

Saskatchewan
Ministry of the Economy

Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD)

2014-15 Annual Report

Canada-Saskatchewan LMAPD

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1. Introduction

The Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) came into effect on April 1, 2014. The LMAPD provides Saskatchewan with approximately \$43.4 million over a four year time period (more than \$10.8 million annually) for delivery of programs and services to ensure persons with disabilities have the opportunity for training, education and employment.

The LMAPD is targeted to Saskatchewan individuals aged 16 and over whom, because of a disability, require extraordinary supports to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment.

Applications can be made by any:

- individual adults who, because of a disability, requires specialized supports in order to prepare for, obtain and/or maintain employment;
- Community-Based Organizations who conduct assessments or provides disability-specific career and employment services; or,
- employers who require specialized support to hire an individual with a disability.

The Ministry of the Economy was responsible for the administrative obligations outlined in the LMAPD on behalf of Saskatchewan in 2014-15. However, in addition to the LMAPD programs and services which were delivered by the Ministry of the Economy and third party service providers (including post-secondary institutions, businesses and community-based organizations) the Ministries of Health, Advanced Education and Government Relations utilized LMAPD funding to deliver programing specific to their respective mandates.

2. Labour Market Context

Skills and Labour shortages are consistently identified as constraints to growth in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan's labour market continued to be strong in 2014. Population growth continued and, over the past year, Saskatchewan recorded all-time highs in working age population, labour force and employment, including full-time employment for both men and women. Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest unemployment rates across all demographic groups. However, economic and employment growth has slowed over the past year, with Saskatchewan's economy recording moderate real GDP growth of 1.4 per cent in 2014, reflecting lower crop prices and a mid-year decline in the price of oil.

For a more comprehensive description of Saskatchewan's labour market context, please see Appendix 1.

3. Objectives

The overarching goal of the LMAPD is to improve the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities. To attain this goal, the following objectives were pursued:

- Enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities by addressing disability-related barriers;
- Increasing the employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities, by better addressing employer needs, and encouraging employers to remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities; and
- Demonstrating the best possible results for Canadians on these investments as evidenced by enhanced employability and increased labour market participation of persons with disabilities.

4. Programs and Services

4.1 Advanced Education

The Ministry of Advanced Education provides income support to students attending post-secondary programs (if student-loan eligible).

Saskatchewan Student Grant

This grant supplements the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with permanent Disabilities by up to \$2,000 per academic year and is intended to help cover the costs of accommodation, tuition, and books.

Student Loans and Bursary Assistance

This program provides loans for students (including students with disabilities) to attend post-secondary education programs that prepare them for employment. Saskatchewan's loan program provides bursary assistance to ease the debt load for students. In 2014-15 nearly 1,000 individuals received support.

4.2 Government Relations

Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities Program (TAPD)

This program provides financial assistance to municipalities who offer paratransit services for persons with disabilities.

Paratransit provides a critical link for passengers across the province that use the service to get to work, school, medical appointments, and a wide range of other daily activities. Passengers may have physical or mental disabilities, and they may use wheelchairs or ambulatory.

The program is operated according to Part IV of *The Municipal Grants Regulations*, which provides the framework for program eligibility, outlines the grant calculation formula, and describes standards of operation and participant responsibilities.

Seventy-nine communities receive TAPD funding in the province including five new eligible municipalities that were selected to join the program in 2013-14.

Participating municipalities are responsible for determining their own paratransit service operating arrangements. They make decisions with respect to such things as hours of operation, passenger eligibility criteria, fee structure and service providers.

Results:

- In total, 81,060 individuals received supports; an increase of about 4,300 from 2013-14.

4.3 Health

Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Program (SAIL)

This program provides aids and devices for people with disabilities as required in order to maintain or pursue employment. Benefits of the program include specialized medical equipment, lifts or ramps for home and vehicle access, and prosthetic and orthotic devices.

Alcohol and Drug Services

Saskatchewan Health, through the Regional Health Authorities, provides a range of addiction recovery services aimed at promoting healthy living without chemical dependency, including individual and family counselling, detoxification programs and vocational counselling.

For people with substance addictions, these services provide an opportunity to gain knowledge, skills and on-going supports to participate in society including obtaining, maintaining and regaining employment.

Mental Health Services

A range of general mental health services is available from Saskatchewan Regional Health Authorities, such as crisis intervention, case management and individual and group counselling.

