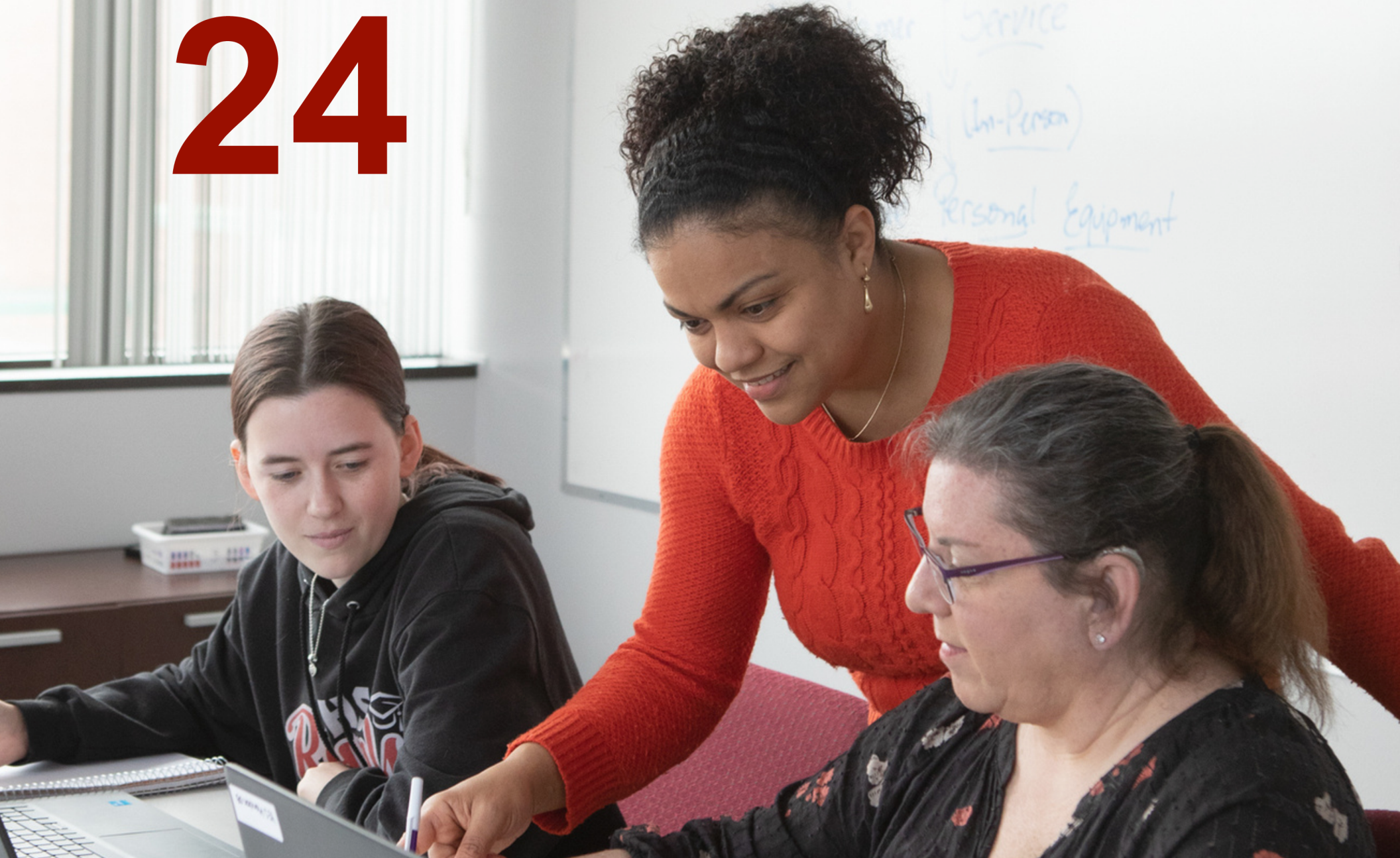


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**CCRW Annual Report**  
Moving The Needle Forward



Canadian Council on Rehabilitation & Work  
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Toronto, ON M4S 1Y5

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## Message from the CEO

This past year has been a testament to our collective resilience and unwavering commitment to creating a more inclusive Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the rate of disability in our country increased by 5% from 2017 to 2022. However, we also witnessed a remarkable rise in the employment rate for persons with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, from 59% to 62% between 2016 and 2021. This progress is a clear reflection of the impactful work we have accomplished together over the years.

