STB across the province is perceived to be a problematic issue by many. There are believed to be inconsistencies ranging from negotiation of rates to administrative capturing of information to use of overpayments. The administrative and survey data indicate that there are indeed some regional differences in delivery (e.g., use of SL, use of exemptions). Some argue that uneven delivery is an acceptable

result of flexibility of delivery which is a highly valued aspect of the STB. On the other hand, inconsistency can raise issues of perceived equity and fairness among clients.

With respect to policy, the relationship between the STB unit and field staff is largely positive and staff are impressed with the responsiveness of the unit. Almost half of staff say they have raised a policy issue with respect to the STB, though fewer have had the issue addressed to their satisfaction. The process that is in place for policy development for STB is in the form of a Reference Group, which includes a varied representation. While staff are not wholly satisfied with the process, this may be at least partially a result of delays in responding to new policy issues due to the recent hiatus of the References Group.<sup>15</sup>

An analysis of the data related to STB exemptions indicated that exemptions are often sought when training programs exceed the 10 month restriction for course length. The living allowance guidelines are sufficient for the majority. Exemptions occur in particular circumstances where clients must travel to training, incur medical-related expenses or have a change in income/reduced income during the training period (typically when EI is exhausted or the client is not eligible for a Student Loan). There is also some evidence to suggest that in 2001 (but not in 2000), those seeking exemptions were overrepresented by women and those who are single with dependents.

#### **d) *Monitoring***

Monitoring and accountability is an important issue for both CES and the STB. Both initiatives rely heavily on the OCSM system for case management and tracking. While there are significant difficulties with OCSM, there is also widespread acknowledgement that the system has improved over time. Issues that remain largely focus on delays/slow operation of the system and the link to the HRDC EI system. The poor “screen scraping” process has a negative impact on case management and causes delays in determining eligibility.

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<sup>15</sup> This hiatus was initially imposed during the development of the Integrated Income Support project (though the Group has now been resurrected).

Neither CES nor the STB have regular follow-up of clients to track outcomes, nor for the STB is there a system of verification of expenses. Both tracking of outcomes and expenses are recognized as challenges by those involved in delivery. Lack of follow-up support was identified by some clients as a barrier and as an area that staff also identify as not meeting needs.

### **7.3 Impacts**

Both CES and STB clients rate the usefulness of the services or training they received in a positive fashion (higher among youth). Again, clients who have used STB provide consistently more positive ratings of usefulness compared to clients who have participated in other CES services and, not surprisingly, benefits in the area of skill development are particularly highly rated by those who have taken STB-sponsored training.

Employment outcomes for job seekers in the post-program period are quite positive, particularly for STB clients. Seven in ten CES clients had worked during the post-intervention period compared to eight in ten STB clients. At the time of the survey interview, 57 per cent and 69 per cent of CES and STB clients respectively were employed. STB clients also experienced an increase in earnings between the pre-and post-program periods.

Reliance on public income support decreased between the time that clients started on CES or the STB and the time of the survey interview. Among CES participants, there was a substantial decline in the proportion receiving social assistance and EI. STB clients also experienced a decline in the use of EI. Individuals in both groups were more likely to name employment earnings as a source of income at the time of the survey interview compared to prior to starting their intervention.

About half of STB clients attribute getting their current job to the income support and training that they received through the STB. For CES participants, there is a more tenuous link between participation in services and finding employment (three in ten say services were very important in finding their current job and even fewer of those who have

post-secondary education and prior work experience say the services were important in finding their current job).

The more positive results for the STB reflect the Department's greater investment in skills upgrading for this group. STB clients also have a stronger educational and work experience background that disposes them to better results. The labour market outcomes for both client groups appear to mature over time; those with a longer post-intervention period are more likely to be employed at the time of the interview and to have spent proportionately more time employed during the post-intervention period.