A range of vocational services are also available such as pre-employment training in daily living skills, job search training, and supervised work experience.

4.4 Economy

Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities Program (EAPD)

EAPD provides funding for programs, goods and services that are required to help individuals attain and/or maintain employment. Clients receive assistance to address the impact of their disabilities on their career development. Supports vary depending on the impact of disability on the six stages of career development, also known as the employability dimensions: (1) stabilization and work readiness; (2) career exploration and decision making; (3) skill enhancement; (4) job search and job finding; (5) job maintenance; and (6) career growth.

The type and level of disability-related support is determined and negotiated on a case by case basis, through consultation with career, vocational or school counselors. Categories of assistance provided under EAPD are as follows:

Assessments

Program funding is used to provide access to assessments that assist with career planning. These assessments include activities such as psycho-educational assessments, vocational evaluations, and work placement assessments. These types of interventions are used in a variety of ways. Some help to determine the impact of disability, while others help to identify an individual's best skills and abilities and his/her corresponding career options. Assessments can also help to identify accommodation needs in educational placements or the workplace.

Individual Accommodations at School and Work

Students, job seekers and workers can pursue individualized support through their local Labour Market Services office or through partnering organizations, such as schools, training providers and agencies that specialize in supported employment services.

EAPD funding is provided to regional colleges, universities, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, the Gabriel Dumont Technical Institute, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, and the Apprenticeship, Trade and Certification Commission. This funding allows training institutions to administer timely and flexible support to students and apprentices who need disability-related support to succeed in their program of study.

Examples of the type of supports that may be provided to students are: flashing fire alarms; short-term individual tutors; note takers; interpreters and special (adapted) equipment. The funding also supports accommodations for approved students with disabilities to write General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Tests.

Funds are also used to purchase a wide range of disability specific goods and services that allow individuals to participate in mainstream employment. Funding may be used to determine disability-related needs in the classroom or on the job, or to help the individual determine a career path that best

fits his/her skills, abilities and interests. Employment supports may also include things like job coaching, career exploration, interpreters, specialized or adaptive equipment, specialized transportation, work-based assessment, training on the job, transition planning and supported employment.

Specialized Programs and Services

Service agreements with community based organizations (CBOs) and training institutions are used to support career development and develop the employability of individuals with disabilities.

Specialized services include:

- Support to build stability and work readiness, including guidance with housing, child care, transportation, health and social services, work readiness training, developing action plans, identifying appropriate community services/supports;
- Career exploration and decision making, including career counselling to identify skills, interests and abilities and suitable vocational opportunities;
- Specialized basic education and adult upgrading, academic skill development and life skills for adults with disabilities;
- Work assessment/placement and work experience services;
- Opportunities to develop pre-employment skills (e.g., personal management, workplace communication, rights and obligations, an understanding of labour market trends, employment requirements and standards, etc.);
- Job searching;
- Mentoring, job coaching and job maintenance services;
- Support to employers in order to identify opportunities for work assessments and jobs, market potential candidates, and to support sustainable employment;
- Information sessions on workplace diversity for employers and supervisors;
- Monitor and report client progress and provide follow-up services as required.

Provincial Training Allowance

In addition to the income support provided by Advanced Education described earlier, the Ministry of the Economy provides income support for learners through the Provincial Training Allowance.

This program provides income support for individuals (including individuals with disabilities) who are in adult education/training programs for which Canada and Saskatchewan Student Loans are not available. The Provincial Training Allowance supports open access for adults involved in these programs.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) at Public Education Centres

This program provides education/training programs and services for adults (including adults with disabilities) who left the K-12 system without completing grade 12.

ABE provides a wide range of opportunities to gain academic and other skills that are required for successful/meaningful attachment to the labour force.

Demographic profile

The profile of EAPD participants from the 2015 survey indicates:

- Participants in EAPD programming represent males (54 per cent) and females (46 per cent) almost equally.
- The average age of participants is about 32 years old. However, the fact that 65 per cent report that they are 34 years of age or younger likely accounts for some of why 78 per cent do not report having any dependents.
- Although 22 per cent self-identify as being Aboriginal, just 2 per cent report that their first language is an Aboriginal language. Most learned and speak English (93 per cent) as their first language.
- Most participants did not take any additional education after high school, as less than 3 in 10 participants report taking any post-secondary education. A similar percentage (24 per cent) report that they did not complete high school.