While we celebrate this significant advancement, we recognize that there remains a 16% employment rate gap between persons with and without disabilities. This gap is not just a statistic; it is a call to action for all of us to continue striving for equality and opportunity for everyone.

And to do this, we are committed to remain inspired by the strides we have made in advancing the employment of persons with disabilities across Canada. Our efforts have not only moved the needle but have also set a strong foundation for future progress.

For nearly 50 years, CCRW has been at the forefront of this mission. We remain steadfast in our dedication to sharing our knowledge with employers, partners, and government entities. Together, we will continue to innovate, create, and champion the rights of workers with disabilities across Canada.

Let us move forward with renewed energy and a shared vision of a more inclusive and equitable future for all.  
With gratitude and determination,

**Maureen Haan, President and CEO**

# OUR MISSION

To promote and support **meaningful and equitable employment of persons with disabilities**. As innovators and agents of change, we build partnerships, develop skills, share knowledge and influence attitudes.

OUR  
MISSION



## Vision

The pre-eminent Canadian Centre of Excellence on the economic, social and psychological aspects of disability (be it one or more physical, sensory, medical, learning or mental health disability), as they impact people's ability to seek, acquire and retain productive employment.

## Values

We recognize the capability of persons with disabilities and support their choices for equitable and meaningful participation in society.

We believe that we are responsible to those persons we serve, and hold accountability to our stakeholders, members, community at large and our benefactors.

**Above all, we believe that the CCRW exists to create an environment where persons with disabilities may attain equality of opportunity.**

# OUR BOARD MEMBERS

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**Naqsh Kochar, Chair**  
Refresh Inc  
Chief Strategist & CEO



**Jennifer Dinn, Treasurer**  
Keyin College  
Campus Administrator



**Wendy Braithwaite, Secretary**  
Microsoft Canada  
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**André Laperrière, Vice Chair**  
Global Open Data for  
Agriculture and Nutrition  
Executive Director



**Gary Robertson, Director**  
Ubiquity Solar Inc.  
Strategic Advisor



**Ali Hamed, Director**



**Tony Dolan, Director**

## CANADA

# WHERE WE WORKED

The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) boasts a widespread and impactful presence across Canada, with six strategic hub locations in Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, St. John's, Moncton, and Halifax. These hubs serve as vital centers for the organization's mission to empower persons with disabilities by fostering inclusion in the workforce.

Complementing these key hubs, CCRW extends its reach with additional offices in Surrey, Charlottetown, Saint John, Moose Jaw, and Kitchener. This extensive network underscores CCRW's commitment to breaking down barriers, promoting accessibility, and advocating for equal employment opportunities for all Canadians.



# KNOWLEDGE:

## The Driving Force That's Moving the Needle

As an organization, we are focused on continuing our work as thought leaders on disability and work in Canada. We believe ensuring that everything we do is supported by research and the lived experience of Canadians with disabilities, we'll be able to further our mission of promoting and supporting meaningful employment for persons with disabilities across Canada.





# Advancements

As a Community Based Research Entity

In 2023-2024, we expanded our research team, which allowed us to increase our involvement in creating research reports, participating in conferences, and partnering with other organizations and institutions on scholarly work. **We continued two funded research programs:**

# 1

## Accessibility Standards Canada Advancing Accessibility Standards Research (SURF)

This project examines the transition from post-secondary education to employment for students with disabilities.

# 2

## Employment & Social Development Canada Skills for Success Research and Innovation (Research in STEAM)

This project explores socio-emotional skill development and employment outcomes for jobseekers with disabilities.



**By the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, CCRW had secured and was managing over \$2 million in research funding.**

We also secured funding for a new research program through the Government of BC Ministry of Education and Future Skills Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) program. **This program investigates labour market attachment for d/Deaf and hard of hearing workers in BC.**

In 2023, we shared volume two of our Trends Report in partnership with INNoVA. We received excellent feedback from our partners and significant interest in further findings. This report is available on our website, and volume three is planned for the 2023-2024 year.

