

# **Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement For Persons with Disabilities 2009/2010 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 labour force development 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 integration into the workplace.

## **ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES**

The *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)* (Statistics Canada) indicates that in 2007 there were about 363,000 Albertans with disabilities aged 16 to 64 years. The SLID data also show there are important differences in the educational attainment, employment rate and incomes of adult Albertans with and without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> In this report, data are provided for 2001 (baseline year) as well as 2006 and 2007, the two most recent years for which SLID data are available.<sup>2</sup>

Educational attainment is important to the overall success and well being of all Albertans. While Albertans with disabilities have somewhat lower levels of education than those without disabilities, gains are being made (Figure 1). Between 2001 and 2007, the proportion of Alberta's labour force who have not completed high school decreased steadily for both persons with disabilities and for those without disabilities. However, in

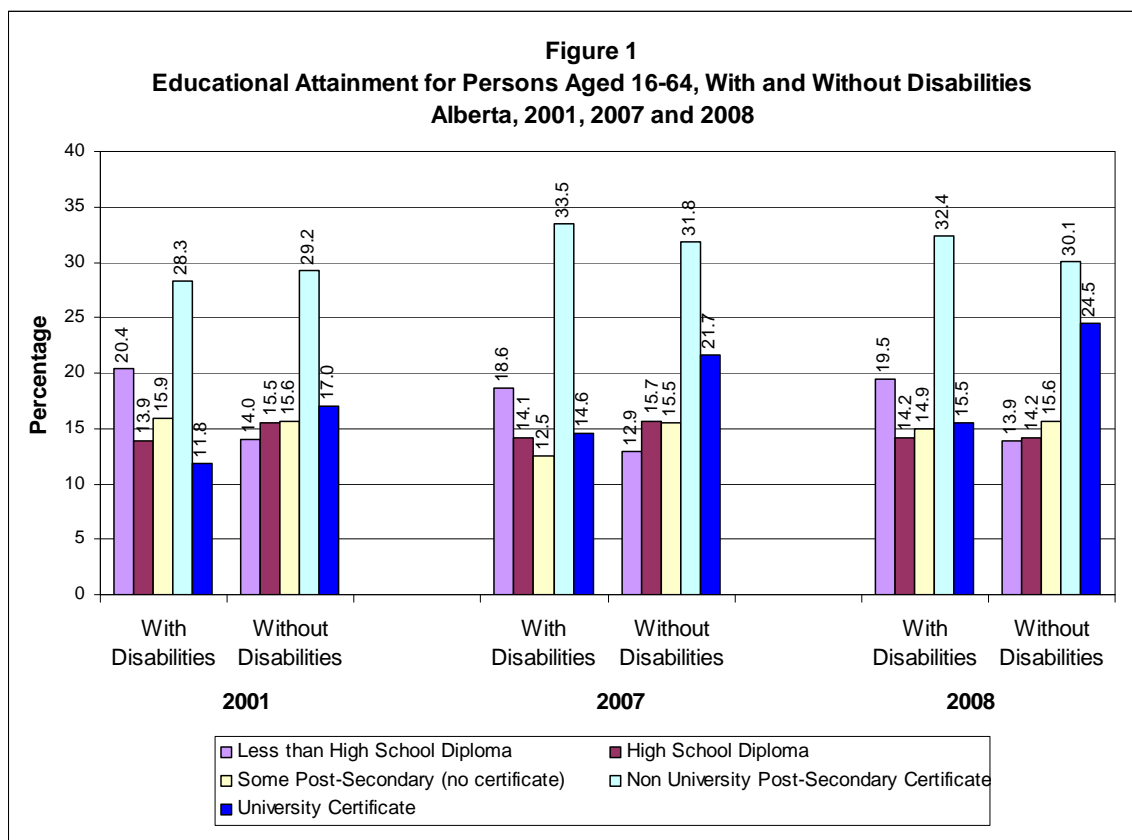
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<sup>1</sup> Statistics in this report are drawn from the SLID which defines "persons with disabilities" as those who report any difficulty doing any of the activities of daily living, and those who report a physical or mental condition or health problem 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.