For both CES and the STB, the factor having the most consistent positive influence on employment outcomes in the multi-variate analysis is having had recent work experience prior to participation in the service or training. In general, better employment results are achieved by those with a post-secondary education, though *perceived* benefits are lower and this group is less likely to experience a positive impact on earnings (for CES). Being married improves outcomes for STB participants. Outcomes tend to be weaker for clients who are social assistance recipients and for STB clients who are Aboriginal.

The socio-demographic characteristics of participants tend to take precedence over service delivery variables (e.g., types of services, types or method of training) and region as predictors of outcomes. There are some significant, though not consistent, relationships (e.g., those with a career action plan and from Region Two rate usefulness of services higher, on-the-job training is associated with reduced joblessness, residents of Region Five are less likely to receive social assistance in the post-program period).

For employers, the primary benefit of their participation in CES through SaskJobs is access to an inexpensive and timely method of recruiting new employees. Not surprisingly, there are fewer benefits in areas such as human resources planning because relatively few employers have access to these services or programs in addition to SaskJobs.



## 7.4 Implications

The evaluation results and the comments and suggestions of those involved in the design and delivery of CES and the STB are pulled together in the following concluding observations.

- ❑ Clients are served to best effect when a *broad array* of services and resources are made available in a *timely* and *coherent* fashion. Both CES and the STB represent valid approaches to addressing the labour market needs of eligible job seekers. Individuals who are underemployed, rural dwellers and multi-barriered clients experience more barriers to participation in services. *Job search supports* (e.g., workshops, clubs) appear to be a *gap* in some offices.
- ❑ Development of the *employer* client base and programs and services for firms to address human resource issues would allow the needs of employers to be met more fully.
- ❑ The *partnership* approach, which sees collaboration around planning and delivery of employment supports, is a key factor of success and is perceived to support service to the client. Flexibility in service delivery to meet individual needs is also highly valued.
- ❑ The *resource* rooms are well-used by clients and meet the needs of the majority of users. Yet, many clients require *additional attention*. Staff assistance is largely focused on providing technical assistance with the computers and equipment. More active approaches to engage clients would enhance benefits and ensure clients are properly referred where necessary.
- ❑ The STB rate and negotiated financial assistance are *appropriate* and do not appear to place an undue burden on most clients. Discontinuation rates are low and only rarely due to financial reasons. As well, incrementality of assistance is high.
- ❑ *Staff responsiveness* is an important strength of the Department and a key area of satisfaction for job seekers and employers. *Additional support and training* of staff who deal with the STB could remedy *issues of inconsistent delivery* and clarify issues related to the SL link and overpayments. For CES, staff development issues are more diffuse and depend on the areas where staff have had less prior training and experience (e.g., in dealing with social assistance clients or negotiating contracts). The evaluation data indicate that some client sub-groups express greater dissatisfaction with service, including those with disabilities and social assistance recipients.
- ❑ *Employment outcomes are positive* and the more intensive intervention supported by the STB leads to stronger outcomes for clients. The employment outcomes for STB clients suggest that *training that includes a job placement component* can translate into positive employment outcomes for clients.
- ❑ Use of a *strong action plan* is agreed by many to help to assess clients' needs or employment barriers and to develop a strategy to lead to long-term employment. In the context of the STB, action plans provide a *stronger link between training* and the labour market. Clients who have developed a career action plan rate the usefulness of services higher.

- *Monitoring and follow-up support* of clients are current challenges. For the STB, financial controls around administration and repayment of overpayments and, less widely, verification of expenses were identified as issues. Currently, both availability of human resources and technical resources (i.e., OCSM) do not fully support this activity. The IISS will address issues around STB financial controls and repayment of overpayments.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **List of Acronyms**



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## List of Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organizations
CEC	Career and Employment Consultant
CEIS	Career and Employment Information System
CES	Career and Employment Services
CSCES	Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services
CSIO	Career Services Information Officer
EI	Employment Insurance
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
IISS	Integrated Income Support System
LMDA	Labour Market Development Agreement
LMI	Labour Market Information
OCSM	One Client Service Model
PSEST	Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training
PTA	Provincial Training Allowance
RFP	Request for Proposals
RSB	Regional Services Branch
SA	Social Assistance
SAR	Social Assistance Recipient
SIAST	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
STB	Skills Training Benefits
SL	Student Loan
SS	Social Services



