

# Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement For Persons with Disabilities 2005 – 2006 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 2004 there were about 413,000 working age (16-64 years) Albertans with disabilities. The SLID data also shows 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 is provided for 2001 (baseline year) as well as 2003 and 2004, the two most recent years for which SLID data is available.<sup>2</sup>

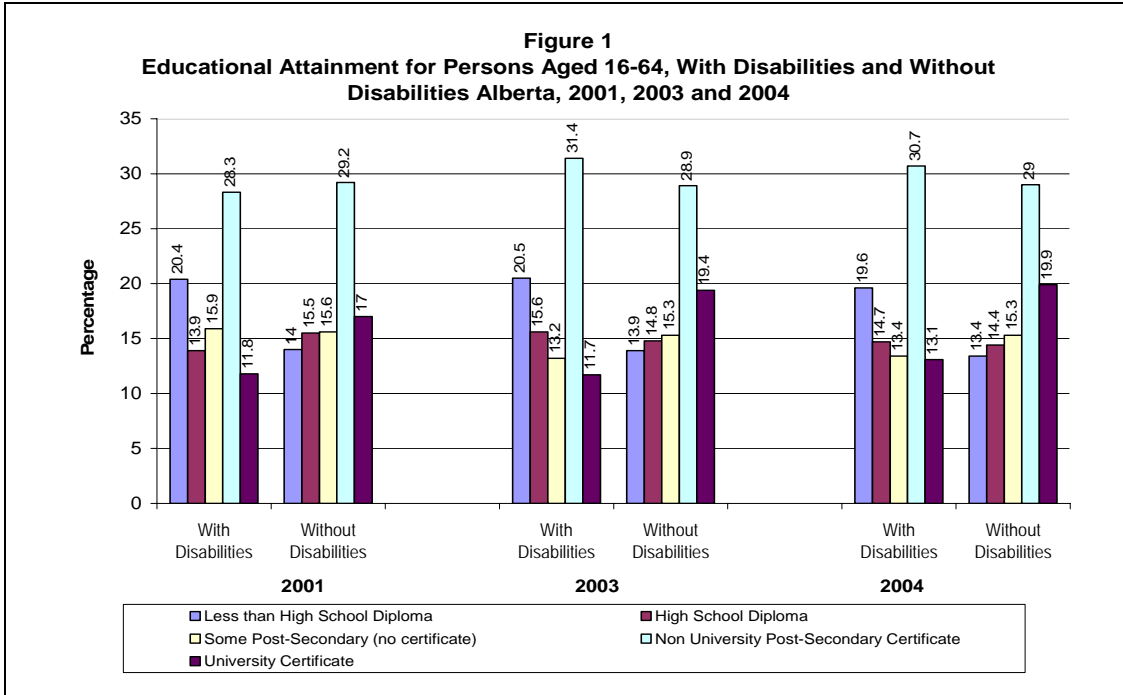
Educational attainment is important to all Albertans' overall success and well being. While Albertans with disabilities generally have lower levels of education than those without disabilities, they are making some gains. About 20 percent of working age Albertans (16-64 years) with disabilities have not completed high school, compared to roughly 14 percent of those without disabilities (Figure 1). And persons with disabilities are less likely than those without to have completed a post-secondary certificate (43.8 percent vs. 48.9 percent in 2004). However, the proportion of Albertans with disabilities who obtain post-secondary certificates is growing faster than that of Albertans without disabilities. Between 2001 and 2004, the proportion of Albertans with disabilities who completed a post-secondary certificate increased by 3.7 percent; compared to 2.7 percent for those without disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