Additionally, CCRW shared findings from our evaluative research and funded programs through various avenues, including:

- **A conference hosted by Guelph University's Live Work Well Institute**
- **The Accessible Canada Accessible World conference hosted by Concordia University and Ontario College of Art and Design**





Throughout 2023-2024, CCRW continued to build a network of experts and researchers in the field of disability and work. Many of our research partners support our funded programs, particularly the ongoing ASC-funded SURF project. Key contributors include:

- **National Educational Association for Disabled Students (NEADS)**
- **Carleton University's Accessibility Institute**
- **Queen's University's Building and Designing Accessible Technology (BDAT) lab**

CCRW also contributed to multiple ASC-funded projects led by other organizations, including:

- **Realize Canada's INDEED project**
- **McGill University's YEAH project**
- **Anna-Karina Tabuñar's project on episodic disability within the federal public service**

We supported early-career researchers in the disability and work space, partnering with the BDAT lab to secure a MITACS Scotiabank Economic Resilience Research Fund (SERFF) grant. This grant supports and mentors Glenda Watson-Hyatt, a student working on a project about speech disability and employer best practices. Our research team also collaborated with the 2023 student cohort at the Research and Education in Accessibility, Design, and Innovation (READi) training program, providing mentorship and direction.



# KNOWLEDGE

Lastly, in 2023-2024, CCRW began or continued research consultation work for organizations including Egale Canada and Tourism HR Canada, **lending our expertise on research methodology and knowledge mobilization** to Egale Canada's 50-30 project and THRC's Belong Project.

# 2023 DISABILITY & WORK IN CANADA CONFERENCE

One avenue of sharing knowledge that is a special part of our year every year is the Disability and Work in Canada Conference.





The 2023 Conference of the Disability and Work in Canada initiative brought together a large audience, both in person and virtually, offering access to numerous presentations and an impressive lineup of speakers. It was a remarkable event with:

**300 Attendees**

**93 Speakers**

**40 Presentations**

Post-event attendee feedback was positive, with attendees appreciating the diversity of topics and speakers, and the informative sessions. Themes arising from the DWC sessions highlighted urgent issues including:

- The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other disruptive technologies
- The growth of temporary 'gig' work and other forms of precarious employment
- Persistent knowledge gaps around labour market outcomes for BIPOC workers with disabilities
- The continued need to strengthen opportunities for early work experiences and accessibility during the school-to-work transition.

# RECOGNITION

**CCRW achieved consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), solidifying its role on the global stage for economic & social issues.**

CCRW's consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a **significant honour, allowing us to actively engage in UN initiatives.** This privilege enables us to advocate for the employment rights of persons with disabilities, attend UN meetings, submit statements, and collaborate with global stakeholders. **We extend our gratitude to the UN DESA NGO Branch for their support throughout the application process.**

# SUPPORT:

## How We're Moving The Needle for Meaningful Employment of Persons with Disabilities

CCRW promotes and supports meaningful employment of persons with disabilities across Canada. We operate nationally and are continuing to grow our network of employers and community partners each year.







Photo of CCRW supported candidate from Ottawa with CCRW staff

Across job seekers with disabilities served by CCRW within this period, **the top services job seekers are looking for are:**



“ It was great working with CCRW. They kept in contact on a regular basis while I was searching for work, assisted me with resume-writing and the job search. Once I accepted a job, CCRW provided me with assistive technology to help me do my job more effectively. ”

- Testimony from CCRW supported candidate, Kendra, Job Seeker from St. John's, NL



# Leveraging Technology

In 2023-2024 our services embraced advancement in technology as a means of expanding our reach as an organization to job seekers anywhere in Canada. As well, it **allows job seekers to be able to self-navigate their employment support through the resources that we have developed.** Some of the technology that we are leveraging:

## Career Management Portal

This is a resource portal for job seekers with disabilities that includes an AI tool for creating and refining resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles, access to a variety of employment skills assessments

## Virtual Reality

Starting in December 2023, we began utilizing Virtual Reality to train job seekers in interpersonal skills needed for employment. We are conducting research through this training service to evaluate if Virtual Reality is an effective medium for improving the confidence of job seekers with disabilities in the workplace.

## Disability Confidence Toolkit

In March 2023, we launched a Disability Confidence toolkit as an extension of our website. This toolkit was designed as a resource for employers who are on the journey of making their workplace more accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities. We have been actively promoting this across Canada.





## Supporting Women with Disabilities

In 2023-2024 we completed the pilot of a program dedicated to supporting women. The results of which will further support service delivery for women at CCRW.

From our services, we learned that the majority of women being served were interested in employment skills training to **help with their confidence in the workforce related to writing, collaboration, and adaptability**. We also saw that the women served improved their confidence the most through employment skills training related to problem solving, digital, and writing.

