Improving Access to Training Opportunities for Women in Precarious Work

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Abstract

Precarious work is a growing form of employment associated with low-pay, job insecurity, income volatility, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of access to training opportunities among other conditions. These conditions are damaging for all who work in precarious employment and yet, research finds women are disproportionately represented in this type of work. As a result, women may be more likely to face socio-economic challenges in the short and long-term, including having limited access to training opportunities. Given the limited research on precarious workers' abilities to access training opportunities, this study further explores this challenge while focusing on women. A series of policy options are analyzed and compared to provide a recommendation for how to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work.

Keywords: Women; Precarious Work; Training; Labour Market Disruption; Policy Analysis

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List of Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
CTB	Canada Training Benefit
CTC	Canada Training Credit
EI	Employment Insurance
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMDA	Labour Market Development Agreements
OLES	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills
OR	Odds Ratio
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
WDA	Workforce Development Agreements

Executive Summary

Precarious work is characterized by unfavourable conditions including low-pay, job insecurity, income volatility, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of access to training opportunities. Labour trends demonstrate that precarious work is on the rise in Canada and warrants significant consideration because of the negative outcomes associated with it. This study confirms that women are disproportionately represented in precarious work and face serious challenges in the short and long term. As such, this study analyzes one key dimension of precarity that impacts women in both the short and long term. Specifically, this study examines the lack of training opportunities that are made available to women in precarious work and determines recommendations to improve access to training opportunities for this population.

The methodologies of this study include quantitative analysis and a literature review. Overall, the findings suggest that women are disproportionately represented in precarious work and are less likely than men to access training. This study also conducts a policy analysis to provide a recommendation to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work. A total of three options are evaluated based on a set of criteria and measures. The options include Enhancing the Canada Training Benefit, Funding Essential Skills Proposals, and developing an Essential Skills Hub.

Based on the evaluation of the three options, this study recommends that the Government pursue both Funding Essential Skills Proposals and an Essential Skills Hub. These options will effectively support women in precarious work with accessing training opportunities and will enable resilience against future labour market disruptions. The Funding Essential Skills Proposals is an action that can be undertaken in the short term to address immediate challenges that various groups of women in precarious work face. The Essential Skills Hub can be developed over the long term to provide a stable source of essential skills training. These options are recommended based on their ability to incorporate a flexible approach that supports a variety of women in precarious work.

Chapter 1.   Introduction

In recent decades, the availability of traditional, standard full-time jobs has been declining while other forms of employment have been on the rise (Fong, 2018). Precarious work is one of these growing forms of employment. Precarious work describes employment that exhibits unfavourable characteristics such as low pay, job insecurity, income volatility, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of access to training or development opportunities. Beyond these characteristics, precarious work is associated with other issues like poor physical and mental health outcomes, an increased likelihood of economic vulnerability, and increased intergenerational costs (Law Commission of Ontario, 2012). Due to the issues associated with precarity, many recognize the growth in precarity as a serious problem for Canada (Fong, 2018; HUMA, 2019; Lewchuk et al., 2015; Vosko et al., 2009).

Research has found precarious work to be gendered, where women are disproportionately represented in it (HUMA, 2019; Hira-Friesen, 2018; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012; Young, 2010). Gendered differences among precarious workers are not only problematic for women, but also employers, the labour market, and the economy. In the short term, precarious working conditions can reinforce a cycle of economic vulnerability where women cannot obtain higher-quality jobs. In the long term, the implications of precarious work may result in women being less prepared for job transformations than men. Given these implications, women in precarious work need ways to access and obtain higher quality jobs to improve short and long-term labour market outcomes. This challenge is further complicated considering how gender intersects with other identities such as age, ability, racial and Indigenous identity to name a few. Since women are not a homogenous group, certain groups of women will experience precarity and its negative consequences more negatively than others. Therefore, any proposed solutions to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work must be flexible, applicable, and appropriate for different women.

The objectives of this study are to first, determine the extent of gender differences in precarious employment. Second, identify trends regarding who accesses training opportunities. Third, understand what barriers impact access to training opportunities for men and women. Finally, determine evaluative criteria and policy

recommendation(s) for how to improve access to training opportunities for various groups of women in precarious work.

