

Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement For Persons with Disabilities 2006/2007 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

The Alberta government is committed to ensuring all Albertans have the skills, knowledge and supports they need to successfully participate in the community. In fulfilling this commitment, there is a long-standing recognition that some Albertans, including persons with disabilities, require personal, learning and employment supports to reach their full potential.

Alberta's labour force development strategy, *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce*, identifies increasing persons with disabilities' contribution to the labour force as an important aspect of addressing labour shortages in the province. Approaches to meeting this objective include increasing access to training and education, increasing employers' awareness of the pool of skilled labour represented by persons with disabilities, and improving programs and networks that support their integration into the workplace.

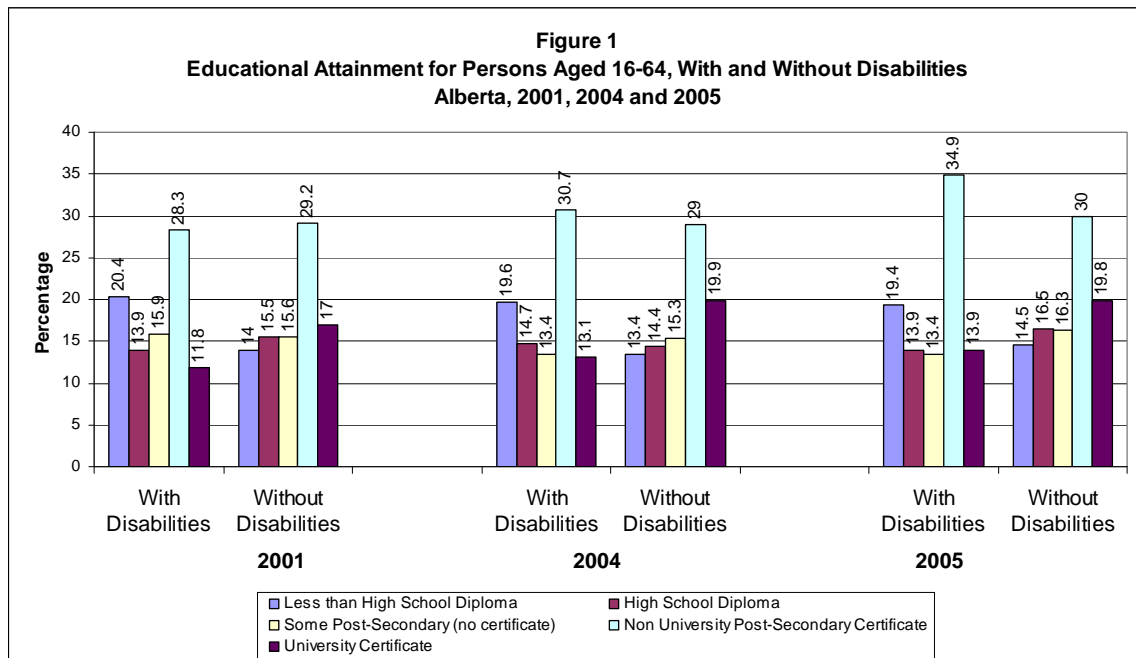
ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES

The *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)* (Statistics Canada) indicates that in 2005 there were about 371,000 working age (16-64 years) Albertans with disabilities. The SLID data also show there are important differences in the educational attainment, employment rate, and incomes of adult Albertans with and without disabilities.¹ In this report, data are provided for 2001 (baseline year) as well as 2004 and 2005, the two most recent years for which SLID data are available.

Educational attainment is important to all Albertans' overall success and well being. While Albertans with disabilities have somewhat lower levels of education than those without disabilities, they are making gains. In 2005, about 19.4 per cent of working age Albertans (16-64 years) with disabilities had not completed high school, compared to roughly 14.5 per cent of those without disabilities (Figure 1). However, persons with disabilities were only slightly less likely than those without to have completed a post-

¹ Statistics in this report are drawn from the SLID which defines "persons with disabilities" as those who report any difficulty doing any of the activities of daily living, and those who report a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of activity they can do in any of several different types of situations, including home, work, school, leisure activities or transportation.