The demographic profile of participants across years is very similar. The only noticeable, albeit not statistically different, differences are that the proportion of EAPD participants who are male has increased each year, from 49 per cent in 2013 to 54 per cent in 2015, and the proportion who self-identify as Aboriginal has increased from 19 per cent to 22 per cent over the past three years.

Disability profile

The profile of participants' disabilities has been consistent over the past three years, with the 2015 results as follows:

- 43 per cent of participants most often report that their disability is learning-related, 23 per cent cite that it is physical, 21 per cent cite a psychiatric/mental illness, and 17 per cent cite a developmental disability (17 per cent).
- Most have been dealing with the disability since a young age, with almost 7 in 10 reporting that their disability began when they were 20 years of age or younger (including 22 per cent who say they were born with the disability).
- Almost half say the disability is not severe (21 per cent) or only mildly severe (27 per cent), with fewer than 2 in 10 reporting that it is severe (11 per cent) or very severe (6 per cent).
- The proportions who say their ability to work in the past three years has increased each year has grown, from 21 per cent in 2013 to 29 per cent in 2015. In 2015, this includes 17 per cent who say their ability to work in the past three years as increased a lot. When asked why they feel their ability to work has increased over the past three years, participants mention multiple reasons, including 59 per cent who say it is because they received training, continuing an upward trend from 47 per cent in 2013.

Because the profile of participants' disability and their demographic profile are very similar each year, this likely indicates that any changes in 2015 from previous years are not the result of differences in the types of EAPD participants surveyed.

Taking the program

Overall, 80 per cent of participants completed their program, which is slightly higher than 2014 (76 per cent). The ability to complete a program was unrelated to participants' gender, age, or the severity of their disability, as completion rates ranged from 77 per cent to 87 per cent among various demographic groups.

Among all respondents, the most commonly-stated reason, albeit less than in previous years, for taking a program was to find a job (23 per cent). Other commonly-mentioned reasons include learning job-finding skills (15 per cent), furthering education (17 per cent), and getting additional experience or knowledge (9 per cent). The reasons for taking the program are very similar regardless of whether participants did or did not complete the program.

When asked directly, a higher proportion of early leavers (83 per cent) took the program to improve or gain skills than those who completed the program (77 per cent). While both early leavers and completers are at their highest proportions to date, 2015 marks the first time that early leavers (72 per cent in 2014) were more likely than completers (76 per cent in 2014) to have taken their program to improve or gain skills.

Among the 18 per cent of participants who did not complete their program, the main reason for not completing was because the program is still in progress (31 per cent), which is similar to what was heard in previous years, when between 25 per cent (2013) and 32 per cent (2014) said the program was still in progress. Otherwise, most reasons tend to be personal reasons, such as having health issues (15 per cent) or for other reasons (12 per cent).

Program outcomes

Among those who completed the program, results show the following:

- About 38 per cent received a certificate, diploma, or degree upon completion, which is similar to the past two years (37 per cent to 43 per cent). The majority of respondents who received a credential continue to state that they received a certificate of completion (53 per cent) but at a lower rate than in years past (65 per cent in 2014, 75 per cent in 2013). One possible reason for this downward trend is the increasing number of respondents who could not identify the type of credential they received (up from 5 per cent in 2013 to 19 per cent in 2015).
- Over 3 in 4 respondents felt that they were prepared to find a job after completing their program, including 42 per cent who said they were very prepared. These results have been consistent over time.

- About 2 in 3 report that the completion of their program had at least some impact on securing their current employment (among those who completed the program and were employed at the time of the survey); with 45 per cent reporting that it had a great deal of impact. These proportions are similar to previous years.

Differences between early leavers and completers

Comparing responses for early leavers and completers indicates the following:

- Early leavers report a similar level of satisfaction with the program overall. Over 9 in 10 completers (93 per cent) were satisfied with the program, while 9 in 10 early leavers (90 per cent) were satisfied. In both cases, the proportion of those who were satisfied with their program was at its highest point to date.
- Completers consistently have higher ratings than early leavers for each of the following four outcomes (relevance to finding a job, help finding a job, ability to get a job, and ability to get good-paying job). For completers, satisfaction (rating of six or seven out of seven) is at the highest point over the past three years for each of these four; however, the proportion of early leavers who are satisfied with each of these outcomes is down from 2014.
- About 7 in 10 early leavers said the program was valuable in helping them find a job (33 per cent very valuable) compared to over 8 in 10 completers (54 per cent very valuable).
- Completing the program does not appear to have an impact on taking further programming, as 23 per cent of completers have taken or are taking additional programs, while 21 per cent of early leavers report the same. These results have been consistent over time.

