

**Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development**

**Employment Services Transformation:**

**Prototype Phase Evaluation**

**General Questions and Answers**

**Table of Contents**

What was the purpose of the evaluation? .....	1
Who was engaged in the evaluation? .....	2
What were the main takeaways from the evaluation? .....	2
Were underrepresented groups supported during the prototype phase? .....	3
How does the IES model improve program delivery? .....	3
How did COVID-19 impact the results of the evaluation? .....	4
How does the government intend to use the findings from the evaluation? .....	4
How will the evaluation affect the rollout of EST? .....	4
How will the MLITSD and MCCSS continue to monitor and evaluate the program going forward? .....	5
Will the evaluation report be shared? .....	5

**What was the purpose of the evaluation?**

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), in close collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), conducted a third-party led evaluation of the prototype phase of Integrated Employment Services (IES) model for the period covering January 2021 to May 2022.

The evaluation focused on the prototype catchment areas of Hamilton-Niagara, Peel and Muskoka-Kawarthas, to assess:

- the implementation of the integrated model in the prototype phase;
- the delivery of services within the integrated model; and

- the extent to which the integrated system is attaining its intended outcomes.

### **Who was engaged in the evaluation?**

Almost 3,000 individuals were engaged in the evaluation including 180 stakeholders (e.g., MLITSD and MCCSS staff, Service System Managers (SSMs), service providers, community informants) as well as 193 employers and 2,382 Ontarians.

### **What were the main takeaways from the evaluation?**

Overall, the evaluation serves as one of many lines of evidence on the Employment Service Transformation (EST) and is part of the ministry's continuous improvement process particularly in relation to service offerings and coordination. The IES evaluation findings suggested that most jobseekers surveyed who completed their pre-employment services (PES) were able to transition into the workforce and that the supports provided to employers were helpful for some to attract and retain relevant talent.

Some key takeaways from the evaluation include:

- IES model was delivered as intended, with SSMs designing and administering programming that was responsive to local needs, including supporting clients currently accessing Social Assistance and those at high risk of long-term unemployment.
- The system stewardship model, under the IES model, is perceived to increase creativity and ownership for SSMs, while allowing the ministry the ability to set targets and expectations and streamline the contracting process.
- Based on survey results, the model helped 87% of those who completed pre-employment services (PES) to secure at least 20+ hours of employment per week over the course of one year post program. Additionally, almost two thirds of clients who completed PES met or exceeded their personal “hourly wage” goal at some point post program, with individuals making between \$18.70 and 19.70 per hour.<sup>1</sup>
- The model also provided valuable supports to many employers, with two thirds of employers surveyed sharing that they had access to sufficient supports to accommodate jobseekers with disabilities and some (19%) sharing the supports helped them retain workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> The minimum wage in Ontario at the time of the evaluation was \$15; it has since increased twice.

## **Were underrepresented groups supported during the prototype phase?**

The evaluation findings indicate that in prototype catchments the IES model was effective in engaging a diversity of Ontarians with 44% of clients served being at high risk of long-term unemployment and 42% of clients served being on social assistance.

It also supported underrepresented groups in the labour force including individuals who self-identified as being racialized (48% of clients), persons with disability (45% of clients), youth with higher support needs (29% of clients), newcomers (18% of clients) and Indigenous people (3% of clients).

## **How does the IES model improve program delivery?**

The IES model combined new programmatic components including an integrated model, a new intake process and a stewardship model with the goal of removing barriers and increasing consistency and accountability.

The IES model integrated social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario in hopes of improving social assistance clients access the employment supports they need, while ensuring responsive programming is provided to all jobseekers. The evaluation found that the pilot showed promising results towards this goal, with two thirds of clients surveyed<sup>2</sup> satisfied with the employment services and supports they received.

The intake process, through the utilization of the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) and Segmentation Model<sup>3</sup>, has helped to increase consistency across case managers with all IES-case managed clients completing the CAT as part of their intake process. The tools also help case managers effectively assess individuals' employment skills and abilities to be able to refer them to appropriate programming.

Finally, the system stewardship model is seen to effectively increase accountability for SSMs to meet their employment outcomes targets with the performance-based funding.

---

<sup>2</sup> A representative sample of individuals who participated in IES prototype were invited by the external evaluator to complete a survey. Efforts were made to ensure that the survey respondents reflect the overall prototype catchments' population level characteristics.

<sup>3</sup> The Segmentation Model utilizes the results from the Common Assessment Tool to place an individual in one of three streams based on their risk for long-term unemployment.

## **How did COVID-19 impact the results of the evaluation?**

The evaluation focused on the model implementation from January 2021 to May 2022, during a time when the province was experiencing COVID-19 and beginning its recovery. The pandemic and subsequent federal government assistance caused a reduction in people engaged in the labour market. As a result, the evaluation findings cannot be generalized and must be considered in the context that the program was being delivered.

## **How does the government intend to use the findings from the evaluation?**

The evaluation is one of several lines of evidence that the ministries are using to ensure evidence-informed decision making and continuous improvement occurs throughout the IES implementation.

The prototype evaluation provided critical insights and lessons learned regarding program design and implementation; however, system changes are also being informed through internal and external consultations with program stakeholders and staff. As a result, below are some of the changes already made to date:

- Clarified and updated business processes to ensure that SSMs have the client support measures they require to deliver efficient and supportive service delivery.
- Developed process and system functionality to improve client pathways.
- Revised the Common Assessment Tool to capture additional information regarding returned referrals to inform caseworker and ministry actions in increasing successful referrals.

The ministries are also actively working with SSMs and other stakeholders to address the following other findings from the evaluation:

- Improve the referral process for Ontario Works participants through Municipal Referral Targets.
- Increase enrollment in IES through new client facing communications.

## **How will the evaluation affect the rollout of EST?**

Throughout the rollout of the EST, data has been collected through ongoing monitoring activities as well as this evaluation. This has allowed lessons learned to be incorporated in real time to enhance implementation for participants and SSMs. This iterative approach to design has been built into the timeline for EST and as a result, the evaluation will not affect the dates of the remaining rollout.

**How will the MLITSD and MCCSS continue to monitor and evaluate the program going forward?**

The government is committed to continuously improving and evolving the IES model. This includes regular monitoring of implementation across all catchment areas to ensure the design and any subsequent modifications are effectively supporting all involved. The government also recognizes the need to continue to evaluate the model, especially as it continues to be rolled out to new sites to ensure the system is efficient, streamlined and achieving the intended outcomes in the new catchments.

**Will the evaluation report be shared?**

With the evaluation focusing on January 2021 to May 2022, the results presented in the report do not reflect the current landscape of the program delivery. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the evaluation findings cannot be generalized and must be considered in the context that the program was being delivered. As a result, the report will not be shared.

However, the learnings from the evaluation have already influenced the continuous improvements of the program.