<sup>2</sup> Data for this report is drawn from the SLID as it is the only data source regarding persons with disabilities in the labour market that is available annually. The SLID data for the outcomes reported here varies from that of related data sources such as the *Labour Force Survey* and the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS)* due to variations in methodology and sampling.

2008, persons with disabilities who have not completed high school increased slightly to 19.5 per cent from 18.6 per cent in 2007. Persons without disabilities experienced a similar trend, with an increase of 1.0 percentage point in the proportion who did not complete high school, at 13.9 per cent in 2008, compared to 12.9 per cent in 2007.

Persons with disabilities with university certificates continued to increase. They comprised 15.5 per cent in 2008, an increase of 3.7 percentage points since 2001. Persons without disabilities with university certificates also experienced a similar trend but with more substantive gains. They comprised 24.5 per cent in 2008, an increase of 7.5 percentage points since 2001.



Source: Statistics Canada, *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)*

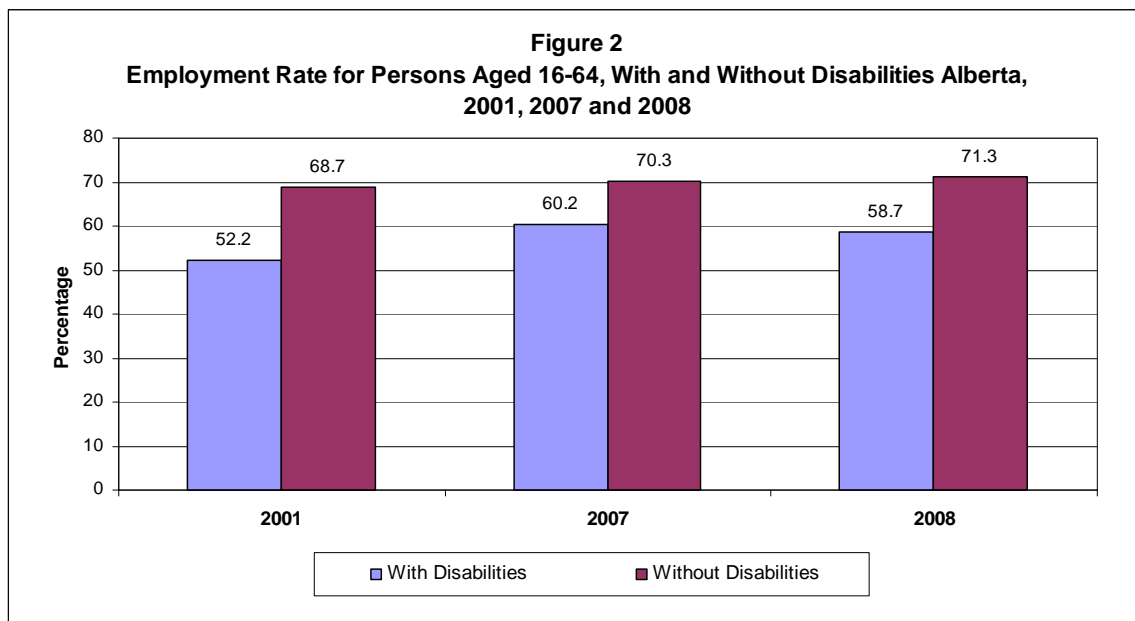
Despite these general improvements in educational attainment for Albertans with disabilities, the employment rate<sup>3</sup> has remained lower than that of persons without disabilities (Figure 2). In 2008, the employment rate for Albertans with disabilities was 58.7 per cent and 71.3 per cent for Albertans without disabilities.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that

<sup>3</sup> Employment rate from SLID is the number of persons employed, expressed as a percentage of the total population 16 years of age and older.

<sup>4</sup> Individuals are considered “employed” only if they are employed for the entire year. Because those employed for part of the year are excluded from this data, employment rates are somewhat underestimated.

