

Report on the Evaluation of Four Programs Funded by the Canada- Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities

Prepared for:

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1.0 Overview of Report

This document presents the reports on the evaluation of four programs funded under the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD). These evaluations were conducted on behalf of Human, Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE). The programs are:

- Full Steam Ahead – a program of the Independent Living Resource Centre, St. John’s
- Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) – a program of the Vera Perlin Society, St. John’s
- Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) – a program of the Calypso Foundation, Lewisporte
- Career and Employment Case Management Centres – a program of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA). (These centres are funded through a number of government programs. This evaluation covers only those centres and services funded under the LMAPD.)

The report is structured as follows:

- This introduction, which includes an overview of the policy context for the programs and the evaluation methodology;
- Chapters two to six, which present the reports on the individual programs. Each chapter begins with a summary of the report, followed by the findings and recommendations in relation to each of the evaluation issues addressed.

1.1 Context for the Programs

1.1.1 Labour Market Context

1.1.1.1 National Labour Market Context

According to the most recent Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), there are nearly two million working-age Canadians (15 to 64 years) with disabilities. While we now understand that having a disability does not make you ‘unemployable’, the employment reality for adults with disabilities is far from acceptable. Persons with disabilities are still greatly over represented within the ranks of unemployed Canadians. Despite a myriad of programs and active measures, the employment of people with disabilities has remained low over the past decade.¹ The Canadian Council on Social Development recently reported that the full year employment of people without disabilities increased between 1993 and 1998, regardless of age group and level of education, while in contrast, among people with disabilities employment decreased among those younger than 50 years of age.

¹ The Roeher Institute. 2004. *Improving the Odds: Disability, Employment and Public Programs in Canada*. Toronto

Other national statistics of note from PALS include:

- People with disabilities work half as many weeks per year as others, are unemployed longer, and spend nearly three times as many weeks out of the labour force.
- The relative employment of people with intellectual disabilities was only about a third (38%) that of the general population in 2001 (26.8% vs. 70.5%).
- People with disabilities were nearly three times as likely (67.8% vs. 23.5%) to be outside the labour force (i.e., neither working, looking for work, nor available for work).
- People with a severe level of disability are much less likely to be employed than people with a lesser degree of disability.

Meaningful employment is generally recognized as the primary method by which adults contribute to their individual well-being and to that of larger society. As Canadians we have come to expect and have reasonable choice in selecting and/or preparing for a job. Such choice is, however, often denied to persons with disabilities in this country. For too long, the world of work was closed to persons with disabilities due to a prevalence of inappropriate and negative beliefs and stereotypes. For many years, it was incorrectly assumed that persons with disabilities lacked the capacity, ability, and perhaps desire to work, to contribute, and to play a meaningful role in community. Thus, many people were denied opportunities to fulfill valued roles in our society.

In instances where employment is not denied at a fundamental rights level, systems have created (and maintained) multiple barriers to employment, that in effect deny persons with disabilities equal access and opportunity for employment.² Some of the more notable barriers include:

Internal/Personal

- Age - employment rates decline with age
- Gender - women are less likely than men to have and keep jobs
- Type of disability - the different “disability groups” are represented to varying degrees in the labour market
- Severity of disability - persons with significant disabilities are less likely to be in the labour market

External/Social

An inadequate supply of, and access to, personal and employment-related disability supports, including:

- Extraordinary costs of disability
- Access to rehabilitative services
- Accessible and affordable transportation
- Access to employment counselling
- Social isolation and segregation
- Lack of job accommodation

² Goss Gilroy Inc., with Institute for Human Resource Development and Don Gallant and Associates. May 2, 2003. “*Doing What Works*” A Review of Research on Barriers to Participation in the Labour Market: Background Report for the Labour Market Strategy. Prepared for Department of Human Resources and Employment Province of Newfoundland and Labrador

Lower levels of education and skills:

- Generally lower levels of education, training and work experience
- High student debt load and limited job prospects

Negative attitudes and behaviour on the part of employers, family, service providers, and society in general:

- Negative attitudes
- Low expectations
- Fear of high accommodation costs
- Lack of accessibility

Disincentives in the Income Support System:

- Allowable income and Claw-backs
- Eligibility criterion

Limited availability of labour market information, including information regarding available supports and services; for both persons with disabilities and potential employers:

- Lack of access to job/labour market information
- School to work transitions

The current low employment rate of persons with disabilities is the result of a combination of many of the factors described above, including general demographics, disability- and employment-related needs, and environmental and other barriers. Singularly and collectively these factors often serve to discourage and prevent people from seeking employment. People with disabilities are affected by a multitude of policy and program factors aside from disability itself. Taken together, these factors can create layers of disadvantage and multiple barriers to employment.

1.1.1.2 Provincial Labour Market Context

Persons with disabilities in this province face many, if not all, of these same barriers as they attempt to prepare for, attain and maintain employment. The low provincial employment rate for persons with disabilities would certainly indicate that increased attention should be given to facilitating a more active participation by persons with disabilities in the labour market. Relevant statistics underscoring this situation include:³

- Adults (of working age) with disabilities are more likely to have lower levels of education:
 - Provincially, 8% have completed university (compared to a national average of 12%)
 - In Newfoundland and Labrador almost 40% of persons with disabilities have not completed high school (compared to a 24% national average)
- 59% of persons with disabilities (who are working) report income levels of less than \$20,000 (compared to 43% for other Canadians).

³ The Roeher Institute. 2004. *Improving the Odds: Disability, Employment and Public Programs in Canada*. Toronto

Approximately 12% (statistical estimates range from 10% – 15%) of the population of this province report as having some type of disability. These populations however remains disproportionately represented on the provincial Income Support caseload in that departmental estimates indicate that almost one quarter of persons in receipt of Income Support have a disability. This continued reality reinforces the necessity for HRLE to continue, and perhaps accelerate, its efforts to assist this population to enter and remain in the workforce.

While this province has experienced relatively positive economic growth during the past five years, recent labour market information indicates that we continue to face high levels of out-migration, a declining population and labour market shortages in certain sectors. A number of demand and supply side factors such as a rise in the education and training requirements for many occupations, and demographic factors are contributing to frequent employer reports of labour market shortages across the province. This is further complicated by the fact that other areas of North America are simultaneously experiencing labour market shortages driving up competition for skilled workers. The shortages will intensify in coming years as the working age population and the estimated labour force is projected to begin shrinking in the early part of the next decade.

Underrepresented groups in the labour market, such as persons with disabilities, constitute key targets for intervention. These individuals represent a significant untapped labour pool that, with access to appropriate education, training and employment supports, could enter the labour force. To position this population to take advantage of the current labour market situation will require specific targeted interventions – interventions directed at assisting persons with disabilities to address and overcome the myriad of disability-related and systemic barriers and disadvantages. Without such active interventions previous experience has demonstrated that, for many persons with disabilities, entry and retention in the workforce will be difficult, if not impossible.

1.1.2 Policy Context

‘Persons with disabilities have the right to participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation’ (In Unison, 2000⁴).

The Vision articulated in *In Unison* sets an ultimate goal of Full Citizenship for persons with disabilities. It is a vision based on the guiding values and principles of equality, inclusion, rights and responsibilities, and empowerment and participation. Citizenship is built upon three building blocks: Disability Supports, Employment and Income.

For persons with disabilities, who historically have been excluded from the labour market, employment is more than a matter of earning a wage. Employment is a significant vehicle through which community participation and contribution, and ultimately full citizenship, is exercised. In recent years, access to employment has been framed as an equality rights issue by persons with disabilities who now expect the public system in this country to facilitate access to the necessary supports and conditions that make it possible to acquire and retain jobs. They argue that such supports should be publicly funded, and should include the full range of accommodations required to successfully attain and retain employment.

⁴ Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Social Services. December 2002. *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues - A Vision Paper*.

The Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (Multilateral Framework) represents a formal commitment by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services to building a strong, inclusive society – one that facilitates the securing of a high quality of life for all Canadians with disabilities. The Multilateral Framework indicates agreement, among all levels of government, that all Canadian citizens should have an opportunity to contribute to the social and economic fabric of the country. The Multilateral Framework provides a cost sharing mechanism between the federal and provincial/territorial governments designed to assist in the delivery of programs and services that enable persons with disabilities to prepare for participation and employment in the labour market, retain employment and/or remove employment barriers so that people with disabilities can live with dignity and realize their capacity for independence.

As part of the Multilateral Framework, a number of societal indicators of appropriate labour market participation were agreed on, including:

- Employment rate of working age persons with disabilities;
- Employment income; and
- Educational attainment.

The goal of the Multilateral Framework is, simply stated, to improve the employment situation of people with disabilities. This goal of enhanced employment is to be achieved through attainment of one of the following objectives:

- Enhancing the employment of people with disabilities;
- Increasing the employment opportunities available to people with disabilities; and
- Building on the existing knowledge base.

Additionally there is agreement on the following five priority areas for action:

- Education and training;
- Employment participation;
- Employment opportunities;
- Connecting employers and persons with disabilities; and
- Building knowledge.

In April 2004, Newfoundland and Labrador entered into a two-year Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD). Under this agreement, the federal government agreed to cost share up to 50% of the cost of programs and services that meet the objective(s) of the agreement, up to a maximum of approximately \$4.5 million per fiscal year. The LMAPD is the successor to the five-year Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Agreement with Human Resources Development Canada that was signed in 1998.

Since its initial inception in 1997 as the Department of Human Resources and Employment, the current Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE)⁵ has had a mandate to provide an integrated approach to proactive human resource development through the co-ordination of labour market services and income support, and the provision of a continuum of income support and labour market services. HRLE has moved from an approach of ‘passive’ income support for social assistance recipients to a more proactive, integrated approach designed to, where possible, help clients join or re-enter the labour market.

⁵ The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment was formed in 2004 with the addition of Youth Services and Immigration, and with responsibility for the Labour Relations Agency.

Through its ongoing process of re-design, HRLE has made significant changes to service delivery and developed and implemented new programs and services to help its clients (including persons with disabilities) to find and keep employment. Enhancements include, but are not limited to, increased efforts toward career development assistance for its clients through access to Career Development Specialists and Client Service Officers, the use of an Enhanced Screening Assessment, rapid reinstatement to Income Support benefits (post employment), streamlined application processes, increased allowable earned income levels, extended health care coverage, and financial support to assist in transition to employment/education. Each of these enhancements addresses and lessens the known barriers to employment for persons with disabilities. Taken collectively, they indicate the development of a positive policy context directed toward enabling persons with disabilities to both attain and retain employment.

The department has also invested in research and pilot projects to better understand its clients, the barriers they face, and what works in helping them to obtain and keep employment. These initiatives have positioned HRLE to strategically invest in programs and services that will lead to enhanced employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

In addition to those career and employment services that HRLE provides to all its clients, the strategy directed toward enhanced employment outcomes for persons with disabilities includes investment and partnership with community-based disability organizations. This investment in the disability sector enables those organizations with acknowledged affinity to, and understanding of, persons with disabilities (and the challenges they face) to play a lead role in creating active linkages to the labour market. Such investment builds on and strengthens the cooperative relationship between HRLE and these disability organizations. Perhaps more importantly, this continued partnership with community-based disability organizations reflects an appropriate acknowledgement by HRLE that achieving increased employment for persons with disabilities is an objective that cannot and should not be achieved by any one sector working in isolation. As data provided throughout the remainder of this report demonstrates, positive outcomes are best achieved when community and government work in partnership.

1.1.3 Provincial Program Context

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Departments of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE), Health and Community Services (HCS), Education, and the Public Service Secretariat provide programs and services to assist persons with disabilities. The total annual cost of these provincial programs and services is approximately \$11.5 million, against which approximately \$4.6 million in federal funds (received via the LMAPD) are applied.

Programs offered within the context of the LMAPD include HRLE Administrative Services, Training Services and Employment Corporations (co-worker funding), HCS Addiction Programs (administration and services), Post-Secondary Programs (general vocational and Waterford Hospital), and Employment Equity and Strategic Initiatives Division (Opening Doors Program and Enabling Resource Centre).

HRLE and HCS both partner with third party agencies in the delivery of specific employment and career development services. These include such programs/services as Newfoundland Coordinating Council on Deafness, Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centres, Independent Living Resource Centre,

Canadian Paraplegic Association – Newfoundland and Labrador Division, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and Interpreting Services of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The contractual relationships with HRLE are entered into within the policy framework of the Community Partnerships Program. The intent of the Community Partnerships Program is to assist HRLE to fulfill its mandate, goals and objectives to help clients prepare for, attain or maintain employment through the establishment of community partnerships (Income and Employment Support Policy and Procedures Manual, undated). The Community Partnerships Program policy and guidelines include requirements for proposals and reports, and set out the respective roles of HRLE and funded agencies. Annual funding agreements also include deliverables and reporting requirements.

This current evaluation focused on four programs funded under the Community Partnerships Program:

- the Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) operated by the Vera Perlin Society;
- the WORC operated by the Calypso Foundation;
- Full Steam Ahead (FSA), a program of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC); and
- the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) Career and Employment Case Management Centres (the four centres funded under the LMAPD).

While this is the first evaluation of these four programs, the agencies funded were the subject of previous reviews conducted by HRLE, in particular the review of projects funded under the Vocational Rehabilitation Development Program (VRDP) for consistency with the new Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Agreement (EAPD).

As part of its ongoing service re-design, HRLE is redefining and strengthening the role of its regional staff. This is designed to achieve a more proactive and meaningful relationship with community agencies and assign regional staff a more active role in the management of relevant contracts. As the data will indicate, such a partnership works best when each partner understands and fulfills its role, and where practice is supported within a strong policy and administrative framework.

Clearly the attainment of increased employment for persons with disabilities is not a goal easily or quickly attained. Research has identified a multitude of factors that mitigate against successful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. Research has also found that where needed policy and program measures are in place the employment situation of people with disabilities generally improves. This report reveals that despite specific challenges and noted areas for improvement, the partnership between HRLE and community is strong and effective. The challenge and opportunity is now to build on and solidify the partnerships created. It is anticipated that one of the outcomes of this current evaluation will be the utilization of relevant findings to further define contract and partnership relationships related to program targets, program structure and intended and measurable outcomes.

1.2 Evaluation Methodology

1.2.1 Overview

The evaluation was carried out as follows:

- The four programs were evaluated as separate entities, within the context of the overall LMAPD. Common information gathering instruments were used with some tailoring of

- questions and instruments to specific programs as needed.
- A consultant was assigned as the lead for each program to gather information and draft the report (In the case of the CPA program which had four sites, two consultants gathered information and collaborated on the report.)
 - During information gathering and analysis of evidence, the consultants collaborated on an ongoing basis to ensure consistency of approach.
 - The consultants worked together in a ‘challenge review’ of the draft report on each program to ensure consistency in analysis, findings and recommendations. They worked together on the summary findings and recommendations.

1.2.2 Methods

The approach involved the following core methods:

- Finalization of methodology;
- Site visits;
- Telephone survey of clients⁶ of CPA and FSA;
- Face to face interviews with WORC participants;
- Employer telephone interviews;
- Administrative data analysis and match to Income Assistance data.

1.2.3 Evaluation Methodology

HRLE put in place an evaluation steering committee comprised of program managers and consultants from the Provincial Office. GGI collaborated with the committee in the finalization of the evaluation methodology, building on the design included in the call for proposals.

HRLE had developed initial logic models for each of the four programs and these were fine-tuned through the information gathering process.

1.2.4 Evaluation Issues and Questions

The following chart sets out the evaluation issues and related research questions used for the evaluation.

Evaluation issues and research questions

Issues	Research questions
CONTEXT	
1. How does the design of the program meet the needs of the client group?	In consideration of program design, - What needs assessment process, if any, was used to establish need for this program?

⁶ When describing projects and the evaluation methods in general the term ‘client’ is used to refer to recipients of services. In the chapters related to individual projects, this report uses the term most commonly used by the respective programs (i.e. client, participant, consumer).

Issues	Research questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What gap in services is the program designed to address? - What would you characterize as the underlying rationale for the approach/model used in this program? - Are the objectives clearly defined? - Is there a clear organizational and program structure, policy, tools and supports in place to guide program delivery? - How is the program compatible with HRLE policies as related to employment and employment supports for persons with disabilities? - Does program design reflect a best practice in employment programming for the client group? Elaborate. - What other factors were considered in program design? - Did persons with disabilities have any input into the program design?
<p>2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the four models? Are people with disabilities served well by these models?</p>	<p>The attached model describes the program. Does this capture accurately the program design? Are there any significant features missing?</p> <p>What would you view as the major strengths of the program? Are there any weaknesses? How could these weaknesses be addressed?</p> <p>What is done to ensure staff are able to deliver appropriate services (effectiveness of recruitment processes, staff development, tools and resources provided for staff)</p>
<p>RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES</p> <p>3. How well do the programs coordinate with other service providers who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?</p>	<p>Are there other agencies in this service area that offer employment-related services to the clientele of the program? Please name key agencies.</p> <p>What is the relationship between the program and HRLE?</p> <p>How does the program coordinate activities with the other agencies? (provide and discuss examples of linkages, referral procedures, processes used, etc)</p> <p>What linkages/initiatives are in place with the business community to achieve program objectives and client outcomes? How well are these working?</p>
<p>4. To what extent do the services provided by the four programs complement those offered by other agencies, particularly HRLE?</p> <p>5. To what extent do the four services duplicate or overlap with services provided by other agencies, particularly HRLE?</p>	<p>With respect to overall coordination with other employment-related agencies, how well do you think this is working as related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring complementarity of services to clients? - Avoiding service duplication? <p>How, if at all, does the program enhance clients' access to services and supports provided by other agencies?</p> <p>Are there ways in which the relationship between employment agencies could be strengthened?</p>

Issues	Research questions
6. To what extent do clients use employment-related programs or services? Is the need to rely on other agencies for additional assistance for clients (accommodations, wage subsidies) an efficient way to provide services?	How important are employment-related supports (e.g. accommodations, wage subsidies, etc.) to attaining successful client outcomes?
OTHER SERVICES: 7. How well do the programs coordinate with providers of other related services who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?	Are there agencies offering other services that the program coordinates with (e.g. social, health services)? Please name key agencies. How well is this coordination working (examples of linkages and processes used)? In consideration of what you have stated regarding service coordination what if anything could be done to improve overall service coordination?
INPUTS	
8. Are the services offered by each program appropriate for the actual clients they assist?	What process is used to plan and adjust the program to respond to the needs of clients and labour market circumstances? (examples of any adjustments/refinements to program design and/or delivery) Is the program reaching its target clientele? What evidence is there to indicate adequate program reach? (e.g. marketing/promotion efforts, community referral process)
9. To what degree are the programs able to cater to differing individual needs?	What intake/needs assessment process is carried out with new clients? (process specific to the program, or tailored from an existing assessment tool, extent of self-identification of needs). How effective is this intake process? Is there an existing wait list for entry into the program? If so how extensive?
PROCESS	
10. How is progress towards goals measured for the program?	How are successful outcomes for the program defined? (employment and other) How are program targets: - Established? - Measured? - Tracked & managed? - Met?
11. How is progress towards goals measured for individual clients?	To what extent are interventions tailored to individual needs? What part does the client play in this process? How long does a client typically receive services? Under what criteria are clients considered to no longer be clients of the program? Is there follow-up after clients finish receiving services (please describe)?

Issues	Research questions
<p>12. To what extent are unpaid job placements useful in enabling clients to progress?</p>	<p>Does the program utilize unpaid job placements on behalf of clients? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are these used? - How useful are these unpaid placements in helping clients progress? (examples of changes they help facilitate for clients) - Are there any negative unintended impacts of unpaid job placements? How could these be minimized?
PRODUCTS	
<p>13. Do participants of the program achieve sustainable employment?</p>	<p>To what extent do clients in the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce their barriers to employment and move towards employability? What evidence is there of this progress? - Move on to other training or employment-preparation programming? - Find work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that is not subsidized/funded by government? - that is subsidized by government? <p>Indicators of outcomes:</p> <p>Sustainable employment defined as employment not funded by a government program for one year or more in keeping with client objectives (full-time, part-time or seasonal)</p> <p>Employability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - career decision making - job search - skill enhancement - employment maintenance - Staff perceptions and admin data on changes in client needs/barriers over time - Client perceptions of changes in skills and confidence regarding job search, employment - Incidence of completing training or other programs - Employer perceptions of work experience gained by clients/job performance - changes in work patterns – hours, seasonal, temporary, occupation <p>Quantitative:</p> <p>Savings to Income Support</p>
<p>14. What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?</p>	<p>What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?</p> <p>To what extent do clients' show improvements in their health and well-being? Please describe. To what extent did the services of this program facilitate this?</p>

1.2.5 Information Gathering

1.2.5.1 Site Visits

A site visit was made to each of the program sites by the assigned consultant. Prior to the visit, the program manager was contacted to explain the purpose of the evaluation and request they have available a number of program documents. An average of two days was spent at each site, during which interviews were conducted with the chair of the board and program manager, staff, local/regional HRLE manager/staff, representatives of up to two other organizations that the program has linkages with in providing client service, and interviews with two employers. During the site visits, a review was done of randomly selected client files. In most cases, follow up contact was made with the program manager for clarification of information or additional documentation.

A total of 57 interviews were conducted as part of this process. Individuals interviewed are included in Annex A to this report.

1.2.5.2 Surveys of Clients

CPA and FSA

Telephone surveys were conducted for these two programs using a team of research assistants trained for this specific survey.

The program managers were asked to provide names and contact information on all clients served since April 1, 2002. Clients were called at various times of the day and evening and on weekends, and as many times as necessary. In some cases up to 15 calls were made to complete the survey, get a refusal, or determine that they were unreachable. Interviews lasted from 15 to 55 minutes, with the average being around 30 minutes. The table below shows the results of these calls.

Client telephone survey results

CPA/FSA Clients			
	CPA	FSA	Total
Clients served with contact information	311	137	448
Questionnaires completed	95	82	177
Wrong and not in service numbers	88	28	116
Refused to do survey	32	11	43
Unable to contact after repeated attempts	35	10	45
Unable to complete because of disability/sickness	34	5	39
Did not receive services	27	1	28

Completed questionnaires were entered in SPSS for analysis.

Calypso and Vera Perlin WORC Programs

The managers of both programs were asked to provide names and contact numbers for the clients who participated in the programs since April 1, 2002.

In person interviews were conducted with clients of the two WORC programs. At each site, the consultant and the research assistant conducted some initial interviews together in order to get a first hand sense of client experiences. The research assistant conducted the remainder, with quality control provided by the consultant. Parents/guardians or other care givers were invited to attend the interviews where deemed appropriate.

A total of 40 interviews were planned and conducted as follows:

Calypso WORC Clients	
Number of client names provided	28
Number of interviews completed	22
Vera Perlin WORC Clients	
Number of client names provided	77
Number of interviews completed	18

1.2.5.3 Survey of Employers

The managers of all four programs were asked to provide names and contact information for all employers that had hired clients of the respective programs since April 2003. Interviews were conducted with employers in two ways:

- During site visits, the GGI consultant conducted a couple of interviews with selected employers deemed by the program to be more engaged in the program.
- The remainder were conducted by telephone by research assistants. Employers were randomly selected from each program for telephone interviews.

The methodology called for completing 50 employer interviews in total. These were done as follows:

CPA Employers	
Number of employer names provided	46 ⁷
Number of interviews completed	23
Calypso WORC Employers	
Number of employer names provided	18
Number of interviews completed	7
Vera Perlin WORC Employers	
Number of employer names provided	35
Number of interviews completed	18

1.2.5.4 Administrative Data Review and Participant Profile

The managers of the four programs were asked to provide administrative data on all participants who received services through the programs during the period from April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2005 and on any employers who employed these participants. The participant data requested included Social Insurance Number (SIN), name, address, phone number, date of birth, type of service, start date, end date, and source of funding. Employer data requested included the employer name, contact person, phone numbers, and whether placements were unpaid, subsidized, or unsubsidized.

Data on participants was used to generate a list of SINs provided to HRLE. The department then extracted information on Income Support payments and program participation for each individual over the reference period. Administrative data was then linked to survey data and this combined data was used to generate a profile of participants and their participation in the four programs being evaluated.

Income Support data on all participants for which a valid SIN was provided was used to calculate savings to this program. Participants in all four programs who received Income Support in 2001 were included, and a comparison was made of their Income Support payments in 2001 and 2005.

⁷ This includes employers at the CPA sites in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Port Saunders and Bay Roberts. CPA St. John's identified employers who had hired clients of CPA. However, this site uses an empowerment approach where clients find their own jobs. It was determined following a few interview attempts that interviews would not be appropriate for that site as employers were not aware of the CPA role with the placements.

2.0 Evaluation of Full Steam Ahead - Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) St. John's

2.1 Report Summary

Full Steam Ahead (FSA) is an employment and career exploration program for people with disabilities delivered within an Independent Living model of consumer empowerment. Consumers create their own individual programs based on self-identification of their goals and aspirations within a supportive, respectful environment in which they can make choices, take risks, be the decision makers and generally control their own career directions. FSA was developed in response to an identified need to assist people experiencing significant disability-related barriers to employment and training and for whom access to more generic services is difficult or impossible.

FSA is a program of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) and has been funded by Human Resources, Labour and Employment since 2001. It primarily serves the St. John's metro region and to a lesser degree the entire Avalon region, with some level of service afforded to consumers around the province through e-mail and phone contacts. There is one staff person, a Career Development Coordinator, who has been with the program since inception.

The evaluation indicates that FSA is responsive to consumers' individual, informational, skill development, and employment-related needs. Participant feedback on the program demonstrates satisfaction with its consumer-directed, participant-centred and flexible approaches.

The following is a brief summary of the findings related to each of the evaluation issues:

CONTEXT - FSA has clear goals and objectives. It is supportive of HRLE's focus on equitable and inclusive communities and compatible with its mandate to move people from Income Support to employment. There are clearly delineated program processes and activities in which consumers can participate and its career development options are broad.

As evidenced by the participant survey, most FSA participants are satisfied with the services they received. The few who offered suggestions referenced the need for more staff and volunteer resources and increased follow up. Informants noted that an increased caseload and more complex participant profile are placing pressure on program resources.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES - There are strong links between FSA and a range of external organizations providing employment services, founded on clear lines of communication, respect for each other's mandates and complementary activities. HRLE and FSA are closely linked through on-going information sharing and a program Steering Committee which includes representatives from both HRLE's Provincial Office and the Avalon Region.

INPUTS - FSA offers a comprehensive individualized and participant driven intake and assessment process. Program interventions are tailored to individuals' needs, with the consumer identifying the

supports and services he/she requires to achieve his/her employment goals. Responses to the participant survey showed that the majority of FSA participants did develop an employment plan.

The FSA program has evolved to respond to participants' changing needs and identified trends. It has developed an employment advocacy process in which the FSA Coordinator can act as the intermediary between the consumer and the employer in an effort to bridge difficulties that consumers have when they are communicating with employers. Another tool - the employment proposal - allows consumers to highlight their skills and develop a job description fitting their characteristics and abilities.

A majority of participants rated FSA services as being useful in improving their employability skills. The services rated most highly were related to empowering participants to carry out their own career and employment plans.

There is no waitlist for FSA. However, with the increased caseload informants stated that the FSA Coordinator might not be able to be as timely in his interventions with participants nor spend as much time as needed with those with complex needs. The program is described as serving its target group, although informants noted that it does not yet have adequate reach to all those who could avail of its services.

PROCESS - Due to FSA's individualized nature, there are no overall numerical program targets: participants define their own goals and objectives; progress is individually determined and defined. Exit dates are established by each individual based on his/her continuing need for the program supports and services. When they feel ready, participants can begin to independently job search and market themselves.

In general, FSA's intent is not to directly link consumers with employment; rather the intent is to provide participants the skills and abilities, confidence and self-esteem they need to be able to secure employment on their own. The FSA Coordinator is not an employment broker.

FSA includes detailed aggregate data on participant outcomes in its annual reports. This assists both with program analysis and accountability.

PRODUCTS – FSA participants move along the employability continuum as they gain the confidence, skills and abilities to do so. The data indicate that, year over year, there is an increase in program participation and employment outcomes with increasing numbers achieving attachment to the labour force for a period of time. Survey respondents noted improvements in their employability skills and their ability to get and keep a job: 95.7% of respondents rated the employment-related services they had received as somewhat to very helpful in removing or reducing problems they faced in finding employment. Over half of participants (56%) who had worked since receiving services had found unsubsidized employment.

Evidence from the participant survey demonstrates that participation in FSA positively impacts consumers' quality of life. In particular, they reported that participation positively influenced how they view their own capacity for success and contribution. A significant proportion of participants report positive changes in overall health status and quality of life since participation in FSA. However, this area shows less change compared to impacts on employability.

The findings are listed at the end of the report for ease of reference. The report does not make any recommendations, as the findings do not indicate that changes are needed.

2.2 Overview of Program

Full Steam Ahead (FSA) is a job search and career exploration program which uses an Independent Living (IL) model of service delivery to assist people experiencing significant disability-related barriers to employment and training, and for whom access to more generic services is difficult or impossible. The IL model is one of consumer empowerment: persons with disabilities are provided the tools and information they require to make choices and decisions which positively influence the quality of their lives and which facilitate their becoming self-reliant. FSA assists individuals in making employment choices, weighing out risks and gaining ownership over their career development.

FSA is a program of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) - a community-based, disability resource centre which is based on the IL model and philosophy. The ILRC endeavours to deliver its programs and services, including FSA, in a safe, supportive environment designed to provide consumers with individualized opportunities to achieve their articulated goals and attain their desired lifestyles.

The FSA program, which has been offered at the ILRC since 1998, began as a component of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centre's *Navigating the Waters* project. As this was expected to be a time-limited pilot, the ILRC sought and secured alternative funding for FSA in 2001-02 from the Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment (HRLE). Based on positive results, FSA has been operating with HRLE funding since that time.

FSA primarily serves the St. John's metro region and to a lesser degree the entire Avalon region. Through e-mail and phone calls, the program has provided some level of service to consumers around the province. There is one staff person, a Career Development Coordinator, who has been with the program since inception. HRLE provides \$50,695 in annual funding for FSA. Of note, HRLE also provided funding to the ILRC for an Adaptive Technology (AT) Coordinator in 2005-06. This staff person has supported FSA consumers to explore the AT available on-site at the ILRC in order to determine what best meets their needs.

The logic model for Full Steam Ahead is presented in the following chart:

Full Steam Ahead Program Logic Model

Component	
TARGET	Individuals with disabilities with and without attachment to Income Support
PROGRAM INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment Counselling - exploring all aspects of employment for consumers - Skill development - Education/training assistance - Labour market information - Group employment sessions - Job search - Resume development - Employment proposals - Employment advocacy - Barrier identification and removal
OTHER INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodations - Generic programs - Wage subsidies
OUTPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced employability - Enhanced career and skill awareness
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness/understanding of labour market - Employment - Savings to Income Support - Reduced health care costs
IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased labour market participation - Improved personal well-being

2.3 Findings

In this section, the findings in relation to each of the research issues are presented. The reporting format used is as follows: the research issue and related research questions are stated, the related findings are presented and each finding is followed by the supporting evidence gathered from all lines of evidence in the evaluation.

2.3.1 Research Issue - CONTEXT

Research Questions:

- How are employment-related goals/objectives for persons with disabilities identified?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model? Are people with disabilities served well by the model?

Finding: FSA is supportive of HRLE's focus on equitable and inclusive communities and is compatible with its mandate to move people from Income Support to employment.

In the FSA 2004-05 funding proposal to HRLE, there is a clear statement of support for HRLE's commitment to equitable and inclusive communities. Further, it is identified that FSA demonstrates this commitment through provision of inclusive services and outreach efforts to persons with disabilities who have "...historically been excluded from generic employment programs."

Finding: Full Steam Ahead (FSA) is a specialized and unique employment and career exploration program for people with disabilities delivered within an Independent Living framework. FSA was developed in response to an identified need to assist persons with disabilities who were experiencing significant disability-related barriers to gaining access to generic employment services and the labour market.

In 1998, the ILRC applied to the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) for funding to have a career development staff person at the ILRC to help consumers explore employment in a relaxed setting. Specifically, staff was to assist people who had more significant barriers, such as those with multiple disabilities. It was believed that these individuals were being "turned away" by other government agencies and service providers who had decided the consumers' potential for employment was non-existent or extremely limited.

According to program informants, consumers had stated that some employment programs were "creaming" or picking those with the highest skill levels and providing the best service to them, as they were likely to be successful. Other services were not accommodating people. Consumers were coming to the ILRC looking for work and support and communicating their displeasure with other community employment services. There appeared to be a need for a process to assist persons with disabilities in mitigating their barriers to job search and finding employment.

The ILRC conducted an environmental scan in the fall of 1997 to seek input from consumers on how it could support them in their employment aspirations and goals. The resulting information was used to design and develop the ILRC's FSA program. It was initially funded through the Opportunities Fund and launched in 1998. As noted above, there is one staff person.

FSA is a responsive employment program in which consumers create their own individual programs based on a self-identification of their goals and aspirations, although there are clearly delineated processes and activities in which consumers can participate. The FSA career development options are broad. Participants identify their employment goals and values, i.e. what are important considerations for defining their future (financial prosperity; health and wellness; family; etc.), and as well they look at their employment-related barriers and solutions.

Participants first focus on defining their short-term goals, which are broken down into manageable steps, thereby enabling consumers to experience a sense of accomplishment as they achieve each step. It is felt that looking at the bigger and longer-term picture could be overwhelming for participants, although they are encouraged to define their three-year goals. Individuals are provided access to a group of services including pre-employment skills development, skills inventory, job search, accommodation in the workplace and assistance with entrepreneurial activity. These have been identified over the years as being of importance to consumers.

In addition to the supports just mentioned, additional funding has been sought from HRLE to provide FSA participants, on an as-needed basis, with disability-related supports including sign language interpretation, transportation, and family supports such as child care. Informants stated that without these kinds of supports, many consumers would not be able to participate in the program.