Current employment

The employment rate (defined as the number of respondents who are currently employed divided by the total number of respondents who are currently employed or looking for employment) is 77 per cent, which is up from previous surveys (66 per cent in 2013 and 60 per cent in 2014). The difference is largely due to an increase in the employment rate of completers, from 62 per cent in 2014 to 80 per cent in 2015. Early leavers continue to see a rise in employment from 46 per cent in 2013 to 58 per cent in 2015.

Among all participants who are currently employed, the majority of those who are employed have one job (90 per cent), and over half (53 per cent) have been at their job for longer than 12 months. On average, program participants work about 26 hours per week at their main job and have an average hourly wage of \$14.71. Results for the number of hours worked per week at their main job have remained almost identical over time, while in 2015, the average wage per hour increased by over \$2.00 (income has not been adjusted for inflation). This increase in hourly wage is a result of a downward trend in those making less than \$10.00 per hour (16 per cent in 2013 compared to 9 per cent in 2015) and an increase in the number of respondents making \$20 or more per hour (6 per cent in 2013 compared to 11 per cent in 2015).

Among those who were unemployed and not looking for work, their disability does not appear to be the primary consideration for not working, as just 33 per cent of those who are unemployed and not looking for work say it is because of an illness or disability (36 per cent in 2014 and 33 per cent in 2013). The main reason given is that they are going to or plan to go to school (37 per cent). Results have remained consistent over time.

Impact of disability on employment

Over half of respondents say their disability affects their ability to work; however, there are slight differences between employment groups. For instance, 9 per cent of those who are unemployed and not looking for work say that because of their disability they can't do any job. This compares to 1 per cent of those who are unemployed and looking for work, while none of those who are employed indicate that their disability stops them from doing any job.

About 1 in 3 say their disability affects how much they can work. Similar to previous years, results show that those who are unemployed and not looking for work (13 per cent) are much more likely than those who are employed (1 per cent) or unemployed and looking for work (1 per cent) to say that because of their disability they cannot work at all, but also that their disability causes them to only be able to work some of the time (33 per cent among unemployed and not looking for work, 35 per cent among unemployed and looking, and 20 per cent among those employed).

When asked how their disability affects their ability to work, the most common impacts tend to be cognitive rather than physical. For instance, many mention such cognitively-related impacts as trouble learning, thinking or understanding (12 per cent), trouble reading or writing (6 per cent), or trouble concentrating (5 per cent). Another common impact is social or mental impacts, such as trouble with social interactions (8 per cent), trouble dealing with stress or anxiety (6 per cent), or emotional issues (5 per cent). These themes have remained constant over time.

Conclusions

Generally, the EAPD program appears to have a positive impact on participants. Most notably, over 9 in 10 are satisfied with their overall experience in an EAPD program, and satisfaction levels are virtually the same between those who complete the program (93 per cent) and those who do not (90 per cent). In responses, early leavers most often indicate that reasons for not continuing the program are not related to the program itself, but most often, they leave for personal reasons.

The potential impact of the program can also be shown with employment rates among completers (80 per cent) and early leavers (58 per cent), both of which are at their highest point over the past three years. There has also been growth in the average salary for those who found employment, to just below \$15 per hour in 2015.

Results also indicate that a main reason for not working or not seeking work appears to be related to participants' perceptions of their disability. Those who are unemployed are more likely than those who are employed to say their disability affects the jobs they can do or the amount they can work. However, there was very little difference in the severity of disabilities among completers and early leavers, indicating that program completion does not appear to be driven by the severity of participants' disability.

5. Expenditures

Ministry	Provincial Contribution	Government of Canada Contribution	Total Expenditures
Economy	\$8,986,779	6,403,000	\$15,389,779
Health	\$9,864,498	2,550,000	\$12,414,498
Government Relations	\$294,715	\$217,608	\$512,323
Advanced Education	\$2,624,767	1,682,000	\$4,306,767
Total	\$21,770,759	\$10,852,608	\$32,623,367

Appendix 1- Labour Market Context

Within the Province of Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Economy is responsible for labour market development, which supports the broader ministerial mandate to advance growth to generate wealth and opportunity. Labour market investments support the broad government goals of population and employment growth. Specifically, the labour market development division is responsible to support the development, attraction, and retention of a skilled labour force.