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Program Descriptions**





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## Program Descriptions

### A-2 Career and Employment Services (CES)

Career and Employment Services was formerly administered by the Regional Services Branch of Saskatchewan Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST) and now by Saskatchewan Social Services.<sup>16</sup> The Branch oversees the development and operation of a network of 20 Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices which offer an integrated delivery system of employment services and career planning and information. The offices are located across the five regions of Saskatchewan.

The CSCES network was formed as part of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy (STS) implemented in April 1997, in response specifically to one of its objectives, which was to provide improved access to career and employment services to support people in making their career plans and obtaining training or employment (*STS Final Report*, October 2000). The offices offer an expanded array of products and services compared to what was in place before. The CSCES offices were formed out of provincial New Career Corporations (NCC) and Human Resource Centres of Canada (HRCCs). The latter were transferred to the Department following transfer of training responsibilities from the federal government to the Province in January 1999.

CSCES offices are an important conduit for employment and training assistance services and products. Among the services and products provided (which are described in greater detail below) are: counselling, workshops, labour market information (SaskNetWork), use of a computer, job search and resumé-writing assistance, an Internet-based

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<sup>16</sup> On April 1, 2002 the Saskatchewan Government reorganized its departments. The reorganization has an impact on both the Regional Services Branch and Skills Training Benefit Unit of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. The Regional Services Branch, which encompasses the twenty Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices, became part of the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services. This move is intended to cement the role that the CSCES staff and programs play in supporting the government's *Building Independence Strategy*. The *Strategy* is designed to assist individuals receiving social assistance or at risk of becoming dependent on social assistance to move to employment. The program and service array provided through the CSCES will play a vital role in the success of *Building Independence*.

job matching service (SaskJobs), course calendars, education and training application forms, and other self-help resources. Provided as well are referrals to and delivery of the various employment and training programs and benefits offered by the Department, such as Employment Programs, Self-Employment, JobStart/Future Skills, Adult Basic Education, the Provincial Training Allowance, and the Skills Training Benefit (described below). Also provided is planning assistance for stakeholders in employment and training services.

CSCES offices have as their main goals to enable job seekers to make well informed education, training, employment and career decisions, as well to enable them to find work (e.g., job search assistance, find a posted job). The outputs and impacts of the services range from better informed decisions, obtaining a job, entering training, increased confidence, increased self-sufficiency, to high-paying long-term employment. Expected outcomes vary according to the service obtained and timeframe over which outcomes are measured, though the ultimate outcome of all measures would be to obtain and maintain a “good” job. There are other outcomes for employers (filling jobs) and other stakeholders (enhanced delivery) making use of CSCES.

The main target group of CES is job seekers in Saskatchewan, who are EI recipients and social assistance recipients, as well as members of the general public. Other targets of CES are employers seeking workers and other partners with a stake in labour market issues. Job seekers either make use of services on their own (self-help or self-serve) or register and talk to a Career Services Information Officer (CSIO) who in turn may direct the client to other services or to a Career Employment Consultant (CEC) for counselling and employment program assistance. In 1999/2000, CES served 18,297 clients.

It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to track individuals who drop in to use the self-help services, unless they move through to meet a counsellor and/or are placed in an employment program, in which case they are entered (registered) into the One Client Service Model (OCSM) system through the Career and Employment Information System (CEIS). Other “clients” of CSCES would be employers seeking workers to fill jobs and vacancies, and stakeholders in employment, career and education services who benefit from working with CSCES officers to identify and fill gaps in services.