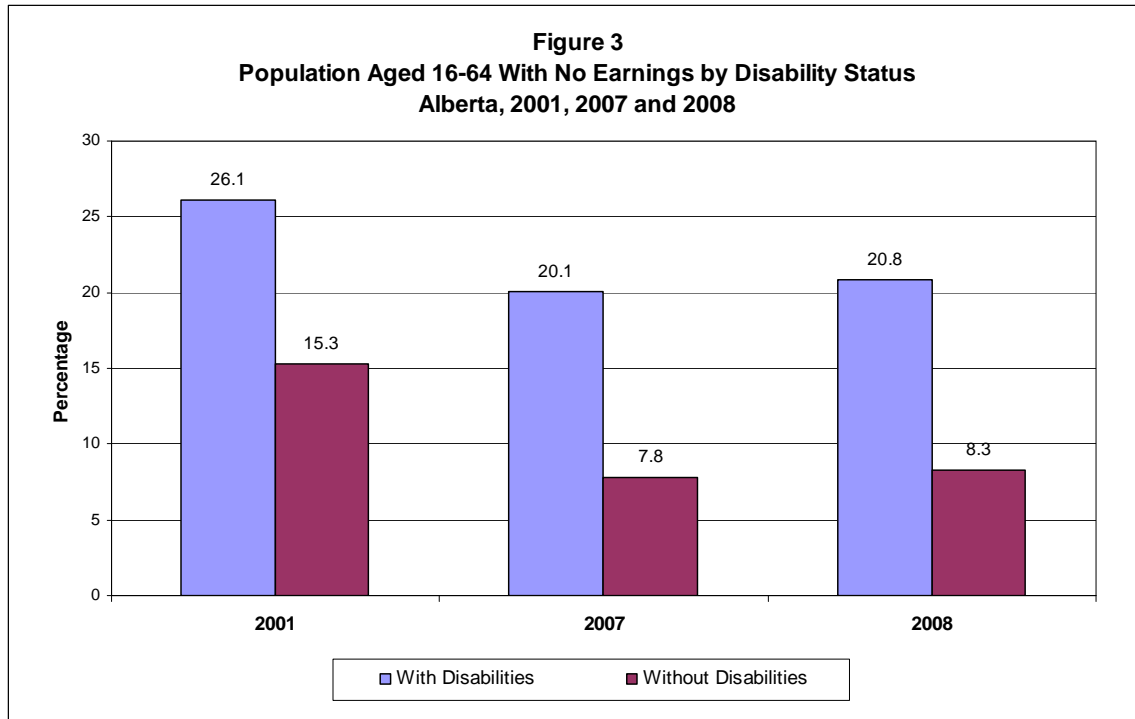
the employment rate for persons with disabilities dipped between 2007 and 2008 by 1.5 percentage points, while persons without disabilities increased by 1.0 percentage point in the same period.

Nevertheless, the employment rate for Albertans with disabilities increased by 6.5 percentage points between 2001 and 2008 (from 52.2 per cent to 58.7 per cent), significantly higher than the 2.6 percentage point gain for Albertans without disabilities. This trend is consistent with data from the *Labour Force Survey* reporting continuing improvement in employment rates for all Albertans aged 15 and older, including those with disabilities, from 69.0 per cent in 2001, to 71.5 per cent in 2007 and 72.0 per cent in 2008.



Source: Statistics Canada, *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)*

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 receive government transfers (e.g. financial benefits) as their only source of income. The proportion of Albertans with disabilities who had no earned income fell from 26.1 per cent in 2001 to 20.1 per cent in 2007. In 2008, it increased slightly by 0.7 percentage points to 20.8. Similarly, the proportion of Albertans without disabilities who had no earned income declined from 15.3 per cent in 2001 to 7.8 per cent in 2007. However, it also increased to 8.3 per cent in 2008, by 0.5 percentage points.