Finding: FSA has clearly articulated goals and objectives which have evolved over time to reflect changing trends in the labour force and in adaptive technology.

In FSA's 2006–07 funding submission to HRLE, its overall goals and objectives are articulated as follows:

Goal: To assist people who have disabilities to prepare for, attain and/or maintain employment.

Objectives:

- 1. To provide learning opportunities about the labour market in preparation for setting employment goals.*
- 2. To provide skill development opportunities in areas of skill inventory, resume writing, interview techniques, job search, etc.*
- 3. To provide information and learning opportunities about employment resources, accommodations, rights in the work place, etc.*
- 4. To facilitate problem solving by individuals who experience disability-related barriers to employment.*
- 5. To facilitate the identification of and access to Adaptive Technology for individuals who encounter disability-related barriers in accessing computers and Internet.*
- 6. To develop and implement skill development opportunities in the use of adaptive technology (individual or group).*
- 7. To facilitate on-line career development.*
- 8. To facilitate and/or coordinate entrepreneurial supports.*
- 9. To assist individuals in connecting with generic and disability-related employment and career program/resources.*
- 10. To provide opportunities which are empowering and that encourage individuals to take ownership of their career plan(s).*
- 11. To gather and share information about barriers to employment experienced by people who have disabilities.*

12. *To develop and provide innovative strategies such as employment proposals and employment advocacy.*
13. *To provide awareness and information sessions to governments, educational facilities and businesses.*

Over the course of the last several years, program objectives have evolved to reflect emerging trends. Objectives related to technology (#5,6,7) were added in recognition of the need for consumers to be supported to access the Internet, e-mail, spreadsheets, etc., in order to engage in training and effective job search, among other activities. Further, an option for entrepreneurial activity (#8) was added.

Finding: FSA creates an environment which supports consumers in accessing the services they need.

FSA is not about doing things for the consumers, rather it is about working with them to identify their employment goals and assist them to address disability-related issues which are negatively impacting on their search for/retention of employment, and to develop skills – all processes designed to move them to employability. Consumers who are interested in FSA meet with the Coordinator to learn more about the program and to discuss approaches and activities which meet their learning needs and interests.

Informants stated there is an “informality” of approach and a total focus on, and respect for, the consumer – both of which are considered to offset feelings of intimidation. FSA participants are supported by the Coordinator and can access other ILRC services such as information, networking and individual advocacy as required. Further, they are supported to access services in the broader community and from government. The process is described as one of empowerment, as FSA participants make choices, take risks, are the decision makers and, generally, control their own career directions.

This program creates and provides a safe non-judgmental environment for consumers – one in which they can make mistakes and change their minds about an employment goal/direction without fear that there will be a loss of “something” or that services will be withdrawn. The approach is “Let’s try another option or the next option.” The Program’s focus is on what a person can do and achieve and, thus, is seen to better respond to the needs of those who are not considered to be well served by generic employment services.

Program informants stated that, in contrast, there could be fear associated with involvement in a government based program making referrals to such interventions as training programs and wage subsidy placements. For example, some consumers perceive that should they change their minds about an employment goal or withdraw from a program, there would be repercussions in terms of their funding from the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD). Informants provided several examples: some individuals have felt “pressure” that if their marks in post-secondary training are not good enough they may lose their HRLE funding; others worry that due to a mental illness or physical illness, they may lose their funding. Further, and for some, the process of studying may be very stressful and full course loads may not be realistic. Yet some feel that this is their only option if they access LMAPD funding. In relation to employment goals, individuals sometimes fear that if a wage subsidy position does not work out they may not be able to secure more funding in the future. There is not the same fear associated with being referred to such programs by FSA.

Finding: FSA staff is well supported personally and professionally to deliver the program.

Administratively, there is a well-defined policy framework for the ILRC for delivery of all of its programs including FSA. There is a clear organizational structure in terms of supervision of, and support to, the FSA staff by the ILRC Executive Director who provides individualized support tailored to the needs of staff members. As with all ILRC staff, the FSA Coordinator takes part in a regular self-evaluation in which they identify personal and professional goals including training goals and then avail of opportunities as they are presented. The ILRC holds a weekly staff meeting. ILRC staff is a team and described as very supportive of each other. The FSA Coordinator has attended employment conferences and has received training in career development and tools such as using databases, PowerPoint and other computer programs. It was noted that because practices and approaches in career development change so rapidly, the Coordinator is always updating his knowledge to remain current.

Finding: The increased caseload and more complex participant profile are placing pressure on program resources.

In the early years of the program, there was a participant base of 20 to 30 consumers and now the caseload is closer to 100. Informants identified that those who now are coming to/remains with the program have more complex issues than those who initially accessed services. Early FSA participants generally moved through the program within a few months, availing of what they needed. They required less intensive support than the current consumers, who are longer term participants with more multi-faceted challenges and barriers to employment.

Among respondents who participated in the survey for this current evaluation, 28% had participated in FSA for up to one year; 24% for one to two years; 22% for two to three years; and 27% for more than three years.

Almost one quarter of survey respondents (24%) report as having less than high school graduation, with a further 29% holding an educational level of high school with no further post-secondary education. Approximately 8% cite having some post-secondary education and 40% said they had completed a post-secondary degree or diploma program.

The needs of current participants are resulting in increased demands on the program and the one staff person, because there is a higher and longer level of support demanded. FSA staff can see all of those who come to the program, but it is recognized that those with more complex challenges need a level of support that staff do not always have time to provide, since efforts are made to balance the needs of all of the FSA participants.

Another program demand has been identified through FSA participants increasing use of the ILRC's Adaptive Technology (AT) services. Informants at the ILRC highlighted the need for on-line employment-related support to be available on a consistent basis to persons with disabilities, particularly those with mobility disabilities. While current FSA staff can provide some support over the phone and via e-mail, informants saw a need for resources to hire an employment coordinator (an E-powerment Coordinator) to provide on-line assistance - answer questions, inform consumers about available resources, etc.

Finding: Most FSA participants are satisfied with the services received and few offer suggestions for improvements.

In the participant survey, respondents were asked about their overall satisfaction with FSA services and any areas for improvement. Eighty-eight percent (72) of the 82 respondents to the survey were somewhat satisfied (23%) or very satisfied (65%) with the services they received from FSA. Only 2.4% were somewhat dissatisfied.

Twenty-three percent (19) of the respondents offered suggestions for improvements to FSA services. The suggestions (including number of times mentioned) are as follows:

- Focus more on employment opportunities/outreach to employers (6)
- More staff/volunteers (5)
- More disability supports/programs (4)
- Improved outreach, use of email to connect with participants (3)
- More follow up with participants (2)

2.3.2 Research Issue – RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES

Research Questions:

- How well does the program coordinate with other service providers who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?
- To what extent do the services provided by the program complement those offered by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do the services duplicate or overlap with services provided by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do clients use employment-related programs or services? Is the need to rely on other agencies for additional assistance for clients (accommodations, wage subsidies) an efficient way to provide services?
- How well does the program coordinate with providers of other related services who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?

Finding: There are strong links between FSA and a range of external organizations providing employment services, founded on clear lines of communication, respect for each other's mandates and complementary activities.

Early on, FSA established links with other community agencies, government departments and post-secondary training institutions offering employment services, resources and supports – to inform them of FSA and to gather information on their services for dissemination to FSA participants. FSA annual reports identify the importance of such communication links and information-sharing in avoiding duplication of service and enabling consumers to make informed choices about accessing other generic or targeted employment programs and services they might want or need. All informants stated that there are strong linkages between FSA and a range of external organizations providing employment services. There is a level of respect for each other and the work each does.

The external employment agencies consulted view FSA (and more broadly the ILRC) as a valuable resource for information about disability and in assisting them in better serving persons with disabilities. As well, FSA is a conduit to the many other supportive, individualized, non-employment-

related services co-located at the ILRC - a significant benefit to the consumer. Informants generally noted that there is no duplication of service but rather that services complement each other.

For example, clients of Stella Burry Community Services are given a tour of the ILRC to provide them with an understanding of the centre's cross-disability focus and an overview of the range of programs and services available to them. Some of these clients are referred to FSA for assistance in seeking funding from the Opportunities Fund or LMAPD and for assistance with acquiring needed adaptive technology. Conversely, FSA staff might provide information about Stella Burry Community Services to a participant who might require its services although, in keeping with the IL approach, referrals are not made. Rather, the choice to access the relevant service is left to the participant.

The relationship between the FSA and the Y Employment Services (the Y) was described as excellent, clear and complementary. The Y, which works with people who are job ready, values what FSA (and more broadly the ILRC) provides to it as a partner organization - in terms of sharing information and its expertise on persons with disabilities. Informants from both the Y and FSA stated that FSA is cognizant of ensuring a consumer's interests are appropriately and effectively met. This is done either as individual organizations or in concert depending on an individual's needs. For example, for participants with disabilities who are not job ready, FSA can provide them a specialized service to work on pre-employment skills and barriers. Alternatively, persons with disabilities who are job ready and working with the Y could be accessing FSA for assistance in mitigating barriers which are disability-related and impact employment, or the person might access other ILRC services for help addressing more general disability-related barriers.

Typically, if FSA participants require non employment-related supports, the Coordinator tells them about the ILRC's other programs and services and encourages them to explore opportunities to access these supports. Consumers also access other agencies such as those offering credit counselling and home support. While FSA staff has extensive knowledge of the other non employment-related organizations/agencies (e.g. the Community Services Council) and the services they provide, there is no on-going link or communication with these groups. If a consumer expresses a need to access some of these external services, he/she is provided information and again the choice to access the relevant services is left to the consumer.

Finding: FSA's efforts are focused on building consumers' own capacity to link with employers rather than being the linking mechanism for them.

In general, FSA's intent is not to directly link consumers with employment; rather the intent is to provide participants the skills and abilities, confidence and self-esteem they need to be able to secure employment on their own. The FSA Coordinator is not an employment broker although it is noted he can support consumers in their interactions with employers should they request it (see Inputs section below).

Informants stated that FSA, and the ILRC more broadly, have recognized the need to try and build community capacity in terms of employment for consumers and have begun to strategize around processes which can create and/or strengthen links with the business community. The intent is to inform employers about the realities of employing persons with disabilities and, in so doing, hopefully increase opportunities for their inclusion in a range of employment sectors. No specific information regarding these initiatives was provided.

Finding: HRLE and FSA are closely linked through on-going information sharing and a program Steering Committee.

There is an FSA Steering Committee which meets quarterly or as required. This committee has representation from HRLE and its Avalon regional office, the ILRC staff and consumers. It is described as a venue for ensuring clarity of roles in particular what is demanded under the contract and the amount of information required for consumers to access various HRLE services; discussing on-going program activity; identifying patterns of participant activity; reviewing program direction; and presenting dilemmas and seeking solutions.

FSA participants can avail of HRLE funds for short-term training courses and, on limited occasions, an HRLE job broker has contacted FSA participants when there is a match of their skills to an employer's needs. FSA staff makes an effort to avoid duplication of service: it is felt that a participant who is availing of employment support from FSA does not need to see a Career Development Specialist for counselling but could interact with these staff for access to, for example, LMAPD funding or entry into post-secondary courses. If FSA participants choose to see a Career Development Specialist, it was identified that they go through an intake interview process with this service provider.

Finding: Disability-related employment supports and wage subsidies are considered to be critical to consumers increasing their employability and securing employment.

Informants stated that disability-related employment supports, from the minute to the expensive, are critical. These could include adaptive technology; communication aids, and information about accommodation in the workplace to employers who may not have experience in accommodating persons with disabilities. Some informants identified consumers with sensory disabilities, communication issues and multiple disabilities as those who, generally, need the most support in terms of accommodation. They are seen to have numerous (often significant) workplace barriers and experience difficulty securing employment. As well, wage subsidies are considered critical for many of these consumers due to their limited, or lack of, attachment to the labour force. It was felt that employers appear less receptive to considering someone for employment if they have little or no evidence of previous work experience.

Availability of the on-site AT program/staff at the ILRC over the last several months was identified as being of significant benefit to FSA participants. Consumers are supported to explore AT in a timely manner: with the assistance of staff they can try out the different technologies to identify what best meets their needs in general and for moving through the FSA program, and use the relevant technologies to access on-line career development and search for jobs on various provincial and national job banks. It was felt that in the past, their access to AT was somewhat impeded by having to wait to avail of professionals such as Occupational Therapists to assess them for their technology. Having on-site access to the technology and informed AT staff, enables a more timely assessment and identification of their AT needs and expedites the request for funding to agencies such as Service Canada or LMAPD.

Some informants reflected on the fact that disability-related supports are still too often seen as "special" assistance and not simply a right. Further, some questioned whether or not it remains easier for some persons to get access to supports because their disability-related needs are more easily accommodated. There is seen to be an inequity in access, depending on the type and severity of a person's disability.

Participants who responded to the survey were asked if they received help from sources other than FSA. Work experience/wage subsidy programs were accessed by 9.8% of participants and training/education by 8.5%. Both of these would fall under the responsibility of HRLE or the Opportunities Fund. Similar percentages said they needed these services but were unable to get them: 9.5% in the case of work experience/wage subsidy and 5.3% who needed training/education.

37.8% received other help, including the Opening Doors program (11%), the Vera Perlin Society and the Y (4.9% each), and Stella Burry Community Services, the Murphy Centre, the CPA, HRLE, and Avalon Employment (2.4% each).

2.3.3 Research Issue – INPUTS

Research Questions:

- Are the services offered by each program appropriate for the actual clients they assist?
- To what degree are the programs able to cater to differing individual needs?

Finding: There is a comprehensive individualized intake and assessment process designed to assist individuals in identifying and achieving their employment goals.

Informants stated that FSA has a comprehensive, consumer-controlled and participant-driven intake process which enables consumers to do a thorough self-assessment. Individuals first meet with the Coordinator to learn about the program and discuss approaches which would be best suited to their learning needs and interests. They are asked to complete an FSA Participation Form which concentrates on employment/career objectives and individual goal setting resulting in what is described as “a customized action plan”. As noted above, consumers identify their short- and long-term employment goals and values, their employment-related barriers and solutions.

Finding: All FSA interventions are tailored to individuals’ needs, with the consumer identifying the supports and services he/she requires to achieve his /her employment goals.

As noted earlier, the FSA 2004-05 funding proposal to HRLE describes the program approach as one which provides an opportunity for participants to take ownership of their own employment goals and career plans. It is noted that case management is participant-directed and consumer-driven: participants take on the responsibility of self assessment, tracking their own progress and altering goals as they acquire knowledge and skills. There are no pre-defined limits on the time that staff can devote to consumers to assist them in defining and moving towards employment goals although, as noted above, with an increasing and more complex case load the timeliness and level of interaction may be negatively impacted.

The approach taken is one focused on consumers’ abilities and solutions to their barriers rather than on what they cannot do. Some informants questioned the depth of understanding of the consumer in the workplace: there seems to be a continued sense that persons with disabilities are best able and suited for entry-level positions. FSA deconstructs these notions through its work with consumers – the program helps participants focus on what they want to be - not what society deems they can be.

There is an extensive array of topics and information available to FSA participants including understanding the workplace/workforce, accommodation, writing resumes and cover letters, setting goals that work for the individual, upgrading education and training, learning how to do labour market research and studies, and creating web resumes. Participants choose to undertake those which meet their

needs and are supported by the Coordinator as requested and required. Informants stated that participants define their own pace for moving through FSA. It was stressed that a fast-track approach with a focus on quick results does not work for the FSA target group.

FSA participants are first introduced to the program’s computerized database system which by its very design (bright colors and pictures, attractive font) appears to be inviting and non-threatening. Participants’ files contain their personal information as well as journal entries which track their goals, training and job search activity, employment placements, etc., and detail meetings and discussions with the Coordinator and any subsequent actions taken. As well, participants can access Career Cruising - a computerized career development tool which is also used by Service Canada.

Career Cruising is a comprehensive career guide that has the following components: matchmaker; explore careers; explore education and training; and a portfolio tool. FSA staff stated that the career matchmaker component provides consumers an excellent start in FSA as they can go through an interactive survey (39 questions) designed to help them identify how different careers match up with their interests. Careers are ranked according to their responses and, for each, consumers can have a look at required skills, training requirements, etc. As they move through the Career Cruising components, consumers can begin to develop their own portfolio to track their career development activities, develop a career plan and a comprehensive resume.

Responses to the participant survey showed that the majority of FSA participants did develop an employment plan and discuss integral components.

Participant perspective on the employment planning process	
Question	% responding “Yes”
Q7. Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?	75.9
Q8a. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?	83.8
Q8b. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?	86.2
Q8c. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?	89.0
Q8d. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?	95.9

As can be seen from this table, approximately 76% of all participants surveyed report having developed an employment plan. Over 80% indicated they had identified strengths and barriers to employment, their preferred employment options and what they needed to do to prepare for work. Other assistance consumers received included counselling (69.5%); resume writing (76.8%); assistance accessing labour market information (58.5%) and in job search (64.6%). None of the survey participants reported receiving assistance in the area of self-employment although, as noted earlier, it is an area which was

reported to have been of interest to a growing number of participants. 14.6% reported receiving assistance in maintaining employment.

It is noted that the percentage who had developed an action plan was slightly lower than that reported for the other employment processes. This may indicate that FSA does not explicitly use a formal action plan to document participants' and FSA commitments and responsibilities or that fewer participants understand the term 'action plan' as much as they do individual goal setting. It is an indication of a slightly weaker output for this step in the delivery process.

The Coordinator also provides participants with information on the realities of the labour market in relation to their expressed employment goals for particular fields of work. As well, consumers are encouraged to do labour market analysis in their chosen field. However, once a participant has gathered or been provided with all the relevant information, the decision to pursue a particular occupation or not is left to him/her.

Participants have provided feedback on the FSA program and excerpts are presented in FSA documents. The following is a sample of the positive comments reported:

Full Steam Ahead Final Report April 2002 – March 2003

Participant Feedback

“It’s consumer directed and does not seek to determine for us what we can do and what we want to do. It also gives valuable information about funding and programs that are carefully hoarded and not accessible through the staff of HRE.”

“It is a very relaxed atmosphere. The CDF is flexible and dedicated to the work he does, approachable, easy to work with, etc.”

“The program is flexible and client centred. Really centred around what the client needs not just as a buzz-word. There are fresh and innovative ideas on how to find a job. “

“I like the fact that there is no set way to go about things. My sessions were based around my individual needs and goals.”

“I think it is excellent. Unlike the agencies that help with career skills, etc. FSA has no limits (i.e. anything school or job-related), you know you will get help or choices. But, other programs or people only do certain things. And FSA doesn’t do that.”

Finding: The FSA program responds to participants’ changing needs and identified trends in innovative ways.

Informants stated that FSA is always evolving to respond to consumers’ changing needs and interests and the Coordinator continually enhancing and increasing his knowledge base to keep pace with their goals. For example, he has significantly broadened his computer skills so he can access information and then provide it in a number of formats as requested, and he has sought information on entrepreneurship as consumers increasingly express interest in this area.

As overall trends are identified, efforts are made to respond. As an example, over the course of several years, it became evident that there was a significant need for consumers to have ready access to the AT

required to further their employment goals. As previously noted, the ILRC was successful in acquiring funding for an AT Coordinator who supports consumers in exploring on-site hardware and software to see what best meets their needs. This individual support was described as a significant benefit to consumers of FSA.

As FSA evolved, employment advocacy was identified as a need and a process was developed to provide this. Employment advocacy helps to bridge difficulties that individuals have when they are communicating with employers. Many of the individuals who access this service encounter communication barriers, due to disability or limited social interaction skills and, even though they might have identified an employer who they would like to approach, they are hesitant to do so because of their communication concerns.

Through the employment advocacy process, the FSA Coordinator can act as the intermediary between the consumer and the employer. He informally interviews a consumer to identify what information he/she wants conveyed to the employer in regards to a potential job and in answer to questions such as, "Why can't the individual contact me herself or himself?" After talking to the consumer, the Coordinator contacts the employer and provides the information which the consumer has identified as being important to be conveyed, i.e. an overview of his/her skills and abilities. As well, if requested by the consumer, the Coordinator could support him/her in the actual job interview process.

Of note, at no time does the Coordinator attempt to influence the employer in terms of hiring the FSA participant: in the employment advocacy process, the Coordinator is a conduit for information. It is felt that through this process, the targeted employer may begin to better understand the consumer's skills and abilities, place less emphasis on the communication difficulties and provide an opportunity for the consumer to further explore job possibilities with the employer.

The employment advocacy process appears to be having some degree of impact on consumers' securing employment. The FSA 2002-03 annual report stated that nine individuals (16% of program participants) were supported with the employment advocacy service during that year, with two of these participants finding employment. The FSA 2004-05 annual report stated that 14 participants had accessed employment advocacy services during that year, of which three had secured employment.

Another FSA initiative, again developed in response to an identified consumer need, is the *employment proposal* tool which allows consumers to develop a job description fitting their characteristics and abilities. Employment proposals are developed utilizing Denise Bissonette's guide to employment proposals in *Beyond Traditional Job Development - the Art of Creating Opportunity*.

As noted in the FSA 2003-04 report:

...The employment proposal is a tool to assist individuals in creating their own unique job description. Each employment proposal is presented to an employer focusing on what an individual can accomplish on a work site, as opposed to what they cannot. Each employment proposal is tailored to highlight the skills that each FSA participant can offer an employer.

Employment proposals are often used in conjunction with employment advocacy initiatives. Many individuals who are looking for work focus on what they can offer an employer, and then create their own unique job descriptions. Current job ads in newspapers and on electronic job banks often have criteria that disqualify individuals from applying for work. By creating an employment proposal, the job seeker feels more comfortable in applying for a job that meets the individuals' unique qualifications and needs.

The employment proposal is described by program informants as a marketing tool designed to present an individual's strengths and enhance an employer's interest in the individual's job potential. It was reported in the FSA 2002- 2003 annual report that nine participants investigated and developed employment proposals that year with one person securing employment as a direct result. Little other data was available to indicate the degree of impact that employment proposals had on consumers' job acquisition.

Finding: A majority of participants rated FSA services as being useful in improving their employability skills. The services rated most highly were related to empowering participants to carry out their own career and employment plans.

Participants who were surveyed were asked how useful the FSA services were in helping them develop various employability skills. Ratings were requested on a five-point scale with 1 meaning 'not at all useful', 5 meaning 'very useful' and the mid-point 3 meaning 'somewhat useful.' The results are shown in the following table⁸:

Survey responses – Usefulness of services to employability skills						
Employability skill	1. Not at all useful	2.	3. Somewhat useful	4.	5. Very useful	N=
Understanding how to search for a job?	1.4%	1.4%	32.4%	25.6%	39.2%	74
Finding out about job opportunities?	2.7%	1.3%	36.5%	17.6%	41.9%	74
Making a career choice?	2.9%	8.7%	29.0%	27.5%	31.9%	69
Gaining specific job-related skills?	1.6%	19.7%	27.9%	26.2%	24.6%	61
Gaining work experience on-the-job?	9.0%	14.5%	25.5%	25.5%	25.5%	55
Increasing your confidence?	1.3%	5.3%	29.4%	21.3%	42.7%	75
Increasing your satisfaction with your work life?	5.4%	12.7%	21.8%	34.6%	25.5%	55
Improving your ability to keep a job?	10.4%	14.6%	31.2%	29.2%	14.6%	48
Arranging appropriate job supports?	6.0%	6.0%	32.0%	28.0%	28.0%	50
Improving your physical health?	5.7%	8.6%	45.7%	22.9%	17.1%	35
Improving your general quality of life?	4.1%	2.0%	20.4%	38.8%	34.7%	49

A majority of respondents rated all services as being somewhat to very useful.

The services that were rated most highly (over 60% of respondents giving a rating of 4 or 5) focused on the following employability dimensions: understanding how to job search, increasing satisfaction with work life, and improving general quality of life.

A number of services were given slightly lower but still positive ratings by a significant proportion of respondents: gaining job-specific skills, gaining work experience, and improving ability to keep a job. On these dimensions of employability, approximately 21% to 25% of respondents felt the services were

⁸ The percentages are calculated by excluding those who responded 'not applicable and 'don't know/refused'. Some of these items (gaining on the job work experience, increasing satisfaction with work life, improving your ability to keep a job) are only applicable to those who were working or had worked.

not useful (a rating of 1 or 2). This is a significant minority which bears examination in terms of programming.

A significant proportion of respondents (34% to 54%) indicated that the following services were not applicable to them: improving physical health, improving general quality of life, improving ability to keep a job, arranging job supports.

Finding: Evaluation has been an integral element of FSA and one used to ensure the program is providing appropriate, adequate and relevant supports and services to consumers.

FSA participants complete evaluations for workshops and information sessions such as peer networking and skill development, job search and employment proposals done under the auspices of the program. As well, informal feedback is garnered on an on-going basis through discussions with participants and other service providers. In 2003, the ILRC commissioned a five-year review of programs and services, including FSA, in an effort to ensure programs continued to be IL based, appropriate, reflective of real needs and responsive. The intent of all evaluation tools is to assess the degree to which consumers are receiving necessary support from the program. More recently, the ILRC has been designing an overall program evaluation specifically for FSA. Informants said that at this point it is still in the development stages – efforts are being made to ensure the tools and process are sensitive and able to be delivered within an IL framework. Through this evaluation process, FSA participants will be asked to rate their satisfaction with the career development approach and their program experience as it compares to more traditional modes of service delivery. Their responses will be used to determine the efficacy and applicability of IL principles within an employment-related service delivery framework.

Finding: There is no waitlist for FSA.

Informants stated that once initial contact is made, the program response time has to be within two weeks of the initial call/request. Informants noted that response to a new entrant to the program is usually done before this two-week period elapses. However, and as referenced earlier, with an increased caseload, it was stated that the Coordinator may not be able to be as timely in his interventions with participants and despite an individual focus, he may not be able to spend as much time as needed with those with complex needs.

Finding: Informants stated that while the program is serving its target group, it does not yet have adequate reach to all those who could avail of its services.

ILRC staff stated that consumers with a range of disabilities and employment-related needs are availing of the program. Participants come to FSA in a number of ways. For example approximately 47% of survey respondents were referred to the program by friends or family and 21% by an external agency/community group. Informants noted there were few referrals from HRLE. This is clear from the participant survey which reveals that only 8% of those surveyed had been referred to FSA by provincial and federal government sources.

There is an on-going marketing of FSA through public service announcements, posters and information dissemination to a range of organizations and agencies. Concerns were expressed, however, that despite the ILRC's 25-year history, there are still many in the community who do not understand the organization, its programs and services including FSA. In the last few years, the ILRC has blanketed the city with posters which describe FSA and its various components and while this has served to raise

its profile, there is a need for enhanced marketing to engage other consumers who may still not know about FSA and its benefits. To that end, FSA through the ILRC is focused on increasing its accessibility to the community.

ILRC has upgraded its website, distributes a newsletter, held a well publicized Gala, and uses WEB 4 All resources to disseminate information about its programs and services. There is a sense that, as more consumers become aware of the ILRC's programs and services, there will be an increased uptake of these services including FSA. Of note, there are concerns that increased awareness brings a level of need that the ILRC's, and more specifically FSA's, current resources could not address.

2.3.4 Research Issue - PROCESS

Research Questions:

- How is progress towards goals measured for the program?
- How is progress towards goals measured for individual clients?
- To what extent are unpaid job placements useful in enabling clients to progress?

Finding: Due to the individualized nature of the program, there are no overall numerical program targets; participants define their own goals and objectives; progress is individually determined and defined.

Finding: There is no pre-determined time frame during which a consumer can participate in FSA. Exit dates are established by each individual based on his/her continuing need for the program supports and services.

The FSA funding proposal for 2004-05 states that there are no program milestones in the traditional sense. Rather, milestones and targets are attached to individual action plans and the time lines are as identified by the individual participant. In general, and in keeping with the IL approach, people progress through the program at their own pace with all approaches designed to respond to their individual career development needs as previously described.

Informants identify that an individual receives service as long as he/she indicates a continued need: the "end" depends on the individual. As noted in FSA's 2002-03 funding proposal, "Reflective of the nature of FSA and in adherence to IL principles and practices, individual participants negotiate their own exit plans with the Career Development Coordinator. Each exit plan is unique due to the nature of the participant's barriers to employment and their particular circumstances. Some individuals access FSA for one component and move on very quickly. Most others identify a longer-term need for support, skill development and job search."

When a consumer has reached a stage where he/she feels employment ready, he/she can begin to independently job search and market him/herself. On the other hand if, for example, an individual acquires employment which could be temporary or short term, he/she can come back looking for services again should the employment end.

People generally inform the FSA Coordinator when they acquire employment and he continues to support individuals in the workplace as requested. For example, a consumer's ability to access program staff for five minutes on the phone on a particularly bad day is seen to facilitate a consumer's success in the workplace. A file is closed after a year if a consumer has not been in contact with program staff.

FSA includes detailed aggregate data on participant outcomes in its annual reports. This assists both with program analysis and accountability. This data covers:

- Number of participants who found jobs in the year, with a breakdown of success by age range
- Extent of reductions in reliance on Income Support through employment
- Employment success by disability category
- The type of work found – duration, full-time/part-time
- Reasons for leaving work

2.3.5 Research Issue - PRODUCTS

Research Questions:

- Do participants of the program achieve sustainable employment?
- What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?

Finding: FSA participants move along the employment continuum with an increasing number achieving attachment to the labour force for a period of time.

Finding: The program has had a positive impact on interest in training among participants, but less than half have actually participated in a training program.

Participants who responded to the survey were asked to assess improvements in their employability skills due to the FSA services. While not all respondents felt all questions were applicable to them, for those who did respond, a majority indicated they had made improvements in their employability skills as follows:

- 74.0% felt the skills they bring to a job have increased
- 64.4% felt that their ability to get a job has improved
- 59.4% felt that their ability to keep a job has improved
- 82.9% were more interested in improving their skills through training opportunities. However, 59.8% had not participated in training since participation in FSA, while 30.5% had taken one course and 9.7% had taken two or three courses.

Overall, 95.7% of respondents rated the employment-related services they had received as somewhat to very helpful in removing or reducing problems they faced in finding employment.

Survey respondents were also asked to provide their labour force activity in the 12 months before they first received services from FSA and their labour force activity in the most recent 12 months. To test the statistical significance of reported change in labour force activity, analysis was conducted using an ANOVA for a repeated measures design. This analysis concluded that, when data for both the CPA and FSA participants were combined, there was a statistically significant increase in months employed over time. However, when results are reported by individual program (CPA and FSA) none of the results are statistically significant. The responses of survey respondents participating in FSA are shown in the following table:

FSA Participants – Change in Labour Force Activity		
Type of Labour Force Activity	Prior to Start	Post Start
Months employed	1.87	3.15
Months self-employed	0.00	0.00
Months unemployed and looking for work	5.05	4.25
Months unemployed and not looking for work	3.02	3.16
Months homemaker	0.00	0.00
Months attending school	2.07	1.43
Months retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	75	79

Though not statistically significant across the program, results show that participants who responded to the survey had made gains in the time spent working. On average, the 75 respondents increased their time working from just under two months to just over three months in the 12 month period, had a slight reduction in time spent unemployed and looking for work (0.8 months), experienced similar periods of time spent not looking for work (3.02 versus 3.16 months) and slightly less time spent in school (0.64 months).

In the following table this same data is provided for survey respondents but this time respondents who were in training in the 12 months before they received FSA services are excluded. Again, results are not statistically significant across the program.

FSA Participants not in Training Prior to Services – Change in Labour Force Activity		
Type of Labour Force Activity	Prior to Start	Post Start
Months employed	2.30	3.27
Months self-employed	0.00	0.00
Months unemployed and looking for work	6.02	4.75
Months unemployed and not looking for work	3.68	3.03
Months homemaker	0.00	0.00
Months attending school	0.00	0.95
Months retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	60	64

When these respondents are excluded, employment gains are reduced slightly, but there is a greater drop in the percentage of time spent unemployed and looking for work and an increase in the percentage of time attending school.

Income Support payments to FSA participants were also examined but, due to the small number of FSA participants for which SINs were provided that were on Income Support in 2001, the change in these payments between 2001 and 2005 was not statistically significant.

Survey respondents were also asked how many jobs they had held since they started receiving services. 58.5% of respondents were employed at some point during this period (46.3% had held one job and

12.2% had held more than one job). Of those respondents who were employed, 56.3% had held an unsubsidized job.

In terms of progress towards goals, informants stated that some participants find employment and others do not - but they are seen to become more employable. FSA is described as having been successful in supporting individuals to get past barriers and access other employment services, develop career-related knowledge and job search skills and to acquire paid employment. Program reports over the last number of years provide a snapshot of participants' achievements in terms of moving along the employment continuum. The data indicate the year over year increase in program participation and employment outcomes. One example is as follows:

During the past year, Human Resources & Employment support of FSA enabled the participation of 55 consumers, up from last year's 37 participants. (This represents a 33% increase in participation.) All participants became attached to the labour force: 17 people found paid employment (21 jobs and entrepreneur ventures were found in total), 47 people (85%) were in an active job search, eight people (14%) were investigating entrepreneurship activities, 12 people (22%) participated in Full Steam Ahead skill development sessions (Full Steam Ahead April 2002 – 2003)

Informants, more generally, identified the following as successful employment and non-employment-related outcomes for FSA participants:

- increased confidence
- skill development
- enhanced ability to identify and mitigate their barriers
- improved decision making
- improved analysis of their own situations in terms of what they must do to be employed
- increased awareness of their choices – and of their right to make choices
- consumers being able to get accurate information about educational opportunities and funding for disability supports needed to access these opportunities
- successful employment – of one's choice. A consumer is not just working at a job because there is no where else to "put them". They are in a job which reflects their articulated employment goal with needed disability-related supports to be successful in that position
- moving along the employment continuum. (It is important to recognize that such movement differs considerably from one consumer to another. For example, some may take a year to decide what they want to do, to identify the required training and the disability-related supports to facilitate their success.)