Services are provided to job seekers using a partnership approach. CSCES offices work with employers, encouraging them to open up jobs for clients (Job Development Program) and hire and train clients in wage subsidy programs, and helping them to post jobs on SaskJobs. Employers may also be involved in human resource planning in their region. Other key partners include the educational institutions (Regional Colleges, with which partnerships have been established in all eight Regional College regions to deliver career services, and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), which is working with the province to develop a collaborative relationship with CSCES to deliver services); the provincial department of Social Services; Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC); and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), which have signed contracts with the Department to deliver specialized services.

The detailed services and products offered through CSCES offices are the following:

- ❑ **services:** *SaskNetWork* which is an online service completed in partnership with labour market stakeholders under the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Information Strategic Initiative; this enables persons, through the self-serve model, to explore career interests and make better career and training decisions, look for job opportunities (through SaskJobs), discover local education and training programs, discover information on workplace issues such as work-family balance, and other labour market information; CSIOs assist clients and help them arrange interviews with Career and Employment Consultants (CECs) for in-depth assessment and development of a career action plan; there have been about 19.9 million page views and 1.6 million user sessions (number of unique users regardless of how many pages were viewed) between April and December 2000.
- ❑ **find/post jobs:** *SaskJobs* (available on the SaskNetWork website) which is an Internet-based order/job matching system allowing employers to post job orders using the Internet or the Integrated Voice Response system; job orders are then uploaded to HRDC National Job Bank and are integrated with the OCSM system; job seekers in turn post their resumés and search the job orders to obtain employment from employers searching the resumés on the site; this product was completed in partnership with labour market stakeholders under the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Information Strategic Initiative; from April to December 2000 there were 12,250 job orders placed by staff and directly by employers (RFP).
- ❑ **information:** *Career Information Hotline:* assists employers, job seekers, young and adult learners to get information about services and programs (including Social Services SES program); as well, it provides on-line access to career service publications such as “What to Study” and grants and bursaries; there were 10,643 calls in 1999/2000 according to the RFP, and a total of 38,554 by March 31, 2000 (*STS Final Report*, October 2000).

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- ❑ **labour market information (LMI):** regional labour market and economic information, information on the province and other provinces and Canada, industry and sector information, occupational information, both historical and perspective.
  - ❑ **orientation** to services offered;
  - ❑ **counselling:** career planning, career/employment counselling, career and LMI for individuals, Action Plans which vary according to intensity of intervention required to integrate the client into the labour market, assessment and testing services, and group counselling;
  - ❑ **job search assistance:** supports high-risk clients in job placement, maintenance and development, including finding work and addressing barriers to job search, outreach for marginalized and the displaced;
  - ❑ **resumé writing assistance:** assistance in writing resumé;
  - ❑ **delivery/referral of employment/training programs:** including Employment Programs for recipients of EI and SA, Self-Employment, Job Start/Future Skills, Apprenticeship, referral to technical/vocational training at colleges, Provincial Training Allowance (PTA), Basic Education, etc.;
  - ❑ **planning:** staff work at local and regional levels to establish and maintain effective planning partnerships with relevant stakeholders in employment, career services and education, identifying gaps/needs in services, mechanisms to fill gaps, ways to maximize collaboration to ensure client-centred, responsive services and programs, this corresponds to the STS objective of developing better LMI and planning at regional, sectoral and provincial levels.

### **A-3            The Skills Training Benefit (STB)**

The STB is administered by the Student Financial Assistance Branch of Saskatchewan Learning. The STB is part of the Skills Loans and Grants program, under the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) signed in 1999. The STB regulations provided the province with the authority to deliver the STB measure for Employment Insurance (EI) clients and came into effect in January 1999. The regulations were amended in June 1999 to allow apprentices to receive benefits and to increase day care allowances in line with the Student Loans Program. The STB is delivered through CSCES offices, as are employment programs generally in the province.

