

## Executive Summary

The BC Centre for Employment Excellence presented a webinar on [May 21, 2014](#) on *Accessibility for Specialized Populations in One-stop Employment Centres: Best Practices from the UK, US and Australia*.<sup>1</sup> This reference document provides additional information and resources to accompany the free webinar.

The Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC), implemented on April 2, 2012, replaced a range of provincial and federal employment programs intended to serve job seekers with an integrated approach designed to provide consistent services across all communities in the province. The model represents a “one-stop” comprehensive approach to serve all unemployed British Columbians.

EPBC is delivered in 85 WorkBC Employment Services Centres found in 73 catchment areas across the province. The program is being delivered under contract with 47 lead organizations that have formed partnerships with other local service providers for the delivery of specialized programming and services. The Ministry has identified eight “specialized populations” that are provided additional supports as necessary to gain an attachment to the labour market: aboriginal peoples, Francophones, immigrants, persons with disabilities, rural and remote populations, multi-barriered, survivors of violence or abuse, and youth.

EPBC has been in place for over two years, time enough to work out many early implementation issues and to recognize areas that need improvement. Of particular interest are ways to ensure that job seekers belonging to one or more of the specialized populations experience the system as one that is accessible, that welcomes them, where they engage and feel optimistic proceeding along a pathway to work. More specifically, there is interest in learning the following kinds of things to support disadvantaged job seekers:

- Ways to ensure that job seekers are aware of employment supports.
- Ways to improve collaboration and cooperation both at the level of inter-agency partnerships and with community based organizations.
- Strategies to level the playing field, that is, to develop more universal standards of service delivery across the province.
- Practices to support the development of organizational capacity, that is, things like leadership and business practices.

The BC Centre for Employment Excellence conducted a synthesis of best practices found to work well with specialized populations seeking employment through one-stop employment service centres. Information has come from experience and program evaluations from the United States, in the United Kingdom and Australia, all jurisdictions with a longer history of one-stop approaches than BC. What is

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<sup>1</sup> Access to Webinar: <http://www.cfeebc.org/say-accessibility-specialized-populations-one-stop-employment-centres-best-practices-uk-us-australia/>.

the experience for clients and providers within these frameworks? What are the factors most likely to spell “success,” in terms of supporting specialized populations to find and retain jobs?

It is hoped that this survey of best practices from other jurisdictions can be used as a resource for providers and practitioners in EPBC. Moreover, it will facilitate dialogue in WorkBC Centres about innovative approaches and to identify, adapt or create strategies appropriate for their Centre to improve access for job seekers in specialized populations.

This reference document provides the following information:

- **Key features of one-stop systems.** This report provides an overview of the one-stop employment services approach taken in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, including system goals and procurement models.
- **Best practices along the client pathway to employment.** This report reports and organizes best practices collected from the three jurisdictions in a framework delineating the steps along the client’s pathway to employment.
- **Things that make a difference.** This report discusses several factors that influence service delivery and the client experience, most having to do with aspects of organizational capacity including business practices, a positive work environment, coordination and collaboration between sub-contracted partners, linkages with community organizations and staff capacity to deliver services.

Each jurisdiction has undergone many reforms since first implementing one-stop approaches in the late 1990s, with some reforms more fruitful than others. In the constantly evolving field of employment services, new initiatives are being tried and tested and new approaches to problem solving are constantly emerging here and in other jurisdictions. For example, “communities of practice” are developing to tackle some of the challenges in supporting job seekers with complex needs into work.<sup>2</sup>

The learning shared in this report points to ways in which individual one-stops may benefit from targeted support in all relevant areas.

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<sup>2</sup> A Community of Practice (CoP) is comprised of individuals who share issues, challenges or concerns and want to change or improve practices.