Informants stated that many of the FSA participants are not job ready and/or they experience significant barriers to employment. For this group, a successful outcome may be addressing personal issues impeding their movement along the employment continuum. Some consumers who have never been involved are now doing volunteer jobs – informants described this step as an important precursor for some who have not been attached to the labour force. Some move on to training and employment programs. Work is quite varied –short term, replacement positions, contractual, summer jobs; etc. It was noted that "sometimes you cannot see the pay off for years."

The Coordinator is of the view that everyone in the program is a success—from the person who secures a job to the individual who gathers courage to come in seeking assistance. For some consumers, just taking that first step requires them to overcome fears of failure and their own low self-esteem. All of

these are considered successful outcomes. It is thought that once people feel confident and good about themselves then they can begin to focus on achieving their employment goals.

Finding: Participation in FSA positively impacts consumers' quality of life in particular how they view their own capacity for success and contribution. Participant feedback to the program demonstrates satisfaction with the consumer-directed, participant-centred and flexible approaches facilitated by FSA.

From the moment people enter FSA, they begin to engage in a process which some informants noted automatically improves their quality of life. FSA provides people an opportunity to talk and vent about their barriers – and from there they move on. Consumers develop a healthy self-esteem as the focus is on their employability instead of the negatives in their lives.

Informants stated that people actively engage in a process which contributes to personal growth and development and which gets them focused on career development. They develop skills, build their resumes, engage in educational programs and job search all designed to lead them to employment and a position of being self-sustaining. Individuals in this environment get direct and appropriate support which helps them realize that they have abilities and opportunities. Consumers focus on their potential for contribution.

Finding: A significant proportion of participants report positive changes in overall health status and quality of life since participation in FSA. This area shows less change compared to impacts on employability.

Respondents to the participant survey self-assessed changes to their overall health as follows⁹:

- 34.6% reported their overall health has improved or greatly improved since they first obtained FSA services. 45.6% reported no change in health status.
- 47.6% reported their quality of life had somewhat or greatly improved since they first received FSA services. 37.5% reported no change.
- 26.6% reported their stress level had somewhat or greatly decreased since first receiving FSA services. A similar level (25.3%) felt their stress level had somewhat or greatly increased in this period, while 48.1% reported no change in stress level.

Of note, the greatest proportion of respondents showed no change in overall health and stress levels. Also, a similar proportion of participants showed increases and decreases in stress levels.

2.4 Summary of Findings

Full Steam Ahead is described as a specialized and unique employment and career exploration program for people with disabilities delivered within an Independent Living framework. It was developed in response to an identified need for persons with disabilities to have access to an employment program responsive to their individual employment-related issues and realities. The program is delivered in an environment which is considered supportive, respectful and consumer-focused.

Through a comprehensive self-assessment process, consumers are supported to identify their employment goals and the mechanisms for achieving these. The program is self-directed and so all

⁹ Percentages are calculated based on excluding those who responded 'don't know or refused'.

interventions are tailored to individuals needs with the consumer identifying the supports and services he/she requires to achieve his/her employment goals. It facilitates connections between consumers and other employment and non employment-related service providers who can assist them with aspects of their career plan and/or support them in their employment goals.

The program focus is on the provision of information, choices, and support and ultimately on empowering individuals to define and actualize their career aspirations. Participant feedback demonstrates satisfaction with FSA's consumer-directed, participant-centred and flexible approaches.

Consumers move along the employability continuum as they gain the confidence, skills and abilities to do so. FSA is, therefore, supportive of HRLE's policy direction in regards to moving people off of the Income Support system to employment and self sustainability.

Recommendations

No recommendations are being provided for the Full Steam Ahead Program as the findings do not provide evidence to indicate changes are required.

2.5 List of Findings

1. FSA is supportive of HRLE's focus on equitable and inclusive communities and is compatible with its mandate to move people from Income Support to employment.
2. Full Steam Ahead (FSA) is a specialized and unique employment and career explorations program for people with disabilities delivered within an Independent Living framework. FSA was developed in response to an identified need to assist persons with disabilities who were experiencing significant disability-related barriers to gaining access to generic employment services and the labour market.
3. FSA has clearly articulated goals and objectives which have evolved over time to reflect changing trends in the labour force and in adaptive technology.
4. FSA creates an environment which supports consumers in accessing the services they need.
5. FSA staff is well supported personally and professionally to deliver the program.
6. The increased caseload and more complex participant profile are placing pressure on program resources.
7. A high proportion of FSA participants are satisfied with the services received and few offer suggestions for improvements.
8. There are strong links between FSA and a range of external organizations providing employment services, founded on clear lines of communication, respect for each other's mandates and complementary activities.
9. FSA's efforts are focused on building consumers' own capacity to link with employers rather than being the linking mechanism for them.

10. HRLE and FSA are closely linked through on-going information sharing and a program Steering Committee.
11. Disability-related employment supports and wage subsidies are considered to be critical to consumers increasing their employability and securing employment.
12. There is a comprehensive individualized intake and assessment process designed to assist individuals in identifying and achieving their employment goals.
13. All FSA interventions are tailored to individuals' needs with the consumer identifying the supports and services he/she requires to achieve his /her employment goals.
14. The FSA program responds to participants' changing needs and identified trends in innovative ways.
15. A majority of participants rated FSA services as being useful in improving their employability skills. The services rated most highly were related to empowering participants to carry out their own career and employment plans.
16. Evaluation has been an integral element of FSA and one used to ensure the program is providing appropriate, adequate and relevant supports and services to consumers.
17. There is no waitlist for FSA.
18. Informants stated that while the program is serving its target group, it does not yet have adequate reach to all those who could avail of its services.
19. Due to the individualized nature of the program, there are no overall numerical program targets: participants define their own goals and objectives; progress is individually determined and defined.
20. There is no pre-determined time frame during which a consumer can participate in FSA. Exit dates are established by each individual based on his/her continuing need for the program supports and services.
21. FSA has developed a level of expertise in reporting its outcomes resulting in a comprehensive delineation of participants' progress.
22. FSA participants move along the employment continuum with an increasing number achieving attachment to the labour force for a period of time.
23. The program has had a positive impact on interest in training among participants, but less than half have actually participated in a training program.

24. Participation in FSA positively impacts consumers' quality of life in particular how they view their own capacity for success and contribution. Participant feedback to the program demonstrates satisfaction with the consumer-directed, participant-centred and flexible approaches facilitated by FSA.
25. A significant proportion of participants report positive changes in overall health status and quality of life since participation in FSA. This area shows less change compared to impacts on employability.

ANNEX - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- FSA Participant Report form
- Full Steam Ahead information sheet
- Career Advisory's Guide – Career Cruising 2006
- File review – 10 participant files.
- ILRC website: <http://www.ilrc.nf.ca/fsa.htm>
- Full Steam Ahead Project Report September 1998 – September 1999
- Full Steam Ahead Annual Report April 2000 – March 2001
- Full Steam Ahead Annual Report April 2001 – March 2002
- Full Steam Ahead Annual Report April 2002 – March 2003
- FSA report 2003 – 2004
- FSA report 2004-2005
- Independent Living Resource Centre Full Steam Ahead Proposal Fiscal Year 2002-2003
- Independent Living Resource Centre Full Steam Ahead Proposal Fiscal Year 2004-2005
- FSA Annual Submission 2006-2007
- ILRC Annual Report 2004-2005
- 2005-06 service contract with HRLE

3.0 Evaluation of Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) – Vera Perlin Society, St. John’s

3.1 Report Summary

The Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) in St. John’s is one of four programs under the umbrella of the Employment Division of the Vera Perlin Society. WORC was conceived in 1979 in response to an articulated need by some clients with intellectual disabilities, and more strongly their parents, for employment opportunities to allow the clients to demonstrate their abilities and to secure an income. WORC receives operational funding from HRLE through the Labour Market Agreement on Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD). Program informants stated this does not offset total program costs and additional monies are provided from the Vera Perlin Society. WORC clients are drawn from the St. John’s metro area.

The Career Education and Exploration program (CEE), a 10-month pre-employment skills program housed at the College of the North Atlantic is an integral component of WORC. CEE is administered and funded by the Vera Perlin Society through funding from HRLE under the LMAPD. WORC’s staff complement includes a manager, a field instructor, and two CEE instructors.

The evaluation indicates that WORC is a client-centered employment program responsive to the needs and interests of persons with intellectual disabilities seeking employment. WORC client informants stated satisfaction with the program and the level of support it provides them as they pursue their employment interests and goals.

The following is a brief summary of the findings related to each of the evaluation issues:

CONTEXT - WORC has clear goals and objectives which are supportive of HRLE’s focus on facilitating Income Support recipients to move toward sustainable employment. The program is firmly focused on ensuring the client is supported and that he/she develops a positive relationship with the employer.

In general, client informants indicated that they liked participating in WORC and CEE, that it was a good and helpful program. Most clients felt that no program changes were required. Those who were not working indicated that one desired change would be for the program to help them get a job. Employer informants were satisfied with the program processes and their employees’ performances. They expressed interest in on-going participation in WORC as opportunities arose.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES - There is a referral process to and from other agencies but no direct coordination of service. In general, WORC primarily relies on the Vera Perlin Society’s other programs and services to address clients’ employment and other needs. There is a need to strengthen liaison with and reporting to HRLE with which WORC is weakly linked. This should facilitate a clearer understanding of program activities and results and a more consistent approach to program development.

INPUT - There is a clear program delivery process with a comprehensive, individualized intake and assessment process designed to assist individuals in identifying their employment interests and goals. WORC has evolved to meet its clients’ needs through the classroom-based skill building component (CEE); through provision of required support both in the job search process as well as in the workplace

and on an on-going basis as determined by clients' needs for such support; and through advocacy efforts to engage employers. WORC client informants spoke positively about the level of support they received in advance of getting their jobs and as well the level of ongoing and consistent on the job support.

There is no wait list for entry into WORC although there may be a waitlist for those who want to enter CEE. There also are 60-70 WORC clients waitlisted to go to work and staff noted that their employment is dependent on labour market conditions, availability of wage subsidies and available staff resources to provide work place support. Staff feels WORC is reaching and serving its target population as much as possible within its limited staff resources.

Employment and disability-related supports are considered to be critical to clients attaining successful outcomes. WORC facilitates only paid work placements and relies on wage subsidies for a portion of these placements.

WORC is proactive in engaging the business community to provide employment opportunities for its clients and has facilitated individualized and responsive relationships with those who do engage. They have approached businesses and employers in several sectors (e.g. construction industry and tourism) with varying success. One notable partnership is that with Island Furniture, which over the last several years has been an on-going source of wage subsidies for Vera Perlin's employment programs, including WORC.

PROCESS - Program success is defined as an individual acquiring and maintaining employment; receiving a wage; and increasing personal happiness. WORC has established a target of 45-50 clients working in the community at any given time. These targets are based on the Employment Division's resources available to do job search and monitor WORC clients in their workplace, as WORC staff and Vera Perlin's Supported Employment staff jointly support their clients. WORC clients continue to receive support as necessary once a job placement has been secured, although program informants stated that the focus is on diminishing the level of support required over time. Withdrawal from the program is voluntary.

The extent to which WORC goals are met is not well documented. The annual funding proposal to HRLE constitutes its annual report on the previous year's program activities and outcomes in relation to its program goals. Recent proposals contain little annual statistical data on activities and outcomes and no qualitative reporting. However, WORC staff notes that their proposal responds to HRLE's required format for submission. WORC staff stated that there is a need for an enhanced understanding of this program within government. This could be facilitated by improving on the statistical information reporting and analysis of results in the annual reports.

PRODUCTS - WORC clients enhance their employability with a percentage achieving sustainable supported employment for varying periods of time. WORC informants stated that of their target of 45 to 50 clients working in the community at any given time, 25 to 30 are consistently the same clients who are in the same job and requiring on-going and varying levels of support, with the remainder representing new client intake to work placements.

WORC clients develop a skill base for entry-level positions that makes them competitive for these jobs which, in general, are the target employment opportunities sought for the clients. WORC informants and employers stated that the program contributes positively to clients' well-being and quality of life. Most of the WORC client informants said that participation in the program had changed their lives: it

increased their confidence; helped them to think about and prepare for their employment future (for example learning new skills and doing job search) and/or to acquire a job.

The report sets out specific recommendations in relation to each of the findings. The findings and recommendations are also listed at the end of the report for ease of reference.

3.2 Overview of Program

The Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) in St. John's is one of four programs under the umbrella of the Employment Division of the Vera Perlin Society. This Division was created in the mid 1980s in an effort to address the many challenges facing persons with intellectual disabilities who were seeking employment. It includes four programs: the Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) and Career Education and Exploration (CEE) are the focus of this evaluation and are discussed in detail in this report. The other two programs, Supported Employment and The Button Shop, are described below for reference purposes:

- Supported Employment, which is the development of community employment options that are suited to individual preferences and strengths. This program serves to match employer needs to client potential. Once a placement has been secured, intensive training and support are provided to individuals to enable skill development so as to learn all job tasks and to facilitate integration into the workplace. Individuals are supported by a job coach or job trainer whose main role is to ensure the supported worker meets employer expectations in terms of job duties and tasks.
- The Button Shop, which facilitates short-term employment for a number of individuals with intellectual disabilities, most of whom can work independently while others work with support to complete assigned duties. Employment Division informants stated that this initiative offers employment to those who, because of their Income Support, do not want to work full time and more than their work exemption limit. It is felt that this flexible work opportunity improves their financial position and status. This shop specializes in such products as promotional buttons; collating; labelling; bumper stickers; and press kit assembly.

Founded in 1979, WORC remains focused on assisting persons with intellectual disabilities to secure and maintain appropriate community-based, paid employment. CEE, a 10-month pre-employment skills program housed at the College of the North Atlantic, is an integral component of WORC. It is focused on building the capacity and abilities of WORC clients to enter the workforce.

WORC tailors all of its approaches and processes to fit the needs of its clients in the St. John's metro region. There are four WORC staff: a manager, field instructor and two CEE staff (an instructor and an assistant), all of whom have been with the program for many years. In the 2005-06 fiscal year, WORC received operational funding in the amount of \$195,000 from Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE). Program informants stated this does not offset total program costs; additional monies in the amount of \$52,000 are provided by the Vera Perlin Society to ensure this program is able to operate effectively.

The logic model for WORC is presented in the following chart:

Vera Perlin WORC Program Logic Model

Component	
TARGET	Individuals with intellectual disabilities with and without attachment to Income Support
PROGRAM INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life Skills Training - Pre-Employment Training - Job Search - Group Sessions
OTHER INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodations (provided primarily through Vera Perlin’s Community Living Division) - Transportation (funded by HRLE)
OUTPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced employability - WORC provides paid work placements – using where necessary wage subsidy monies
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Savings to Income Support (WORC informants indicate that there are some savings but given the fact that not all WORC clients work full time and in permanent jobs, the degree is questionable.) - May be some degree of reduced health care costs - Improved personal well-being
IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased labour market participation - Improved personal well-being

3.3 Findings

In this section, the findings in relation to each of the research issues are presented. The reporting format used is as follows: the research issue and related research questions are stated, the related findings are presented and each finding is followed by the supporting evidence gathered from all lines of evidence in the evaluation.

3.3.1 Research Issue - CONTEXT

Research Questions:

- How are employment-related goals/objectives for persons with disabilities identified?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model? Are people with disabilities served well by the model?

Finding: WORC was conceived in response to an articulated need by some clients with intellectual disabilities, and more strongly their parents, for employment opportunities. It continues to evolve to meet the clients' needs.

Finding: WORC is focused on assisting persons with intellectual disabilities to secure appropriate community-based, paid employment.

WORC began in 1979 in response to an articulated need by some clients with development disabilities, and more strongly their parents, for employment opportunities to allow the clients to demonstrate their abilities and to secure an income. In the ensuing years, the program has grown and evolved as necessary to support clients to achieve their employment goals.

The WORC objectives are delineated in the 2005 funding proposal to HRLE:

1. The primary objective of the program is to secure employment for individuals with an intellectual disability.
2. Employment objectives of the program:
 - Community-based Employment through the development of the business community.
 - Special Projects - working with identified employers and in partnership with Island Furniture to fund training/employment programs to secure employment opportunities.
 - Business Opportunities - Support in the development of a Business for individuals who have an interest to be an entrepreneur.
3. Other objectives of the program:
 - Career, Education & Exploration Program - offered out of the College of the North Atlantic to ten individuals with an intellectual disability. This program is delivered over a 10 month period with the goal of employment upon completion.

Initially, WORC was designed to find employment placements for 12 clients. As time went on, it was evident there was a need for clients to have both pre-employment training and an increased level of maintenance and support. In the early 1980's, WORC approached government to establish a pre-employment training program, Career Education and Exploration (CEE). This program was subsequently established and has been continuously housed in a designated classroom in the College of the North Atlantic (CNA). However, CEE is not a CNA program: it is administered and funded by the Vera Perlin Society through LMAPD funds received from HRLE and CEE instructors are the Society's employees.

CEE is designed to teach pre-employment skills over a 10 month period (September – June) to 10 individuals who have intellectual disabilities to prepare them to enter into the workforce, with the goal of employment on completion. Skill development includes employment-related skills, as well as money

management, basic academic skills (e.g. math), and general community awareness. CEE students engage in a regular school day with classes running from 9am to 3pm. There is a detailed curriculum which delineates a range of topics and sub-topics, with supporting text and audio resources. Both individual and group based training are delivered, depending on the topic under consideration and the students' skill levels.

While it is considered a component of WORC, CEE is available to any client of the Vera Perlin Society's Employment Division who is interested in accessing it. It is not a mandatory part of WORC: some clients do not wish to avail of CEE begin job search processes at the outset. If these clients later identify a need to participate in CEE, they can as space becomes available. Ten students can participate in CEE each year.

Informants highlighted how the Employment Division programs collectively meet the needs of high school students with intellectual disabilities in their transition into the labour market. This group continues to leave high school with few vocational, life and employment skills.

Finding: WORC is a client-centered employment program considered responsive to the needs and interests of persons with intellectual disabilities seeking employment.

Informants stated that WORC has tailored its program and approaches to reflect the needs and interests of its clients with intellectual disabilities. A clear program delivery process with a detailed intake/assessment process has emerged and been refined over the years. Referrals between and among Vera Perlin's Employment Division programs occur as deemed appropriate for and/or by the individual.

Both WORC staff and Supported Employment staff provide support to WORC clients through the many program components, including job search, job interviews and in the workplace. Staff has divided monitoring duties among themselves with each taking a section of the city and the clients located in workplaces there. This blending of supports was done because clients of both programs are distributed throughout the city and in an effort to ensure effective time-management and better support to individuals.

Staff visits clients at their employment sites, as needed – as little as once every month or two, to as much as several times a week. This kind of consistent monitoring is considered to be preventative in nature as it facilitates early intervention in addressing any potential problems.

Of note, informants stated that WORC does not place people in employment just to reflect good statistics. In order to be successful, there has to be a good match between the employer and the employee. The program is firmly focused on ensuring the client is supported and that he/she develops a positive relationship with the employer.

Finding: WORC is responsive to the needs of employers, thus increasing the likelihood of a successful client placement and interest in future placements.

WORC is described in Vera Perlin's brochures as a "match making" business - matching employer needs with clients' abilities. The program is focused on facilitating relationships with businesses that are positive, enlightening, responsible, successful, on-going and negotiable. A successful match occurs through assessing employer/employee compatibility, facilitating introductions between the parties, and providing the requisite level of support needed to ensure the development of a mutually beneficial long term relationship.

In addition to the support provided to the client, WORC recognized that for a successful work placement they needed to provide support to the employer. The Employment Division staff who monitor and support WORC clients in their workplaces have facilitated relationships with their clients' employers. It was noted that they make an effort to speak to the clients' workplace supervisors on each visit. Lines of communication are described as clear and on going.

Generally, relationships between the Employment Division staff and employers who have WORC clients are individualized and dependent on the employer in question. Some employers indicate they will call WORC staff should there be a need, while others are interested in on-going communication.

Employer informants stated that they were provided a great deal of support by the Employment Division staff. Lines of communication were described as clear, open and on-going. Employers noted that staff was only a phone call away, and they encountered no problems contacting staff who were quick to respond to the issues at hand.

Employers are generally considered to be very supportive of their WORC employees and attempt to solve problems and issues that arise. If an employer is unable to arrive at a solution, Employment Division staff provides intervention services. As well, the Employment Division Manager visits and calls each employer at least twice a year to ensure they are satisfied with their employees' performance and the level of support WORC is providing to both the employer and their employees.

The majority of employer informants stated they would participate in the program again if the opportunity arose. Reasons included their satisfaction with their WORC employees' performance, the level of support provided to both the employee and employer, and a desire to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to work and demonstrate their abilities. The few employers who said they would not participate in the program again noted that they did not have need of additional staff at this time.

WORC informants stated that a number of their current employers have provided them with positive feedback about their employees, the support systems and the program in general. Employers promote WORC to other employers, and the organization gets calls as a result of the networking and sharing of information among employers.

Finding: WORC staff is well linked to and supported by Vera Perlin's other Divisions and administration.

Finding: WORC staff avails of professional development opportunities in accordance with available funding.

Administratively, WORC's position within the Vera Perlin Society is clear and lines of communication between and among staff (including CEE staff) are described as strong and unencumbered. WORC is incorporated under the policy framework of Vera Perlin although, as noted above, it has clear program objectives. The Society's Executive Director provides WORC staff with overall guidance, direction and assistance with problem solving as required.

WORC staff stated that within their limited resources, they acquire educational materials, videos and other related materials on job development and delivering employment-related services including that required for the CEE program. As well, they attend the annual provincial supported employment conference and regional meetings of the supported employment corporations, using these opportunities

to share information and learn from others' practices and approaches. Staff point out that such networking is facilitated on a "shoestring" budget which precludes attendance at national conferences and meetings.

3.3.2 Research Issue – RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES

Research Questions:

- How well does the program coordinate with other service providers who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?
- To what extent do the services provided by the program complement those offered by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do the services duplicate or overlap with services provided by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do clients use employment-related programs or services? Is the need to rely on other agencies for additional assistance for clients (accommodations, wage subsidies) an efficient way to provide services?
- How well does the program coordinate with providers of other related services who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?

Finding: There is a referral process to and from other agencies but no direct coordination of service either in terms of employment or non employment-related services, supports or accommodations.

Finding: WORC primarily relies on the Vera Perlin Society's other Divisions, programs and services to address clients' employment and non-employment related needs.

WORC staff do not describe their efforts and interactions with other service providers as coordination of services. Rather, as needed, there is a referral to employment-related and other agencies/organizations. For example, WORC clients are referred to Opening Doors when they articulate an interest in working within the public service. For clients who are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), there are referrals to Service Canada training and employment programs. Some WORC clients also avail of the Independent Living Resource Centre's Full Steam Ahead program although this is of their own volition and not through a referral to this program.

The Employment Division does provide WORC clients with other options as described previously and movement between and among these programs is facilitated based on a client's needs. For example, if an individual completes CEE and it is identified that his/her best option would be supported employment, he/she "transfers" to this program. If a WORC client finds a placement and it is identified that he/she needs more monitoring and support than is provided by the WORC program, he/she is transferred to the Supported Employment program. A job coach is then sought to provide the individual with intensive one-on-one support. Of note, as an individual's skill and ability to work independently increases, he/she can move back under the auspices of WORC. Finally, an individual can seek part-time employment in The Button Shop should this be his/her preference.

If WORC clients need other supports such as access to transportation and housing, these are facilitated through the Vera Perlin Society's Community Living Division. On occasion these supports are sought from government (for example, Health and Community Services) on behalf of clients. Also, if an individual with a dual disability requires a level of support or accommodation not provided through the

Society, assistance is sought from the requisite organization (for e.g. the HUB, Canadian Paraplegic Association, or Canadian National Institute for the Blind).

WORC staff did not identify any overlap or duplication of services in their interactions with other agencies and organizations. They only go to these groups seeking a service which they cannot provide to WORC clients. In terms of strengthening relationships to other service providers, WORC staff stated that they would be amenable to partnership opportunities as required. However, they noted that these agencies would first need to better understand what WORC does to ensure there is appropriate partnership development.

Finding: WORC's focus on assisting persons with intellectual disabilities to achieve their employment goals is in keeping with HRLE's focus on facilitating Income Support recipients to move toward sustainable employment. Despite this commonality of purpose, informants stated that WORC is weakly linked to HRLE in terms of program monitoring and support. More consistent implementation of HRLE's Community Partnerships Program policy and guidelines could strengthen this partnership and coordination.

WORC's mandate and objectives are consistent with those of HRLE in terms of moving people off of Income Support through attachment to the labour force. However, WORC's relationship to HRLE is described as purely financial with little on-going interaction. Program informants questioned the level of understanding government has about WORC and felt that there is lack of communication among HRLE staff who are involved with the program at both the Regional and District levels.

HRLE has developed detailed policy and procedures on the Community Partnerships Program which provide a comprehensive framework for contracting with community agencies. HRLE is currently implementing its new service delivery network. As part of this, the department is taking steps to build partnerships with agencies and to strengthen the role of the regions in managing funding agreements with agencies as set out in the Community Partnerships policy framework. As this transition is at different stages in the various regions, there is currently variation in coordination with funded agencies, including WORC, largely the result of the approach of regional and/or district management. This is expected to improve as the service delivery network is further developed.

Finding: Employment and disability-related supports are considered to be critical to clients attaining successful outcomes.

Informants stated that WORC's individualized approaches and processes, as well as its on-going workplace monitoring and support are key to successful employment outcomes for WORC clients. More generally, informants stated that clients need disability-related supports such as access to transportation and required personal supports in order for them to secure and maintain employment. As noted previously, should a client require assistance in these areas, it is provided through the Society's Community Living Division or by other organizations in the community.

Finding: WORC facilitates only paid work placements and relies on wage subsidies for a portion of these placements.

Wage subsidies are considered critical for successful client outcomes. WORC uses a number of different funding sources for wage subsidies, including an internally-administered fund provided by Island Furniture and the HRLE NL Works (formerly Employment Generation) and NewfoundlandJobs Programs. Once WORC staff has identified an employer who is willing to hire a client with a wage

subsidy, they can set the processes in motion to connect HRLE and the employer, but WORC is not involved in the resulting administrative processes. WORC does not use unpaid work placements as they feel it is important to compensate their clients for the work they do.

Of the 18 employers of WORC clients interviewed for this evaluation, only six were currently availing of wage subsidies for these employees. A number stated that their employees initially had wage subsidies but when the subsidies ended, the employees were retained and placed on the regular payroll.

Finding: WORC is proactive in engaging the business community to provide employment opportunities for its clients.

In the 2004 funding proposal to HRLE it is noted that WORC's main goal is to secure employment placements which are monitored and maintained while new opportunities for interested clients are secured. Informants stated that WORC has been proactive over the years in seeking employment opportunities. They have approached businesses and employers in different sectors (e.g. construction industry and tourism) with varying success.

Eleven of the 18 employer informants stated they were directly approached by program staff to participate in WORC. Other employers had been approached by a WORC client or his/her advocate – for example a friend or family member. Three employers stated they had approached the program seeking employees.

One notable success in engaging business was an initiative undertaken with Sobeys in 2001, as this business expanded in the metro region. WORC approached Sobeys and secured their agreement for developing and delivering a program designed to make WORC clients employment ready for Sobeys' work environment – specifically for entry-level positions. Ten students first participated in a 20-week classroom-based training program designed by Sobeys and WORC to meet Sobeys' specific job-related needs. Training was delivered by WORC staff and on completion these students were deemed by Sobeys as ready for on-the-job work exposure, which was 32 weeks in duration. During this period, their wages were cost-shared by Sobeys and WORC through wage subsidies. In the fall of 2002, at the end of this initiative, nine of the 10 students were hired and six of these original students continue to work there.

Another notable partnership is with Island Furniture, which over the last several years has provided upwards of two million dollars to the Vera Perlin Society's charitable foundation. Sixty to 70% of this amount has been used by the Society to provide wage subsidies for its Employment Division clients; the remaining amount responds to applications from the 18 Employment Corporations across the province seeking wage subsidies for their client placements.

A joint committee of representatives from both Island Furniture and the Vera Perlin Society meets two to three times every year to determine the level of funding which will be provided to the Society and how it will be expended. Once the amount of available funding is determined, applications are invited from the 18 Employment Corporations for wage subsidies required to facilitate employment for their clientele. As well, the Society's Employment Division develops an application for its projected level of demand for wage subsidies.

The Manager of the Employment Division presents all the applications to the committee and decisions are made as to what can be funded within the allocated yearly amount. All applicants, including WORC, are encouraged to exhaust opportunities for wage subsidies from other existing sources, such as

those within the provincial and federal governments, before making application for the Island Furniture funding. If, as the year progresses, the allocated wage subsidy amounts are not used, the committee will look at the total amount still available and the Society will issue another call for expressions of interest from the Employment Corporations for this wage subsidy funding.

When employer informants were asked if there was more WORC could do with businesses to support the goals of the program, most did not offer suggestions. Some employers commented on the importance of the personal one-on-one approach to businesses by the Employment Division staff. It was suggested that it might be useful to link potential employers to current employers who could provide information about the process and benefits of participation.

3.3.3 Research Issue – INPUTS

Research Questions:

- Are the services offered by each program appropriate for the actual clients they assist?
- To what degree are the programs able to cater to differing individual needs?

Finding: There is a comprehensive individualized intake and assessment process designed to assist individuals in identifying their employment goals.

In its statement of core values, the Vera Perlin Society cites its belief that every individual with an intellectual disability must be provided the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of participating in all areas of community living. To that end, in an effort to assist persons with disabilities in meeting their employment challenges, the Society developed an Employment Division with a set of programs designed to respond to a range of needs. The Employment Division endeavours to support individuals in a variety of ways, including advocacy and support to obtain the services which are required to maximize success in the work place.

During the intake process, significant information is gathered on an individual including his/her employment goals, experience, skills, and current or potential barriers to employment. WORC takes a holistic view of individuals – looking not only at the person’s interests and experiences, but also the available level of family/caregiver support, other natural supports, transportation concerns, etc.

Referrals come to WORC in a variety of ways. Client informants stated they had learned about WORC and/or been referred to the program by family, friends, through school presentations, professionals or they self-referred. Once a referral is received, the individual in question is sent a letter outlining the next steps in terms of entering WORC. Accompanying these letters are the following two forms which are completed and returned in advance of a face-to-face meeting with the applicant.

- HRLE’s Employment & Career Services “Medical Report” form. This form, which is completed by a physician, seeks information on the nature/extent of the individual’s disability; functional status/limitations; and other medical conditions that may affect the person’s participation in employment and training. This form is sent back to the Employment Division and maintained in a client’s file. Should the individual participate in CEE training, the form is forwarded on to HRLE to secure the weekly stipend paid to CEE participants.
- HRLE’s Employment and Career Services “Personal Inventory and Application” form. This form seeks information on the individual’s education, training and employment history as well

as his/her personal interests – e.g. involvement with community organizations. It, too, asks for disability-related information. This form provides baseline information for the Employment Division staff in advance of the initial face-to-face meeting and interview.

Following receipt of the required information, two staff members from WORC and/or Supported Employment conduct an extensive interview with the applicant using an assessment form which seeks information on a range of topics including the individual's education and employment history, financial status, and disability. As well, an Enhanced Screening and Assessment (ESA) tool is used to further delve into the client's employment goals and needs particularly those that may impede the person's attainment of these goals. This form is completed for, and sent to, HRLE.

Once the initial interview is completed, the staff of WORC and Supported Employment determine the most appropriate placement for the applicant within the Employment Division. The information garnered and the recommendations regarding placement are provided to the Client Selection Committee for final decision. When an applicant is accepted and directed into one of the Employment streams, movement between and among programs is facilitated should decisions from the initial assessment need to be revisited. As noted above, those accepted into WORC are offered the pre-employment training at CEE or they can choose not to participate and to begin job search immediately. WORC staff support these clients as required – for example, in resume development and skills training for interviews.

The intake and pre-employment training processes are individualized: the discussion focuses on clients' employment goals and opportunities to realize these. If an individual has an interest in certain sectors of the labour market, this is what guides WORC staff in its efforts in targeting relevant employers. For example, should an individual enter the program and desire to work at a hotel as a chambermaid, this option is explored. The WORC staff and client look at the requirements of the job; the background, education and experience of the client; and in general look at the potential for the client to undertake such a position. If it is mutually determined that this is not a viable option for the individual in question, then there is a more realistic option determined.

Finding: CEE contributes to WORC clients' personal development and pre-employment skills building as well as refinement of clients' employment goals.

CEE is designed to prepare participants for the world of work. For example, they do an intensive review of commonly asked interview questions and then mock interviews are held: participants are required to dress as they would should it be a real interview. Interviews are taped and then played back – participants discuss the strengths and areas that need to be developed. They are also assisted in preparing a job inventory to identify their employment interests if they have not already identified these.

A site visit to the CEE classroom provided an opportunity to interact with the current participants. They had been together five months and it was clearly evident that they were collegial and comfortable with each other. In a question and answer session, they were able to detail the topics they were covering (e.g. job development, reading time clocks, banking and resume writing) and to articulate their employment goals. As well, they were able to identify questions they were likely to be asked in a job interview.

The majority of employers interviewed had reviewed a person's resume and then conducted an interview before offering a position. In a number of cases, employers were provided a roster of WORC

clients with past experience and skills relevant to the positions being filled. Interviews were conducted and the top candidate was chosen.

Over half of the WORC client informants said that, through CEE, they had improved their reading and writing skills, learned how to cooperate, how to write resumes, and how to answer interview questions, and became comfortable with activities of daily living (e.g. banking; riding the bus). A number of clients specifically stated that they enjoyed the CEE program.

In February or March of each year, individuals in CEE participate in Work Exposure placements - work experience opportunities of approximately two to three weeks in length, depending on what has been negotiated through Vera Perlin's Employment Division. Work Exposure placements are considered to be an integral part of the CEE Program as they give clients an opportunity to understand what the world of work is all about and to make/change their career choices. As well, placements provide staff with an opportunity to evaluate the clients in the workplace.