Under the STB, beneficiaries are provided with financial support enabling them to access services facilitating their return to work. Program targets are job seekers who are current EI recipients or reachback clients.<sup>17</sup> Recipients must have a career action plan, i.e., an agreement mutually developed by the client and a Career and Employment Consultant (CEC) in a CSCES office, setting out the employment and training actions necessary for the client to return to work. Benefits are taxable but they do not affect the EI benefits the client receives. In the first full year of operation (1999/2000), a total of \$11.6 million in financial assistance was provided to 2,876 job seekers. Information to keep track of the program and its clients is maintained in two databases: the One Client Service Model (OCSM) database which includes the electronic counselling tool, the Career and Employment Information Service (CEIS); and the STB database itself.

The objective of the STB is to enable current and former EI clients to access education and training allowing them to enter a job and contributing to their long-term employability. Expected outcomes would include not only increased skills, employment, and earnings, but longer term payoffs such as increased confidence and the maintenance of employment (i.e., long-term labour market attachment). Other program objectives are to ensure

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<sup>17</sup> Human Resources Development Canada defines a reachback client as an unemployed individual: a) for whom an unemployment benefit period has been established or has ended within the 36 months prior to the date of requesting assistance; or b) for whom a benefit period that included a maternity or parental claim has been established within the 60 months prior to the date of requesting assistance, after which the individual remained out of the labour market in order to care for a newborn or newly adopted child and is now seeking to re-enter the labour force.

that the amount received reflects the needs and resources of the client and to allow the province to collect information on the client group, which is really an operational objective of the program.

The amount received under the STB is determined using a flexible negotiated approach. This means that what clients receive reflects the required employment and training assistance set out in the client's Action Plan, as well as other (non-training) activities that must be pursued in this training. The amount also reflects the personal resources of the client and his/her household, including client and spousal income and student loans (which the STB tops up). The client is expected to contribute to his/her own skill development.

Eligible costs covered by the STB include all costs required for the client to participate in the needed training activities. These include direct training costs (books, tuition, supplies), the costs of meeting the special needs of the disabled to allow them to participate, childcare and eldercare costs, and personal and family living expenses (such as transportation). Ineligible costs are previous debts; the client must be informed early in the process that such costs are not covered and he/she must then determine how the debt costs will be met while participating in the training.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Profile of Job Seekers**





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## Profile of Job Seekers

### a) ***Socio-Demographic Profile***

A summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of CES participants and STB clients is presented in Table C.1. The gender distribution of the two client groups is identical, with 56 per cent of clients being men and 44 per cent, women (higher in Region Three). The average age of CES and STB clients is also virtually the same, 35 years of age. Youth (less than 25 years) are represented in equal proportions in each group, at just under one in five clients. Among STB clients, the age profile of clients in regions one and five is slightly older compared to other regions.

CES participants have a weaker education profile compared to STB clients. While almost three in ten CES participants do not have their high school diploma, only 14 per cent STB clients are in this category. Just over one-third (35 per cent) of CES clients have completed at least some post-secondary education compared to 44 per cent of STB clients. CES participants in Region Three are more likely to have a university education compared to other regions and Region One participants are more apt to have less than a high school education.

While CES participants are less likely to be married than STB clients (41 per cent compared to 57 per cent of STB clients), the two groups are almost equally apt to have dependents (56 and 58 per cent respectively, but higher for Region One CES participants). There are proportionately more individuals who are members of an equity group in the CES participant group compared to the STB client base. (39 vs. 24 per cent). First Nations and Métis participants in CES are more highly represented in regions one and two among CES participants and in Region One for STB.

The CES participant group is slightly more likely to reside in an urban area (64 per cent compared to 59 per cent of STB clients). The average annual personal income of CES and STB clients at the time of the interview was \$19,400 and \$21,900 respectively).