Saskatchewan's labour market continued to be strong in 2014; however, the rate of growth has declined.

Population

Population growth has continued, with an all-time high of 1,133,637 people residing in the province as of July 1, 2015. Saskatchewan's annual population increase was 11,354 with the largest share (76.4 per cent) the result of international migration. Inter-provincially, there was a net loss of 3,200 people. The largest population exchange was with Alberta with 8,073 people coming to Saskatchewan and 10,977 leaving for Alberta. Saskatchewan's growth rate of 1.01 per cent was third highest among provinces and above the national rate of 0.87 per cent over the 12-month period, July 1, 2014 to July 1, 2015.

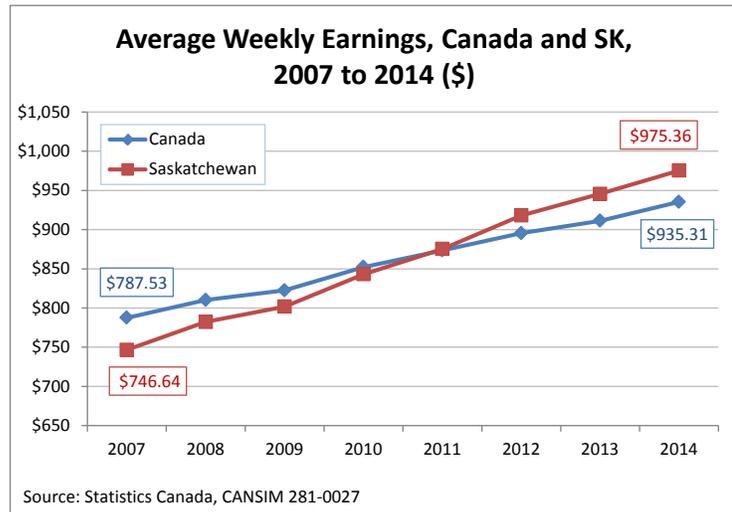
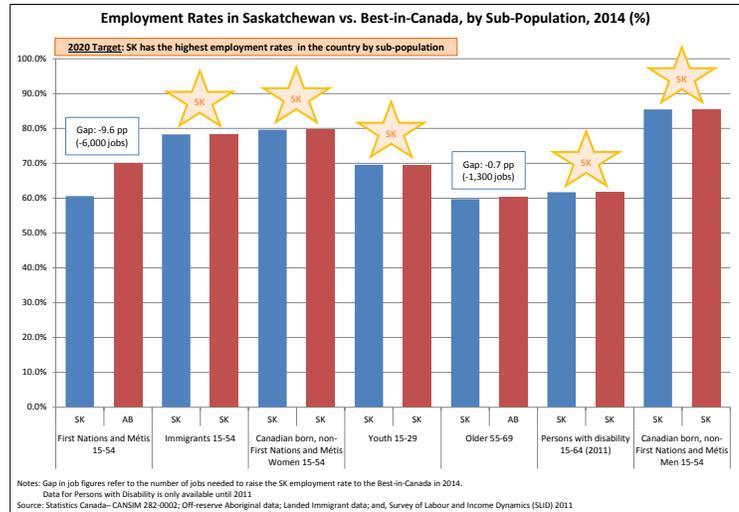
Labour Force

In 2014 Saskatchewan recorded all-time highs in working age population, labour force and employment including full-time employment for both men and women. As of April 2015, the working age population (15+) reached 859,700, the labour force 598,000 and employment 569,600 including full-time employment at 467,500.

While the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has started to increase from a historic low of 3.8 per cent in 2014 to 4.3 per cent in April 2015, Saskatchewan retains the lowest unemployment rate in the country, for 19 consecutive months as of April 2015, below the national rate of 6.8 per cent.

Saskatchewan has amongst the highest employment rates across all demographic groups; however, attaining “Best in Canada” rates for First Nations and Metis and older workers would add more than 7,000 to the work force.