Women with disabilities availing of our services indicated they were facing many different types of barriers when it comes to gaining employment. For instance:

- **Qualifications for jobs and lack of experience**
- **Disability related barriers**
- **Finding work that fits their skillset**
- **Poor communication from employers**
- **Inaccessible built environments**
- **Co-worker behaviours and attitudes**

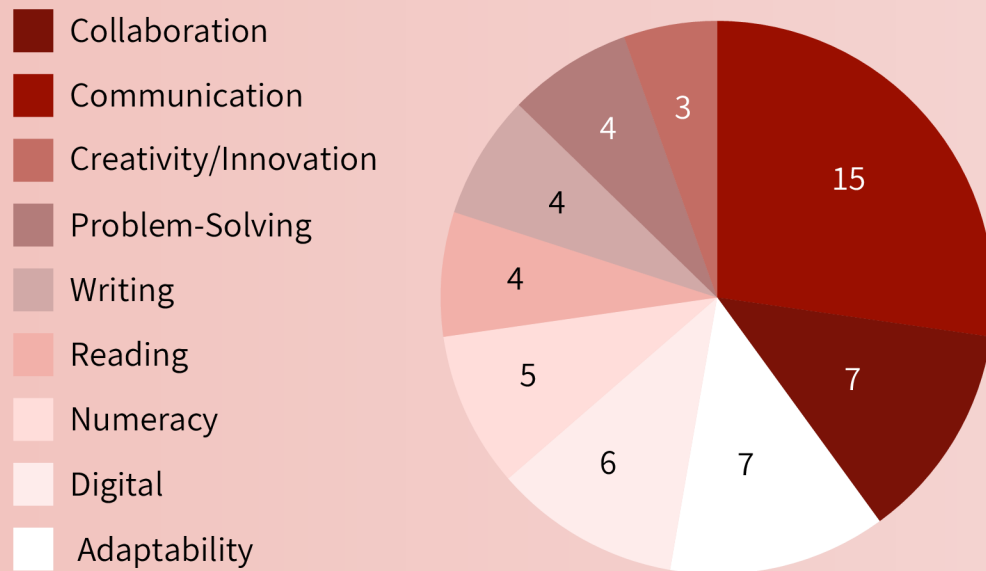
As we continue supporting women job seekers, we'll focus on the insights gained. Women praised CCRW's support and noted that Employment Coaches boosted their confidence, though barriers persist. Going forward, we'll connect women with disability-confident employers for meaningful work.



# Developing Employment Skills Through eLearning

In 2022, we began training job seekers and workers with disabilities using the Skills for Success model. During the 2023-2024 period, we continued this work through our Career Management Portal.

**55** We developed a total of 55 eLearning courses across the nine Skills for Success domains



# ELEARNING

We monitored engagement and feedback for our eLearning courses, using this data to refine and translate the most popular options. **Sixteen courses were translated into French, and 15 into ASL and LSQ.** These courses will continue to be offered to job seekers in our services, with plans to expand access through our website and community partners. **On average, learners completed six courses, with Communication, Writing, and Adaptability being the most in-demand skill areas.**

Notably, **81% of learners improved their assessment scores in at least one skill domain,** demonstrating the program's impact in building new skills.

# National AccessAbility Week

CCRW ran a national campaign to raise awareness about National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) in Canada and the importance of accessibility in the workplace. As a part of this campaign, we captured and shared three stories from job seekers across Canada to highlight the difference accessibility made.

We were also able to host events across Canada in; Ottawa, Winnipeg, Moncton, St. John's, and through virtual webinars. Across these events we were able to hear from political leaders about their jurisdictions commitment to accessibility and to highlight the work we are doing to make employment more accessible.

As a part of our events we were able to host a virtual livestream of a panel featuring the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, the then Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. This panel discussed the importance of accessible workplaces.

One of the highlights of our events was in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador where there were representatives from all levels of government who shared what their current accessibility initiatives were. Without any pre-planning, all initiatives shared were intertwined and related to one another and demonstrated the importance of working together to make accessibility happen.

**10** CCRW organized and hosted more than 10 events across Canada, both virtually and in-person, during National AccessAbility Week, fostering discussions and education on disability and employment.