secondary certificate, including university (48.8 per cent versus 49.8 per cent in 2005). The proportion of Albertans with disabilities who obtain a post-secondary certificate has grown faster than that of Albertans without disabilities. Between 2001 and 2005, the proportion of Albertans with disabilities who completed a post-secondary or university certificate increased by 8.7 percentage points; compared to 3.6 percentage points for those without disabilities.²

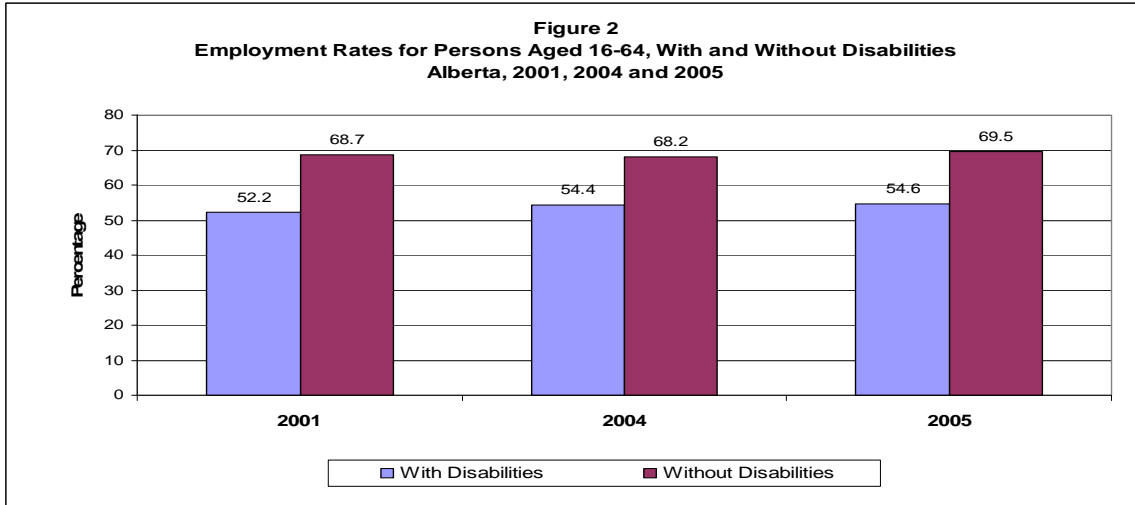


Despite the improvements in educational attainment for Albertans with disabilities, there are significant differences in their employment rates³ when compared with persons without disabilities. In 2005, the employment rate for Albertans with disabilities (54.6 per cent) was significantly lower than that for Albertans without disabilities (69.5 per cent), as demonstrated in Figure 2.⁴ Nevertheless, between 2001 and 2005 the employment rate for persons with disabilities increased 2.4 per cent, from 52.2 per cent to 54.6 per cent, while the rate for those without disabilities increased 0.8 per cent, from 68.7 per cent to 69.5 per cent.

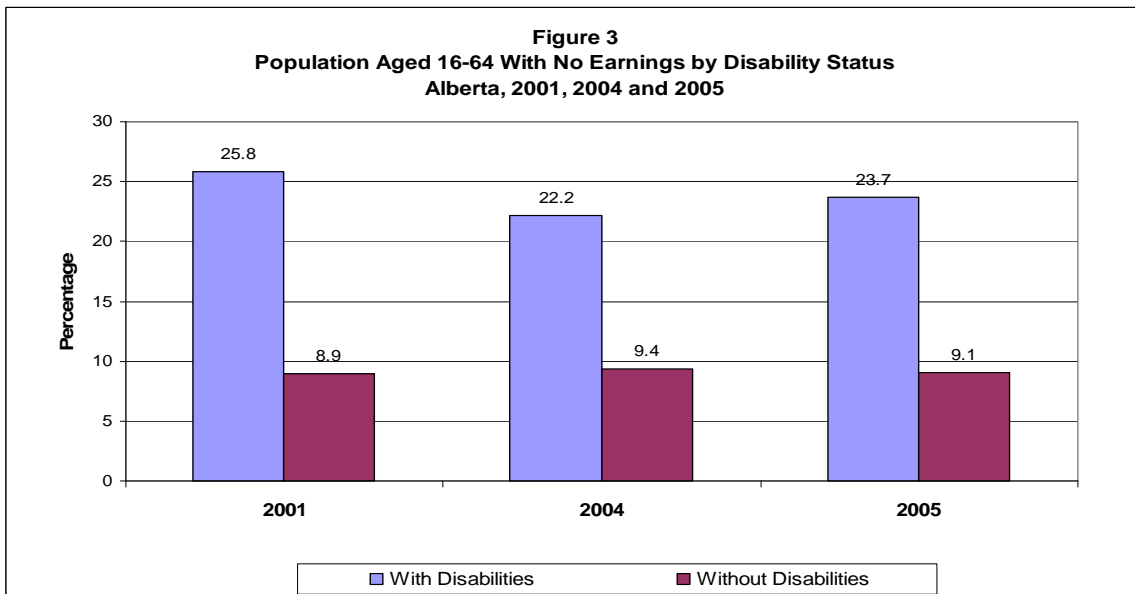
² Educational attainment data does not sum to 100% as non-responses are not reported.