CEE placements are determined by the participants' interests - revealed through their initial assessment for entry into the Employment Division and, as previously referenced, through exploration of work interests in the CEE program. All placements are monitored from start to finish. Participants are supported by a job coach during their work experience placement. This coach assists with work performance if the individual cannot keep up and provides back to the CEE staff an assessment of the person's strengths and weaknesses on the job. There is sufficient CEE program time to work with individuals on areas that need development.

Finding: Employment Division staff support WORC clients in their job search, in their introduction to an identified work placement, and on an on-going basis as determined by clients' needs for such support.

Some WORC clients can do their own job searches and self-promotion. In these instances, a letter may be attached to an individual's resume outlining the supports and services available to the potential employee and employer should he/she be hired. In some cases, Employment Division staff meets with potential employers first to discuss what supports and services can be provided to the employee and the employer. They discuss the merits of hiring the employee – in particular noting that there is little turnover due to the person's skill level and that entry-level positions are a good fit for the client in question.

Once a position is identified and secured for a client, Employment Division staff does a job site analysis. This includes a review of all aspects of the employment experience - for example, the hours of work; proximity to a bus route; job requirements; and potential job modifications.

An Employment Division staff member goes with a client on his/her first day on the job. There is a full orientation with the employer. The staff asks a lot of questions to try and create a level of comfort for the client and to get conversation started between the client and the employer – it is a relationship building exercise. The client is also encouraged to ask questions. As referenced earlier, there is consistent on-site monitoring of WORC clients at their workplaces by both WORC and Supported Employment staff.

WORC client informants, who are working, referenced the level of support they received in advance of getting their jobs and as well the level of ongoing consistent support on the job.

Comments included:

- *Lots of support for whatever I needed.*
- *Lots of support, no problems.*
- *Help you anytime, whatever you need.*

Informants stated that in general, this consistent monitoring is seen to facilitate early intervention if a difficulty arises with a client on the job and/or with the employer. Employers are aware that WORC staff is available to assist with issues.

Finding: There is no waitlist for entry into this program although there may be a waitlist for CEE.

There is a waitlist for clients' still seeking a work placement in part due to the competition for the type of employment targeted for WORC clients.

In the 2004 funding proposal to HRLE, it is stated that 'there is no written client recruitment plan but most of the clientele served through this program are self-referrals, referred by the school system or through Human Resources Labour and Employment. All individuals must have a diagnosis of an intellectual disability and want to enter the workforce..'

There is no wait list for entry into WORC, although there may be a waitlist for those who want to enter CEE. For example, if an individual enters WORC in November, he/she has to wait for the next available CEE program opening, which at a minimum is not till the following September when the program starts up again. If there are more than the maximum 10 clients interested in entering the CEE program at that time, then some go on a waiting list for the next year. As well, there are 60 to 70 WORC clients waitlisted to go to work and staff noted that their employment is dependent on labour market conditions/availability of jobs, availability of wages subsidies and available staff resources to provide work place support. A review of some WORC client files indicates that efforts are on-going to identify work placements for individuals.

In terms of labour market circumstances, it is important to acknowledge that employment facilitated through WORC is generally entry-level and that competition for such positions is high since employers have access to a pool of potential employees. However, program informants said that WORC employees are of interest to employers because they are dependable and "in it for the long term". While other employees may see an entry-level position as a stop gap measure to pay off some debts and get needed experience to move up the employment ladder, program informants stated that for most persons with intellectual disabilities, these entry-level positions meet their long-term employment aspirations.

Finding: Staff felt WORC is reaching and serving its target population as much as possible within its limited resources.

Program informants felt that WORC is reaching its target population. They do not broadly promote their program, stating they are constrained by limited resources which are first and foremost dedicated to providing service to those they support in the workplace (some of whom require intensive support), those preparing for employment and new clients who are presenting with more complex needs.

However, each spring they send a memo to all the high schools in the metro area noting that WORC and CEE are accepting applications and they advertise in *The Telegram*. In the past, they have done presentations to special needs instructors/classes in the K-12 system and they have presented to special needs teachers in training at Memorial University.

3.3.4 Research Issue - PROCESS

Research Questions:

- How is progress towards goals measured for the program?
- How is progress towards goals measured for individual clients?
- To what extent are unpaid job placements useful in enabling clients to progress?

Finding: WORC established a target of 45-50 clients working in the community at any given time. They are monitored on an on-going basis in the workplace with their progress is measured individually both through observation and use of assessment tools. WORC staff and Supported Employment staff jointly support their Employment Division clients in the workplace.

According to informants, WORC aims to have 45 to 50 clients working in the community at any given time. WORC reports that 25 to 30 of this group are consistently the same clients who are in the same job and requiring on-going and varying levels of support, with the remainder representing new client intake to work placements. These targets are based on the Employment Division resources available to do job search and monitor WORC clients in their workplaces. Statistics reported in the 2004 and 2005 funding proposals to HRLE indicate that WORC has been fairly consistent in maintaining this number of clients in the community.

Staff follows up with a client soon after his/her first day on the job to ensure the client understands the job requirements and is functioning well. The two WORC staff and two Supported Employment staff have blended their human resources as they felt this enabled them to more effectively and efficiently monitor and support their clients in the field: most recently, 52 WORC clients and 25 to 30 clients in Supported Employment. There is an on-going sharing of information about the status of clients to enable any staff member to provide support to any client should the need arise.

New placements are visited two to three times a week to monitor the client's status and the extent to which he/she is progressing. The Vocational Assessment Curriculum Guide (VACG) is one tool used to measure the individual success in areas such as self-esteem, motivation, interaction with co-workers and taking direction.

Finding: WORC clients continue to receive support as necessary once a job placement has been secured although the focus is on diminishing the level of support required over time. Withdrawal from the program is voluntary. Success is ultimately defined as acquisition of an appropriate employment placement, unfunded or funded.

A WORC client receives services for the length of time deemed necessary by the individual's workplace capabilities and abilities. However, clients can voluntarily withdraw from the program. An individual may perform duties with different levels of support and maintenance over his/her working life but the overall program goal is to diminish the level of required support over time. WORC informants described this as their program process, but it was beyond the scope of the evaluation to quantify the degree to which the level of support is reduced over time.

Employer informants described the on-going support afforded their employees. Some noted that the level of support decreased as the employees became more comfortable in their jobs.

In the 2005 WORC funding proposal to HRLE, it is stated that once an individual with a developmental disability is successfully employed in a paid employment opportunity it is a milestone achieved. Success is defined as an individual acquiring and maintaining employment; receiving a wage; and increasing personal happiness. Staff noted that participation in the labour force provides an individual stability and facilitates his/her social life.

Finding: The extent to which WORC goals are met is not well documented.

WORC provides monthly data sheets to HRLE for reporting purposes. Its annual funding proposal constitutes its annual report on the previous year's program activities and outcomes in relation to its goal of securing employment placements for its clients. WORC's 2004 and 2005 proposals to HRLE contain little annual statistical data on activities and outcomes and no qualitative reporting. Specifically, there is information provided on the total number of WORC clients employed on an annual basis, either in the community or in the Button Shop, but there is little other detail provided. Staff notes that their proposal responds to HRLE's required format for submission.

WORC staff stated that there is a need for an enhanced understanding of this program within government. This could be facilitated by improving on the statistical information reporting and analysis of results in the annual reports.

Summary and discussion

It is evident that WORC clients and their employers are provided support as required to facilitate successful work placements. However, it is also apparent that there is limited movement of clients out of the program year to year with the result that there is a significant yearly waitlist of WORC clients seeking work placements. As program informants have stated that they do not have adequate resources to increase their level of effort to place these clients nor monitor them in a workplace, consideration should be given to increasing their amount of LMAPD funding to support staff's efforts in this regard. Discussions also should be held with WORC staff to clearly outline expectations for outcomes associated with this increased funding amount and an evaluation mechanism established to determine the extent to which these are achieved.

More generally, in order for HRLE to get a clear picture of the reach and impact of the WORC program, there is a need for more in-depth annual reporting: for example, on the number of new WORC placements, level of workplace support provided and job search activities undertaken for those clients not yet placed.

Recommendations

1. HRLE develop with WORC management a format for annual reporting of program information which would provide clarity of its process, intent, outcome and impacts.
2. HRLE and WORC management discuss opportunities for increased program funding to facilitate entry of additional WORC clients into work placements. HRLE should clearly outline its outcome expectations and the process by which these should be evaluated.

3.3.5 Research Issue - PRODUCTS

Research Questions:

- Do participants of the program achieve sustainable employment?
- What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?

Finding: WORC has supported a fairly consistent number of clients in the workplace over the last few years.

Informants stated that WORC has supported a fairly consistent number of clients in workplaces over the last few years. The following statistics were available from two recent funding proposals from WORC to HRLE:

2004 Program Proposal to HRLE

Individuals served through the WORC Employment Division 2003 - 2004:

Total Clients Working in W.O.R.C. - 112
Total Clients Working in Community - 54
Total Clients Working in Button Shop - 58

2005 Program Proposal to HRLE

Individuals served through the WORC Employment Division 2004-2005:

Total Clients Working in W.O.R.C. - 92
Total Clients Working in Community - 50
Total Clients Working in Button Shop - 42

16 of the 18 employers interviewed for the evaluation had WORC clients employed in permanent, unsubsidized positions, with some being with the same employers for several years. The other two employers had permanent, part-time WORC employees. In section 3.2.4 it was noted that WORC has a target of 45 to 50 clients working in the community at any given time. WORC informants reported that 25 to 30 of this group are consistently the same clients who are in the same job and requiring on-going and varying levels of support, with the remainder representing new client intake to work placements. This evidence suggests that a percentage of WORC clients achieve sustainable supported employment for varying periods of time.

Of note, and also as articulated earlier, WORC informants stated they do not have adequate resources to increase their level of effort to place clients waiting to go to work. If there is to be an increase in the level of sustainable employment realized through WORC, informants stressed that there have to be sufficient resources dedicated to increasing employer participation in the program.

Finding: WORC clients enhance their employability. Some WORC clients develop a skill base for entry-level positions which makes them competitive for these jobs.

As staff articulated, WORC serves to reduce their clients' barriers to the extent possible. Clients do enhance their employability and many are employed for some part of the year.

The vast majority of WORC clients interviewed stated that attending WORC changed their lives: it made life “more interesting”; increased their confidence; helped them to think about and prepare for their employment future (for example learning new skills and doing job search) and/or acquire a job. Clients stated that they learned:

- how to do resumes
- interview skills
- job skills and preparing for interviews, (cleanliness, hand shake, sitting up straight, eye contact)
- how to keep a job

Eight of the client informants were working full time at (for example) janitorial work or in food service preparation. Workplaces included the airport, local retail stores, a bakery and community-based organizations. A smaller number were working part time with all but one of the remaining informants looking for work.

A number of WORC clients are described as having a great deal of experience in some entry-level jobs and able to compete successfully for these positions. In terms of training, the vast majority of WORC clients participate in the CEE program. According to program staff, the academic expectations of the mainstream training programs have proven to be a challenge for WORC clients in the past.

Finding: WORC contributes positively to clients’ personal development including their social skills and self-confidence.

WORC clients are described as experiencing personal development – they enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem, improve their ability to develop and build relationships, and have increased opportunities for a social life. In general, WORC clients are considered to have an overall improvement in their well-being and quality of life. Staff stated that there is a sense of self-accomplishment displayed by the WORC clients who, prior to program participation, had little success with employment and who now are successfully employed. Families often remark on how well their sons and daughters are doing.

Client informants commented on how participation in WORC has personally impacted them. Some stated they had increased confidence, improved social skills/a wider social circle and more opportunities for participating in recreational activity.

Learning cited included:

- how to be punctual and get along with others
- how to communicate better and listen better
- phone skills and more professional skills
- how to be more independent and self confident
- if you make mistakes you can learn from them
- how to get along, cooperate, to have friends.

In general client informants indicated that they liked participating in WORC and CEE and that it was a good and helpful program. Most stated that there were no changes required. Those who were not working indicated that the one change they would like to see is for the program to help them get a job.

A majority of employers cited the positive impact that the work placements had on WORC clients' personal development, citing changes in their confidence levels, self-esteem, and their social and relationship building skills. Comments included:

- “The person is much more confident and has learned so much. In the beginning he was too shy to speak & now he has come so far.”
- “The person is more social and has a sense of humor.”
- “The person is always doing new things & has adapted well to anything that comes up.”

Finding: Employer informants were satisfied with the program processes, their employees' performances and expressed interest in on-going participation in WORC as opportunities arose.

Employers' reasons for participating in the program included a belief that persons with disabilities should be provided opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, a desire to make a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities, and an interest in supporting community-based programs. Some employers had friends or family members with intellectual disabilities and a small number of employers felt that the individual who presented to them had the qualifications to fit their positions. Non-profit employers saw an opportunity to match their staffing need with the availability of an employee who brought with him/her a wage subsidy.

Employers stated that the WORC job placements were positive for their businesses. Many identified that the placements raised their staff's awareness about persons with disabilities and the support for their participation in the workplace. Others noted that it is favorable for a business to be seen to be inclusive and that the employees were good and dependable workers. Again, non-profit employers identified the benefit of having an employee with a wage subsidy.

The majority of employers stated they would participate in the program again. Reasons included their satisfaction with the employee's performance, the level of support provided to both the employee and their business, and a desire to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to work and demonstrate their abilities. The few employers who said they would not participate in the program again noted that they did not need additional staff at this time.

3.4 Summary of Findings

WORC was conceived in response to an articulated need by some clients with intellectual disabilities, and more strongly their parents, for employment opportunities. This program is tailored to meet individual client's needs and over the years has evolved to meet these needs through a classroom-based skill building component, through provision of required support both in the job search process as well as in the workplace, and through advocacy efforts to engage employers.

With a focus on securing employment for persons with intellectual disabilities, WORC's mandate and activities are in tandem with HRLE's policy direction of moving people from Income Support to employment. Despite this commonality of purpose, informants described the connection between HRLE and WORC as weak. Such a disconnect is felt to contribute to HRLE's lack of true understanding of WORC's processes and impacts. Another element that could contribute to this lack of clarity is WORC's annual proposal to HRLE, which does not contain a comprehensive analysis of its program outcomes. However, as staff noted these proposals contain the elements required by HRLE.

WORC remains somewhat removed from other employment and non employment-related service providers, although this is stated to be due to the fact its clients can avail of a basket of relevant services from any of Vera Perlin's internal divisions. However, WORC staff stated they are open to development of external partnerships should the need arise.

The Employment Division staff who monitor and support WORC clients in their workplaces have facilitated individualized and responsive relationships with their employers. Lines of communication are described as clear and on going, and employers cited satisfaction with the level of support they are afforded through the Division staff. The majority of employer informants stated they would participate in the program again if the opportunity arose. Reasons included their satisfaction with their WORC employees' performance, the level of support provided to both the employee and employer, and a desire to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to work and demonstrate their abilities.

It is felt that some WORC clients develop a skill base for entry-level positions that makes them competitive for these jobs which, in general, are the target employment opportunities sought for its clients. Additionally, WORC clients do enhance their employability with many employed for some part of the year and a number who have been employed for many years. However, program informants noted that due to limited staff and financial resources there is little intake of new clients into the workplace as resources are dedicated to supporting existing clients – many of whom remain in their positions for long periods of time.

3.5 List of Findings

1. WORC was conceived in response to an articulated need by some clients with intellectual disabilities, and more strongly their parents, for employment opportunities. It continues to evolve to meet the clients' needs.
2. WORC is focused on assisting persons with intellectual disabilities to secure appropriate community-based paid employment.
3. WORC is a client-centered employment program considered responsive to the needs and interests of persons with intellectual disabilities seeking employment.
4. WORC is responsive to the needs of employers, thus increasing the likelihood of a successful client placement and interest in future placements.
5. WORC staff is well linked to and supported by Vera Perlin's other Divisions and administration.
6. WORC staff avails of professional development opportunities in accordance with available funding.
7. There is a referral process to and from other agencies but no direct coordination of service either in terms of employment or non employment-related services, supports or accommodations.
8. WORC primarily relies on the Vera Perlin Society's other Divisions, programs and services to address clients' employment and non employment-related needs.

9. WORC's focus on assisting persons with intellectual disabilities achieve their employment goals is in keeping with HRLE's focus on facilitating Income Support recipients to move toward sustainable employment. Despite this commonality of purpose, informants stated that WORC is weakly linked to HRLE in terms of program monitoring and support. More consistent implementation of HRLE's Community Partnerships Program policy and guidelines could strengthen this partnership and coordination.
10. Employment and disability-related supports are considered to be critical to clients attaining successful outcomes.
11. WORC facilitates only paid work placements and relies on wage subsidies for a portion of these placements.
12. WORC is proactive in engaging the business community to provide employment opportunities for its clients.
13. There is a comprehensive individualized intake and assessment process designed to assist individuals in identifying their employment goals.
14. CEE contributes to WORC clients' personal development and pre-employment skills building as well as refinement of clients' employment goals.
15. Employment Division staff support WORC clients in their job search, in their introduction to an identified work placement, and on an on-going basis as determined by clients' needs for such support.
16. There is no waitlist for entry into this program although there may be a waitlist for CEE.
17. There is a waitlist for clients' still seeking a work placement in part due to the competition for the type of employment targeted for WORC clients.
18. Staff feels WORC is reaching and serving its target population as much as possible within its limited resources.
19. WORC established a target of 45-50 clients working in the community at any given time. They are monitored on an on-going basis in the workplace with their progress measured individually both through observation and use of assessment tools. WORC staff and Supported Employment staff jointly support their Employment Division clients in the workplace.
20. WORC clients continue to receive support as necessary once a job placement has been secured although the focus is on diminishing the level of support required over time. Withdrawal from the program is voluntary. Success is ultimately defined as acquisition of an appropriate employment placement, unfunded or funded.
21. The extent to which WORC goals are met is not well documented.
22. WORC has supported a fairly consistent number of clients in the workplace over the last few years.

23. WORC clients enhance their employability. Some WORC clients develop a skill base for entry-level positions which makes them competitive for these jobs.
24. WORC contributes positively to clients' personal development including their social skills and self-confidence.
25. Employer informants were satisfied with the program processes, their employees' performances and expressed interest in on-going participation in WORC as opportunities arose.

3.6 *List of Recommendations*

1. HRLE develop with WORC management a format for annual reporting of program information which would provide clarity of its process, intent, outcome and impacts.
2. HRLE and WORC management discuss opportunities for increased program funding to facilitate entry of additional WORC clients into work placements. HRLE should clearly outline its outcome expectations and the process by which these should be evaluated.

ANNEX - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- 2005-06 Service Agreement between WORC and HRLE
- 2004 Program Proposal to HRLE
- 2005 Program Proposal to HRLE
- Brochures
 - Overview of the Vera Perlin Society
 - Employment: A Division of the Vera Perlin Society
 - Vera Crosbie-Perlin – A Brief History
- Forms
 - HRLE's Employment & Career Service's Medical Report (September 2001)
 - HRLE's Employment & Career Service's Personal Inventory and Application (January 2001)
 - HRLE's Enhanced Screening and Assessment Documentation Sheet (November 1999)
 - Monthly Client Data Reports
- Career Education and Exploration Program (CEE)
 - Curriculum
 - Weekly class schedule
 - Work placement data
- Employment Division – Assessment/Intake guide
- Vocational Assessment Curriculum Guide (VACG) 1993
- File review – 10 WORC clients

4.0 Evaluation of Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) – Calypso Foundation, Lewisporte

4.1 Report Summary

The Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) is a community-based program operated by the Calypso Foundation. The program serves Lewisporte and surrounding communities. WORC has been funded by Human Resources Labour and Employment (HRLE) since 1977. The program is self described as 'a community-based program which trains adults who are developmentally delayed¹⁰ in the necessary skills enabling them to become contributing members of society and to obtain employment within the labour force. Throughout the program, emphasis is placed on acquiring those skills necessary for independent living'.

The WORC program presents as a long standing and well established program focused on the provision of employment preparation/placement supports for persons with intellectual disabilities. Initially conceived in response to identified needs of adults with intellectual disabilities in the Lewisporte area as a means to facilitate successful entry into the labour force, the program has evolved (and continues to do so) from its initial centre-based focus to one that today is more reflective of practices within the Supported Employment model. This gradual shift in the program model is in accord with current best practices in the area of employment services for persons with intellectual disabilities, and has been accomplished in partnership with HRLE, and influenced by the policy framework of that department.

The following provides a brief summary comment as related to findings within each of the evaluation Research Issues:

CONTEXT - The goals and objectives for the program are clearly stated, and are in accord with overall direction and policy of HRLE. Components of program design and delivery have kept pace with advancing theory and practice related to service delivery for persons with intellectual disabilities. There are, however, several current program delivery elements (such as the high percentage of part-time employment, continuing attendance by participants in the classroom phase, and indeterminate length of time that participants can remain 'clients' of the program) that have less compatibility with the policy direction of HRLE. While acknowledging that significant advancement has been made, potential still exists for greater use of a 'supported employment' rather than a 'training placement' approach when presenting an initial employment strategy to employers.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES - The WORC appears to have a positive relationship with many of the key stakeholders in the Lewisporte area, namely HRLE, Service Canada, and the school system. Interactions between program staff and these other agencies is characterized as effective and resulting in client access to necessary individual supports and services, as needed. The overall level of interaction between the WORC and other service providers in the Lewisporte area was generally rated as very satisfactory, but with a caveat that these relationships could be further enhanced and strengthened. In contrast, the level of current interaction and service coordination between WORC and the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) was deemed to be inadequate.

¹⁰ Within the general text of this report the terms 'intellectual disabilities' and 'adults/persons with intellectual disabilities' will be used to describe the condition referred to (for reasons of quotations and/or historical accuracy) in other sections as developmental delay, or mental handicap,

INPUTS - The WORC provides a valuable service to persons with intellectual disabilities residing in the Lewisporte and surrounding area. The program, through efforts of its Board and staff, has remained responsive to the needs of its clients, and through the years has made program modifications to reflect changing practices. The Calypso Foundation has an active Board of Directors and the program has strong and ongoing relationships with its clients, families and funding agency and has used this to inform ongoing program development and enhancement. Most notable among these program enhancements has been the development of Board operated businesses (serving as both training and employment for clients) and, in more recent years, an effort toward adoption of a supported employment approach. Services provided are appropriate for clients served and the program has demonstrated capacity to respond to changing client expectations and prevailing local labour market conditions. The program has demonstrated capacity to reach its intended clientele and does not currently have a waiting list.

PROCESS – The WORC has clearly identified program goals and outcomes, and these are reviewed/confirmed with its funding partner (HRLE) on an annual basis. At the client level, program intervention is highly individualized, and attempts are made to ensure that continuing classroom attendance is geared to meeting individually identified needs. While overall intervention strategies utilized by the program reflect an individualized approach, formal identification and measurement of progress toward attainment of individual client goals is weak. Data also confirm that individuals attend the WORC for reasons other than employment and it is noted that many clients continue to attend the centre after attainment of employment.

PRODUCTS - Increased emphasis has been placed on the acquisition of employment outcomes for clients of the WORC program during the past several years. All current WORC clients are in paid employment (either part-time or full-time). While the majority of employment found for clients is of a part-time nature, evidence indicates this employment is sustainable, and in many instances potential exists for increased hours of work. The majority of employers felt that the hiring of the person with a disability was ‘good for business’ and they indicated a willingness to be involved in the program again. It is also apparent that the program is just now beginning to explore the increased employment potential associated with availability of co-worker¹¹ support. Benefits other than employment are currently associated with program attendance (such as friendships, social activities, adult learning opportunities) but it is also noted that these can be achieved (and more appropriately so) via other community activities. The challenge for the Calypso Foundation is to ensure that its clients are fully included within activities in the broader community, thus lessening their need to seek these outcomes from the program.

The report sets out specific recommendations in relation to each of the findings. The findings and recommendations are also listed at the end of the report for ease of reference.

4.2 Overview of Program

The Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre (WORC) is a community-based program that has been funded by Human Resources Labour and Employment (HRLE) since 1977. The program is self

¹¹ Co-workers are paid staff who provide specialized on-site support to an employee with an intellectual disability, and are one of the defining support characteristics within a supported employment model.

described as 'a community-based program which trains adults who are developmentally delayed¹² in the necessary skills enabling them to become contributing members of society and to obtain employment within the labour force. Throughout the program, emphasis is placed on acquiring those skills necessary for independent living'.

The program is operated under the auspice of the Calypso Foundation and is located in the community of Lewisporte, serving it and surrounding communities. The Calypso Foundation also sponsors a number of other programs/services including the Calypso Living Skills Centre, Grass Cutting Project, Calypso Green Depot, Cardboard and Paper Recycling and Calypso Confectionary.

The funding agreement with HRLE provides for salaries, operating costs, and program management. In fiscal year 2005-06, the total WORC funding was \$172,990.

The program logic model for the WORC is presented in the following chart:

Calypso WORC Program Logic Model

Component	
TARGET	Individuals with developmental disabilities with and without attachment to Income Support
PROGRAM INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life skills training - Pre-employment training - Job search - Group (classroom based) sessions
OTHER INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodations - Transportation
OUTPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced employability - Training placements
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jobs - Savings to Income Support - Reduced health care costs - Improved personal well-being
IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased labour market participation - Improved personal well-being

¹² Within the general text of this report the terms 'intellectual disabilities' and 'adults/persons with intellectual disabilities' will be used to describe the condition referred to (for reasons of quotations and/or historical accuracy) in other sections as developmental delay, or mental handicap,

4.3 Findings

In this section, the findings in relation to each of the research issues are presented. The reporting format used is as follows: the research issue and related research questions are stated, the related findings are presented and each finding is followed by the supporting evidence gathered from all lines of evidence in the evaluation.

4.3.1 Research Issue - CONTEXT

Research Questions:

- How are employment-related goals/objectives for persons with disabilities identified?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model? Are people with disabilities served well by the model?

Finding: The WORC program was originally designed in response to identified community and family needs as related to adults with intellectual disabilities. The program has remained in accord with its original mission and mandate.

The origins of the WORC program are rooted in a response to a noted lack of day time supports/activities for persons with intellectual disabilities in Lewisporte, who had left the secondary school system (or who in many cases had never attended). This need, identified through a Needs Assessment, was first presented to government in a brief prepared by The Association of Parents and Friends of the Mentally Handicapped (January 1976). This brief called for the establishment of a Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre to 'train mentally handicapped adults'. This initial proposal was supplemented by a public meeting and had the strong endorsement and support of many community agencies, including employers and representatives of many of the church groups. The program began operations in 1977.

The original aims and objectives of the WORC were expressed as:

- To assist each individual overcome the abrupt and often difficult change from sheltered environment to the adult working world
- To assist individuals in obtaining optimum vocational competence and maximum progress towards a productive vocational status
- To assist individuals in the entry into remunerative employment as independent citizens and workers
- To assist in the maximum functioning level and self sufficiency in work situations.

The current constitution of the Calypso Foundation retains these objectives as the mandate of the Calypso Employment Training Program.

Finding: The annual funding proposal is submitted in compliance with applicable HRLE policy requirements and undergoes appropriate review/assessment by HRLE officials. Recommendations made pursuant to this assessment process have been implemented by the program.

The annual funding proposal submitted by WORC to HRLE was found to be in keeping with then required departmental policy. The proposal was submitted in a timely fashion and underwent a formal review/assessment conducted by regional and district officials. The budget component of the proposal

also underwent separate review by regional staff. It is noted, however, that the annual proposal (for fiscal year 2005-06) submitted by the WORC did not contain sufficient program information and detail, and in order to conduct a comprehensive assessment HRLE officials were required to seek additional information from the program.

For the 2005-06 fiscal year, several recommendations were forthcoming as a result of this review process and included:

1. That submitted budget be amended to reflect actual expenditures so as to avoid funding identified for one area being used to make up shortfall in other areas
2. That HRLE continue to work in partnership with Calypso and Health and Community Services to identify potential recipients for community-based placements
3. That recipients of HRLE funding be case managed and tracked in the Client Services Management System
4. That efforts be made to have departmental representatives at regular Board meetings to participate in discussions directly related to case managed recipients
5. That Calypso be requested to provide to HRLE a program curriculum for participants participating in on site programming
6. That Calypso's mandate/objectives reflect recognition of the Supported Employment model
7. That in order to develop a more collaborative and supportive relationship, that Calypso direct all inquiries/correspondence to the HRLE district office in Lewisporte

Information gathered from program and HRLE informants indicates that compliance has been achieved for six of the seven recommendations. The only outstanding issue relates to usage of the Client Services Management System (CSMS); this issue is more the responsibility of HRLE and is currently being worked on.

Finding: Goals and objectives for the program are clearly stated, and are in accord with overall direction and policy of HRLE.

Finding: Current program delivery elements such as the high percentage of part-time employment, continuing attendance by participants in the classroom phase, and indeterminate length of time that participants can remain 'clients' of the program have less compatibility with the direction and policy context of HRLE.

Program objectives, mission, mandate and program structure are clearly articulated in several program documents, including brochures and program information sheets. The WORC is self-described as a 'three-phase program', consisting of:

- **Pre-employment:** classroom based instruction in job-related skills, independent living skills, social/personal skills and functional academics;
- **Training 'On the Job':** trainees work on the job for one or two days a week, and have coverage from the Workplace Health, Safety, and Compensation Commission (WHSCC); employers do not pay wages; and
- **Employment:** individual hired and paid by the employer (minimum wage or higher, sometimes in conjunction with a time limited wage subsidy) with continuing on site support from the WORC staff.

HRLE informants indicated that the goals and objectives of the program were clearly defined, were well known to the community of Lewisporte, and that the program experienced a high level of community support. In addition informants were in agreement that the program intent and objectives were in accord

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with the overall policy framework of HRLE (as related to employment and employment supports for persons with disabilities). It was noted that certain program delivery elements (such as the perceived over-usage of part-time employment, continuing attendance by participants in the classroom phase, and the length of time that participants remain ‘clients’ of the program) have less compatibility with the policy of HRLE.

Finding: Increased usage of the supported employment model¹³ to attain and maintain employment for clients with greatest employment barriers reflects a movement toward a ‘best practices’ approach.

Finding: Potential exists for greater use of a ‘supported employment’ rather than a ‘training placement’ approach when presenting an initial employment strategy to employers.

Informants at all levels were unanimous in their opinion that the WORC addressed a real and existing gap in service provision for persons with intellectual disabilities in the Lewisporte area. The provision of prerequisite skills to employment and assistance with job attainment and retention was noted by all informants as key gaps addressed by WORC. WORC staff and Board informants were particularly supportive of the combination of classroom-based instruction and employment (either in the community or Foundation businesses) as the most appropriate method of fully addressing client needs. Informants referenced the high levels of client and family satisfaction with program design, delivery and achieved outcomes. Informants also acknowledged that, in the absence of the WORC, no other agency currently existed that could potentially step forward to address this need of persons with intellectual disabilities, certainly not to the level currently provided by WORC. In addition to the specific employment efforts on behalf of clients, many informants acknowledged that the WORC addresses another gap - broader advocacy efforts on behalf of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

All informants were supportive of the noted movement toward increased usage of the supported employment model.

The approach used as the underlying rationale for the WORC is one that is self-described by program and Board informants as being ‘built in’ Lewisporte, founded on an underlying belief that persons with intellectual disabilities (regardless of level) have a right to be employed and have access to appropriate and adequate supports. The original design of the WORC was influenced in large measure by the prevailing and best practices of the time (i.e. 1970s), reflecting an emphasis on securing paid community employment rather than usage of a more traditional sheltered workshop approach prevalent at the time. Whether the WORC still reflects a ‘best practice’¹⁴ is certainly debatable, particularly given its ongoing and, for many clients, extensive use of classroom-based instruction. However the emphasis placed on acquisition of paid employment for all clients, and the increased movement toward a supported employment model, are certainly elements commonly associated with current best practices.

Data collected during the employer interviews confirmed the high community profile and broad support experienced by the program within the Lewisporte area. The majority of employers did not note any

¹³ Within the province the supported employment model is usually associated with and delivered by Employment Corporations. While several clients of the WORC program are supported on the job by a co-worker (a feature unique to the supported employment model) the WORC retains its separate identity and is not considered an Employment Corporation.

¹⁴ While no absolute agreement exists within the disability sector, current literature would indicate that a best practice in the area of employment services for persons with intellectual disabilities is one characterized by person-centered planning, non-segregated, community based, employment rather than training based, and resulting in real employment at a minimum wage rate or higher. It is against these criteria that the term best practice is used.

significant weakness associated with either program design or delivery, and expressed satisfaction with the program as currently delivered. However several employers did suggest that increased efforts could be directed to more active engagement of the employer sector. When asked to suggest changes/improvements to the program the most frequent suggestions offered (including the number of times cited) were increased use of co-worker support (3) and increased availability of wage subsidies (2). When asked about possible additional activities by the program within the employer sector, the most frequent suggestions offered included hosting of employer training and awareness sessions (3) and increased focus on the potential for full-time client employment (2). In particular, a minority of employers felt that increased emphasis should be placed on securing employment as an initial outcome, rather than necessarily using a training placement (in which the client is placed on the job on a temporary unpaid basis) as the first overture to employers (an approach more akin to the supported employment model).