# RESULTS:

Where the Needle Moved To



# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

In 2023-2024, our Employment Services across Canada were **accessed by 1361 job seekers**

“CCRW was excellent & helped me in every way possible. They gave me all the information needed to use the CCRW Portal. They promptly answered my emails, sent me job links, & recommended online courses. CCRW also assisted with my resume & interview skills. They treated me with respect and were very kind. Thank you, CCRW!” - David, St. John’s

“As I worked with CCRW, I found their support invaluable. They provided excellent resume assistance and provided support with facilitating the request for accommodations with employers. Their networking events and referral services connected me with inclusive employers, which played a significant role in helping me to secure interviews and a job that aligned with my skill set.” - Teresa, Toronto

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

We also engaged with **867 community partners and employers.**

**“I have nothing but excellent things to say about CCRW’s staff and the relationship between the YMCA and CCRW in mutually helping clients—both participants and employers—meet their hiring needs in the Durham community. Throughout our collaboration, I found CCRW staff to always be personable, knowledgeable, and professional.”** - Chris, Oshawa

Working with CCRW was a pleasure. The staff was professional, efficient, and provided excellent follow-up. We had been struggling to fill this position and find the right candidate, but CCRW presented us with three strong candidates, making the most challenging part of the process choosing whom to hire. **I would definitely work with CCRW again in the future and recommend them to any employers who are recruiting.** - Tiffany, Oshawa

# EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



## Employment Standard from Accessibility Standards Canada

In the timeframe of this report, Accessibility Standards Canada released their draft standard for the employment of persons with disabilities. CCRW conducted community consultation and provided detailed feedback on Accessibility Standards Canada's draft Standard on employment.

**128** 128 partnered community organizations, advocates, and members of the broader disability community provided feedback and demonstrated resounding agreement with CCRW's recommendations for the Standard. We look forward to updates on this standard from Accessibility Standards Canada in 2024-2025.



CCRW reviewed the draft Standard and created a position paper with recommendations for the Standard, which was shared publicly to solicit feedback. **CCRW's three key recommendations were:**

- 1** Define and amplify the concept of disability confidence
- 2** Move away from representation targets as the primary way to achieve workplace diversity, instead refocusing on strategizing, evaluating, and monitoring recruitment, retention and advancement to foster genuine inclusion
- 3** Promote the development of a federal centralized accommodation fund to address accommodation needs and remove financial disincentives to employers accommodating workers.



# Supporting Employers Across Canada

CCRW partnered with INNOVA to design and deliver important knowledge exchange sessions and training.

A key part of 2024 involved Train the Trainer sessions. One of these engagements was with the Toronto Transit Commission. In March of 2024 INNOVA was contracted to deliver a three-part Train the Trainer series for identified TTC staff called "Access & Inclusion". Access and Inclusion gives participants an understanding of the practical benefits of building and maintaining an accessible and inclusive workplace.

The three-part series, delivered by INNOVA Accessibility Consultants, gave trainers the knowledge foundation and confidence to deliver training and content in a way that is accessible, engaging and impactful for their workplace. TTC staff learned about the value of putting accessibility first, gained confidence in disability language and etiquette and improving outcomes for staff who may identify as having a disability. They also learned critical and practical elements for hosting an accessible training session, including embedding accessibility features, facilitating method to receive and support specific accessibility requests made by participants and delivering content that is engaging for any learning style.

The series wrapped up with an "Ask an Expert" panel discussion with INNOVA Accessibility Consultants. In this module, TTC staff heard specific examples of how accessibility and accommodations continue to evolve and enhance the workplace. By the end of the series, the TTC trainers were well equipped to deliver training and embed accessibility and creating an inclusive environment to maximize learning. It is through opportunities like this, and with INNOVA, that we are measuring impact on inclusive practices in business.

 [www.theinnovasolution.ca](http://www.theinnovasolution.ca)

## About INNOVA

INNOVA is an innovative consulting firm, grounded in leading edge research and focused on enhancing Canadian workplaces. We help cultivate accessible individualized experiences to drive positive employee engagement and business success. InnoVA is a partner organization of the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW), a non-for-profit with 45 years of experience in disability and work.

**We lead...you succeed.**





# Advancing Disability Inclusion in the Red Seals Trades

In 2023-2024, CCRW made significant strides in supporting disability inclusion in the Red Seal Trades across Canada. Throughout the year, we supported a total of 114 apprentices, with a growth of 66 additional apprentices by year-end. This expansion included apprentices from various provinces, with notable participation from Nova Scotia (70 apprentices), Manitoba (13 apprentices), and British Columbia (12 apprentices).

## Diverse Representation

**29%** 29% or 33 apprentices served were women

**12%** 12% or 14 apprentices served were Indigenous

**20%** 20% or 23 apprentices served with of a visible minority group

These figures surpass the national averages, highlighting our success in attracting a diverse pool of apprentices.