**TABLE C.1**  
**Socio-Demographic Profile of Job Seekers**  
**(at time of interview)**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=800) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	56	56
Female	44	44
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 25	19	18
25-34	34	42
35-44	29	27
45+	22	17
Mean	35.0 years	34.5 years
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	28	14
High school	37	42
Some post-secondary	15	23
Community college	12	15
University	8	6
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	41	57
Single	45	33
Other	13	10
<b>Dependents</b>		
Yes	56	58
No	43	41

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=800) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Equity Group Status</b>		
Person with disability	10	7
First Nations	18	4
Métis	10	8
Visible minority	5	6
None	61	76
<b>Community Type</b>		
City	64	59
Town/village/hamlet	27	33
Farm	5	6
Indian reserve	3	1
<b>Personal Income</b>		
<\$10,000	16	11
\$10K-\$19K	22	20
\$20K-\$29K	13	18
\$30K-\$39K	5	9
\$40K+	6	7
DK/NR	38	34
Mean	\$19,433	\$21,890

Source: Surveys of CES and STB Job Seekers, 2001

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**b) Work Experience Profile**

A profile of CES and STB clients' work experience prior to their participation in interventions sponsored by these initiatives is presented in Table C.2. The vast majority of clients of both CES and STB have had recent work experience, though this is proportionately higher for STB (71 and 80 per cent respectively). About two-thirds of clients in both groups were working in year round jobs (less likely in regions one and two) and most were working full-time (85 to 87 per cent). Among those CES participants that were working part-time, the majority are underemployed (that is, most – 72 per cent – would have preferred to be working in full-time jobs). Average hourly earnings in their pre-intervention job were virtually identical for CES participants and STB clients at about \$12 hourly.

Shortage of work was the most frequently mentioned reason participants' last job had ended for both CES and STB clients (36 and 44 per cent respectively) and end of a temporary or contract position was the next most common reason for both groups (between 11 and 13 per cent). For CES participants, the third most frequently mentioned reason their job ended was due to medical or health reasons. For STB clients, ending their job to take training was mentioned more often.

At the time of starting their CES intervention/training, participants were typically unemployed (65 per cent of CES participants and 56 per cent of STB participants). One in five CES and STB participants were working (either self-employed, employed full-time or employed in non-standard employment) in the week prior, with the remainder classifying themselves as out of the labour market.

In terms of income support status, CES participants are weighted to active EI claimants (38 per cent) and another 17 per cent are reachback clients. One in five (22 per cent) were social assistance recipients (higher in Region Two) and 23 per cent of CES clients are neither eligible for EI nor SA at the time of being registered with CES. Reflecting the eligibility criteria of the program (i.e., unemployed and EI-eligible or reachback), the distribution of STB clients across these categories is quite different, with the vast majority indicating they are either active EI claimants (59 per cent) or reachback (28 per cent). The remaining 12 per cent of clients could reflect a dual status (i.e., reachback, but now receiving

social assistance that was not classified properly), lack of recall of timing of previous EI claim or a situation where training technically started outside of the claim period. The proportion of clients in this category is higher in Region One.

CES and STB participants' main sources of income prior to starting their intervention reflect their employment status and income support status described above, with the majority indicating reliance on some form of income support (EI or social assistance) at the time they started with CES or started their STB-sponsored training. About one in five in both groups had employment earnings at this time. The remaining sources of income are spouse or family, savings, or loans.

STB clients were asked about their history with respect to student loans. Four in ten STB clients had had a student loan (in the context of their STB or prior to this). Of those who had ever had a student loan, almost one in five were in default of a student loan at the time they were receiving the Skills Training Benefit (or about seven per cent of clients overall).