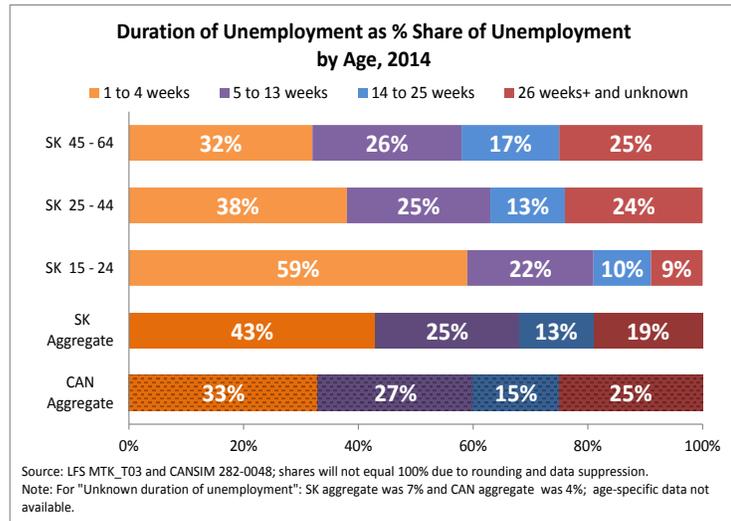
Saskatchewan’s average weekly earnings (including overtime) were \$975 in 2014, the third highest among provinces (behind Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador) and above the national average of \$935. With inflation factored in, Saskatchewan had a real increase in average weekly earnings of 0.8 per cent, eighth highest among the provinces and above the national real wage increase of 0.7 per cent.



Unemployed

There were 22,800 unemployed in the province in 2014; 30 per cent were youth, 54 per cent were 25 to 54 years of age, and 15 per cent were older workers (aged 55+). Lower-skilled workers represented nearly two-thirds of the unemployed (28 per cent had less than Grade 12 completion and 37 per cent had Grade 12 as their highest level of completion) and the higher-skilled the remaining 35 per cent (21 per cent with post-secondary certificate or diploma and 14 per cent with a university degree).

For those who are unemployed in Saskatchewan, the duration was relatively short in 2014 – 43 per cent were unemployed for 4 weeks or less, 68 per cent were unemployed for 13 weeks or less and 81 per cent were unemployed for 25 weeks or less. Among provinces, Saskatchewan had the highest share of unemployed with the shortest duration of unemployment – 43 per cent for 1-4 weeks compared to 33 per cent nationally and 81 per cent for 25 weeks or less compared to 75 per cent nationally.



Unemployed youth were able to (re)attach to the labour market the most quickly as they had the highest proportion that were unemployed for the shortest period of time (59 per cent unemployed for 1-4 weeks) and the lowest proportion unemployed for 26 weeks or more (9 per cent). Lower-skilled workers also were able to (re)attach to the labour market more quickly than higher-skilled workers as they had the highest proportion unemployed for the shortest duration of 1-4 weeks – 43 per cent of those with less than high school completion/on-the-job training and 42 per cent of those with high school completion as their highest level of educational attainment compared to 35 per cent of university degree holders and 41 per cent of post-secondary certificate and diploma holders. Youth (who have less work experience) and lower-skilled workers tend to work in lower-paying, higher turnover jobs with shorter recruitment periods that are associated with shorter periods of unemployment, whereas, older workers (who have more work experience) and higher-skilled workers tend to work in higher-paying, lower turnover jobs with longer recruitment periods that are associated with longer periods of unemployment.

In 2014 an estimated 48 per cent of unemployed workers received regular Employment Insurance benefits in Saskatchewan, compared to a national average of 38 per cent. For Saskatchewan this is an increase in the EI coverage rate (from 44 per cent in 2013) that is due to an increase in regular EI beneficiaries but fewer unemployed.

There was an average of 10,905 regular EI beneficiaries in Saskatchewan, an increase of 240 (+2.3 per cent) from 2013. Over the same period, the number of unemployed declined by 1,300 (-5.4 per cent) as a greater number of people became employed (5,600) compared to the number of new labour market entrants (4,200).

Males accounted for a greater share of regular EI beneficiaries (60 per cent) than women (40 per cent). Workers aged 25 to 54 accounted for the largest share of regular EI beneficiaries (65 per cent) with older workers aged 55 and older representing 21 per cent

Current and Future Demand

- Economic and employment growth has slowed over the past year, with Saskatchewan's economy recording moderate real GDP growth of 1.4 per cent in 2014, reflecting lower crop prices and a mid-year decline in the price of oil. Slower economic growth is expected to continue, with experts predicting real GDP growth of 0.8 per cent due to the continued low price of oil and lower oil production. Stronger growth is forecast for 2016 and 2017, 2.4 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively. Softer economic indicators and easing of labour market conditions have been observed including fewer job vacancies, rising unemployment, slower earnings growth, declining employment in the goods-producing sector, and lower business optimism.
- Over the five-year period, 2015 to 2019, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance has forecasted employment growth of 0.8 per cent, an increase of 24,100 new jobs. With replacement of retiring workers also factored in, a total of 95,200 job openings are expected over the next five years.