Based on an analysis of the responses from all key informants, the following represents a summary of the noted strengths and areas for improvement of the WORC model and associated delivery issues:

Strengths

- Valuable and valued service to adults with intellectual disabilities (and their families)
- A safe learning and working environment
- Clients acquire increased social skills, friendships and experience personal growth
- Employment outcomes being achieved (i.e. every client is employed - at least on a part-time basis)
- Multi-phased program (Classroom, On the Job Training and Employment)
- Long positive history of providing appropriate supports to persons with intellectual disabilities in the Lewisporte and surrounding areas
- Strong community support/well known by and in the community
- Demonstrated movement toward increased usage of a supported employment model
- Positive rapport with clients, families and employers
- Strong positive relationship with government departments
- Extensive knowledge of client strengths and weaknesses
- Active involvement in the identification and acquisition of other supports needed by clients (e.g. transportation, supported living, etc)

Areas for improvement

- Still viewed as a segregated/sheltered program
- Many clients working part-time for many years—not enough emphasis on acquisition of full-time employment
- Many clients are still reliant on Income Support benefits
- Need an increased emphasis on supported employment model
- Persons may be ‘rejected’ due to severity of needs
- Lack of funds/lack of sufficient staff
- Program size limited by maximum capacity of 12 clients (in classroom component at any one time)

Finding: Staff of the WORC Lewisporte have adequate access to ongoing professional development.

WORC staff reported as having adequate access to ongoing professional development opportunities via attendance at annual conferences, and in-service events (such as First Aid, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training, and Anger Management). The Manager of the WORC is a member of Supported Employment Newfoundland and Labrador (SENL) and maintains close relationships with service providers in this sector. It should also be noted that all staff of the WORC are long standing employees, having all been with the program in excess of 20 years.

Summary and discussion

The Lewisporte WORC, now a part of the larger Calypso Foundation, is a long established program dedicated to the provision of employment supports and services to persons with intellectual disabilities. Its longevity can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness, in that the program has been a major source of stable support for many individuals and families over the years. Yet it also represents a program operating in 2006, with its mandate and mission formulated over 30 years ago. To the credit of both Board and staff, components of program design and delivery have kept pace with advancing theory and practice as related to service delivery for persons with intellectual disabilities. However, as a comprehensive program unit it has not undergone the type of transformation one could reasonably expect to witness given the significant advances that have been achieved within the area of intellectual disability during the past three decades. Incremental changes have been introduced but there is no evidence to indicate that the coherency of the entire program model has undergone necessary review.

Recommendations

1. The Board of the Calypso Foundation initiate a Strategic Planning Process, perhaps using this current evaluation as a starting point, to review and confirm its vision and mandate, and set a long term future direction for the organization. Particular emphasis within this process would be placed on the future design and delivery of the WORC.
2. Board and staff of the Calypso Foundation participate in the upcoming Supported Employment Training Program (as delivered by Employment Corporations).
3. Increased usage be made of co-worker support as a means of increasing the number of employment placements in the community for persons with more significant employment barriers.

4.3.2 Research Issue – RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER SERVICES

Research Questions:

- How well does the program coordinate with other service providers who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?
- To what extent do the services provided by the program complement those offered by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do the services duplicate or overlap with services provided by other agencies, particularly HRLE?

- To what extent do clients use employment-related programs or services? Is the need to rely on other agencies for additional assistance for clients (accommodations, wage subsidies) an efficient way to provide services?
- How well do the programs coordinate with providers of other related services who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?

Finding: The WORC is the only community-based agency providing employment-related services to persons with intellectual disabilities in the Lewisporte area. No evidence was found to indicate service duplication or overlap.

No other employment programs providing service to persons with intellectual disabilities, other than Service Canada or HRLE, were identified either through document review or key informant interviews in the Lewisporte area. The issue of complementarities, relationship between employment agencies and potential service duplication with other employment agencies is therefore not applicable to the Calypso WORC.

Finding: The relationship and service coordination with HRLE is adequate and acceptable.

The relationship between the WORC and HRLE was described by program staff, Board members and HRLE informants as positive and effective, with ongoing communication characterized as open and beneficial. Contact is maintained with the district office on an as needed basis with increased frequency of meetings occurring during the budget development and review cycle. HRLE officials such as the District Manager and Career Development Specialist attend Board meetings as needed, to bring any noted concerns to the attention of the Board and/or to share program/policy changes. HRLE informants indicated that in recent months this attendance has been more regular as there had been a need to more fully explain the evolving role of HRLE. These ongoing discussions were noted by informants as extremely helpful in recent months in assisting the WORC to make greater use of the supported employment model for several of its clients.

Finding: The level of interaction and service coordination between WORC and the Department of Health and Community Services (HCS) is inadequate.

During the course of the key informant interviews only two other agencies were noted with whom the WORC coordinates services, namely Health and Community Services (HCS) and the school system. The level and type of interaction with the school system was deemed acceptable, with meetings being held as required related to students who will be graduating and possibly seeking acceptance into the WORC. Referrals are made as required and in a timely manner (e.g. of the 19 clients interviewed, 10 had been initially referred by their teacher). No improvements were suggested nor deemed required with respect to the interaction between WORC and the school system.

The relationship with HCS was, however, viewed as less acceptable. Program informants noted a decrease in contact between the two agencies since the restructuring of the former Department of Social Services (which occurred in 1998). Informants speculated that, as responsibility for employment-related services for persons with intellectual disabilities is now not within the mandate of HCS, less attention is given to this issue than had been previously. As evidence of this, program staff advised of a significant decrease in invitations to General Service Plans (GSP) meetings and further noted that referrals were not forthcoming from HCS as they had been in past years. Concern was expressed by informants at all levels that there were still many HCS clients (e.g. persons living in Alternate Family Care situations) who could benefit from attendance at the WORC program but who are not being referred.

The WORC reported as having a positive relationship with the local Employment Assistance Services (EAS) office. In fact the manager is a former Board member (and President) of WORC and thus knows the program well. WORC takes advantage of wage subsidies (where appropriate) to assist clients in attaining employment.

Finding: While general satisfaction was indicated by key informants as to overall interaction between the WORC and other service providers, there was agreement that these relationships could be enhanced and strengthened.

The majority of informants expressed general satisfaction with the overall level and type of interaction occurring between the WORC and other agencies (with the notable exception of HCS, as described above). Program informants indicated that at the client level, access to available government supports and services (such as transportation funds, wage subsidies) were dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. Program staff were aware of who to contact and of the process involved. No major deficiencies were noted in this area. At the program level, informants suggested that the extent and nature of interaction (while currently deemed acceptable) was ad hoc and issue-based rather systematic. The majority of informants expressed an opinion that ongoing refinements to the WORC model could be facilitated via a more consistent relationship with key community/government partners.

The following summarizes the responses received when informants were asked to suggest improvements to overall service coordination:

- Enhanced presentation of the supported employment model as an option to employers, during initial contact;
- Efforts to increase the level of awareness of the WORC program among staff of HCS;
- Increased frequency of meetings with HCS staff, with a view to increasing the number of referrals from that agency; and
- More frequent and regularly scheduled meetings with both HRLE and Service Canada.

Finding: Employment-related supports (in particular wage subsidies) are available and utilized to the extent needed by clients and represent an essential component to attainment of paid community employment.

Informants cited wage subsidies as the employment-related support that is most often provided to clients. This support was deemed essential by program staff as an initial mechanism to achieving longer term sustainable employment for program clients. Program informants indicated that without these subsidies (generally accessed from HRLE) employers would be very reluctant to hire and less likely to take a risk on the client. In situations where clients have gone to work with businesses in the community these subsidies have been used and, as reported by program staff, have led to later permanent employment. Without the subsidy many potential job placements would not be possible. A review of current employment statistics for the program indicates that a wage subsidy is being used in only four of the 23 paid employment placements (evidence that wage subsidies have indeed led to longer term employment). HRLE informants also expressed the opinion that wage subsidies were used only to the extent needed, and that the use of these subsidies had led to longer term (non-subsidized) employment for many clients.

Finding: The WORC undertakes a number of activities (on an annual basis) directed towards increasing general program awareness within the business and employer sectors. The WORC does not, however, have a formal strategy for engagement of the employer sector.

Finding: While well known within the employer sector, the WORC has not yet adequately explained to employers the enhanced employment options now possible via the use of the supported employment model.

A review of program documents did not reveal any formal strategy through which linkages were initiated or maintained with the business community. There were, however, many individual examples cited in annual reports of efforts being directed toward the business and broader community. These included presentations to local service groups, client profiles being prepared and advertised on the local television station, and display and information booths set up at the local mall (with videos and distribution of brochures, posters and buttons) at least once a year. During Supported Employment Month (February) articles are submitted to the local newspaper, and a supported employment insert has been added to the WORC brochure. The Calypso Foundation maintains contact with the employer sector via its membership in the local Chamber of Commerce.

During the employer interviews, respondents suggested that a more proactive and direct approach be taken with the employer sector. The majority of informants felt that many local employers still had significant misconceptions regarding the hiring of persons with an intellectual disabilities, with a minority (3/9) suggesting that information sessions be specifically offered to employers to address this issue. It was also suggested that a direct mail out of program information and relevant literature to employers might be beneficial. These employers expressed a view that the WORC was not fully exploring the potential for community employment but were overly relying on many of its internal businesses as a source of client employment. A final comment raised by informants suggested that the WORC program place less emphasis on the training component and instead focus on securing paid employment from the outset (possibly using co-worker support if necessary).

Summary and discussion

In general, the WORC appears to have a positive relationship with many of the key stakeholders in the Lewisporte area, namely HRLE, Service Canada, and the school system. Interactions between program staff and these other agencies is characterized (by informants) as effective and resulting in client access to necessary individual supports and services, as needed. At the broader program level, the relationship was perhaps best described as ‘strong, but could be made stronger’. The one noted concern as related to interagency coordination was that of the relationship with HCS. For reasons unable to be ascertained during the course of this evaluation, it is apparent that the relationship between the WORC and HCS has deteriorated significantly in recent years. Given the common client group served by both WORC and HCS (i.e. adults with intellectual disabilities) this is an issue that should be given considerable and immediate attention and focus.

Interviews with employers indicated a high level of program visibility and awareness among the broader business community in the Lewisporte area. It would appear that despite this general awareness the WORC is viewed as rather insular and limited in its current approaches to employers. Several of the employers interviewed indicated a willingness to explore initial employment options other than exclusively a training placement model, and further indicated this might be representative of many more employers. This possibility has great positive potential for the program and certainly merits further exploration by program staff.

Given ongoing program changes, it may be advantageous for the WORC program to now develop and implement a more systematic employer engagement strategy. This strategy should build on the already established positive contacts in this sector, and be used as a means of ensuring that all employers in the Lewisporte area are aware of the increased availability of the supported employment model. This

strategy could include such activities as a mail out of up-to-date program material/literature to all employers in the local area and subsequent in-person follow up, hosting of an annual ‘employers breakfast’, use of local employer(s) to champion this issue with other employers, and presentations on the merits of the program (especially that now available via the supported employment model) to such groups as the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club.

Recommendations

4. A meeting be held between senior staff of WORC and staff of the local HCS office responsible for services to persons with intellectual disabilities. This meeting should identify and address reasons for the lack of referrals from HCS to WORC; emphasize/explain the changing role (i.e. more employment focused) of the program, and reach agreement as to a potential role for WORC staff in client planning processes undertaken by HCS.
5. In order to maintain a high level of interaction and dialogue with the program, an official of HRLE attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings of the Calypso Foundation.
6. Senior WORC staff hold regular meetings (perhaps quarterly) with staff of HRLE to ensure that the program is in compliance with departmental policy, direction and reporting requirements.
7. The WORC develop a formal ‘employer engagement’ strategy.

4.3.3 Research Issue – INPUTS

Research Questions:

- Are the services offered by each program appropriate for the actual clients they assist?
- To what degree are the programs able to cater to differing individual needs?

Finding: Services provided are appropriate for clients served, and the program has demonstrated capacity to respond to changing client expectations and prevailing local labour market conditions.

Finding: The Calypso Foundation has an active Board of Directors and the program has strong and ongoing relationships with its clients, families and funding agency, and has used this to inform ongoing program development/enhancement.

Finding: The WORC has not undertaken any formal program evaluation efforts.

While no formal processes of program evaluation/modification were noted during the course of this evaluation, the Board of Directors is clearly the mechanism by which the program has attempted to remain responsive to the needs of its clients and the changing labour market and program context. Under the direction of its Board of Directors (on which more than 120 community members have served since 1977), the WORC program has grown into the larger Calypso Foundation. The Foundation, in addition to the WORC program, now sponsors other programs such as the Living Skills Centre, Grass Cutting Project, Calypso Green Depot, Calypso Confectionary and most recently the Cardboard and Paper Recycling. These projects were initiated as considered decisions of the Board of Directors, and each was created as a means of addressing the employment needs of program clients within the prevailing labour market conditions of the Lewisporte area. In particular the Green Depot and the Cardboard and Paper Recycling were undertaken to provide direct employment for WORC

clients. These two projects are used to provide on the job training, primary and/or supplemental employment for clients. The Board is currently considering undertaking a strategic planning process, and to date has also developed a Calypso Foundation Marketing Initiative (2005)¹⁵. In a less direct way, noted changes and enhancements to the program have, over the years, been influenced by input from families and clients and certainly through ongoing discussions/negotiations with various government departments, most notably HRLE. The document review also confirmed changes to the classroom component of the program, for example the addition of computers and a modified curriculum.

HRLE informants acknowledged efforts by the program to remain responsive and relevant to the needs of the people it serves. While informants expressed concern regarding the nature and value of the classroom component of the program (particularly its long term use for some clients), it was agreed that staff and Board of the program were receptive to program suggestions offered by HRLE. The recent increased emphasis on the use of the supported employment model by the program was cited to support this contention.

Informants further noted that the current evaluation was the first 'formal' evaluation undertaken of the WORC since its inception. The majority of informants were supportive of a more regular evaluation process, one that would supplement and inform ongoing Board efforts and ensure that the program remained responsive and appropriate to the changing needs of its clients, funding agencies, employers and community.

Finding: WORC has demonstrated capacity to reach its intended clientele and does not currently have a waiting list.

The WORC program is operating at capacity, with 23 clients being served. This active client list reflects clients who are (some concurrently) in different phases of the program, with the maximum program caseload being defined as no more than 12 clients at any one time involved in the classroom component. The program is well known throughout the Lewisporte area, and program staff maintain adequate contact with the high schools in the area and HRLE, both of which are primary sources of new referrals to the program. The document review also revealed that in past years several families have actually relocated to the Lewisporte area to enable attendance at the WORC. There is currently no wait list for the WORC program.

Key informant interviews indicated strong community knowledge of and support for the Calypso Foundation and its associated programs. Respondents were unanimous in the opinion that the program was adequately known within the community and that program reach was adequate.

Finding: Current intake process (and associated program assignment) utilized with new clients is sufficient to enable an individual response to client needs.

The staff of the program follow a standard intake/assessment process for all new clients. It is designed to enable an individual assessment of each person's particular strengths, needs and interests, and to enable determination of whether the WORC is an appropriate program response. This process consists of the following steps:

¹⁵ This marketing initiative is primarily geared to current recycling efforts of the Foundation and potential for further recycling opportunities. No data was available as to the extent to which objectives of the Initiative have been realized.

- Upon receipt of a referral, an application/intake form is completed. This initial application form includes necessary consent forms and collects basic demographic, educational, vocational and/or employment history, and a basic skills inventory.
- A determination is made as to whether the person has a developmental disability. This confirmation is medical in nature and is usually performed by the family doctor, who confirms the diagnosis.
- The Manager will then conduct a home visit and speak to the parents /caregivers, other family members, and the individual. This home visit is also used as an opportunity to discuss/identify other support needs.
- Once consent forms are signed, additional information is then collected (e.g. from the school, work study program, HCS, HRLE, etc).
- Once the individual is accepted into the program, WORC staff also carry out a more formalized assessment – the Adaptive Functioning Index (AFI). This is a social educational test, an objective assessment of the basic skills necessary for independent living in the community.
- During this process other additional supports required by the person may be identified (e.g. transportation) and if so a funding request is forwarded to the appropriate agency.

The WORC is designed as a three-phase program, yet participation in each of the phases is very much related to the expressed interests, skills and choice of clients. Following the intake process described above, new clients usually (but not necessarily) begin in Phase 1 of the program - the Classroom Training component. Program staff indicated that depending on the existing skills and/or interests of the person, clients may spend minimal time in the classroom component or move directly to on the job training and/or employment.

Summary and discussion

Since it was first conceived and implemented nearly 30 years ago, the WORC has undeniably provided a valuable service to persons with intellectual disabilities residing in the Lewisporte and surrounding area. The program, through efforts of its Board and staff, has managed to remain responsive to the needs of its clients, and through the years has made program modifications to reflect changing practice. Most notable among these program enhancements has been the development of Board operated businesses (serving as both training and employment for clients) and in more recent years a more directed effort toward adoption of a supported employment approach. Interviews with both Board and staff informants clearly revealed an openness to new ideas and a willingness to consider further and ongoing program change, if such is seen as being in the best interests of clients (and families) served.

Recommendations

8. A review of all program and client related forms and assessment instruments be undertaken to ascertain and ensure compatibility to current HRLE policy, and program/best practices.
9. A formal evaluation be conducted of the WORC program (completed by an external evaluator) at least every three years (with first of these due as of March 30, 2009)

4.3.4 Research Issue - PROCESS

Research Questions:

- How is progress towards goals measured for the program?
- How is progress towards goals measured for individual clients?
- To what extent are unpaid job placements useful in enabling clients to progress?

Finding: Measurement of progress toward attainment of program goals is adequate.

Finding: Interventions utilized within the WORC are individualized and tailored to meet the specific need of clients.

Finding: While overall intervention strategies utilized by the program reflect an individualized approach, formal identification and measurement of progress toward attainment of individual client goals is weak.

Finding: The classroom component of the program provides clients with necessary pre-employment, job search, and labour market information. The curriculum associated with this program component would benefit from review and revision. The continuing role (and value) of the classroom should now be reassessed given that all clients have demonstrated capacity to attain employment.

Finding: Program forms and assessment instrument need to be updated and made more relevant to the increased program emphasis on employment outcomes.

Program outcomes are identified within the proposal submission/assessment process between the program and HRLE, with annual employment targets identified. These outcomes/targets are tracked and monitored by program staff and reported to HRLE via monthly reporting.

A review of program document and data collected through the key informant interviews indicates that the following represent agreed upon successful client outcomes:

- Paid employment (either part or full-time)
- On the job training experiences in the community and paid placements within Foundation operated businesses
- Provision of an appropriate and valued activity for clients through attendance at the centre
- Access to a safe learning environment.
- Learning and personal growth experienced by clients as a result of the attendance at the classroom sessions.
- Client satisfaction
- Assisting the person to advance as far as possible (even if that is only a part-time job)
- Reduced dependence on Income Support benefits

Interventions are very individualized and based on the needs of the clients. While the classroom portion is carried out in group sessions much one-on-one support is available and provided. However, no Individual Program Plans (IPPs) are created for clients. Informants did indicate that this was a former practice but has been discontinued. Program staff indicated that the focus of classroom instruction is linked to the needs identified on the job (for those who are working) or specific areas of weakness that might need to be addressed to enable a future work placement for a client.

Clients are not required to attend the classroom portion of the program for a set period of time. There is no formal program in place and no formal curriculum that every client must complete. Instructors clearly indicated that they are not ‘teachers’ and that this is not a school. Work and/or getting ready for work are the priorities of the program. The classroom portion works toward increasing client understanding of basic concepts that they will need to work in the community (for example, handling money). In the classroom there is emphasis placed on preparing a resume, conducting mock interviews, increasing self-esteem and self confidence, and addressing behavioural issues (if needed). Again however it is noted that such is not done within the formal framework of an IPP.

Program informants advised that if a client displays major behavioural concerns, instructors will work in conjunction with a Behaviour Management Specialist of Health and Community Services. It was also noted that if a new referral has significant/severe disabilities he/she may not be accepted as a client of the WORC.

Every effort is made to keep the classroom components fresh and new. Instruction is ongoing and is in response to client needs. The classroom portion is used to help with other issues that might be of importance to the client (EI, income tax, learning about the political system, etc).

Other noted indicators of individualized service delivery included the use of wage subsidies; securing of client transportation; assistance with other needed services such as drug cards, physical accessibility; and attendance at General Service Plan (GSP) meetings. Program informants also noted that clients can spend varying time in Phase 1, that 1:1 instructor support is available and provided as needed, and that job searches are all tailored to meet individual needs and interests.

A review of client files (based on eight randomly selected files) revealed that program application and consent forms, personal skills inventories and AFI assessments had been completed. However no evidence was found that would indicate this information was then used to identify client-specific short- or long-term goals beyond those implicit in overall program goals (i.e. attainment of employment, attendance in Phase 1, etc). While staff indicated that classroom instruction was tailored to meet individual issues as identified by program clients, file documentation did not substantiate this assertion. In the absence of identification of specific client goals/objectives, measurement of progress toward attainment of these goals is not possible.

The file review also revealed the continued use of forms that are now outdated (for example, several of the forms contain questions that refer to clients as students). It is also noted that the program’s primary assessment tool, the Adaptive Functioning Index (AFI), is also a very dated instrument and its use should be discontinued or at least replaced by an assessment/inventory profile that would be more applicable to current practices.

There was consensus among HRLE informants that the WORC, in recent years, had made great strides toward an increased emphasis on achieving employment outcomes for all its clients. Informants were also unanimous in their commendation of WORC for its increased usage of the supported employment model as a means of achieving employment for clients with the greatest employment barriers. Informants cited these program enhancements as evidence that the WORC had made significant movement away from its original status as a ‘sheltered workshop/segregated training centre’.

While lauding the program for its increased employment outcomes, informants also expressed concern about the use of ‘training placements’. While acknowledging that these placements do provide valuable job experience and exposure, informants cautioned that they should not be used for extended periods of

time, particularly in the private/for profit sector. This was noted as a general caution in that informants were unable to identify to what extent training placements were actually being used (or overused).

Finding: Attainment of paid employment does not necessarily terminate the active program status of a client. Individuals can attend the program so as long as desired and/or needed.

Finding: Individuals attend the WORC for reasons other than employment - many clients continue to attend the centre after attainment of employment.

A review of program documents revealed that there is no formal or imposed graduation criterion. Clients can remain active within the WORC for as long as needed. However, clients certainly do 'leave' the program. In most instances this occurs after they have attained full-time employment (and been provided follow up support on the job for a period of six weeks). It should be noted that even in these situations, individuals may still avail of services from the WORC (for example assistance with tax preparation, budgeting, EI claims, etc). For most current clients, participation in the program consists of part-time employment supplemented by two to three classroom sessions per week. Client interviews (with both current and former clients) confirmed this pattern of part-time employment supplemented by part-time attendance at the centre, and as well confirmed a high degree of satisfaction with the program as currently delivered. It is also noted that parents are very supportive of the classroom component of WORC, with continued attendance at the centre being seen as a very valuable support and service (i.e. respite).

Finding: The WORC program does not utilize 'unpaid job placements' but rather, as one phase of its three-phase program, does use an on the job training model. No evidence was found that these training placements were extended to the detriment of clients.

A review of program documentation, and confirmed via staff interviews, revealed that the program does not utilize 'unpaid job placements'¹⁶ but rather as part of its design and three-phase approach does make use of an 'on the job training' component. This program component was viewed as an important program feature and one essential for many individuals so as to ensure a successful transition to employment. This program component was compared to other co-op programs, such as that of Memorial University. At point of completion of this evaluation, no clients were in training.

Staff were cognizant of the need to closely monitor these training placements and ensure that they did not continue indefinitely. This caution was also expressed by all other key informants (particularly as related to training placements occurring in the private for profit sector). A review of program documentation did not, however, reveal any formal time limit to these placements. Program staff indicated that the decision to move beyond (or perhaps terminate) a training placement is a joint one involving program staff, the individual and the employer.

All informants were of the opinion that, when used appropriately, training placements had great potential for providing clients with increased work experience, increased exposure to the demands of a work environment, and helping them determine the type of work they might be best suited to and/or had greatest interest in. Program staff in particular also spoke of the value of training placements, noting

¹⁶ During key informant interviews with program staff, training placements were defined to be used for clients who were not yet fully job ready, be of finite duration and intended to serve a training function (learning job duties, work related skills); differentiated from unpaid work placements seen as options used by persons who were job ready but could not yet find paid employment. The latter were assumed to be longer term and not for purposes of training. The finding is based on this distinction.

that as there are no initial financial considerations to the employer they are more likely to participate in the program. This was a comment echoed by both employers interviewed, and in each of these instances, the training placements had been followed by the hiring of the individuals placed.

Summary and discussion

Data collected indicates that the WORC has clearly identified program goals/outcomes, and these are reviewed/confirmed with its funder (HRLE) on an annual basis. At the client level, program intervention is highly individualized, and attempts are made to ensure that continuing classroom attendance is geared to meeting individually identified needs. A noted weakness, however, is that such intervention is not captured within the context of any (written) plan. Documentation reviewed did reveal initial identification of client strengths and needs but no evidence was found as to how this information was used to further identify specific employment goals and/or inform instructional content. This is an area of program delivery that would benefit from further review and refinement.

A further area of specific concern noted by many informants was the classroom component of the program. To assess this issue one must remember that the program began as a sheltered workshop, with the classroom as its essential component. While still retained today, it is certainly less central to intervention than in previous years, and the program has now evolved to a point where its continued role should be reviewed and rationalized.

It is also worthy to note that while there was consensus among all informants as to the value of the training placement component of the program, caution was also expressed that these placements should be used only when advantageous to securing of longer term paid employment. The duration of the placements was also a concern of many informants, and while no evidence was found to indicate extensive or inappropriate use of these placements, this is an area that will require ongoing vigilance by program staff. It is also suggested that as increased use is made of a supported employment model, there may be less need to utilize the training placement option.

Recommendations

10. The classroom curriculum be reviewed (in conjunction with HRLE officials) to ensure it represents best practice in the area of adult education and career planning.
11. A review of the role and function of the classroom component (particularly for those individuals who are currently working) and the training placement component be undertaken. Such a review should consider the future utility of both these components in light of the ongoing evolution toward increased usage of a supported employment model.
12. A formal Employment Plan be created and maintained for each client.

4.3.5 Research Issue - PRODUCTS

Research Questions:

- Do participants of the program achieve sustainable employment?
- What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?

Finding: All current WORC clients are in paid employment (either part-time or full-time). The majority engaged in part-time employment, with Calypso being the employer.

All of the 23 clients listed as active with the WORC program (January 2006 – Monthly Activity Report) are involved in paid employment. Of these, nine have employment of more than 25 hours per week. Four of the individuals have access to co-worker support. A review of the Monthly Client Report (January 2006) reveals that nine of the 23 WORC clients work exclusively at the Calypso Recycling Depot (four of these work full time).

As noted above, all WORC clients are involved in paid employment as part of their attendance at the WORC program. WORC informants indicated that the level of paid employment is influenced by the interest and capacity of the clients to engage in paid employment (it was noted that several clients have health issues that prevent full-time employment), the availability of alternate job opportunities in the community, and in several instances the desire to remain under the allowable monthly earnings exemption stipulated by HRLE Income Support policy.

Five individuals hold part-time positions with community employers, supplemented by employment at the Calypso Recycling Depot. When not working, the majority of WORC clients choose to continue to attend the classroom component of the program. Classroom attendance is limited to 12 clients at any one time. The classroom component operates on a Monday – Thursday schedule, as on Fridays clients instead work for several hours at the Recycling Depot. In 19 of the 23 employment placements, wages are paid by the employer, with wage subsidies in place for the other four placements.

A total of 19 former and current clients of the WORC program were interviewed as part of the client interview process. Data collected from these interviews revealed that five of these individuals no longer attend the WORC centre classroom component and four individuals indicated part-time attendance. Approximately 75% of clients interviewed (14/19) were currently employed, three on a full-time basis. It is noted that all individuals (either unemployed or working part time) indicated a desire for employment and/or increased hours of work.

During the key informant interviews, HRLE informants expressed concern regarding the high percentage of part-time employment among WORC clients. A related concern involved questioning the amount of time (and value of such time) spent by clients at the WORC site and the classroom component of the program. Opinion was expressed that perhaps many of these clients could/should be working more in the community.

HRLE informants also noted that many of the WORC clients used natural supports¹⁷ on the job and, in instances other than training placements, were being paid minimum wage or more by the employer. Both are positive features of the program.

During the on site visit to the WORC, two employers associated with the program were interviewed by the evaluator. Both employers interviewed were very positive in their opinion of the WORC and spoke highly of the experience of hiring a person with an intellectual disability, with the assistance of the WORC. In both instances the employee was retained on a permanent basis after a period of training and subsidized employment. Work assigned is reflective of typical duties required by the companies and the wages paid are consistent with those paid to other employees doing similar work.

¹⁷ In this context the term natural supports is used to describe on the job support not provided by a paid co-worker, but rather support drawn from the typical worksite (e.g. from another staff, supervisor, etc)

Employment was deemed to be sustainable by both employers interviewed. In one instance the employee has been there more than two years and the employer said “he can keep this job for as long as he likes – he is an excellent employee.” The other employee has just begun unsubsidized employment (following a training placement) and is now working two half-days a week. The employer said there was much potential for these hours to be extended in the future.

As part of the evaluation, a telephone survey was conducted with seven additional employers who had employed clients of the program. Data collected from these interviews (including the two completed on site) revealed that 44% of the initial placements (4/9) involved a wage subsidy, employers paid the full wage in 44% of initial placements (4/9) and one placement was for training purposes with no wages. The majority of placements were initiated by program staff (5/9); an interview was conducted prior to the placement in two instances. Of the nine employers, seven had retained the client (full or part time); with five of the positions being unsubsidized. All employers rated the support provided by the program - to them and the client - and communication with the program as either good or excellent.

Finding: The majority of employers felt that the hiring of the person with a disability was ‘good for business’ and indicated a willingness to be involved in the program again.

Finding: Participation in WORC was deemed to provide significant social benefits for clients beyond employment.

The majority of employers interviewed (89% (8/9)) felt that the hiring of the person with a disability was ‘good for business’ and indicated a willingness to be involved in the program again.

All informants viewed the attainment of employment as a key outcome for WORC clients. Informants were also in agreement that employment was not/should not be the only indicator by which success of the WORC was measured. The following were other social benefits identified by key informants:

- Tremendous social benefits
- Clients make friends
- Clients attend social events that are sponsored by WORC
- They have gone on ‘road trips’. This expands their experiences
- Increased community participation
- Their confidence and self-esteem improves. Clients are very happy and satisfied with attending WORC
- Learned more social skills and as a result have made more new friends
- They have learned more about the services that are available in the community
- They are more involved in their community and its activities – attending church, involved in men’s and women’s groups, recreational activities etc

When asked to comment on improvements in client health and well-being, all informants were of the opinion that this area was impacted positively by program participation but were also cautious to attach causality without more quantifiable indicators. Informants agreed that it was reasonable to assume that being out of the house on a regular basis, being employed and earning a wage, not being at home all day watching television, having new friends, and being increasingly involved in community activities would contribute to feelings of increased health and well-being. Several informants also indicated that program attendance also had an impact on the well-being of the family – in that the son/daughter is engaged in a valuable contributing activity, or at the very least attendance at the centre was a valuable form of respite for the family.

Client interviewed had a high degree of satisfaction with the services provided by WORC. All clients, including those not now attending, indicated that they very much liked attending the program. The reasons most often given were that they enjoyed meeting new people, making new friends, and/or working. All clients indicated that they enjoyed the classroom component of the program and felt that it did help them prepare for work and that it led to work. When asked to identify the most important things learned through attending the program, the majority of clients mentioned learning how to work at the recycling business, using computers, and learning how to handle money.

All clients indicated a desire to stay at the program indefinitely, although it may have been difficult for many clients to distinguish between work and program attendance. Perhaps more revealing were client responses to being asked what they would be doing if they were not attending the program – with all responses falling into the category of ‘at home, bored; doing nothing; watching TV’.

In discussing the benefits/impacts of attending the program, the answers most frequently given by clients (or in some cases by their parents who supported them during the interview) were as follows:

- Something to do/reason to get up
- Made me more independent/more responsible
- Helped me to make new friends/socialize
- Increased my self confidence
- Helped me to learn work skills
- Helped me learn basic life skills

Clients also felt that one of the major implications of their participation on their families was that it gave them a break from each other. This opinion was also confirmed by the majority of parents who took part in the interview process, adding that attendance at the WORC greatly reduced the stress associated with provision of day time supervision and/or activity.

Summary and discussion

Data collected during the course of this evaluation confirm that increased emphasis has been placed on the acquisition of employment outcomes for clients of the WORC program during the past several years. While the majority of employment found for clients is of a part-time nature, evidence indicates this employment is sustainable, and in many instances potential exists for increased hours of work. It is also apparent that the program is just now beginning to explore the increased employment potential associated with availability of co-worker support. The availability and use of co-worker support presents a real opportunity for increased full-time employment in current jobs, as well as a viable method to assist clients currently employed within Calypso sponsored businesses to secure more community based employment. Recommendations to this effect have been made earlier in this report.

While employment in the community is and should be a priority outcome of the program, it is also important to recognize the other benefits derived by clients and their families from the program. Clients and families clearly affirmed the value and benefit of the ‘non-employment’ outcomes associated with program attendance. The fact that these benefits are currently associated with program attendance is undeniable, however such benefits as friendships, social activities, and adult learning opportunities can be achieved (and more appropriately so) via other community activities. The inherent risk to any centre-based program is that it becomes the primary (and in some cases the sole) source of community participation for individuals. The challenge for the Calypso Foundation, as its WORC evolves to an

employment-focused program, is to ensure that its clients are fully included within activities in the broader community, thus lessening their need to seek these outcomes from the program. Efforts in this regard will require the support, cooperation and collaboration of others beyond the Foundation, including families, HRLE, HCS, and community organizations. Continued movement away from a centre-based approach will ensure that persons supported by the program are not forever viewed as 'WORC clients' but rather as citizens of Lewisporte.

Recommendations

13. The Calypso Foundation play a leadership role in ensuring a comprehensive person centered planning process is undertaken for all its current and future clients; involving other key partners such as HRLE, HCS, family and relevant community organizations; directed toward increased inclusion for clients within all aspects of community life and activity.

4.4 Summary of Findings

Upon review, the WORC presents as a program with design and delivery features that are in full accord with the Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities. The program does provide an individualized service approach focused on enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities and increasing employment opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities.