**TABLE C.2**  
**Work Experience Profile of Job Seekers Prior to Intervention**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=555) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Worked in year prior to intervention</b>		
Yes	71	80
No	28	20
Mean years	4.6 years	5.1 years
<b>Type of employment</b>		
Year-round	67	66
Seasonal	18	20
Casual	15	13

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=555) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Weekly hours</b>		
<30	11	11
30 or more	85	87
DK/NR	4	2
<b>Prefer to be working full-time</b> [asked of those working part-time]		
Yes	72	--
No	27	--
DK/NR	1	--
<b>Weekly earnings</b>		
<\$250	18	12
\$250-\$499	35	43
\$500 or more	36	37
DK/NR	11	8
Mean Hourly Wage	\$11.9	\$11.9
<b>Main Reason Job Ended</b> (top three)		
Laid off/lack of work	36	44
Temporary/contract	13	11
To take training	--	11
Medical/health	9	--
<b>Employment status week prior to participation</b>		
Self-employed	1	1
Employed full-time	9	6
Employed part-time	4	4
Employed casual/ contract/seasonal	8	12
Unemployed and looking for work	65	56
Unemployed and not looking for work	4	17
Student	3	2
Homemaker	1	1
On leave (maternity, disability)	2	3
DK/NR	2	--

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=555) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Status</b>		
Employment Insurance Claimant	38	59
Reachback	17	28
Social Assistance	22	2
None	23	10
<b>Main Sources of Income Week Prior</b>		
EI	32	56
Social assistance	28	8
Employment earnings	20	18
Spouse/family	11	17
Savings	8	7
Student loan/grant	7	13
<b>Ever had student loan</b>		
Yes	n/a	42
No	n/a	58
<b>In default of student loan [of those with student loan]</b>		
Yes	n/a	18
No	n/a	80
DK/NR		2

### **c) Program Participation**

Table C.3 presents a profile of CES and STB clients' interventions based on program administrative data. Among CES participants, six in ten individuals were recorded as receiving one intervention through CES and four in ten had two interventions or more. Region Four clients were more likely to have multiple interventions. The most common type of intervention (received by over two-thirds of participants) was request for service/counselling (higher in regions two and three and lower in Region Four). Almost four in ten received a formal orientation session (37 per cent) (higher in Region Four). Less frequent interventions included: referral (17 per cent); job search (11 per cent) (higher in Region Five); group counselling (eight per cent) (higher in Region Four); and resumé writing (seven per cent) (higher in Region Five). Distribution of clients by region is as follows: Region Four (37 per

cent of job seekers), Region Three (23 per cent), Region Two (one in five), Region Five (15 per cent, and Region One (five per cent).

The vast majority of STB clients received one STB benefit during the period of study (84 per cent). Having multiple STB benefits is more common in Region Three. One-third of clients took training that was less than 12 weeks (higher in Region Five) and just over half (55 per cent) participated in STB-sponsored training that was 12 weeks or more. The distribution of STB clients by region roughly follows the regional breakdown for CES participants, though the proportion participating in STB in Region Three is somewhat higher compared to the CES distribution and Region Four correspondingly lower.

The Student Loan database was analyzed for STB clients to assess, in particular, the extent of restrictions due to default and the rejection rate for other reasons. Among the individuals in receipt of the STB during the period of study, 34 per cent had a Student Loan record. Of those who had a Student Loan, about one in five (18 per cent) had ever been restricted from a Student Loan due to default and six per cent were restricted due to default during the period of study (representing two per cent of STB clients overall). One-half of STB clients with a Student Loan record had applied and been rejected for a Student Loan.

**TABLE C.3**  
**Program Participation Profile of Job Seekers**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=800) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Number of Interventions*</b>		
One	59	84
Two+	41	15
<b>Length of training</b>		
<12 weeks	n/a	33
12 weeks or more	n/a	55
Other (e.g., Bridging)	n/a	12



<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>CES Participants (n=800) (%)</b>	<b>STB (n=453) (%)</b>
<b>Type of Intervention</b>		
Request for service/counselling	67	n/a
Orientation	37	n/a
Referral	17	n/a
Job search	11	n/a
Group counselling	8	n/a
Resumé writing	7	n/a
<b>Region of last intervention</b>		
1	5	7
2	20	24
3	23	32
4	37	23
5	15	15

Source: CES and STB Administrative Data (n=800 CES participants and 453 STB participants)

\*For CES participants, an intervention is defined as participation in one or more of the six activities listed in OCSM during the period under study (e.g., request for service/counselling, orientation, referral, job search, group counselling, and resumé writing). For STB clients, intervention refers to the number of STB benefits received during the period under study.