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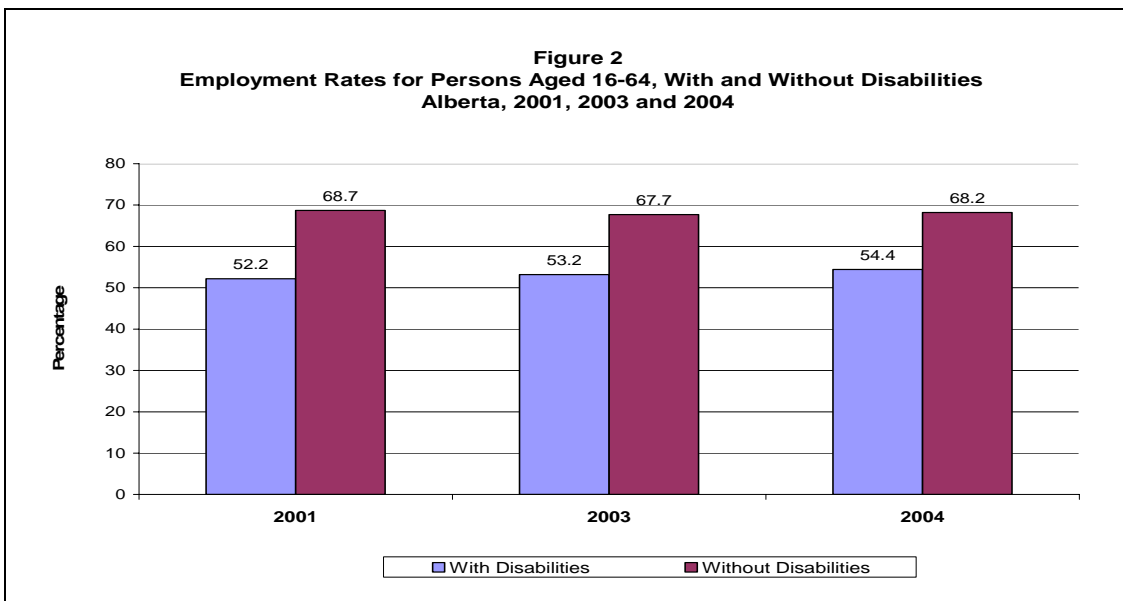
<sup>1</sup> Statistics in this report are drawn from the SLID which defines "persons with disabilities" as those who report any difficulty doing any of the activities of daily living, and those who report a physical or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of activity they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

<sup>2</sup> Data for 2001 and 2003 may vary from that reported previously due to adjustments made by Statistics Canada.

<sup>3</sup> Educational attainment data does not sum to 100% as non-responses are not reported.

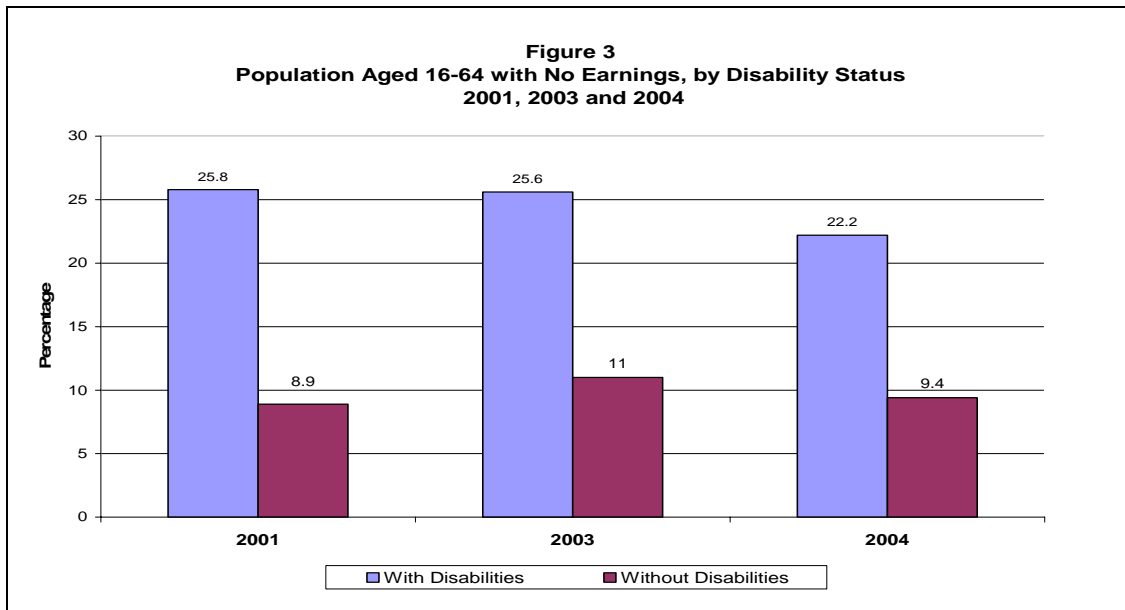


While the overall patterns of educational attainment are similar for Albertans with and without disabilities, there are significant differences in their employment rates (the number of persons employed, expressed as a percentage of the total population 16 years of age and over). The employment rate for Albertans with disabilities is significantly lower than that for Albertans without disabilities, as demonstrated in Figure 2.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, between 2001 and 2004 the employment rates for persons with disabilities increased steadily from 52.2 percent to 54.4 percent.