## Disability Inclusion



Learning Disabilities 43%  
(49 apprentices)

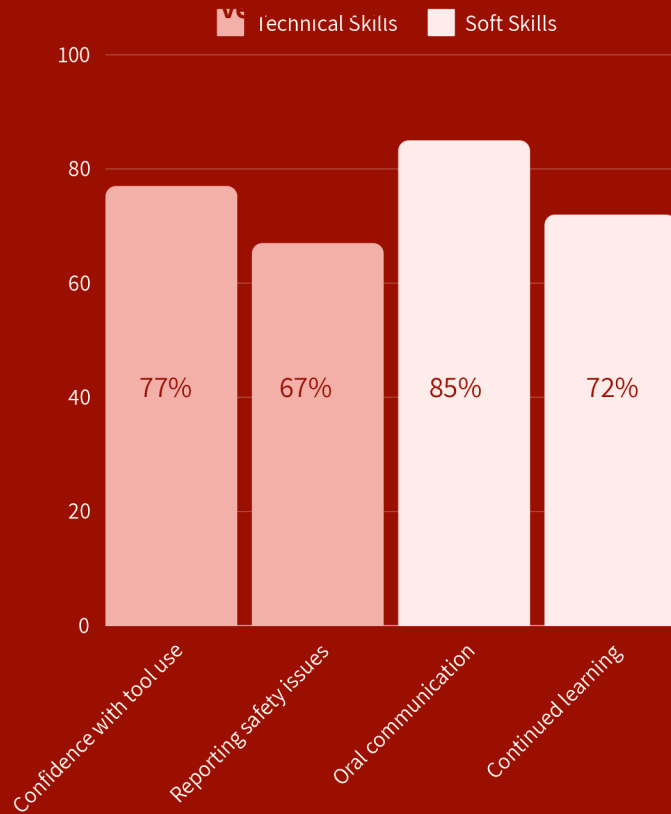


Mental Health 34%  
(38 apprentices)



# RED SEAL TRADES

## Apprentices' Confidence and Skills:



## Barriers and Support:

Under the theme of Barriers and Support, the most common challenges faced by participants included

 Mental Health  School/Study  Finances

## Achievements:

 7 apprentices completed their certification

 84% or 21 apprentices were employed at service closure

 With 71% working in the trades



### **Work Experience and Classroom Levels:**

- Work Experience: Average hours increased from 4,318 to **4,584**.
- Classroom Levels: Average completed levels rose from 1.8 to **2**.

### **Partnerships and Advocacy:**

- Engaged with 166 partners across 10 provinces and one U.S. state.
  - Participated in key forums and conferences, advocating for disability inclusion in the trades.
- 

**CCRW continues to dismantle barriers and provide comprehensive support to apprentices, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse workforce in the Red Seal Trades.**



# RED SEAL TRADES

“... Having dealt with numerous employment agencies in the past, **I can confidently say that the support I received from CCRW was unparalleled.** Regularly scheduled calls to discuss progress, proactive outreach to relevant companies, and continuous updates on job openings through their partnerships—all of these efforts were instrumental in my success. Thanks to their unwavering support, I secured employment with one of their partners, the 'University Pension Plan,' exceeding my expectations.

The journey of job hunting can be overwhelming and disheartening, but **CCRW extends a compassionate hand to those in need, restoring faith in their capabilities.** Their assistance doesn't end with job placement; they continue to follow up, ensuring a smooth transition into the new role and offering post-hire support tailored to individual needs.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the CCRW team for their exceptional help in securing my future. I eagerly anticipate the start of my new job and the opportunities that lie ahead on this new path. Best wishes to CCRW for their continued impactful work!” - Laura, Apprentice Supported by CCRW



# RED SEAL TRADES



# FUNDING PARTNERS

Canada 

New Brunswick  
Nouveau Brunswick  
C A N A D A



Saskatchewan 

Ontario 

# FUNDING PARTNERS

# FINANCIALS



## Revenues



**92.69%**

Government



**1.93%**

Training



**2.25%**

Investment Income



**3.13%**

Misc.

## Expenses



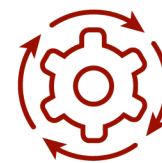
**50.40%**

Staffing & Consultation



**32.04%**

Participant Expenses



**15.76%**

Operations



**1.8%**

Misc.

# THANK YOU

The progress we've made in 2023-2024 reflects our dedication, but we know there is still more to be done. **Our mission to "Move the Needle Forward" remains unwavering**, and we will continue to champion accessibility, equity, and opportunity for all.

# THANK YOU