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Profile of Training Funded by STB**



## Profile of Training Funded by STB

Participant survey respondents were asked a series of questions related to the training that they took that was funded by the STB. A summary of the findings is presented below. The average length of training sponsored by the STB was 36 weeks or about nine months. Three in ten clients received training that was less than 12 weeks. Just under half of STB clients (46 per cent) said that their training included an on-the-job component. In terms of the source of training, the majority of clients took training through the Regional College (32 per cent) or SIAST (27 per cent). One in four STB clients received training through a private vocational school (higher among men at 25 per cent compared to 13 per cent for female clients). The remainder (14 per cent) took training through another type of school or organization (e.g., community-based organization).

There was great variety in the type of training received by clients. One in four received computer-related training. The next most frequently mentioned types of training included social/health education (16 per cent), truck driving (14 per cent), construction and related (e.g., trades) (eight per cent) and office-related (eight per cent). Truck driving training is more common for male STB clients (23 per cent), whereas training in the social/health/education disciplines is more likely among female clients (27 per cent).

**TABLE D.1**  
**Profile of STB-funded Training Program**

Characteristic	STB (%)
<b>Length of training</b>	
<12 weeks	31
12-24 weeks	22
25-52	22
52+ weeks	23
Mean	35.5 weeks
<b>Included on-the-job component</b>	
Yes	46
No	53

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>STB (%)</b>
<b>Where took training</b>	
Regional College	32
SIAST	27
Private vocational school/trainer	25
Community-based organization	4
Other	10
<b>Type of training (top 5)</b>	
Computer-related	19
Social/health/education	16
Truck driving	14
Construction and related	8
Office	8

(n=453)

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Profile of Employers**





## PROFILE OF EMPLOYERS

Tables E.1(a) and E.1(b) provide an overview of the characteristics of organizations that have posted vacancies on SaskJobs. Organizations using SaskJobs are generally small firms, with 16 employees on average. Just over one-third have fewer than five employees. The vast majority of organizations are private sector businesses (70 per cent), though one in five are non-profit or community-based organizations. While three in ten organizations say they have more staff than two years ago, over 70 per cent say they plan to hire workers over the next year (suggesting that hiring is due both to growth and to replacement of staff). In addition to CES, organizations' usual methods of recruitment include newspaper advertisements and word of mouth.

The percentage distribution of organizations by industry indicates that a broad variety of sectors are represented. Sectors making greatest use of CES are the service industries (e.g., retail trade, accommodation/food services and other services), as well as manufacturing and transportation.

**TABLE E.1(a)**  
**Percentage Distribution of Organizations by Employment Size and Type of Organization, and Other Organization Characteristics\***

Characteristic of Organization	Total (%)
<b>Number of employees</b>	
Less than 5	35
5 to 19	48
20-99	13
100+	3
Mean (no. of employees)	15.5
<b>Type of Organization</b>	
Government	3
Municipality	4
Non-profit/community-based	19
Private sector	70
DK/NR	4
<b>Percentage intending to hire workers over next year</b>	71
<b>Percentage whose employed staff is greater than two years ago</b>	31

<b>Usual methods of recruitment</b>	
Newspaper	57
Word of mouth	39
CES	39
Internet	4
Private employment agency	3
Other	5

(n=150)

**TABLE E.1(b)**  
**Percentage Distribution of Organizations by Industry**

<b>Key Industries</b>	<b>Total</b>
Retail trade	19
Accommodation/food services	12
Other services (except public administration)	11
Manufacturing	9
Transportation and warehousing	9
Healthcare and social assistance	7
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	6
Construction	6
Mining/oil	5
Arts, entertainment	3
Professional, scientific and technical services	3
Utilities	3
Wholesale trade	3

(n=150)