Go-Forward Challenges and Opportunities

- The ability to sustain economic growth in Saskatchewan will hinge on:
 - An adequate supply of workers so the economy continues to grow;
 - Having a workforce with the right skills to match labour demand;
 - All individuals, including those from under-represented groups, being given the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the province's prosperity; and,
 - More proactive, collaborative involvement of employers and industries in workforce planning and design of interventions, particularly in the Ministry's strategic core sectors.

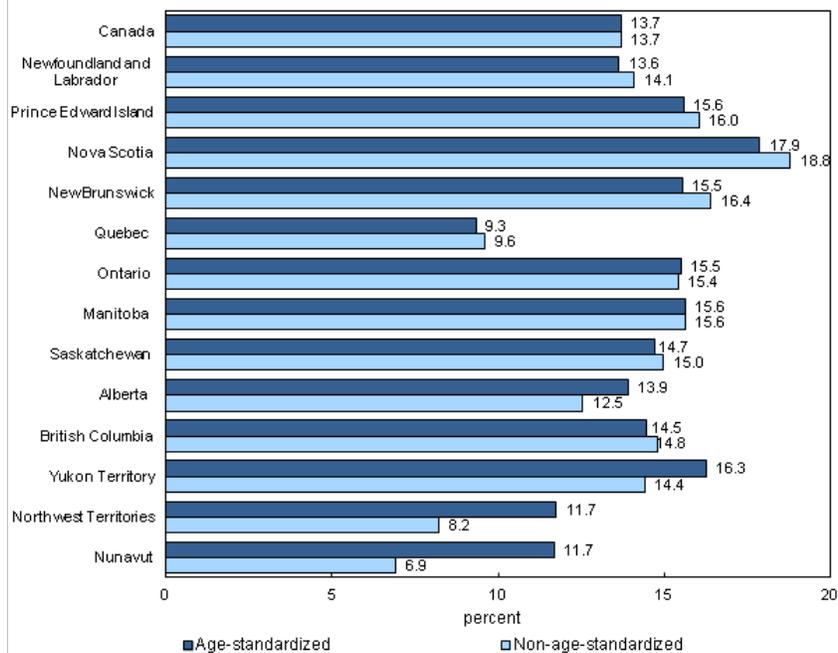
- Strategies to grow and develop Saskatchewan’s labour force address:
 - Increased competition for human capital: Saskatchewan employers face growing competition for skilled and unskilled workers. Competition exists within and across sectors, both domestically and internationally, particularly where: (a) the youth population is smaller than the population of retirees; and (b) there is limited workforce diversity or innovative engagement of underrepresented groups. While competition within the Province and among neighbouring jurisdictions has temporarily eased, it is expected to heat up as the country regains its economic momentum.
 - Limited supply of job seekers: Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate averaged 4.5 per cent over the past seven years and is expected to stay below 5 per cent over the next five years. A limited supply of job seekers presents challenges for workforce development, recruitment, and retention over the medium term. While Saskatchewan’s SEPH job vacancy rate in 2014 remains second to Alberta (2.4 per cent) and below the national average (1.5 per cent), it has seen a decline from 2.1 per cent in 2013 to 1.9 per cent in 2014. Solutions include efforts to attract workers from under-represented groups, activities to improve worker productivity (to minimize demand for new workers) and recruitment from outside the province.
 - Persistent labour demands: Over the next five years, 62 per cent of job openings are expected to require management experience or post-secondary education and training. Demand also remains strong for lower-skilled workers, with 38 per cent of job openings anticipated to require high school completion or less/on-the-job training.
 - Mismatch between requirements of employers and the available labour supply: While a slowing economy has eased recent business concerns over labour shortages, businesses continue to identify these shortages as the second highest constraint on sales/production growth in 2015. (Canadian Federation of Independent Business’s Business Barometer).
 - Skills mismatches are evident where unemployment rates are below the provincial average in some industries (e.g. transportation and warehousing; finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; educational services; and health care and social assistance) and major occupational groups (e.g. management; natural and applied sciences; and social science, education, government service and religion).
 - A high number of job vacancies remain hard-to-fill in the province – according to the new national Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) 5,600 job vacancies in February and March were vacant for more than three months or employers were constantly recruiting for them. As well, 39.6 per cent of Saskatchewan’s job vacancies were considered hard-to-fill, the second highest percentage share in