In assessing the WORC program it must be acknowledged that it is a program that was first introduced in 1976, and one that predates the current policy intent and direction of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and the prevailing supported employment model for persons with intellectual disabilities. It is a program that has remained true to its founding mission and mandate, yet has been able to transform in ways that have kept its service delivery relevant to its clients, and overall in accord with changing expectations and practices in the field. This transformation is, however, still ongoing and incomplete, as evidenced by the increasing movement in recent years toward a supported employment model.

Data collected during the course of this evaluation indicate that the program has moved to a more active emphasis on job acquisition for its clients as a primary goal, that clients are engaged in some form of full-time or part-time paid employment and that classroom attendance is now viewed as a prerequisite and/or supplement rather than a replacement to paid employment. While designed as a three-phase program, due flexibility is demonstrated in that clients are not expected nor required to complete all program components, if skills and/or interests indicate otherwise.

Data revealed no level of service duplication for the client group served, and the program presents as having strong linkages with other community organizations. Data further indicated the presence of a positive relationship between program staff and HRLE at both the district and regional levels. Communication and information exchange was deemed by all informants as facilitating ongoing program enhancement and improvement.

The findings also reveal that there are several areas of program delivery in which further enhancements are still needed. These include such issues as identification and measurement of individual client goals; refinement and updating of classroom curriculum; adoption of a formal employer engagement strategy; increased emphasis on acquisition of full-time rather than part-time employment for program clients;

and the continued decreased reliance on centre based activity. These and other issues have been addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

4.5 List of Findings

1. The WORC program was originally designed in response to identified community and family needs as related to adults with intellectual disabilities. The program has remained in accord with its original Mission and Mandate.
2. The annual funding proposal is submitted in compliance with applicable HRLE policy requirements and undergoes appropriate review/assessment by HRLE officials. Recommendations made pursuant to this assessment process have been implemented by the program.
3. Goals and objectives for the program are clearly stated, and are in accord with overall direction and policy of HRLE.
4. Current program delivery elements such as the high percentage of part-time employment, continuing attendance by clients in the classroom phase, and indeterminate length of time that participants can remain 'clients' of the program have less compatibility with the direction and policy context of HRLE.
5. Increased usage of the Supported Employment Model to attain and maintain employment for clients with greatest employment barriers reflects a movement toward a 'best practices' approach.
6. Potential exists for greater use of a 'supported employment' rather than a 'training placement' approach when presenting an initial employment strategy to employers.
7. Staff of the WORC Lewisporte have adequate access to ongoing professional development.
8. The WORC represents the only community based agency providing employment-related services to persons with intellectual disabilities in the Lewisporte area. No evidence was found to indicate service duplication or overlap.
9. The relationship and service coordination with HRLE is adequate and acceptable.
10. The level of interaction and service coordination between WORC and Health and Community Services (HCS) is inadequate.
11. While general satisfaction was indicated by key informants as to overall interaction between the WORC and other service providers, there was agreement that these relationships could be enhanced and strengthened.
12. Employment-related supports (in particular wage subsidies) are available and utilized to the extent needed by clients and represent an essential component to attainment of paid community employment.

13. The WORC undertakes a number of activities (on an annual basis) directed towards increasing general program awareness within the business and employer sectors. The WORC does not however have a formal strategy for engagement of the employer sector.
14. While well known within the employer sector, the WORC has not yet adequately explained to employers the enhanced employment options now possible via the use of the supported employment model.
15. Services provided are appropriate for clients served, and the program has demonstrated capacity to respond to changing client expectations and prevailing local labour market conditions.
16. The WORC has not undertaken any formal program evaluation efforts. However the Foundation has an active Board of Directors and the program has strong and ongoing relationships with its clients, families and funding agency, and has used this to inform ongoing program development/enhancement.
17. The WORC has not undertaken any formal program evaluation efforts.
18. Program has demonstrated capacity to reach its intended clientele and does not currently have a waiting list.
19. Current intake process (and associated program assignment) utilized with new clients is sufficient to enable an individual response to client needs.
20. Measurement of progress toward attainment of program goals is adequate.
21. Interventions utilized within the WORC are individualized and tailored to meet the specific need of clients.
22. While overall intervention strategies utilized by the program reflect an individualized approach, formal identification and measurement of progress toward attainment of individual client goals is weak.
23. The classroom component of the program provides clients with necessary pre-employment, job search, and labour market information. The curriculum associated with this program component would benefit from review and revision. The continuing role (and value) of the classroom component should now be reassessed given that all clients have demonstrated capacity to attain employment.
24. Program forms and assessment instrument need to be updated and made more relevant to the increased program emphasis on employment outcomes.
25. Attainment of paid employment does not necessarily terminate the active program status of a client. Individuals can attend the program so as long as desired and/or needed.
26. Individuals attend the WORC for reasons other than employment - many clients continue to attend the centre after attainment of employment.

27. The WORC program does not utilize 'unpaid job placements' but rather, as one phase of its three-phase program, does use an on the job training model. No evidence was found that these training placements were extended to the detriment of clients.
28. All current WORC clients are in paid employment (either part-time or full-time); with the majority engaged in part-time employment, with Calypso being the employer.
29. The majority of employers felt that the hiring of the person with a disability was 'good for business' and indicated a willingness to be involved in the program again.
30. Participation in WORC was deemed to provide significant social benefits beyond employment.

4.6 List of Recommendations

1. The Board of the Calypso Foundation initiate a Strategic Planning Process, perhaps using this current evaluation as a starting point, to review and confirm its vision and mandate, and set a long term future direction for the organization. Particular emphasis within this process would be placed on the future design and delivery of the WORC.
2. Board and staff of the Calypso Foundation participate in the upcoming Supported Employment Training Program (as delivered by Employment Corporations).
3. Increased usage be made of co-worker support as a means of increasing the number of employment placements in the community for persons with more significant employment barriers.
4. A meeting be held between senior staff of WORC and staff of the local HCS office responsible for services to persons with intellectual disabilities. This meeting should identify and address reasons for the lack of referrals (from HCS) to WORC; emphasize/explain the changing role (i.e. more employment focused) of the program, and reach agreement as to a potential role for WORC staff in client planning processes undertaken by HCS.
5. In order to maintain a high level of interaction and dialogue with the program, an official of HRLE attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings of the Calypso Foundation.
6. Senior WORC staff hold regular meetings (perhaps quarterly) with staff of HRLE to ensure that the program is in compliance with departmental policy, direction and reporting requirements.
7. The WORC develop a formal 'employer engagement' strategy.
8. A review of all program and client related forms and assessment instruments be undertaken to ascertain and ensure compatibility to current HRLE policy, and program/best practices.
9. A formal evaluation be conducted of the WORC program (completed by an external evaluator) at least every three years (with first of these due as of March 30, 2009).
10. The classroom curriculum be reviewed (in conjunction with HRLE officials) to ensure it represents best practice in the area of adult education and career planning.

11. A review of the role and function of the classroom component (particularly for those individuals who are currently working) and the training placement component be undertaken. Such a review should consider the future utility of both these components in light of the ongoing evolution toward increased usage of a supported employment model.
12. A formal Employment Plan be created and maintained for each client.
13. The Calypso Foundation play a leadership role in ensuring a comprehensive person centered planning process is undertaken for all its current and future clients; involving other key partners such as HRLE, HCS, family and relevant community organizations, directed toward increased inclusion for clients within all aspects of community life and activity.

ANNEX - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- LMDA Employer Data Collection Form
- LMDA Data Collection Form
- Funding Proposal request from Calypso to Minister Joan Burke September 2004
- Proposal Assessment Sheet HRLE January 2005
- Memo to Assessment Committee from Robert Turner re: Review of WORC Budget Request February 2005
- Service Agreement HRLE – WORC Lewisporte (with appendices A and B) June 30, 2005
- A brief re the establishment of a Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre for the Lewisporte area. January 1976
- The Constitution of the Calypso Foundation Providing Services for Developmentally Delayed Adults Registration #00619528-59-01, as amended June 1993
- Supported Employment Monthly Activity Report January 2006
- Supported Employment Monthly Client Data Report January 2006
- Application Form for Calypso WORC (undated)
- Adaptive Functioning Index # 1 and 2 (AFI) and AFI Wheel copyright 1971
- Monthly Activity Report
- Annual Report – Calypso Foundation April 2004 - March 2005
- Position Description Form – Manager, Calypso WORC (undated)
- Calypso Foundation WORC brochure (undated)
- Calypso Report January 2006
- Calypso Foundation Marketing Initiative Business and Operational Plan April 2005
- WORC Program Description sheet (undated)
- Weekly Schedule for Classroom component

- Classroom Curriculum/Materials
 - Computer Lab
 - Accessing Internet
 - Using e mail
 - Digital camera and scanner
 - Working 1 and 2 – Teacher Guides
 - Attitudes and Habits for getting and holding a job
 - Interpersonal Skills Assessment and Training for Employment
 - Let’s Talk about Money
 - Control Your Money
 - Laubach Way to Reading – Books 1 – 4
 - Health and Safety in the Workplace
 - Signs Around Town
 - Smart Solutions – Skills, Problem Solving, Tools and Applications
 - Complete Math Smart Grade 3
 - Job Savvy – How to be a Success at Work
 - Job Survival Skills
 - 150 Ways to Keep your Job
 - Speaking Up at Work
 - I Want a Job
 - Step by Step Approach to Learning How to Fill Out Application Forms

5.0 Evaluation of Career and Employment Case Management Centres - Canadian Paraplegic Association

5.1 Report Summary

The Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) has been funded by Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE) since 1998-99 to provide career and employment services to persons with physical disabilities who are in receipt of Income Support. This funding, allocated under the Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD), provides for a career and employment disability case manager at each of four CPA Employment and Career Case Management Centres which respectively serve Labrador, the Northern Peninsula, Northeast Avalon, and Trinity-Conception-Placentia regions. (The CPA delivers programs through 10 such centres across the province. Other government programs (in particular, Service Canada) also fund CPA services in these centres. This evaluation focused only on the services funded through the LMAPD.)

The need for a service for persons with disabilities such as the CPA Employment and Career Case Management Centres is well recognized. The program is consistent with the policy objectives of HRLE and is generally considered to complement well the services delivered directly by the department.

Overall, the evaluation indicates that the CPA is providing a relevant service that is having positive impacts for a majority of clients. However, more rigorous documentation of the policies and procedures is needed to ensure that the services are delivered consistently, and to a high level of quality, across all sites. Also, an improved program planning and reporting process is needed to ensure the program meets the needs of HRLE in achieving its mandate.

The following is a brief summary of the findings related to each of the evaluation issues:

CONTEXT - The CPA program is consistent with the mandate of HRLE and is designed to provide an expert service for persons with disabilities that complements the generalist services of HRLE. The program operates in multiple sites in a complex environment which calls for a well-defined program delivery model and guidelines to ensure staff in the four sites provide a consistent level of service in line with this model.

The CPA has not adequately documented this model and this weakness is a fundamental one that impacts on other findings in this evaluation. This is not to imply that the current array of services provided are inappropriate; rather, more complete documentation of the model, guidelines for implementation, program tools, and clear indicators of results based on the model would improve on the program clarity and facilitate more effective and efficient program implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

As evidenced by the client survey, a large proportion of clients were satisfied with the services provided which indicates that the approach being used is appropriate for client needs. However, a significant minority offered suggestions for improvement which were consistent with the areas for improvement identified by key informants.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SERVICES - Coordination with HRLE and with other service providers varies by site and is influenced by the approach taken by individual CPA staff and the local HRLE office, rather than by a defined approach embedded in the service delivery model for the program.

There is a need to strengthen liaison with, and reporting to, HRLE at both the Provincial Office and regional levels so that there is a clearer shared understanding of program activities and results, and a more consistent approach to program development. Similarly, other service providers could benefit from a renewed introduction to CPA services as part of the continuum of employment supports for persons with disabilities.

Marketing to employers varies by site, a strength being the case managers' personal approach and their knowledge of local employers. This aspect of services could benefit from a stronger overall marketing strategy.

INPUTS - There is some evidence that the approach used by individual staff is client-centered and tailored to individual needs. However, in a program that spans four sites, there is a need to strengthen documentation of service standards and to adopt consistent tools to support service delivery.

There is evidence that the program is not reaching all its potential clientele within each of the regions covered. As well, there is some indication that the program is serving clients who are not IS-eligible – a risk to the investment by HRLE in the program.

PROCESS - Tracking of progress towards the goals of the program is limited to a statistical report of the number of employment placements. This does not provide sufficient information for review by HRLE and for negotiation of any changes needed to the program. HRLE is going through transition to its new service delivery structure. It will be important that a more defined process for program reporting and review of these reports be adopted as the structure is rolled out.

The progress of individual clients is difficult to track in current program records, since consistent case management documentation is not maintained in either a paper or electronic format.

Unpaid placements as a tool for client development are rarely, but appropriately, used.

PRODUCTS –Clients surveyed expressed a high level of satisfaction with the services provided, and a majority indicated CPA has had a positive impact on their employability skills and has helped remove barriers to employment. Clients have shown improvements in their time spent employed and in training following the receipt of services. However, statistical information on program activities indicate that few potential IS clients are being reached for services (either through referral by HRLE, self-referral or through outreach by CPA). Also, the employment placement targets are not being achieved. This indicates that the capacity of the program has not been fully tapped.

The program has helped generate interest in training among clients, but few clients have participated in training programs. Additional funding for training was identified by clients surveyed as an area for improvement in the program.

Employment through immediate placements made by CPA is largely achieved through use of wage subsidy programs. The majority of these placements do not continue beyond the wage subsidy period. The limited sustainability of employment outcomes is a concern and examination of the factors leading

to this outcome is needed. It is understood that in rural areas of the province, subsidized employment may be the only option for many workers in general. However, there is a need for CPA to engage the business community in coming up with other approaches to meeting their needs as well as those of persons with disabilities so that longer-term employment is achieved.

A positive finding was that Income Support payments to CPA clients decreased between 2001 and 2005.

Employment placements have a number of other personal and social benefits for individuals in addition to income which are important to the goal of improving employability for persons with disabilities. Indeed, almost half of the clients surveyed indicated that they experienced improved health and quality of life following receipt of CPA services.

The report sets out specific recommendations in relation to each of the findings. The findings and recommendations are also listed at the end of the report for ease of reference.

5.2 Overview of Program

The Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) has been funded by HRLE since 1998-99 to provide career and employment services to persons with physical disabilities who are in receipt of Income Support. This funding provides for a career and employment disability case manager at each of four Career and Employment Case Management Centres:

- St. John's – serves Northeast Avalon region
- Bay Roberts – serves the Trinity-Conception-Placentia region
- Port Saunders – serves the Northern Peninsula north of Rocky Harbour
- Happy Valley-Goose Bay – serves all of Labrador.

These four Career and Employment Case Management Centres are part of a larger network of 10 such centres operated by CPA. At three of the above centres - St. John's, Bay Roberts and Happy Valley-Goose Bay – funding is also provided by other government programs (in particular Service Canada) for a career and employment disability case manager to provide similar services to their respective target clientele. Similarly, other government programs fund staff in the other centres in the province. This evaluation covers only those services funded through the LMAPD.

The funding agreement with HRLE provides for salaries, operating costs, program management and some program-wide costs such as staff training. In 2005-06, the total program funding was \$231,295.

Program logic model

The program logic model for the program is shown in the following chart:

CPA Career and Employment Disability Case Management Services Program Logic Model

Component	
TARGET	Individuals with disabilities in receipt of Income Support
PROGRAM INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment (for physical, cognitive/perception skills, academic level, learning potential (links to medical service providers for some assessments – using an inter-disciplinary approach) - Employment counselling - Career counselling - Pre-employment training - Life skills training - Resume development - Job search - Job brokering - Job modification/development - Job accommodation
OTHER INPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wage Subsidies - Opportunities Fund - LMAPD funded programs - Generic programs (Linkages)
OUTPUTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced employability - Subsidized employment - Increased educational qualifications
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Savings to Income Support - Reduced health care costs - Increased community participation
IMPACTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased labour market participation - Improved personal well-being

5.3 Findings

In this section, the findings in relation to each of the research issues are presented. The reporting format used is as follows: the research issue and related research questions are stated, the related findings are presented and each finding is followed by the supporting evidence gathered from all lines of evidence in the evaluation.

5.3.1 Research Issue - CONTEXT

Research questions:

- How are employment-related goals/objectives for persons with disabilities identified?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model? Are people with disabilities served well by this model?

The research issue related to program context was assessed by examination of the rationale for the program design, the link with HRLE policy objectives, the evidence of best practices, and evidence of clear program structure, policy and procedures to support delivery.

Finding: The program is funded in a policy context that supports individualized and employment-focused service, and the funding agreement describes an approach that is consistent with this policy context.

The program was originally funded in 1998-99 as a three-year pilot project under the Employment Development area of Career, Employment and Youth Services. It is now funded under the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD), which provides for a continuum of individualized services focused on enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities and increasing employment opportunities. The agreement is supportive of organizations providing a broad range of services along a continuum towards employment. Programs funded under the LMAPD are to provide a range of services and supports appropriate to their target clientele that both improve clients' employability as an intermediate goal and help them access longer term and sustainable employment as an ultimate goal.

The annual proposals for funding from the CPA have included substantively the same text as contained in the proposal of 1998-99. Representatives of both HRLE and the CPA advised that the annual proposals were not expected to change until an evaluation had been carried out of the pilot project. With each annual submission for funding, CPA requested that this evaluation be funded and carried out. HRLE endeavoured over the period since 1998-99 to have funding allocated for an evaluation, and were finally successful in allocating funds in 2006-07, resulting in this current study.

The proposal dated March 1, 2005 describes targeting the identification/creation¹⁸ of 60 jobs annually for persons with physical disabilities. A range of client-centred services that relate to both employability improvement and employment are described including:

¹⁸ Job creation in the context of the CPA program refers to the brokering of jobs with employers and incentives to hire through provision of wage subsidies funded through provincial or federally-funded programs.

- Vocational and employment assessment;
- Fully developed resume;
- Employment at minimum wage or higher;
- Coordination with Human Resources Development Canada¹⁹, as and if required;
- On the job training support and follow up services for a six-month period;
- Assistance to employers and employees regarding workplace modifications, adaptive equipment, job redesign, and/or modified hours/days;
- Coordinated case management with HRLE and linkages to Health and Community Services;
- Identification of needed vocational or educational training options as a prerequisite to employment;
- Completion of an Individualized Employment Plan.

The proposal also sets out a number of provisions on the part of HRLE that “would be in the best interest of the Department to ensure”:

- Program is seen as reducing barriers to employment;
- Work place accommodations;
- Clients are allowed to retain entitlement to certain disability-related supports after a return to work, for a predetermined time period;
- A rapid reinstatement to entitlement, if required;
- Utilization of the existing wage subsidy program;
- Program be seen as a point of labour force entry/reentry for clients who are not clients of other programs (e.g. HRDC).

These provisions are also relevant to the continuum of supports that would facilitate the transition from Income Support to employment and self-sufficiency.

In short, the combination of in-program services and the above provisions on the part of HRLE in its policies and services provides for a holistic program framework that supports an employment-focused array of services for individuals.

Finding: The program responds to the needs of persons with disabilities identified in national research, but is weak in the documentation of provincial and regional needs assessment.

The original proposal in 1998 cited a National Council of Welfare report on the dependence of persons with disabilities on income support. The report cites that Newfoundland and Labrador has the longest stay on welfare - 76% of clients remain on assistance for 25 months or longer. No other analysis of provincial income support caseloads or needs are cited in this or subsequent proposals for funding to inform decisions on the level and location of services to be provided. As well, the original proposal set out a plan to develop a service agreement with HRLE which would include the input of persons with

¹⁹ When HRLE first allocated funds to CPA, its federal counterpart department responsible for employment programming was Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Since then, HRDC has gone through two reorganizations, first becoming Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD) and currently Service Canada. Throughout this report, Service Canada will generally be used to when referring to this federal department. However, in some cases, there may be references to previous time periods when either HRDC or HRSD will be used, depending on the departmental name at those times.

disabilities. There is no evidence that the development of this service agreement and the related consultation were not carried out.

It appears that some analysis of the best placement for services was done in the early stages of this funding agreement, but this was not documented. The original CPA proposal was for staff in 10 sites across the province. CPA management advise that HRLE funded four sites as a three-year pilot project. No documentation was provided in the rationale for the selection of the four sites. One of these original sites was Corner Brook, but shortly after the program was funded it was agreed to place the case manager in Port Saunders to better serve the Northern Peninsula.

Finding: A majority of clients have low education levels, indicating a need for focus on training.

Client survey data show that 26% of clients report as having less than high school graduation, with a further 30% holding an educational level of high school with no further post-secondary education. This is an indication of the importance of education and training interventions to support clients in moving to longer-term sustainable employment.

Finding: The program operates in a complex environment. There is limited documentation of program policy and procedures to guide implementation of the activities and to assess progress in implementation in this environment.

This province-wide program operates in a context that is complex and influenced by a number of factors:

- It is an employment service operated within an organization that has a much broader mandate for assisting persons with disabilities with their other needs beyond employment (e.g. rehabilitation, advocacy for services).
- Three of the four sites are funded by HRLE and other government programs (in particular Service Canada) to deliver services to their respective clientele, leading to program directions and expectations specific to each of these funders. CPA reports that they understand that Service Canada is now focused on employment results, not employability gains, while HRLE is focused on both. (Service Canada informants reported that their focus is still on both employability gains and employment. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to examine this difference in perspectives, but is it noted here as it forms part of the context for the CPA program.)
- In most regions there are a number of similar organizations serving various groups of clientele which may overlap with those of CPA; most also have small numbers of staff serving large geographies, presenting the need for good coordination and sharing of effort to capitalize on resources.
- The clientele of the program face many barriers to employment in the relatively weak Newfoundland and Labrador labour market. This requires innovative and active programming to both empower clients and engage employers.

In this context, it is particularly important that services and how these are delivered be well documented and clear to all stakeholders. It calls for an active process of program and staff development.

Based on a document review and interviews, it is the opinion of the evaluators that the program structure, policies, procedures, and service standards have not been sufficiently documented to guide consistent implementation across sites in this complex operating environment. The organization is using a core service standards manual issued by the national office of the CPA which does not deal with employment services in detail and is of limited use in guiding the approach being taken to delivery of career and employment services. Given that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, the CPA provides employment services to persons with all types of physical disabilities (not just spinal cord injuries), the program requires current policies and procedures designed for this specific program. A CPA Orientation and Training Manual was developed early in the program. However, this does not provide policy and procedures to operationalize the services as set out in the proposal for funding or as described in the logic model. Rather it focuses largely on internal personnel policies and procedures. The only service delivery information is a point form list of tasks and lists of resources for staff to follow.

There are various tools in place to guide staff: a job description which was updated in 2006, agenda and materials for an employment preparation workshop (a new initiative started in late 2005), and a statistical reporting format for each office. New case managers are also given a short orientation and follow a two-week self-study program developed by the national CPA office. This program covers the full range of services provided by CPA and provides useful and detailed information on employment services. Also during semi-annual in-service sessions, management reports that a variety of topics are covered in an effort to maintain/develop services. Staff reported that these sessions are useful.

However, the key documentation missing is an overall policy and procedures manual, with supporting tools. Such documentation would be helpful to managers and staff in understanding the service delivery process they are to follow, and to clients and funders in understanding the service delivery process they can expect. For example, the services to be provided include completion of an individualized employment plan, but the expectations of this process and product are not documented. None of the sites uses a standard employment plan format. In some cases, offices are documenting only an intake assessment form and not an action plan. CPA provided us with the employment plan form that should currently be used, but the reason for the inconsistency across offices was not evident.

CPA case managers indicated that program changes are usually introduced via communication from the Manager of Client Services. Many of these changes are relayed at the semi-annual CPA in-service sessions, and do not appear to be followed up by any type of written policy/procedure directives. Staff reported that they often do not have full understanding of the rationale/intent behind many of these changes, creating the risk of inconsistent interpretation and application of new procedures.

The program also does not have an operational plan. Such a plan would be helpful in setting out initiatives and activities to support delivery of services in response to what is learned each year on client needs, and to take advantage of opportunities for program development.

As noted earlier, CPA has been requesting each year that an external evaluation of the program be done to assess results and to move it beyond the pilot stage. This current evaluation is the result of these requests. CPA management indicates that work has not been done on planning and processes because they were waiting for this evaluation. We would contend that program planning and development of processes were needed from the outset of the program and should not have been delayed until an evaluation was completed.

In short, the lack of program policies and procedures and lack of an operational plan make it difficult to fully assess what is intended by the program and how, if at all, this has been refined since the original

proposal in 1998. There is a need to further develop the program documentation and tools to achieve consistency in service delivery and to build on effective practices in place at various CPA sites.

Finding: The CPA brings a number of strengths to the delivery of employment services for persons with disabilities, which could be built on in further developing the program. In particular there is a need to document and communicate the service delivery model, building on practices in other levels of the CPA organization.

Informants identified a number of strengths in the CPA program:

Organizational capacity: As a province-wide organization, CPA is located in rural areas where other employment resources may be limited and the CPA services are called on to be flexible in meeting client needs – which they have proven they have the capacity to do. For example, in Port Saunders there is no Community Employment Corporation serving clients with intellectual disabilities, so the CPA office serves this group. This multi-site presence and flexibility is considered by informants to be one of the strengths of the CPA. However, informants also identified the need for active coordination with other agencies in such regions. (In the Port Saunders example, it was noted that a linkage of the CPA office with the Community Employment Corporation in a nearby region might be helpful in accessing information and advice on best practices in serving this client group.)

When there is a large geography with few clients to be served in any one group there is also a need for funders to decide on what model of service delivery is most appropriate.

Expertise: CPA endeavors to hire persons with disabilities and/or with experience serving this client group. They have had some success, in that 40% of CPA staff overall are persons with physical disabilities. However, the case manager in only one of the four sites that were part of this evaluation was a person with a disability. CPA management noted the difficulty in recruiting qualified staff with disabilities in rural areas due to the smaller labour pool with the required experience.

Client-focused: HRLE informants acknowledged that one of the positive features of service delivery by CPA was that they bring a demonstrated affinity and awareness of persons with disabilities, and thus should be more aware of the kinds of supports that are needed by persons with disabilities to ensure a successful and long term attachment to the labour market. The program can also complement HRLE services well in that they have the resources to ‘stick with’ clients in the longer term.

Informants also identified a number of areas that need improvement:

Clarity on program design: There is a lack of clarity around what the program does, for whom and how it reports this information to HRLE. While the funding agreement with HRLE sets out clear expectations for services and reports to be provided by funded agencies, it would be beneficial to further elaborate contract requirements and the respective roles of HRLE staff and CPA in program monitoring. The findings from this report could form the basis for this work.

Communications to other service providers: There is a need for better communications with other service providers on what the program does.

Client profile: Some HRLE offices also noted that CPA appears to be serving non-IS clients. This was borne out in interviews and is due to at least two factors:

- both HRLE and Service Canada fund three of the centres where staff may be assigned clients by geography - not by EI or IS eligibility
- Since there is a low level of new clients, staff appear to have the time to serve clients beyond those who are IS eligible.

While serving non-IS clients might be effective in preventing reliance on IS, this should be set out as an appropriate service in the funding agreement.

Unmet needs: CPA informants stated that the funding level for LMAPD limits the number of clients who can be given support for participation in training programs and leads to some clients experiencing delays in entry into training. This context issue is not limited to CPA.

Employer strategy: There is no strategic marketing strategy focused on employers.

Finding: The majority of program clients expressed a high level of satisfaction with CPA services.

Seventy-seven percent (73) of the 95 respondents to the client survey were somewhat satisfied (22%) or very satisfied (55%) with the services they had received from the CPA. Nine percent were somewhat dissatisfied (3%) or very dissatisfied (6%).

When asked, 32 of the 95 respondents to the client survey offered suggestions for improvements to CPA services. These suggestions (including number of times mentioned) are as follows:

- More funding for wage subsidy and self-employment programs and improvements in programs to focus on long term employment (12)
- More advertising and promotion of services (7)
- Follow-up with clients (5)
- Counsellors – less turnover and improved approach to working with clients (4)
- More hands-on job search help (2)
- More services for older workers and injured workers (2)

Summary and discussion

The CPA program is consistent with the mandate of HRLE and is designed to provide an expert service for persons with disabilities that complements the generalist services of HRLE. The program operates in a complex environment which calls for a well defined program delivery model and guidelines to ensure staff in the four sites provide a consistent level of service in line with this model.

The CPA has not adequately documented this model and this weakness is a fundamental one that impacts on other findings in this evaluation. This is not to imply that the current array of services provided are inappropriate; rather, more complete documentation of the model, guidelines for implementation, program tools, and clear indicators of results based on the model would improve on the program clarity and facilitate more effective and efficient program monitoring and evaluation. As evidenced by the client survey, a large proportion of clients were satisfied with the services provided which indicates that the approach being used is appropriate for client needs. However, a significant minority offered suggestions for improvement which were consistent with the areas for improvement identified by key informants.

Recommendations

1. CPA collaborate with HRLE in developing a shared understanding of the needs to be met by the program in each region and province-wide.
2. CPA collaborate with HRLE to further document its service delivery model and the performance targets to match this model. This model should include program objectives, program operating principles, standards of service, service delivery procedures, policies on specific topics (as needed), targets for program outputs and outcomes, reporting requirements, reporting procedures, and an annual operating plan with specific improvement-oriented initiatives.
3. CPA undertake a process of communicating internally and with external partners on this model once it is developed.

5.3.2 Research Issue – Relationship to other services

The evaluation included a number of questions related to coordination with other services:

- How well do the programs coordinate with other service providers who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?
- To what extent do the services provided by the four programs complement those offered by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do the three services duplicate or overlap with services provided by other agencies, particularly HRLE?
- To what extent do clients use employment-related programs or services? Is the need to rely on other agencies for additional assistance for clients (accommodations, wage subsidies) an efficient way to provide services?
- How well do the programs coordinate with providers of other related services who may be able to provide the clients with assistance?

Finding: Coordination with HRLE is more active in some sites than others and is influenced by the approach taken by local HRLE management. More consistent implementation of the Community Partnerships Program policy and guidelines could strengthen the partnerships and coordination with agencies.

HRLE has developed detailed policy and procedures on the Community Partnerships Program which provide a comprehensive framework for contracting with community agencies. HRLE is currently implementing its new service delivery network and as part of this is taking steps to build partnerships with agencies and to strengthen the role of the regions in managing funding agreements with agencies as set out in the Community Partnerships policy framework. This transition is at different stages in the various regions. As a result, there is currently variation in coordination with funded agencies, including the CPA, largely driven by the approach used by regional and/or district management.

In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, there is very limited linkage with CPA in terms of referrals of clients (in both directions) and in ongoing liaison regarding service delivery. There is no process for orientation of

new CPA case managers to HRLE programs, and generally there are opportunities to enhance linkages, client referrals and information sharing. CPA management meets at least annually with HRLE management in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but it appears that the purpose and usefulness of this visit could be more focused – for example, with specific information shared to enhance the partnership, program monitoring and development.

On the Northern Peninsula, Service Canada recently funded four new Employment Assistance Services (EAS) offices. The HRLE district manager in Port Saunders has taken the lead in bringing the CPA case manager and the new EAS staff together with HRLE staff to work out a process to ensure complementary efforts in serving the region and to avoid duplication. The Career Development Specialist in Port Saunders has an active liaison with the CPA office and views the CPA as an asset in that they have the time to counsel and work with persons with disabilities on her caseload. There is a process in place for identifying and referring clients to CPA and back to HRLE for access to programming. Similar to Labrador, CPA management meets at least annually with HRLE management but the meeting is seen as informal and not sufficiently focused on a review of program results and coordination with HRLE.

In the Bay Roberts area, the coordination activities and relationship with HRLE were characterized as very positive by CPA staff, indicating ongoing contact and communication, increasing levels of referrals, joint meetings, and adequate information sharing as needed. HRLE informants felt that the CPA program was addressing a real gap in services for persons with physical disabilities. Through this program, CPA is able to advocate to employers on behalf of persons with physical disabilities, bring specific knowledge about the needs of persons with physical disabilities, access funding for necessary vocational assessments and provide a specific service to this population that is not offered by any other agency in the area. Informants talked of the program as an extension of HRLE services, in that HRLE does not have the capacity to serve all of its clients who require employment and career counselling – CPA addresses a significant gap and is considered as a valuable and beneficial service. Informants put forward a view that HRLE staff are generalists while CPA staff are specialists in regard to persons with disabilities.

However, HRLE informants in Bay Roberts felt that the relationship is somewhat ‘one sided’, in that the majority of interaction is initiated by HRLE staff. CPA does not provide the local office with accurate or timely program/client information. HRLE informants did indicate that this was not meant to imply that appropriate and valuable services were not being provided – simply that they really did not know. HRLE staff did note that CPA is an excellent partner in the delivery of the HRLE Linkages program.

In St. John’s, the CPA case manager indicated that he does not hold any meetings with HRLE staff and that referrals from HRLE are minimal. Program coordination with HRLE is vested more with the management of CPA. The HRLE key informant stated that coordination is limited with all three of the programs being evaluated in this current study that are situated in St. John’s. The reason given was that there is no specific intervention required from HRLE to enter the four programs. In contrast, for HRLE clients who first receive an Enhanced Screening Assessment (ESA) by HRLE before referral to other programming delivered in the community, a case management approach is used by HRLE that includes certain expectations in terms of time frames, skill development and outcomes. It was not evident to the evaluators what prevented HRLE from referring clients to the four programs being evaluated and why they were seen as different from other community-based programs funded by HRLE in the St. John’s area. This is an aspect of programming that requires further follow up by HRLE.

One third of clients who responded to the survey indicated they had received help from other support programs. These included work experience/wage subsidy (24.2% of respondents), training/education (5.3%), transportation assistance (4.2%) and funding for equipment or special assistance (2.1%). All of these would fall within HRLE or Opportunities Fund responsibilities. A minority of respondents indicated they needed supports or programs they could not get. These included work experience/wage subsidy (9.5% of respondents) and training/education (5.3%).