Source: Statistics Canada, *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)*

## **MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK**

In December 2003 the Government of Alberta signed the federal/provincial/territorial *Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities*.

Alberta's goal of helping Albertans with disabilities succeed in the workplace is reflected in 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 with the federal government up to \$25.2 million of its annual spending on labour market programs for persons with disabilities. The information below describes the programs and expenditures Alberta cost-shared in 2009/2010.

## **ALBERTA PROGRAMS**

The Alberta government invests more than \$2 billion annually in a variety of programs 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 and Immigration, Health and Wellness, and Seniors and Community Supports are cost-shared under the LMAPD.

### Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I)

Alberta Employment and Immigration 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 individualized employment and training supports to persons with disabilities to assist them to successfully complete E&I programs and services, to attend post-secondary institutions and E&I approved training programs, and to enter the workforce and maintain employment. Funds for costs associated with assistive technologies such as specialized computer software, assistive services such as tutors and job coaches, and worksite modifications such as wheelchair ramps, can be accessed via DRES. In 2009/2010, 1,715 Albertans with disabilities received ongoing supports from DRES.<sup>5</sup>

- 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.

- Training for Work

Training for Work provides full and part-time occupational 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.

In 2009/2010, there were 6,330 participants with disabilities enrolled in Work Foundations and Training for Work.<sup>6</sup> Client follow-up survey results indicate 72.2 per cent of participants with disabilities completed their training. The same data source indicates that, three months post-intervention, 39.8 per cent of all persons with disabilities who participated in a program were employed or self-employed, and 20.1 per cent were in training or attending school.<sup>7</sup>

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

<sup>6</sup> Due to technical problems, data for the number of clients for Work Foundations and Training for Work cannot be retrieved separately.

<sup>7</sup> Data are obtained from the Work Outcomes Reporting Project (WORP), a follow-up survey of E&I clients who left programs between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010.

## Alberta Health and Wellness (HW)

Alberta Health and Wellness funds Alberta Health Services which 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 counselling, 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).<sup>8</sup>

## Alberta Seniors and Community Supports (SCS)

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 available to about 9,300 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 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
- the Alberta *Employment Standards Code* applies.

In 2009/2010, 2,747 Albertans with developmental disabilities participated in PDD Employment Support Programs. Of these, 1,771 (64 per cent) obtained or maintained employment.<sup>9</sup>

## Employment Innovation Project for Persons with Disabilities

Beginning in 2008/2009, E&I, HW and SCS undertook a second, three-year joint initiative to support new and innovative approaches to meet the employment needs of Albertans with disabilities. The Employment Innovation Project is an extension of the Training and Development Demonstration Project for Persons with Disabilities. It is a multi-site initiative using an integrated learning and employment supports model to

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<sup>8</sup> As a variety of programs are funded across Alberta Health Services, consistent and accurate data on the number of participants is not available.

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

enhance employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> Seven projects located throughout the province are exploring a range of novel approaches including resources and supports for employers and enhanced employment supports for persons with disabilities, including youth and mental health clients.

**ALBERTA 2009/2010 EXPENDITURES<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>
<b>Employment and Immigration</b>	Disability Related Employment Supports <sup>12</sup>	\$16,229,139
	Work Foundations	\$11,096,234
	Training for Work	\$10,612,855
	<b>E&amp;I Total</b>	<b>\$37,938,228</b>
<b>Health and Wellness</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation Programs	<b>\$2,907,081</b>
<b>Seniors and Community Supports</b>	PDD - Employment Preparation and Placement Supports	<b>\$23,516,701</b>
<b>Total Provincial Expenditures</b>		<b>\$64,362,010</b>
<b>50% of Provincial Expenditure</b>		<b>\$32,181,005</b>
<b>Maximum Federal Contribution</b>		<b>\$25,190,332</b>

<sup>10</sup> A similar initiative was in place for 2005-2008.

<sup>11</sup> LMAPD financial data for 2009/2010 was unaudited at the time of this report.

<sup>12</sup> Includes *Employment Innovation Project*.