Canada and well above the national average of 29.7 per cent. Recruitment challenges were for skilled and unskilled workers; 55 per cent of reportable hard-to-fill job vacancies were for higher-skilled (3 per cent management, 14 per cent university degree, and 38 per cent post-secondary certificate, diploma or apprenticeship) and 45 per cent were for lower-skilled (26 per cent Grade 12 and 19 per cent less than high school). Occupational groups most challenged with hard-to-fill positions in the province were manufacturing and utilities (71.7 per cent of vacant positions), health (64.3 per cent) and trades, transport and equipment operators (60.1 per cent).

- An aging workforce is leading to an increased number of retirements, and this is increasing demand for replacement workers who have skills *and* experience. The Government of Saskatchewan is pursuing opportunities for students to gain work exposure through job placements, co-ops and other forms of work experience.
- Potential labour pool faces barriers to labour market participation: Employment obstacles include education and skill levels and other practical barriers.
 - Saskatchewan's 2014 unemployment rate dropped to a historic low of 3.8 per cent, which was the lowest rate in Canada and significantly lower than the national average of 6.9 per cent.
 - Approximately 57 per cent of social assistance clients have a grade ten or lower education, a decrease from 61 per cent in 2007-08.
 - The number of social assistance clients with disabilities has increased 34 per cent since 2007-08 to an average of 18,190 cases in 2014-15.
 - From 2009 to 2014, the off-reserve Aboriginal population (aged 15-64) grew by 10.1 per cent compared to the non-Aboriginal population (aged 15-64) which grew by 8.3 per cent. In 2014 the employment rate for Aboriginal workers was 56.9 per cent, compared to 68 per cent for non-Aboriginal workers, a decline of 2.1 percentage points from 2013. Increasing the employment rate of Aboriginal people aged 15-54 in Saskatchewan to the highest rate in Canada (Alberta) in 2014 would mean an additional 6,000 workers for the province.
 - Participants in adult basic education and other skills training programs that are not student loan eligible often require income support to meet their basic needs. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to improving education and employment for low-income adult learners who require financial assistance to participate in training and in 2015/16 allocated \$32.017M for the Provincial Training Allowance.

- Immigration is key to growing Saskatchewan's population and labour market. Immigration accounted for two-thirds of population growth and a third of employment growth over the past few years. Eight out of ten immigrants arrive in Saskatchewan through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), which seeks candidates who have permanent job offers. Streamlined pathways to credential recognition are important to these workers and their employers. Further federal collaboration is required to improve the responsiveness of the immigration system and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) to provincial labour market realities. Saskatchewan supports PT proposals to enhance the effectiveness of programs for temporary and permanent recruitment of foreign workers, while maintaining Canada's policy direction in the latest program reforms.
- Population retention is necessary to meet employment targets. Overall population growth in the second quarter of 2015 slowed over the previous quarter due to a net loss of inter-provincial migrants as well as a decline in net non-permanent residents (e.g. temporary foreign workers and foreign students).
 - Saskatchewan had a positive net inter-provincial flow of 195 people aged 15 to 64 between 2010/11 and 2014/15, including 64,928 people coming to Saskatchewan from other provinces/territories and 64,733 people moving to other provinces/territories during those five years.
 - Retention of older workers has steadily improved, with 42.9 per cent of the population aged 55 and older working in 2014 (second highest employment rate in Canada), a sizeable increase of 12.8 percentage points over the past 15 years. Achieving the best-in-Canada rate (Alberta) would add another 5,200 to the employed labour force.
 - Saskatchewan has the highest level of engagement of youth in the labour market with an employment rate of 61.9 per cent in 2014, the highest in Canada and well above the national average of 55.5 per cent. However, the youth employment rate declined 3.9 percentage points from 2007 to 2014; which was a period of strong population and labour market growth in the province. As the most mobile age cohort, Saskatchewan will be challenged to retain its youth as opportunities emerge outside the province.

Chart 1
Age-standardized and non-age-standardized prevalence of disability, aged 15 years or older, Canada, provinces and territories, 2012



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.