Finding: Coordination of services with other community-based organizations varies by site and appears to be influenced by the individual case manager, rather than an overall CPA policy and procedures for coordination.

In terms of overall approach, CPA informants stated that the focus of coordination used to be on advocacy and direct interventions to help clients access other supports needed for rehabilitation, independence and employment – housing and medical supports were mentioned in particular. Coordination is now defined as referring clients to these other agencies to access these services on their own. (Rehabilitation services are now provided through a staff member in St. John’s and not funded via this HRLE agreement.)

In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, coordination with other service providers is initiated based on individual client needs, and there was little evidence of establishing and maintaining a network of connections with other service providers. The area used to have a service providers’ network (initiated by HRLE) that met for general information sharing but this has not been active for several years. This was identified by key informants as a gap in the region in general – not only an issue for CPA.

Other partner organizations interviewed in Labrador indicated that the level of coordination with CPA has varied. The CPA office has not made a visit to Labrador West in the past year. However, we learned that the Community Employment Corporation in Labrador West has been providing services to the few persons with physical disabilities who are seeking employment in that area. The Community Employment Corporation has not had any liaison with CPA on this service. The Labrador region also includes a lot of remote communities and the HRLE key informant felt that there was an opportunity for CPA to develop more formalized processes for liaising with EAS offices on the coast to obtain their help in serving CPA clients, particularly those who are in the Linkages program.

The Port Saunders CPA office is currently active in making contacts with other organizations and joining committees (Violence Prevention, Protocol Committee). This level of activity was noted positively by HRLE and other informants. For example, the office has made contact with a school guidance counsellor to identify and meet with graduating students and their parents. The goal is to help them understand the education and training options, and the supports available for transition in an effort to ensure they go on to further education. The guidance counsellor welcomed this initiative. This is an example of the flexibility of the CPA program to respond to needs. However, to ensure that students are provided with a consistent level of attention across all sites, it would be appropriate to identify this target group in the funding agreement.

Feedback on past services in Port Saunders was mixed. An informant from another social service organization was not satisfied with her past involvement with CPA; she had initiated an education session with employers and others to build community engagement in hiring persons with disabilities, which CPA did not attend. She has since not referred clients to the CPA service. Another provider involved with persons with intellectual disabilities was satisfied with the work done by CPA in finding work placements for their members.

Other service providers interviewed at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Port Saunders sites look to the CPA for help with acquiring assistive devices and computers, and, in some cases, with access to employment placements. Some noted that a strength of CPA is their capacity to work with clients over the longer term. None of the other service providers felt that they had a good understanding of the expertise of the CPA staff in counselling persons with disabilities. A common observation by other partner organizations at both sites was that CPA is not well known or understood in the region among other service providers and their respective clients. It was suggested that the name of the organization—CPA—is not understood, particularly since the program serves clients with all types of physical disabilities (and in Port Saunders they also serve those with intellectual disabilities). Some service providers also indicated that they are not fully aware of CPA’s focus in serving clients, particularly at this juncture. Several noted that “they are all about employment and stats” in trying to meet Service Canada expectations.

Informants in Bay Roberts indicated that there were no other community employment agencies serving their particular client group, so there is no service duplication. CPA informants did not note any areas needing enhancement of service coordination with other community employment agencies that serve different client groups. They felt the current relationship is open, with appropriate cross referrals. CPA staff indicated they had made presentations to these organizations in the past. In particular positive service coordination was noted with the local EAS office, which is located in the same office building. Service coordination with other agencies supporting this client group (social, health) was also deemed satisfactory by case managers in Bay Roberts but concerns were noted on the lack of contact and referral from Health and Community Services.

HRLE informants in Bay Roberts provided the following suggestions on ways to improve overall service coordination on behalf of clients:

- More interaction with partner agencies/increased demonstration of a capacity and willingness to collaborate with other agencies
- More effort placed on sharing information at both a program level as well as at the client delivery level
- CPA is not serving on many committees – need to demonstrate more involvement and interest in other larger issues
- CPA needs to follow the local protocol developed by HRLE
- Need to get better at being aware of what each of the agencies is doing on behalf of common clients.

Some of the above issues related to local coordination and information sharing may be a matter of a lack of local autonomy – CPA staff appears to defer a lot to CPA management.

In St. John’s, there were several other community employment agencies identified as serving persons with disabilities. The CPA case manager indicated that clients are referred to these other agencies as needed, that referrals have been received from these other groups, and that he has on occasion attended workshops/seminars offered by these agencies. He felt that agencies were sufficiently aware of what each does and for whom. It was also noted that clients are asked if they receive services from other programs. If so, contact is made with these agencies to determine the level and extent of services provided; however CPA still continues to work with them as active clients. One other organization that provides generic employment services was interviewed and the informant noted that coordination and cross referrals to CPA worked well in complementing their services.

In discussing the ways in which the relationship between employment agencies in St. John's could be strengthened, the following is a summary of responses from CPA informants:

- Need to decrease the extent of 'turf protection' among agencies
- Value to having a forum whereby these agencies meet on a regular basis
- Need to increase the level of understanding of what services are provided, by who, and to what client group(s) - the current situation is confusing to both providers and clients (particularly in the St. John's area).

In summary, the interviews with CPA representatives and with other service providers indicated both successes and areas for improvement in coordination of services. Our overall conclusion is that this is driven largely by the approach taken by the individual CPA centre. This is an aspect of service delivery that should be managed by clear senior management direction and support to staff. As well, senior management liaison should be undertaken with other key organizations to ensure the CPA role is understood and to develop protocols for linkages to provide a context for case managers in carrying out their role at the regional level. CPA could also enhance linkages at a broader level by taking a lead role with other employment-related services in developing broader community employment strategies to raise awareness and engagement in the employment of persons with disabilities.

Finding: The approach used by CPA to engaging the business community in the hiring of persons with disabilities could be further developed.

There is no overall employer relations strategy aimed at building awareness of and support for the hiring of persons with disabilities. CPA management reports that employer appreciation days are held in each region approximately annually. There used to be employer advisory committees but these are not active now.

In the absence of an overall strategy, case managers develop their own approaches to contacting employers. A strength appears to be that case managers know their region and individual employers and making personal contacts to market clients. This strength is borne out by the feedback from employers interviewed for this evaluation. Twenty-three employers were interviewed and the majority (18) indicated that CPA had approached them about hiring the referral through a wage subsidy program. Almost all were very satisfied with the services provided by the CPA. Several noted the need for improved awareness among employers of the kinds of services provided by organizations like the CPA. Two employers expressed disappointment that they were not approached again by CPA to take additional workers – they had thought the previous placement had worked out well and that they would be ideal repeat participants in the wage subsidy program.

Other marketing practices used by case managers include writing letters from CPA to introduce persons with disabilities (which rarely get responses), dropping off resumes for clients who lack transportation, and going with clients for interviews.

On a more specific client feedback level, several employers interviewed noted they were not getting their payments from CPA for Linkages wage subsidies in a timely manner.

Marketing to employers and engaging them as partners is an important activity for further development given the evidence that, on a national basis, employer attitudes and employment practices are seen as a key barrier to employment for persons with disabilities. It is also recognized that this can be a challenging piece of work at both the provincial and local office level which needs to be well planned and resourced. Our conclusion is that the approach to engaging employers and profiling persons with

disabilities is one that could be improved with an infusion of creativity based on effective practices at various CPA sites and those used by other agencies.

Summary and discussion

Coordination with HRLE and with other service providers varies by site and is influenced by the approach taken by individual CPA staff and the local HRLE office, rather than a defined approach embedded in the service delivery model for the program.

Marketing to employers varies by site, a strength being the personal approach and case managers' knowledge of local employers. This aspect of services could benefit from a stronger overall marketing strategy.

Recommendations

4. CPA review and refine its approach to collaboration with HRLE both for program planning and review and for service to individual clients.
5. CPA develop a process for each site to follow in (re)establishing linkages with other service providers to inform them of the CPA approach to service delivery and to strengthen processes for client referrals to and from CPA.
6. CPA take leadership in regions that lack a communications/networking forum for service providers to explore how such a forum could be set up.
7. CPA refine its employer-relations/marketing strategy, based on research on effective practices used within CPA and elsewhere.

5.3.3 Research Issue - INPUTS

Research questions:

- Are the services offered by each program appropriate for the actual clients they assist?
- To what degree are the programs able to cater to differing individual needs?

Finding: At the program level, there is limited information to indicate if services are appropriate. Data is collected and reported, but not in a format that facilitates analysis of results for HRLE funded activities. Nor is there evidence of the program being refined or adjusted based on results being achieved.

As noted earlier, there is no evidence from program documents or key informant interviews of any periodic analysis of client profiles, services provided, and results being achieved. This current evaluation was identified by both HRLE and CPA as the first effort to do this analysis. In this evaluation, the client survey is the main source of information on services provided.

In terms of overall levels of activity, CPA sends quarterly reports listing the individual clients served and interventions provided. HRLE has, in the past, done some analysis of these reports to match to Income Support records to determine savings to the Income Support program. The annual statistical reports on program activities prepared by CPA integrates HRLE and Service Canada funded activities. Consequently, it is difficult to clearly identify the activity levels and outputs for the HRLE funding agreement. However, HRLE does use the information provided in the assessments of annual funding proposals, and sets out performance targets in the contracts with CPA.

It is our view that in the normal course of delivery of a program (especially one deemed to be a pilot) one would expect to see program managers within CPA examining results and adjusting programming in terms of levels of service, demand for services, resources allocated or approaches being used. One would also expect HRLE as the funder to set out requirements for this kind of information for consideration in annual reviews of proposals. From an examination of the statistical information provided by CPA on activities over the past two years, it is evident that the single program target of employment placements has not been met and this alone should have resulted in discussions with CPA.

Finding: At the individual client level, interventions are focused on the needs of individuals. However, this is not based on a structured needs assessment and action planning process. In-take is not limited to IS eligible clients.

Case managers generally indicate that the intervention is very individualized and influenced by the decision making of the client, and very much 'client controlled'.

The assessment/intake process identified include:

- No formal assessment tool is used
- CPA program is explained and it is determined if the client would benefit from intervention
- Client is asked if he/she is involved with other programs
- Personal data is taken
- Client intake form completed/consent form signed
- Disability is confirmed
- Client interests/goals are identified
- IS/EI status is determined (if IS client, the Bay Roberts office completes an ESA)
- Prior work experience is identified
- Transportation issues are identified
- Labour market information is shared

Clients may be referred for a more in-depth vocational assessment (usually through referral to Pathways). Some staff noted that they had been using a Transferable Skills Analysis, but this practice has ceased. The in-take/assessment process as described and as documented in the client files does reflect a focus on the individual's goals (employment, education/training).

Service delivery does not appear to be constrained in terms of eligibility criteria, nor does there appear to be any prioritization or limitation of services to IS clients (perhaps because there is no waiting list for services). Eligibility criteria do come into play in referral to programming (e.g. medical assessments, wage subsidy, training programs, access to assistive devices).

There is no articulated CPA employment counselling process or case management process, although the two-week self study program for new staff does provide some useful information on employment counselling. The approach described by staff lacks the structure that one would expect to see in a counselling/case management process. For example, one case manager stated that the intake/assessment interview was conducted using common sense; another described the interview as a conversation process.

Despite these weaknesses in documentation of procedures, data from the client survey reveal that the majority of CPA clients reported being assisted by CPA staff to complete the necessary elements of an employment action planning process.

This data is displayed in the chart below.

Summary – CPA clients’ perspective on the employment planning process	
Question	% responding “Yes”
Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?	71.0
Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?	78.4
Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?	77.3
Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?	85.6
Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?	87.0

As can be seen from this chart, approximately three quarters of all clients surveyed reported having had an employment plan developed, identification of strengths and barriers to employment, identification of preferred individual employment options and discussion of the necessary prerequisites for securing such employment. This indicates that the majority of clients are supported to proceed through an appropriate employment planning process. The high percentage of clients who report being assisted to identify preferred employment options (85.6%) and necessary preparatory work (87.0%) also affirm the focus by CPA on employment outcomes. Clients surveyed also reported having received other forms of assistance from CPA such as counselling (49.5%), assistance with resume writing (50.5%), labour market information (41.1%), job search assistance (56.8%), and help in maintaining employment (17.9%).

While generally positive and indicative of an appropriate client focused employment process, this data also reveal that a significant minority of clients do not engage in any elements of what would be typically considered part of employment counselling. For example, nearly one third (29%) of clients surveyed reported not developing an employment plan. It is possible that these clients may have obtained a very specific service from CPA (such as help with resume writing or job search techniques) and/or clients may not have understood the term ‘plan’. It does, nonetheless, reinforce the necessity for CPA to develop and implement a more structured case management system.

It is also of interest to note that while no clients surveyed reported as receiving assistance from CPA counsellors on starting their own business, data from the file review process did reveal several instances where individuals were provided assistance in this area. While not necessarily a contradictory finding, this may indicate that CPA could place greater emphasis on providing information regarding self-employment to its clients. There is an increasing trend for this type of activity to be a successful employment route for many persons with disabilities.

Finding: There are variations in services among sites that are not reflected in the proposal for funding.

The Bay Roberts and St. John's sites use an approach to placements that does not involve direct intervention by the case manager – rather, clients are assisted in conducting their own job search. This approach may be appropriate but is not explained in the proposals for funding and is a departure from the activities as described in both the program logic model and proposal.

Also, as noted earlier, the Port Saunders site provides services to clients with intellectual disabilities, including arranging placements that provide a support worker. Some of these clients may also have physical disabilities. The reason given was that there is no Employment Corporation on the Northern Peninsula to provide these services. The local HRLE office is aware of this activity and supports it, but it is not reflected in the proposal for funding or the agreement with HRLE. The case manager has also done some outreach work with high school students and their parents.

As noted earlier, this is not to say that serving clients who are not in the target group for this program are inappropriate, but these services are not covered in the funding agreement.

Finding: Documentation of client needs and tracking of progress is not consistently captured in program forms.

Staff informants indicated that the only 'required' client file data include an intake form, consent form (for information sharing with other service providers) and case notes on each client contact. File review in all four offices confirmed the presence of these materials in all files.

Each office is using different forms for client intake. In-take forms do not specifically identify assets, deficits, goals and actions to get to the goals. In some cases multiple intake forms are completed on each client at various points in service delivery. It is difficult to readily identify in the files the client needs and the progress made in addressing these.

The CPA Orientation Manual contains a number of (undated) forms related to service delivery that appear to overlap and duplicate information collection, and which do not provide clear direction on the client information that staff should currently collect. The manual also contains two different versions of a return to work action plan, but most of the case files reviewed did not include this form.

Overall, the documentation does not allow for any rolling up of information on the profile of client needs that should be taken into account in adjusting program design. It is difficult to follow what has been done and why in some files.

Finding: There is mixed evidence on whether the program is reaching all potential clients.

The evidence on reach is as follows:

The low number of new clients annually

In 2004-05, a total of seven new clients were referred by HRLE, Service Canada, and HCS to the four sites. A total of 26 clients self-referred or were referred from other sources in that period.

Information on the HRLE caseloads by region and disability status was requested as a benchmark to assess this level of intake. Due to changes to the data collection process resulting from the new HRLE

Income Support payment system, HRLE was unable to provide this information. However, the annual level of new CPA clients appears quite low.

In both the Bay Roberts and St. John's CPA offices it was noted by informants that referrals from HRLE were less than what might be expected given the population size. CPA informants advised that referrals from HRLE in Bay Roberts have been increasing. However, CPA informants also felt that there were many other persons with physical disabilities on Income Support who could benefit from employment and the support of CPA who had not yet been referred. No one interviewed could provide a reason for this apparent lack of referrals.

HRLE informants in Bay Roberts were satisfied that CPA was reaching its target clientele. Concern was expressed that CPA may be serving many non-mandated clients in that region (i.e. persons without disabilities). CPA informants advised that they provide services to persons without disabilities as part of their contract with HRLE for delivery of the Linkages Program. CPA provides short term employment services to graduates of this program rather than refer them on to EAS.

Data from the client survey reveal that approximately 8.3% of CPA clients surveyed (n = 96) indicated they became aware of the employment services of CPA from HRLE. This finding is consistent with other program and administrative data indicating a low number of referrals from HRLE. The largest percentage (37.5%) of respondents indicated becoming aware of CPA employment services via referral by a community group/agency.

Geographic distribution

Clients in three regions are concentrated in specific areas within the region:

- In Labrador, half of the clients in the region reside in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Factors affecting reach include the cost of travel and the limited liaison of CPA with other service providers located in remote communities in order to tackle the vast geography in the region.
- On the Northern Peninsula, most clients are in the Straits area. The case manager who was recently hired has started conducting quarterly visits to each area within the region during which client visits and liaison with other organizations is being done.
- In the Northeast Avalon region served by the St. John's office, the majority of clients are those with access to the Wheelways accessible bus service. This service is also used by CPA staff in providing outreach services to clients. Since Wheelways only serves the St. John's-Mount Pearl area, the program is constrained in reaching all those within the area to be served.

No waitlist

There is no wait list for services. This might indicate that reach is effective, and that the majority of the potential clientele has been identified and served. However, combined with the above information on limited referrals from government departments and other agencies, and the geographic concentration of clientele, it may mean there are potential clients who have not yet been made aware of the service and consequently have not tried to access services.

Collectively, the information indicates that the capacity of this CPA program is not being fully utilized.

Finding: A majority of clients rated the CPA services as useful to improving their employability skills. However, there is a significant minority who rated some services as not useful which indicates a need for fine-tuning of these aspects of the program.

Clients who were surveyed were asked how useful the CPA services were in helping them develop various employability skills. Ratings were requested on a five-point scale with 1 meaning ‘not at all useful’, 5 meaning ‘very useful’ and the mid-point 3 meaning ‘somewhat useful.’ The results are shown in the following table²⁰:

Survey responses – usefulness of services to employability skills						
Employability skill	1. Not at all useful	2.	3. Somewhat useful	4.	5. Very useful	N=
Understanding how to search for a job?	5.3%	5.3%	26.3%	25.0%	38.1%	76
Finding out about job opportunities?	7.8%	7.8%	19.5%	22.1%	42.8%	77
Making a career choice?	10.3%	10.3%	14.7%	23.5%	41.2%	68
Gaining specific job-related skills?	10.6%	9.1%	21.2%	21.2%	37.9%	66
Gaining work experience on-the-job?	13.8%	5.1%	13.8%	19.0%	48.3%	58
Increasing your confidence	7.6%	7.6%	15.2%	17.7%	51.9%	79
Increasing your satisfaction with your work life?	13.6%	7.6%	21.2%	18.2%	39.4%	66
Improving your ability to keep a job?	10.9%	9.1%	14.5%	16.4%	49.1%	55
Arranging appropriate job supports?	7.3%	5.5%	25.4%	23.6%	38.2%	55
Improving your physical health?	11.5%	11.5%	19.3%	15.4%	42.3%	52
Improving your general quality of life?	11.8%	7.3%	14.7%	14.7%	51.5%	68

A majority of respondents rated services as being somewhat to very useful to improving all employability skills. In all but one case (increasing satisfaction with work life), 60% or more respondents rated the services at a 4 or 5 level.

On a number of dimensions of employability, approximately 20% of respondents felt the services were not useful (a rating of 1 or 2). These were: making a career choice, gaining job-related skills, gaining work experience, improving ability to keep a job, and improving physical health.

A significant proportion of respondents (33% to 37%) indicated that the following questions were not applicable to them: improving physical health, improving ability to keep a job, arranging job supports.

Overall, the responses indicate that a majority of clients feel the CPA services are useful to them in developing their employability skills. However, the results also indicate a need to examine and fine-tune those services that were rated as not useful by a significant proportion of clients.

Summary and discussion

The CPA program lacks documentation of the actual process used to deliver services to individual clients. There is some evidence from key informants that the approach used by individual staff is client-centered and tailored to individual needs. However, in a program that spans four sites and which is part

²⁰ The percentages are calculated by excluding those who responded ‘not applicable and ‘don’t know/refused’. Some of these items (gaining on the job work experience, increasing satisfaction with work life, improving your ability to keep a job) are only applicable to those who were working or had worked.

of a wider network of 10 sites, the lack of documentation of service standards and lack of consistent tools is a major weakness in the program.

There is evidence that the program is not reaching all its potential clientele within each of the regions covered. As well, there is some indication that the program is serving clients who are not IS-eligible – a risk to the investment by HRLE in the program. While this expansion of the clientele might be appropriate in preventing dependency on IS (for example, in the case of services to high school students before they graduate), it represents an extension of services that should be incorporated in the funding agreement.

The client survey results indicate that the services provided by the CPA are useful to clients in improving their employability skills. The survey results also provide an indication of services that could be fine-tuned to better meet client needs.

Recommendations

8. CPA develop detailed operational guidelines for staff on the service standards and approach to service delivery, together with supporting tools.
9. CPA develop an outreach approach tailored to each region to ensure access to services.
10. The target group for services should be confirmed or re-defined by HRLE and CPA in the funding agreement, as deemed appropriate.

5.3.4 Research Issue – PROCESS

Research Questions:

- How is progress towards goals measured for the program?
- How is progress towards goals measured for individual clients?
- To what extent are unpaid job placements useful in enabling clients to progress?

Finding: The employment target has remained unchanged over six years, with no indication of re-negotiation based on performance and needs assessment. The same employment targets are set for each of the four sites and are not based on analysis of needs in each region. There are no targets or methods to track progress toward goals.

The funding agreement sets an annual target of identification/creation of 60 jobs for clients of HRLE in either subsidized or unsubsidized placements. This target is not further allocated by region based on HRLE caseload and past program results. The funding agreement does not set targets for placements in training, but each year the proposal references the number of clients placed in training in the previous year.

The CPA has assigned annual targets to each site as follows:

- 12 employment placements to assist clients in developing an Action Plan to successfully obtain employment within the agreement period
- 6 training placements
- An average monthly caseload of approximately 20-25 active clients
- Open action plans for 12 new clients (2 per month)

Observations on these targets are as follows:

- CPA indicates these are minimum targets but this is not specifically stated.
- When it was pointed out that 12 placements per site for four sites would result in a total annual target of 48 placements (not 60) CPA stated that the target of 60 was a mistake, yet this was the target stated in the CPA proposal each year.
- There is no evidence of any discussion or negotiation of annual targets based on performance – it appears that the 60 placements target has been continued annually without analysis of whether it is appropriate.
- The rationale for assigning the same targets to each site is not evident. As is noted in a later finding on results, achievement of targets has varied (which may reflect regional differences in populations and needs and/or the level of service provided).
- Targets related to increased employability and tracking of such targets are not included in the funding agreement.

HRLE informants noted that the department has carried out periodic analysis of reports provided by CPA, and this analysis indicated that an evaluation of the program was needed to inform future adjustments to the program.

Finding: At the program level, it is difficult to track progress towards the placement target based on the reports that are produced by CPA. An improved report format is needed.

The number of placements made by CPA is contained in statistical reports submitted quarterly and annually to HRLE. The reports do not specifically identify or discuss progress made on the target for the HRLE agreement (statistics for both HRLE and Service Canada funded services are contained in the one report with no distinction made between the two). No narrative is provided to accompany these consolidated statistical reports. The reports could be better formatted to track progress against the HRLE agreement and the factors impacting on progress.

Finding: The setting of targets could be enhanced by stronger monitoring of achievement of targets and subsequent adjustments to targets or services.

The funding agreement includes a requirement for quarterly reports on program results. However, the format of the reports submitted by the CPA does not specifically set out the progress towards achievement of the target of 60 placements. Neither HRLE nor CPA indicated that the reports are analyzed and used for direction to staff or adjustment of services.

The funding agreements and reports have not been shared with HRLE regional offices and informants in all regions were unaware of specific levels of services achieved in their respective regions. HRLE regional offices indicate that they are not provided with information on the results of the previous year's contracts for use in their assessment of funding proposals. As well there is no indication that any analysis of reports is done at the provincial office level in negotiation of future year agreements.

Beyond the statistical reporting, there is no narrative reporting on the activities carried out in the delivery of services, new initiatives tried or challenges/opportunities encountered. Providing this kind of information would be helpful in the assessment of results compared to targets. HRLE informants indicated that this level of reporting is planned as part of the strengthening of the implementation of the Community Partnerships policy guidelines.

Finding: At the individual client level, reports produced and the case management approach do not allow for tracking of progress toward goals.

Progress for individual clients is documented in diary notes in case files. This allows for tracking back over the interactions and interventions for each client, but it is cumbersome as there is no place in the file where the outcomes are presented in sequence. There is also no documentation of results in a database or electronic case management system. Few files have employment action plans against which to measure progress and results. CPA does not have a procedure for closing out client files so there is no clear information on how many clients have actually achieved their goals and exited services.

Finding: Unpaid placements have been used in a limited number of cases to assist with career exploration.

Case managers indicated that unpaid placements, job shadowing, and (more likely) volunteer placements were used on some occasions for short periods to allow clients to explore career options or to gain exposure to employers; these have proved helpful in these cases. There is no indication that unpaid placements are used inappropriately for extended periods.

Summary and discussion

Tracking of progress towards the goals of the program is limited to a statistical report of the number of employment placements. This does not provide sufficient information for review by HRLE and negotiation of any changes needed to the program. HRLE is going through transition to its new service delivery structure. It will be important that a more defined process for program reporting and review of these reports be adopted as the structure is rolled out.

The progress of individuals is difficult to track in current client records as consistent case management documentation is not maintained in paper files, and no electronic system is used.

Unpaid placements as a tool for client development are rarely, but appropriately, used.

Recommendations

11. CPA together with HRLE develop an updated set of performance targets inline with the revised service delivery model to be developed, and a reporting format that will provide both statistical information on results and narrative analysis.
12. CPA adopt an electronic case management system.

5.3.5 Research Issue - PRODUCTS

Research Questions:

- Do participants of the program achieve sustainable employment?
- What are the benefits of program participation outside of improvements in employment success?

Finding: Almost half of the clients who responded to the survey reported positive impacts on their employability skills since participation in CPA services. A majority of clients rated the services as helpful in removing barriers to employment.

Finding: The program has had a positive impact on interest in training among clients, but few have actually participated in a training program.

Responses to the survey of CPA clients indicate that almost half have made improvements in their employability skills since participation in CPA services:

- 48% felt the skills they bring to a job have increased
- 42% felt that their ability to get a job has improved
- 47% felt that their ability to keep a job has improved
- 75% were more interested in improving their skills through training opportunities, which is a very positive result, given the high proportion of clients with no post-secondary education. However, only 21.1% of survey respondents had participated in a training course since receiving services.

86% of respondents rated the employment-related services they had received as somewhat to very helpful in removing or reducing problems they faced in finding employment.

Finding: Survey respondents showed an increase in the time spent working in the 12 month period following CPA services.

Survey respondents were also asked to provide their labour force activity in the 12 months before they first received services from the CPA and their labour force activity in the most recent 12 months. To test the statistical significance of reported change in labour force activity, analysis was conducted using an ANOVA for a repeated measures design. This analysis concluded that, when data for both the CPA and Full Steam Ahead (FSA) participants were combined, there was a statistically significant increase in months employed over time. However, when results are reported by individual program (CPA and FSA) none of the results are statistically significant. The responses of survey respondents participating in the CPA program are shown in the following table:

CPA Clients – Change in Labour Force Activity		
Type of labour force activity	Prior to Start	Post Start
Months employed	1.99	3.07
Months self-employed	0.00	0.00
Months unemployed and looking for work	5.77	5.66
Months unemployed and not looking for work	1.78	2.43
Months homemakng	0.00	0.00

CPA Clients – Change in Labour Force Activity		
Type of labour force activity	Prior to Start	Post Start
Months attending school	2.45	0.84
Months retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	88	94

Though not statistically significant across the program, results show that clients who responded to the survey experienced the most change in their time spent attending school. On average, the 88 respondents decreased their time in school from 2.45 months to just less than one month (.84). The respondents on average increased their time working by just over a month in the 12 month period following receipt of services (from two months to three), spent similar periods of time unemployed and looking for work and showed a slight increase in the time spent unemployed and not looking for work.

In the following table this same data is provided for survey respondents but this time respondents who were in training in the 12 months before they received CPA services are excluded. Again, results are not statistically significant across the program.

CPA Clients not in Training Prior to Services – Change in Labour Force Activity		
Type of labour force activity	Prior to Start	Post Start
Months employed	2.57	2.56
Months self-employed	0.00	0.00
Months unemployed and looking for work	7.06	6.54
Months unemployed and not looking for work	2.37	2.45
Months homemaking	0.00	0.00
Months attending school	0.00	0.45
Months retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	65	71

When these respondents are excluded, employment gains disappear, but there is a greater drop in the percentage of time spent unemployed and looking for work and an increase in the percentage of time attending school. All these measures indicate positive changes in clients' labour force activity overall.

Finding: Income Support payments to CPA clients decreased between 2001 and 2005.

Income Support payments to CPA clients were examined in 2001 and again in 2005. Results of this analysis show a statistically significant decrease in Income Support payments over this time period. In 2001, CPA clients received an average of \$6,798 in Income Support payments. In 2005, these same clients received an average of \$4,498.

Finding: Placement targets set in the funding agreement were not met in the past two fiscal years.

Selected statistics from the CPA 2003-04 and 2004-05 annual reports to HRLE are provided in the following charts:

CPA Client Services 2003-04

Indicator	St. John's	Bay Roberts	Port Saunders	Happy Valley	Total
Total number of clients at beginning of year	139	70	80	99	388
New clients added (referred by HRLE/Service Canada/HC&S)	3	7	4	0	14
New clients added (self referral)	11	3	0	5	19
Average number of active clients per month	46	22	20	16	104
Number of educational placements	10	2	5	1	18
Number of employer site assessments	41	24	34	15	114
Total direct placements in regular jobs	18	14	5	3	40
Total direct placements in casual jobs (less than 20 hours a week)	0	0	7	5	12
Total placements	18	14	12	8	52
Number of clients who received post-employment support to assist them in retaining jobs	215	48	20	11	294

CPA Client Services 2004-05

Indicator	St. John's	Bay Roberts	Port Saunders	Happy Valley	Total
Total number of clients at beginning of year	143	62	82	93	380
New clients added (referred by HRLE/Service Canada/HC&S)	1	4	2	0	7
New clients added (self referral)	4	12	5	5	26
Average number of active clients per month	43	23	20	13	99
Number of educational placements	5	7	2	1	15
Number of employer site assessments	23	5	39	9	76
Total direct placements in regular jobs	12	9	3	6	30
Total direct placements in casual jobs (less than 20 hours a week)	2	11	4	2	19
Total placements	14	20	7	8	49
Number of clients who received post-employment support to assist them in retaining jobs	133	84	27	23	267

The only activity for which there was an annual target set in the funding agreement with HRLE was placements – this was set at 60 in total for the four sites. The target was not met in either 2003-04 or 2004-05. This target was more challenging in the two more rural sites – Port Saunders and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Of note, the Bay Roberts office achieved a higher placement level than St. John's in 2004-05, even though it serves a much smaller labour market.

As noted earlier, both Bay Roberts and St. John's sites use an approach that does not involve placements – rather clients are assisted in conducting their own job search. This may have had an impact on the placement results in those two sites. As noted earlier, such an approach is a departure from the intent set out in the proposal to “identify/create 60 placements a year”. It should be an area for negotiation with HRLE in terms of service delivery and possible revision of targets to reflect any changes to expectations for program outcomes.

The following are other observations on results that are not targeted in the funding agreement:

- The level of new client intake and referrals from HRLE, Service Canada and HCS looks very low at all sites in both years.
- The ‘total clients at the beginning of the year’ is not a good indicator of client demand as it includes all clients on the caseload including those who have been inactive for some time – there is no CPA process for closing out files. Data from the client survey indicate that the highest proportion of CPA clients (39.5%) were active in the program for up to one year. Twenty-one percent of respondents were involved with the program from one to two years, 16.1% from two to three years, and 23.4% for over three years.
- The number of clients who received post-employment support to assist them in retaining jobs looks high, given the low number of new clients and the number of annual placements. It is not clear what level of post-employment support is included in this indicator.

Finding: Wage subsidies are very important in helping clients make the link with employment. However few wage subsidy placements resulted in sustainable employment.

Case managers indicated that wage subsidies are important to the majority of the placements they make. Wage subsidies are determined based on client and employer needs. No inefficiencies were identified in accessing these via HRLE or Service Canada.

It was felt by key informants that most placements do not continue past the wage subsidy, although this is not systematically tracked and recorded through follow up. Of the 23 employers interviewed who had hired workers referred by CPA, 21 indicated that the placement was through a wage subsidy. Thirteen employers still employed the worker at the time of the survey, but in only two cases was this in an unsubsidized position. Almost all employers indicated that the wage subsidy was a key reason for hiring, but most also felt they were motivated to provide an opportunity to the individual who was referred.

Respondents to the client survey were asked how many jobs they had held since they started receiving services. Sixty percent of respondents were employed at some point during this period (48.4% had held one job and 11.6% had held more than one job). However, only 40.4% of respondents who were employed had held an unsubsidized job. This indicates that the majority of jobs held by clients were subsidized.

Finding: Informants identified a variety of personal and social impacts on clients.

When asked to comment on benefits for clients other than employment outcomes, the following represents a summary of responses from informants:

- Increased access to social networks and community activities
- Increased self-esteem, self confidence
- Decreased isolation
- Increased ability to make life/career decisions
- Increased friendships
- Increased awareness of the array of community supports
- Increased motivation

In regard to perceived improvements to client health and well-being, informants indicated that this was difficult to quantify but they did suggest that access to employment should result in reduced depression, decreased use of drugs (recreational) and over the counter medications, getting out of the house, a sense of contribution to community, and improved self-esteem.

Employers identified a number of benefits for the workers they hired:

- Development of job readiness skills
- Learning how to interact with others
- Improved self-confidence

Finding: A significant proportion of clients reported positive changes in health status and quality of life since receiving CPA services. The impacts have been less than the impacts on employability.