³ Employment rate is the number of persons employed, expressed as a percentage of the total population 16 years of age and over.

⁴ Individuals are considered “employed” only if they are employed for the entire year. As people who are employed part of the year are excluded from this data, employment rates are somewhat underestimated.



Similarly, Albertans with disabilities are more likely to report having no earned income (wage/salary or self-employment) than those without disabilities (Figure 3). Albertans with disabilities are therefore more likely to have government transfers (e.g. financial benefits) as their only source of income. While the proportion of Albertans with disabilities reliant on government transfers fell from 25.8 per cent in 2001 to 22.2 per cent in 2004, it rose slightly in 2005 to 23.7 per cent. Between 2004 and 2005 there was a slight decline in the proportion of Albertans without disabilities who relied on government transfers for their income, from 9.4 per cent to 9.1 per cent.



MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK

In December 2003, as part of ongoing efforts to help its citizens fully participate in society, the Government of Alberta signed the *Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities*.

Alberta's goal of helping Albertans with disabilities succeed in the workplace is supported by the Multilateral Framework's objectives of:

- enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities,
- increasing the employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities and,
- building on the existing knowledge base.

In March 2004, Alberta signed the *Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities* (LMAPD). Under this agreement Alberta cost-shares up to \$25.1 million of its annual spending on labour market programs for persons with disabilities, with the federal government. The information below describes the programs and expenditures Alberta cost-shared in 2006/2007.

ALBERTA PROGRAMS

The Alberta Government invests over \$2 billion annually in a variety of programs across several provincial ministries to help Albertans with disabilities improve their lives and participate more fully in their communities. While Alberta delivers a wide range of programs and services to persons with disabilities, only specific labour market programs offered by the ministries of Employment, Immigration and Industry (EII), Seniors and Community Supports (SCS) and Health and Wellness (HW) are cost-shared under the LMAPD.

Beginning in 2005/2006, the three partnering ministries (EII, SCS, and HW) undertook a joint initiative to develop new and innovative approaches to meet the employment needs of Albertans with disabilities. The *Training and Development Demonstration Project for Persons with Disabilities* uses an integrated learning and employment supports model to enhance employment for persons with disabilities. Goals of the project include increasing employers' willingness to hire persons with disabilities by increasing awareness of the potential pool of skilled labour among persons with disabilities, and increasing awareness of the resources available to support them in the workplace. There are currently nine demonstration projects operating throughout the province. Evaluation of this project will inform ongoing efforts to develop innovative and effective approaches to advancing the labour market participation of persons with disabilities. Similar funding has been put in place for 2008-2011.

Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry (EII)

Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry provides a range of services designed to help individuals, including those with disabilities, overcome barriers to preparing for, gaining, or maintaining employment. These programs and services include:

- Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES)

DRES provides ongoing employment supports to help persons with disabilities complete EII programs, enter the workforce, maintain employment, and complete their education through post-secondary institutions, basic training or academic upgrading. DRES consists of three components: workplace supports, job search supports, and educational supports. Individuals may receive help in the form of sign language interpreters, worksite modifications such as a wheel chair ramps, tutors, student assistants, note takers, talking dictionaries and Brailers. In 2006/2007, 1,468 Albertans with disabilities received ongoing employment supports under DRES.⁵ Evaluation results indicate clients are more likely to be employed after receiving DRES supports (50 per cent), than prior to receiving these supports (39 per cent).⁶

- Work Foundations

Work Foundations programs are open to all Albertans including persons with disabilities. These programs provide full- and part-time basic skills training to enable Albertans to pursue further job-related training and/or find a job and substantially improve their employment situation. About 1,567 Albertans with disabilities participated in Work Foundations programs in 2006/2007. Client follow-up survey results indicated 44.5 per cent of participants with disabilities completed their training. The same data source indicated that, three months post-intervention, 20.6 per cent of all persons with disabilities who participated in a program were employed or self-employed, and 32.5 per cent were in training or attending school.⁷

- Training for Work

Training for Work provides full- and part-time occupationally-focused training opportunities to enable Albertans, including those with disabilities, to get a job and substantially improve their employment situation, or adapt to changing labour conditions and skill requirements to sustain employment. Approximately 1,249 Albertans with disabilities participated in Training for Work programs in 2006/2007. Client follow-up survey results indicated 74.4 per cent of participants with disabilities completed their training. The same data source indicated that three months post-intervention, 53.9 per cent of clients with disabilities who participated in a program

⁵ Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no “completions” to report.

⁶ Alberta Human Resources and Employment, “*Evaluation of Three Programs Cost-Shared by Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities*,” 2004.

⁷ Data is drawn from the Work Outcomes Reporting Project (WORP), a follow-up survey of a representative sample of EII clients who left programs between April 1 & December 31 2006.

were employed or self-employed, and 6.2 per cent were in training or attending school.⁷

Alberta Health and Wellness

Alberta Health and Wellness funds Regional Health Authorities that provide supports for employment through vocational rehabilitation programs. These programs provide an integrated vocational and clinical approach to the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to people with severe and persistent mental illness.

Vocational rehabilitation approaches include vocational counseling, skill training, volunteer work experiences, unpaid pre-vocational work units, sheltered workshops, paid work crews, workplace interventions, day programs, transitional employment, supportive employment and comprehensive approaches (e.g., clubhouses, assertive community treatment).⁸

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports

Through the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Program, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports allocates funds to six community boards to ensure a range of supports, including employment supports, are available to approximately 9,100 adult Albertans with developmental disabilities. The community boards contract with community-based service providers to provide employment supports throughout the province.

The PDD Employment Supports Program consists of two components: Employment Preparation and Employment Placement supports. Employment Preparation supports are designed to assist individuals in developing skills for employment and exploring the world of work. Employment Placement supports help individuals to maintain employment and/or self-employment. PDD defines employment as activities that meet the following criteria:

- the individual receives remuneration for work performed;
- an employer/employee relationship exists; and
- Alberta Employment Standards Code applies.

In 2006/2007, 2,923 Albertans with developmental disabilities participated in PDD Employment Support Programs. Of these, 1,872 (64 per cent) obtained or maintained employment.⁹

⁸ As a variety of programs are funded across the Regional Health Authorities, consistent and accurate data on the number of participants is not available.

⁹ Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no “completions” to report.

ALBERTA 2006/2007 EXPENDITURES

Ministry	Program	Expenditures
Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry¹⁰	Disability Related Employment Supports ¹¹	\$12,733,169
	Work Foundations	\$10,698,009
	Training for Work	\$5,555,516
	EII Total	\$28,997,694
Alberta Health and Wellness¹⁰	Vocational Rehabilitation Programs	\$2,264,717
Alberta Seniors and Community Supports	PDD - Employment Preparation and Placement Supports	\$22,361,154
Total Provincial Expenditures		\$53,623,565
50% of Provincial Expenditure		\$26,811,782
Maximum Federal Contribution		\$25,190,332

¹⁰ EII and HW financial data for 2006/2007 was unaudited at the time of this report.

¹¹ Includes *Training and Development Demonstration Project for Persons with Disabilities*.