<sup>4</sup> 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 and self-employment) than those without disabilities. Albertans with disabilities are therefore more likely to have government transfers (e.g., financial benefits) as their only source of income. However, the proportion of Albertans with disabilities with no earned income fell steadily from 25.8% in 2001 to 22.2% in 2004 (Figure 3).<sup>5</sup>



## **MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK**

As part of the Government of Alberta’s ongoing efforts to help its citizens fully participate in society, the Minister of Alberta Human Resources and Employment approved the *Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities* with other Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services in December 2003.

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 existing knowledge base.

To support the Multilateral Framework, Canada and Alberta signed the (bilateral) *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

<sup>5</sup> Due to small sample sizes, SLID data on average earnings for Alberta is not considered reliable and therefore not included in this report.

for persons with disabilities with the federal government. This report describes the programs and expenditures Alberta cost-shares.

## **ALBERTA PROGRAMS**

To help Albertans with disabilities improve their lives and more fully participate in Alberta society, 12 provincial ministries administer 28 disability-related programs at a cost of about \$2 billion dollars annually. While Alberta delivers a wide range of programs and services to persons with disabilities, only specific labour market programs offered by the ministries of Alberta Human Resources and Employment (HRE), Alberta Seniors and Community Supports (SCS) and Alberta Health and Wellness (HW) are cost-shared under the LMAPD.

Beginning in 2005/06, the three partnering departments (HRE, 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.

### Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Alberta Human Resources and Employment 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 to complete HRE 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 2005/06, 1,188 Albertans with disabilities received ongoing employment supports under DRES.<sup>6</sup> Recent evaluation results indicate clients are more likely to be employed after receiving DRES supports (50 percent), than prior to receiving these supports (39 percent).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no "completions" to report.

<sup>7</sup> AHRE, "Evaluation of Three Programs Cost-Shared by Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities," 2004.

- Work Foundations

Work Foundations programs are open to all Albertans including disabled persons. These programs provide full-time 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 1,648 Albertans with disabilities participated in Work Foundations programs in 2005/06. Client follow-up survey results indicated 50 percent of participants with disabilities completed their training. The same data source indicated that, three months post-intervention, 24 percent of all persons with disabilities who participated in a program were employed or self-employed, and 28 percent were in training or attending school.<sup>8</sup>

- Training for Work

Training for Work provides full-time and part-time occupationally-focused training opportunities to enable Albertans, including disabled persons, to get a job and substantially improve their employment situation, or adapt to changing labour conditions and skill requirements to sustain employment. Approximately 1,298 Albertans with disabilities participated in Training for Work programs in 2005/06. Client follow-up survey results indicated 70 percent of participants with disabilities completed their training. The same data source indicated that three months post-intervention, 51 percent of clients with disabilities who participated in a program were employed or self-employed, and 9 percent were in training or attending school.<sup>9</sup>

### 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).<sup>9</sup>

### 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

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<sup>8</sup> Data is drawn from the Work Outcomes Reporting Project (WORP), a follow-up survey of a representative sample of HRE clients who left programs between April 1 & December 31 2005.

<sup>9</sup> As a variety of programs are funded across nine Regional Health Authorities, consistent and accurate data on the number of participants is not available.

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. In 2005/06, 3,068 Albertans with developmental disabilities participated in PDD Employment Support Programs. Of these, 1,858 (61 percent) obtained or maintained employment.<sup>10</sup>

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.

#### **ALBERTA 2005-2006 EXPENDITURES**

<b>Ministry/Service Provider</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditures</b>
<b>Alberta Human Resources and Employment<sup>11</sup></b>	Disability Related Employment Supports <sup>12</sup>	\$10,800,457
	Work Foundations	\$11,875,150
	Training for Work	\$4,984,094
	<b>HRE Total</b>	<b>\$27,659,701</b>
<b>Alberta Health and Wellness<sup>12</sup></b>	Vocational Rehabilitation Programs	\$2,203,599
<b>Alberta Seniors and Community Supports</b>	PDD - Employment Preparation and Placement Supports	\$24,048,000
<b>Total Provincial Expenditures</b>		<b>\$53,911,300</b>
<b>50% of Provincial Expenditure</b>		<b>\$26,955,650</b>
<b>Maximum Federal Contribution</b>		<b>\$25,190,332</b>

<sup>10</sup> Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no “completions” to report.

<sup>11</sup> HRE and HW financial data for 2005/06 was unaudited at the time of this report.

<sup>12</sup> Includes *Training and Development Demonstration Project for Persons with Disabilities*.