Respondents to the client survey self-assessed changes to their health as follows:

- 33% reported their health has improved or greatly improved since they first obtained CPA services. 50% reported no change in health status.
- 42% reported their quality of life had somewhat or greatly improved since they first received CPA services. 49% reported no change.
- 24% reported their stress level had somewhat or greatly decreased since first receiving CPA services. A similar level (23%) felt their stress level had somewhat or greatly increased in this period, while 53% reported no change in stress level.

Of note in this feedback, the greatest proportion of respondents showed no change in health and stress levels. Also, a similar proportion of clients showed increases and decreases in stress levels.

Summary and discussion

Based on the client survey results, CPA services have had a positive impact on the employability skills of almost half of the clients served, and have helped remove employment barriers for a majority of program clients. Survey respondents also had positive changes in their labour force activity (time spent employed and time spent in training).

The program has helped generate interest in training among clients, but few clients have participated in training programs. Additional funding for training was identified by those surveyed as an area for improvement in the program.

Targets set for employment placements have not been achieved over the past two years. New client intake is quite low, in particular the level of referrals from HRLE.

Employment through immediate placements made by CPA are largely achieved through use of wage subsidy programs. The majority of these do not continue beyond the wage subsidy period. The limited sustainability of employment outcomes is a concern and examination of the factors leading to this outcome is needed.

Recommendation

1. CPA examine alternatives to its current approach to placements in order to improve on sustainability.

5.4 Summary of Findings

The need for a service for persons with disabilities such as the CPA Employment and Career Case Management Centres is well recognized. The program is consistent with the policy objectives of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and is generally considered to complement well the services delivered directly by the department. The analysis of where this service should be located in Newfoundland and Labrador to best serve the population of IS clients could be strengthened.

The program is delivered in multiple sites in a complex environment. The design and delivery of the program have not been well articulated in policies, procedures, annual program monitoring and plans in order to support effective delivery in this environment. The program has some key strengths that could be tapped to ensure consistent quality service across all sites.

There is a need to strengthen liaison with and reporting to HRLE at both the Provincial Office and regional levels so that there is a clearer understanding of program activities and results, and a more consistent approach to program development. Similarly, other service providers could benefit from a renewed introduction to CPA services as part of the continuum of employment supports for persons with disabilities. There is also need for a structured marketing strategy focused on employers.

Clients surveyed expressed a high level of satisfaction with the services provided, and indicated CPA has had a positive impact on their employability skills and has helped remove barriers to employment. Clients have shown improvements in their time spent employed and in training following the receipt of services. However, the majority of placements are dependent on wage subsidies and do not result in sustained employment. Statistical information on program activities indicate that the service is reaching few potential IS clients (either through referrals from HRLE, self-referrals or CPA outreach) and that the placement targets are not being achieved.

Overall, the evaluation indicates that the CPA is providing a relevant service that is having positive impacts for a majority of clients. However, more rigorous documentation of the policies and procedures is needed to ensure that the services are delivered consistently and to a high level of quality across all sites. Also an improved program planning and reporting process is needed to ensure the program meets the needs of HRLE in achieving its mandate. There is also need for a strategy for sustainable employment for clients.

5.5 List of Findings

1. The program is funded in a policy context that supports individualized and employment-focused service, and the funding agreement describes an approach that is consistent with this policy context.
2. The program responds to the needs of persons with disabilities identified in national research, but is weak in the documentation of provincial and regional needs assessment.

3. The program operates in a complex environment. There is limited documentation of program policy and procedures to guide implementation of the activities and to assess progress in implementation in this environment.
4. The CPA brings a number of strengths to the delivery of employment services for persons with disabilities. However, these strengths could be better maximized. In particular there is a need to document and communicate the service delivery model, building on practices in other levels of the CPA organization.
5. The majority of program clients expressed a high level of satisfaction with CPA services.
6. Coordination with HRLE is more active in some sites than others and is influenced by the approach taken by local HRLE management. More consistent implementation of the Community Partnerships Program policy and guidelines could strengthen the partnerships and coordination with agencies.
7. Coordination of services with other community-based organizations varies by site and appears to be influenced by the individual case manager, rather than an overall CPA policy and procedures for coordination.
8. The approach used by CPA to engaging the business community in the hiring of persons with disabilities could be further developed.
9. At the program level, there is limited information to indicate if services are appropriate. Data is collected and reported, but not in a format that facilitates analysis of results for HRLE funded activities. Nor is there evidence of the program being refined or adjusted based on results being achieved.
10. At the individual client level, interventions are focused on the needs of individuals. However, this is not based on a structured needs assessment and action planning process. In-take is not limited to IS eligible clients.
11. There are variations in services among sites that are not reflected in the proposal for funding.
12. Documentation of client needs and tracking of progress is not consistently captured in program forms.
13. There is mixed evidence on whether the program is reaching all potential clients.
14. A majority of clients rated the CPA services as useful to improving their employability skills. However, there is a significant minority who rated some services as not useful which indicates a need for fine-tuning of these aspects of the program.
15. A majority of clients rate the CPA services as useful to improving their employability skills. However, there is a significant minority who rated the services as not useful which is indicative of the need to better define and operationalize the services that are provided.

16. The employment target has remained unchanged over six years, with no indication of re-negotiation based on performance and needs assessment. The same employment targets are set for each of the four sites and are not based on analysis of needs in each region. There are no targets or methods to track progress toward goals.
17. At the program level, it is difficult to track progress towards the placement target based on the reports that are produced by CPA. An improved report format is needed.
18. The setting of targets could be enhanced by stronger monitoring of achievement of targets and subsequent adjustments to targets or services.
19. At the individual client level, reports produced and the caseload management approach do not allow for tracking of progress towards goals.
20. Unpaid placements have been used in a limited number of cases to assist with career exploration.
21. Almost half of clients who responded to the survey reported positive impacts on their employability skills since participation in CPA services. A majority of clients rated the services as helpful in removing barriers to employment.
22. The program has had a positive impact on interest in training among clients, but few have actually participated in a training program.
23. Survey respondents showed an increase in the time spent working in the 12 month period following CPA services.
24. Income Support payments to CPA clients decreased between 2001 and 2005.
25. Placement targets set in the funding agreement were not met in the past two fiscal years.
26. Wage subsidies are very important in helping clients make the link with employment. However few wage subsidy placements resulted in sustainable employment.
27. Informants identified a variety of personal and social impacts on clients.
28. A significant proportion of clients reported positive changes in health status and quality of life since receiving CPA services. The impacts have been less than on employability.

5.6 List of Recommendations

1. CPA collaborate with HRLE in developing a shared understanding of the 'go-forward' needs to be met by the program in each region and province-wide.
2. CPA collaborate with HRLE to further document its service delivery model and the performance targets to match this model. This model should include program objectives, program operating principles, standards of service, service delivery procedures, policies on specific topics (as needed), targets for program outputs and outcomes, reporting requirements,

- reporting procedures, and an annual operating plan with specific improvement-oriented initiatives.
3. CPA undertake a process of communicating internally and with external partners on this model once it is developed.
 4. CPA review and refine its approach to collaboration with HRLE both for program planning and review and for service to individual clients.
 5. CPA develop a process for each site to follow in (re)establishing linkages with other service providers to inform them of the CPA approach to service delivery and to strengthen processes for client referrals to and from CPA.
 6. CPA take leadership in regions that lack a communications/networking forum for service providers to explore how such a forum could be set up.
 7. CPA refine its employer-relations strategy, based on research on effective practices used elsewhere
 8. CPA develop detailed operational guidelines for staff on the service standards and approach to service delivery, together with supporting tools.
 9. CPA develop an outreach approach tailored to each region to ensure access to services.
 10. The target group for services should be examined and re-defined as needed in the funding agreement.
 11. CPA, together with HRLE, develop an updated set of performance targets in line with the revised service delivery model to be developed, and a reporting format that will provide both statistical information on results and narrative analysis.
 12. CPA adopt an electronic case management system.
 13. CPA examine alternatives to its current approach to placements in order to improve on sustainability.

ANNEX - DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities
- Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities
- Canadian Paraplegic Association Funding proposal to HRLE – “From Social Assistance to Social Well-being” – 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06
- Agreement – Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canadian Paraplegic Association: 2004-05, 2005-06,
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment Third Party Proposal Assessment – Canadian Paraplegic Association
- CPA Core Services Standards Manual
- CPA Vocational Services Framework
- CPA Orientation and Training Manual
- CPA Opening Doors to Rehabilitation: A Home Study Program for Rehabilitation Counsellors who Work with Clients with Spinal Cord Injuries and other Mobility Impairments
- CPA Notes from in-service session October 17, 2005
- Client Services Statistical Report: April 1, 2002 – March 31, 2003, April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2004, April 1, 2004 – March 1, 2005
- CPA Client Services Report to Executive Director November 12, 2003, November 25, 2003, October 26, 2004, March 20, 2006
- CPA Job Description Career and Employment Disability Case Manager 2006
- Canadian Paraplegic Association (Newfoundland and Labrador) Inc. in Partnership with Human Resources, Labour and Employment Contract Agreement 2005-2006 Career and Employment Disability Case Manager
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment Third Party Quarterly Statistical Report April – June 2005
- Canadian Paraplegic Association (Newfoundland and Labrador), Inc. Client Satisfaction Survey, Spring 1998.
- CPA brochures - Mission Statement, Rebuilding Dreams Together, Peer Support

Annex A – Key Informants Interviewed

KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Program: Independent Living Resource Centre – Full Steam Ahead

ILRC Board Members

- Michelle Murdoch (Chairperson)

ILRC staff

- Barry Galloway (Executive Director)
- Brad Gash (Individual Advocacy Coordinator)
- Roger Baggs (Career Development Facilitator, Full Steam Ahead)

Human Resources, Labour and Employment

- Peter Coombs, Manager Career Information and Resources Centres
- Sylvia Ash (Program Supervisor of Career Employment and Youth Services for Regatta Plaza site – St. John’s office)

Partner organizations

- Karen Brown – Director, Community and Employment Services of the Y, St. John’s
- Paula Greeley - Program Coordinator Employment Program, Stella Burry Community Services
- Matthew Cave - Life Skills Instructor, Stella Burry Community Services
- Susan Ralph – Executive Director, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities

Program: Vera Perlin Society – Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre

Vera Perlin Society Board Members

- Jean Hanley (Treasurer)

Vera Perlin’s Employment Division

- Marilyn Wall (Manager, Employment Division)
- Gina Underhay (Field Instructor, WORC)
- Joe Squires (Instructor, CEE)
- Elaine Stokes (Assistant CEE)
- CEE students (general discussion held)

Human Resources, Labour and Employment

- Peter Coombs, Manager Career Information and Resources Centres
- Sylvia Ash (Program Supervisor of Career Employment and Youth Services for Regatta Plaza site – St. John’s office)

Program: Calypso Foundation – Work Oriented Rehabilitation Centre

Calypso Foundation Board Members

- Art Elliot (Board member)
- Joy Freake (President)

- Karen Organ (Vice President)

Calypso Foundation WORC Staff

- Stan Godwin (Manager)
- Kevin Martin (Instructor)
- Kim Baker (Administrative Assistant)
- Marjorie Winter (Instructor)

Human Resources, Labour and Employment

- Carson Saunders (Regional Director)
- Eugene Hickey (CDS)
- John Legge (CDS)
- Patsy Frampton (District Manager Lewisporte)

Health and Community Services

- Marlene Steiner (Social Worker)

Program: Canadian Paraplegic Association – Career and Employment Case Management Centres

CPA

Headquarters:

Noel Browne – Executive Director
 Mike Buise – Chair of Board of Directors
 Shelley McCarthy – Director Client Services

Career and Employment Disability Case Managers:

Happy Valley- Goose Bay – Cheryl McGrath
 Port Saunders – Heather House
 Bay Roberts – Cynthia Traverse, Kim Mercer (on Leave); Melanie Oliver (temporary)
 St. John’s – Gary Churchill

Human Resources, Labour and Employment

Provincial office:

Jennifer Jeans - Assistant Deputy Minister, Income, Employment and Youth Services
 Sharon Knott – Director Career, Employment and Youth Services
 Ken O’Brien - Program and Policy Development Specialist

Labrador Region:

Agnes Rumbolt, Regional Director
 Betty Learning, Career Development Specialist

Western Region:

Wayne Fillier, Regional Director
 Dave Pittman, District Manager

Jean Anne Biggin, Career Development Specialist
Avalon Region
Peter Coombs, Manager Career Information and Resources Services

Carbonear District Office:

Tom Parsons - District Manager
Joan Noel - Career Development Specialist
Kim Jackson - Career Development Specialist
Denise Jackman - Career Development Specialist
Betty Dawe – Client Services Officer

CPA Partner Organizations

Happy Valley- Goose Bay:

Community Employment Corporation – Lake Melville
Community Employment Corporation - Labrador West
Youth Career Development Centre
Service Canada

Port Saunders:

Shelley Greene, Roncalli High School guidance counsellor
Osmond Gould, Straits Association for Community Living
Elaine Hillier, Social Worker, Health and Community Services

Bay Roberts:

Jake Collins – Employment Assistance Services
Wanda Hill – MRON
Carolyn Burke – WISE

St. John's:

Karen Youden, Y Employment Services

Annex B - CPA/ILRC Survey Data

Process

FSA Participants		
Q2. How did you find out about the employment services offered by the ILRC?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Was already a client for other reasons.	9	10.2
Referred by the provincial government.	2	2.3
Referred by the federal government.	5	5.7
Referred by some other community group/agency.	18	20.5
Referred by an employer.	0	0.0
Through friends or family	41	46.6
Through advertising/pamphlets etc.	4	4.5
Volunteered there	5	5.7
Other	4	4.5
Total	88	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q2. How did you find out about the employment services offered by the CPA?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Was already a client for other reasons.	4	4.2
Referred by the provincial government.	8	8.3
Referred by the federal government.	8	8.3
Referred by some other community group/agency.	36	37.5
Referred by an employer.	0	0.0
Through friends or family	27	28.1
Through advertising/pamphlets etc.	4	4.2
Volunteered there	2	2.1
Other	7	7.3
Total	96	100.0

FSA Participants – Length of Services		
<i>Service Length</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
3 months and under	5	6.3
4 to 6 months	9	11.4
7 to 9 months	3	3.8
10 to 12 months	5	6.3
13 to 18 months	8	10.1
19 to 24 months	11	14.0
25 to 36 months	17	21.5
37 to 48 months	9	11.4
49 to 60 months	6	7.6
Greater than 5 years	6	7.6
Total	79	100.0
Mean	28.8 Months	

CPA Clients – Length of Services		
<i>Service Length</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
3 months and under	12	14.8
4 to 6 months	7	8.6
7 to 9 months	9	11.1
10 to 12 months	4	5.0
13 to 18 months	5	6.2
19 to 24 months	12	14.8
25 to 36 months	13	16.1
37 to 48 months	7	8.6
49 to 60 months	3	3.7
Greater than 5 years	9	11.1
Total	81	100.0
Mean	30.6 Months	

FSA Participants Q11. and Q12. Number of Contacts			
<i>Type of Contact</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
In-person meeting	71	27	17
Telephone/e-mail correspondence	59	38	10

CPA Clients Q11. and Q12. Number of Contacts			
<i>Type of Contact</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
In-person meeting	68	24	6
Telephone/e-mail correspondence	56	39	7

FSA Participants Q7. Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	60	75.9
No	19	24.1
Total	79	100.0

CPA Clients Q7. Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	66	71.0
No	27	29.0
Total	93	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q8a. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	67	83.8
No	13	16.2
Total	80	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q8a. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	69	78.4
No	19	21.6
Total	88	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q8b. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	69	86.2
No	11	13.8
Total	80	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q8b. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	68	77.3
No	20	22.7
Total	88	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q8c. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	73	89.0
No	9	11.0
Total	82	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q8c. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	77	85.6
No	13	14.4
Total	90	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q8d. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	70	95.9
No	3	4.1
Total	73	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q8d. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	67	87.0
No	10	13.0
Total	77	100.0

FSA Participants Summary – Questions 7 and 8	
<i>Question</i>	<i>% responding “Yes”</i>
Q7. Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?	75.9
Q8a. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?	83.8
Q8b. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?	86.2
Q8c. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?	89.0
Q8d. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?	95.9

CPA Clients Summary – Questions 7 and 8	
<i>Question</i>	<i>% responding “Yes”</i>
Q7. Did you develop a plan with your counselor/facilitator to help you prepare for work or find a job?	71.0
Q8a. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss strengths you have that might help you get a job?	78.4
Q8b. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss barriers that may make it more difficult for you to get a job?	77.3
Q8c. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss the type of work you would like to do?	85.6
Q8d. Did you and the employment counselor/facilitator discuss what you should do to prepare for that type of work?	87.0

FSA Participants Q9. Could you identify any barriers you faced that made it difficult for you to find a suitable job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	68	86.1
No	11	13.9
Total	79	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q9. Could you identify any barriers you faced that made it difficult for you to find a suitable job?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	66	76.7
No	20	23.3
Total	86	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q10. What else did the CPA/ILRC counselor/facilitator do to help you?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Counselling	57	69.5
Resume writing assistance	63	76.8
Assistance accessing labour market information	48	58.5
Job search assistance	53	64.6
Help starting your own business	0	0.0
Help in maintaining employment	12	14.6
Other	30	36.6
Total	82	

CPA Clients		
Q10. What else did the CPA/ILRC counselor/facilitator do to help you?		
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Counselling	47	49.5
Resume writing assistance	48	50.5
Assistance accessing labour market information	39	41.1
Job search assistance	54	56.8
Help starting your own business	0	0.0
Help in maintaining employment	17	17.9
Other	26	27.4
Total	95	

FSA Participants		
Q16. Other than the help you received from the CPA/ILRC, did you receive any other supports/programs to help you get or keep a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Work experience programs/job placements/Wage Subsidy	8	9.8
Training/education	7	8.5
Child care support	0	0.0
Transportation assistance	4	4.9
Medical coverage	0	0.0
Funding for equipment or special assistance (e.g. work boots, job coach)	0	0.0
Adaptive technologies	3	3.7
Other	31	37.8
Total	82	NA

CPA Clients		
Q16. Other than the help you received from the CPA/ILRC, did you receive any other supports/programs to help you get or keep a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Work experience programs/job placements/Wage Subsidy	23	24.2
Training/education	5	5.3
Child care support	0	0.0
Transportation assistance	4	4.2
Medical coverage	0	0.0
Funding for equipment or special assistance (e.g. work boots, job coach)	2	2.1
Adaptive technologies	1	1.1
Other	12	12.6
Total	95	NA

FSA Participants		
Q17. Were there any other supports/programs that you felt you needed but were unable to get?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Work experience programs/job placements/Wage Subsidy	10	12.2
Training/education	5	6.1
Child care support	0	0.0
Transportation assistance	2	2.4
Medical coverage	1	1.2
Funding for equipment or special assistance (e.g. work boots, job coach)	0	0.0
Adaptive technologies	0	0.0
Other	9	11.0
Total	82	NA

CPA Clients		
Q17. Were there any other supports/programs that you felt you needed but were unable to get?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Work experience programs/job placements/Wage Subsidy	9	9.5
Training/education	5	5.3
Child care support	0	0.0
Transportation assistance	1	1.1
Medical coverage	0	0.0
Funding for equipment or special assistance (e.g. work boots, job coach)	0	0.0
Adaptive technologies	0	0.0
Other	9	9.5
Total	95	NA

Satisfaction

FSA Participants		
<i>Q15. How satisfied were you with the services you received from the CPA/ILRC?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	2.4
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	9.8
Somewhat satisfied	19	23.2
Very satisfied	53	64.6
Total	82	100.0

CPA Clients		
<i>Q15. How satisfied were you with the services you received from the CPA/ILRC?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very dissatisfied	6	6.3
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	3.2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	13.7
Somewhat satisfied	21	22.1
Very satisfied	52	54.7
Total	95	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18a. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Understanding how to search for a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	1	1.4
2	1	1.4
3 - Useful	24	32.4
4	19	25.6
5 - Very Useful	29	39.2
Total	74	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18a. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Understanding how to search for a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	4	5.3
2	4	5.3
3 - Useful	20	26.3
4	19	25.0
5 - Very Useful	29	38.1
Total	76	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18b. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Finding out about job opportunities?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	2	2.7
2	1	1.3
3 – Useful	27	36.5
4	13	17.6
5 - Very Useful	31	41.9
Total	74	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18b. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Finding out about job opportunities?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	6	7.8
2	6	7.8
3 – Useful	15	19.5
4	17	22.1
5 - Very Useful	33	42.8
Total	77	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18c. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Making a career choice?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	2	2.9
2	6	8.7
3 – Useful	20	29.0
4	19	27.5
5 - Very Useful	22	31.9
Total	69	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18c. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Making a career choice?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	7	10.3
2	7	10.3
3 – Useful	10	14.7
4	16	23.5
5 - Very Useful	28	41.2
Total	68	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18d. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Gaining specific job-related skills?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	1	1.6
2	12	19.7
3 – Useful	17	27.9
4	16	26.2
5 - Very Useful	15	24.6
Total	61	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18d. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Gaining specific job-related skills?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	7	10.6
2	6	9.1
3 – Useful	14	21.2
4	14	21.2
5 - Very Useful	25	37.9
Total	66	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18e. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Gaining work experience on-the-job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	5	9.0
2	8	14.5
3 – Useful	14	25.5
4	14	25.5
5 - Very Useful	14	25.5
Total	55	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18e. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Gaining work experience on-the-job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	8	13.8
2	3	5.1
3 – Useful	8	13.8
4	11	19.0
5 - Very Useful	28	48.3
Total	58	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18f. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Increasing your confidence?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	1	1.3
2	4	5.3
3 – Useful	22	29.4
4	16	21.3
5 - Very Useful	32	42.7
Total	75	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18f. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Increasing your confidence?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	6	7.6
2	6	7.6
3 – Useful	12	15.2
4	14	17.7
5 - Very Useful	41	51.9
Total	79	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18g. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Increasing your satisfaction with your work life?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	3	5.4
2	7	12.7
3 – Useful	12	21.8
4	19	34.6
5 - Very Useful	14	25.5
Total	55	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18g. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Increasing your satisfaction with your work life?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	9	13.6
2	5	7.6
3 – Useful	14	21.2
4	12	18.2
5 - Very Useful	26	39.4
Total	66	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18h. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your ability to keep a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	5	10.4
2	7	14.6
3 – Useful	15	31.2
4	14	29.2
5 - Very Useful	7	14.6
Total	48	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18h. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your ability to keep a job?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	6	10.9
2	5	9.1
3 – Useful	8	14.5
4	9	16.4
5 - Very Useful	27	49.1
Total	55	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18i. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Arranging appropriate job supports?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	3	6.0
2	3	6.0
3 – Useful	16	32.0
4	14	28.0
5 - Very Useful	14	28.0
Total	50	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18i. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Arranging appropriate job supports?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	4	7.3
2	3	5.5
3 – Useful	14	25.4
4	13	23.6
5 - Very Useful	21	38.2
Total	55	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18j. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your physical health?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	2	5.7
2	3	8.6
3 – Useful	16	45.7
4	8	22.9
5 - Very Useful	6	17.1
Total	35	100.0

CPA Clients		
Q18j. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your physical health?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	6	11.5
2	6	11.5
3 – Useful	10	19.3
4	8	15.4
5 - Very Useful	22	42.3
Total	52	100.0

FSA Participants		
Q18k. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your general quality of life?		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	2	4.1
2	1	2.0
3 – Useful	10	20.4
4	19	38.8
5 - Very Useful	17	34.7
Total	49	100.0

CPA Clients

Q18k. How useful do you feel the employment programs and services were for giving you the following skills and experiences? Improving your general quality of life?

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 - Not at all useful	8	11.8
2	5	7.3
3 – Useful	10	14.7
4	10	14.7
5 - Very Useful	35	51.5
Total	68	100.0

Outcomes

Q41a. FSA Participants – Change in Job Skills Since Start Date		
<i>The skills I can bring to a job have increased/improved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	2	2.7
Disagree somewhat	2	2.7
Neither agree nor disagree	15	20.6
Agree somewhat	20	27.4
Strongly agree	34	46.6
Total	73	100.0

Q41a. CPA Clients – Change in Job Skills Since Start Date		
<i>The skills I can bring to a job have increased/improved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	6	8.1
Disagree somewhat	3	4.1
Neither agree nor disagree	17	23.0
Agree somewhat	18	24.3
Strongly agree	30	40.5
Total	74	100.0

Q41b. FSA Participants – Change in Ability to Get a Job Since Start Date		
<i>My ability to get a job has improved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	3	4.1
Disagree somewhat	5	6.8
Neither agree nor disagree	18	24.7
Agree somewhat	20	27.4
Strongly agree	27	37.0
Total	73	100.0

Q41b. CPA Clients – Change in Ability to Get a Job Since Start Date		
My ability to get a job has improved?	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	9	11.7
Disagree somewhat	3	3.9
Neither agree nor disagree	23	29.9
Agree somewhat	11	14.3
Strongly agree	31	40.2
Total	77	100.0

Q41c. FSA Participants – Change in Ability to Keep a Job Since Start Date		
<i>My ability to keep a job has improved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	3	4.3
Disagree somewhat	6	8.7
Neither agree nor disagree	19	27.6
Agree somewhat	10	14.5
Strongly agree	31	44.9
Total	69	100.0

Q41c. CPA Clients – Change in Ability to Keep a Job Since Start Date		
<i>My ability to keep a job has improved?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	6	8.6
Disagree somewhat	4	5.7
Neither agree nor disagree	13	18.6
Agree somewhat	12	17.1
Strongly agree	35	50.0
Total	70	100.0

Q41d. FSA Participants – Change in Interest in Improving Skills Since Start Date		
<i>I am more interested in improving my skills through training opportunities?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	3	4.0
Disagree somewhat	3	4.0
Neither agree nor disagree	7	9.2
Agree somewhat	13	17.1
Strongly agree	50	65.7
Total	76	100.0

Q41d. CPA Clients – Change in Interest in Improving Skills Since Start Date		
<i>I am more interested in improving my skills through training opportunities?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly disagree	2	2.4
Disagree somewhat	1	1.2
Neither agree nor disagree	4	4.9
Agree somewhat	18	22.0
Strongly agree	57	69.5
Total	82	100.0

Q42. FSA Participants – Helpfulness of Programs and Services		
<i>How helpful were the employment-related programs and services you received in removing or reducing problems or barriers you faced in finding employment?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 Not helpful at all	0	0.0
2	3	4.3
3 Somewhat helpful	16	22.9
4	21	30.0
5 Very helpful	30	42.8
Total	70	100.0

Q42. CPA Clients – Helpfulness of Programs and Services		
<i>How helpful were the employment-related programs and services you received in removing or reducing problems or barriers you faced in finding employment?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 Not helpful at all	9	11.6
2	2	2.6
3 Somewhat helpful	19	24.7
4	17	22.1
5 Very helpful	30	39.0
Total	77	100.0

Q43. FSA Participants – Change in Health Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your health is greatly improved, somewhat improved, about the same, somewhat worse, much worse?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly improved	8	9.9
Somewhat improved	20	24.7
About the same	37	45.6
Somewhat worse	14	17.3
Much worse	2	2.5
Total	81	100.0

Q43. CPA Clients – Change in Health Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your health is greatly improved, somewhat improved, about the same, somewhat worse, much worse?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly improved	10	10.9
Somewhat improved	20	21.7
About the same	46	50.0
Somewhat worse	8	8.7
Much worse	8	8.7
Total	92	100.0

Q44. FSA Participants – Change in Quality of Life Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your quality of life is greatly improved, somewhat improved, about the same, somewhat worse, much worse?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly improved	13	16.3
Somewhat improved	25	31.3
About the same	30	37.5
Somewhat worse	9	11.2
Much worse	3	3.7
Total	80	100.0

Q44. CPA Clients – Change in Quality of Life Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your quality of life is greatly improved, somewhat improved, about the same, somewhat worse, much worse?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly improved	13	14.3
Somewhat improved	25	27.5
About the same	45	49.4
Somewhat worse	3	3.3
Much worse	5	5.5
Total	91	100.0

Q45. FSA Participants – Change in Stress Levels Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your stress level is greatly increased, somewhat increased, about the same, somewhat decreased, greatly decreased?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly increased	9	11.4
Somewhat increased	11	13.9
About the same	38	48.1
Somewhat decreased	14	17.7
Greatly decreased	7	8.9
Total	79	100.0

Q45. CPA Clients – Change in Stress Levels Since Start Date		
<i>Thinking back to (start date) and comparing to now, would you say your stress level is greatly increased, somewhat increased, about the same, somewhat decreased, greatly decreased?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Greatly increased	7	7.4
Somewhat increased	16	16.8
About the same	50	52.6
Somewhat decreased	13	13.7
Greatly decreased	9	9.5
Total	95	100.0

FSA Participants – Number of Courses after Start Date		
<i>Number of Courses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	49	59.8
1	25	30.5
2	6	7.3
3	2	2.4
Total	82	100.0

CPA Clients – Number of Courses after Start Date		
<i>Number of Courses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	75	78.9
1	17	17.9
2	3	3.2
3	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

FSA Participants – Number of Jobs after Start Date		
<i>Number of Jobs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	34	41.5
1	38	46.3
2	6	7.3
3	3	3.7
4	0	0.0
5	0	0.0
6	1	1.2
Total	82	100.0

CPA Clients – Number of Jobs after Start Date		
<i>Number of Jobs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	38	40.0
1	46	48.4
2	8	8.4
3	2	2.1
4	1	1.1
5	0	0.0
6	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

FSA Participants – Number of Unsubsidized Paid Jobs after Start Date		
<i>Number of Jobs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	55	67.1
1	23	28.0
2	2	2.4
3	2	2.4
Total	82	100.0

CPA Clients – Number of Unsubsidized Paid Jobs after Start Date		
<i>Number of Jobs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0	72	75.8
1	18	18.9
2	3	3.2
3	2	2.1
Total	95	100.0

Q39 and Q40. FSA Participants – Change in Labour Force Activity		
<i>Type of Labour Force Activity</i>	<i>Prior to Start</i>	<i>Most Recent</i>
Months Employed	1.87	3.15
Months Self-Employed	0.00	0.00
Months Unemployed and looking for work	5.05	4.25
Months unemployed and not looking for work	3.02	3.16
Months Home Maker	0.00	0.00
Months Attending School	2.07	1.43
Months Retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	75	79

Q39 and Q40. CPA Clients – Change in Labour Force Activity		
<i>Type of Labour Force Activity</i>	<i>Prior to Start</i>	<i>Most Recent</i>
Months Employed	1.99	3.07
Months Self-Employed	0.00	0.00
Months Unemployed and looking for work	5.77	5.66
Months unemployed and not looking for work	1.78	2.43
Months Home Maker	0.00	0.00
Months Attending School	2.45	0.84
Months Retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	88	94

Q39 and Q40. FSA Participants not in Training Prior to Services – Change in Labour Force Activity		
<i>Type of Labour Force Activity</i>	<i>Prior to Start</i>	<i>Most Recent</i>
Months Employed	2.30	3.27
Months Self-Employed	0.00	0.00
Months Unemployed and looking for work	6.02	4.75
Months unemployed and not looking for work	3.68	3.03
Months Home Maker	0.00	0.00
Months Attending School	0.00	0.95
Months Retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	60	64

Q39 and Q40. CPA Clients not in Training Prior to Services – Change in Labour Force Activity		
<i>Type of Labour Force Activity</i>	<i>Prior to Start</i>	<i>Most Recent</i>
Months Employed	2.57	2.56
Months Self-Employed	0.00	0.00
Months Unemployed and looking for work	7.06	6.54
Months unemployed and not looking for work	2.37	2.45
Months Home Maker	0.00	0.00
Months Attending School	0.00	0.45
Months Retired	0.00	0.00
Total	12.00	12.00
N	65	71

Demographics

Q49. FSA Participants - Age		
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Under 20	1	1.3
20 to 29	28	35.4
30 to 39	24	30.4
40 to 49	17	21.5
50 to 59	9	11.4
60 and over	0	0.0
Total	79	100.0

Q49. CPA Clients - Age		
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Under 20	4	4.4
20 to 29	33	36.3
30 to 39	23	25.3
40 to 49	22	24.2
50 to 59	8	8.8
60 and over	1	1.1
Total	100	100.0

Q50. FSA Participants - Gender		
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	44	53.7
Female	38	46.3
Total	82	100.0

Q50. CPA Clients - Gender		
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	49	53.8
Female	42	46.2
Total	91	100.0

Q47. FSA Participants – Marital Status		
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single, never married	69	85.2
Married or common law	7	8.6
Separated, divorced or widowed	5	6.2
Total	81	100.0

Q47. CPA Clients – Marital Status		
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single, never married	66	71.0
Married or common law	21	22.6
Separated, divorced or widowed	6	6.4
Total	93	100.0

Q48. FSA Participants – Dependent Children		
<i>Do you have any dependent children?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	8	9.9
No	73	90.1
Total	81	100.0

Q48. CPA Clients – Dependent Children		
<i>Do you have any dependent children?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	22	23.7
No	71	76.3
Total	93	100.0

Q46. FSA Participants – Level of Education		
<i>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than grade 10	11	13.7
Some high school but not graduated	8	10.0
Graduated from high school	23	28.8
Some post-secondary	6	7.5
Completed a private college program	10	12.5
Completed a public college program or diploma	10	12.5
Completed a university undergraduate degree	6	7.5
Completed a graduate degree or post graduate	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

Q46. CPA Clients – Level of Education		
<i>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than grade 10	13	14.1
Some high school but not graduated	11	12.0
Graduated from high school	28	30.5
Some post-secondary	9	9.8
Completed a private college program	5	5.4
Completed a public college program or diploma	16	17.4
Completed a university undergraduate degree	4	4.3
Completed a graduate degree or post graduate	6	6.5
Total	92	100.0