In the Canadian context, there has been a significant body of research conducted on precarious work in Canada (see HUMA, 2019; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012; Noack and Vosko, 2011), however, there has been limited research and analysis on the gendered implications of precarious work and access to training. For example, research has primarily focused on defining and measuring precarious work in Canada (see HUMA, 2019; Fong, 2018). This study contributes to existing research on precarious work in Canada by analyzing this issue in the context of not only gender and other intersecting identities, but also with respect to accessing training and enabling labour market resilience.

This study uses a policy analysis framework to provide a policy recommendation to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work. A mixed methods research approach is used to analyze the policy problem, determine policy recommendations, and develop criteria that will be used to evaluate various options.

In the report, I explain precarious employment and provide an overview of training in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 4 outlines the policy problem and relevant stakeholders. Chapter 5 describes the methodology of this study. I present the primary research findings using quantitative analysis in Chapter 6; Chapter 7 describes the secondary research findings using a literature review. Chapter 8 outlines the criteria and measures as well as the policy options I analyze. In Chapter 9 I present an analysis of the policy options based on this study's evaluative criteria and research findings from Chapters 6 and 7. Finally, Chapter 10 outlines the policy recommendations based on the analysis.

Chapter 2.   Background

Within the Canadian labour market, men and women have very different experiences and outcomes. This chapter provides information on the gendered nature of work and precarious work in Canada.

2.1. The Gendered Nature of Work

Labour market experiences and outcomes are different for men and women due to cultural and social norms, gender-specific barriers, and the gender wage gap (ESDC, 2019a; Pelletier, R. et al., 2019; Drolet, 2020). These factors can prevent women from participating and advancing in the labour market in the same ways that men do. Cultural and social norms have shaped the range of employment choices for women and have kept them employed in certain types of jobs and out of others (McKinsey, 2019). Gendered expectations regarding unpaid work, systemic discrimination and bias, and gender stereotypes are barriers that women face which keep them from participating and advancing in the labour force (Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2018; Drolet, 2020; Cafley, J. et al., 2020). As a result, women experience different and often worse labour market outcomes than men.

The gender wage gap is an example that explains gender differences in labour market outcomes between men and women. In 2018, the Canadian gender wage gap was such that women earn $4.13 less than men per hour (Statistics Canada, 2019a). When considering other identifying factors in addition to gender, research also demonstrates that differently situated women experience additional wage penalties. Research finds there are wage penalties between 9% and 15% for women identifying as Aboriginal (Lamb et al., 2018). Additionally, Canadian Census data indicates that the gender wage gap is experienced differently for many groups of women, this includes Indigenous women, racialized women, newcomer women and women with disabilities (Canada Women's Foundation, 2018). Research has shown that the gender wage gap is primarily attributed to the overrepresentation of women working in part-time work (Statistics Canada, 2019a). As such, men are more likely to work in full-time work where their positions are associated with higher wages, better benefits, and greater employment security. Labour force survey data shows that in 2019, men held 56.3% of

full-time jobs and only 35.7% of part-time jobs, whereas women held just 43.7% of full-time jobs and 64.3% of part-time jobs (Statistics Canada, 2019b). The gender wage gap and the overrepresentation of women in part-time work is one way to explain unequal labour market outcomes between men and women. Other explanations are required to understand the gendered nature of work however, gender differences also exist within specific types of work, including in precarious work.

Using four indicators of precarity, I identify and show the extent of gender differences in precarious work. The indicators show that gender differences exist in precarious work where women make up a greater proportion of low-income workers, women account for a larger share of non-standard workers, women make up a larger share of involuntary part-time workers and women have lower union coverage rates than men.

In addition to gender differences within precarious work, research on automation reveals that labour market disruptions will impact men and women differently. Statistics Canada finds a larger share of women (44.4%) will face a higher risk of job transformation compared to men (34.8%) (Frenette and Frank, 2020). While other research suggests that women may be better positioned to deal with labour market disruptions given their social perceptiveness, writing and problem-solving skills (RBC, 2019). These conflicting findings reinforce the importance of understanding the gendered nature of work especially in the context of vulnerable workers who face risks of labour market disruptions. Research also demonstrates the gendered impacts are unequal when considering intersecting factors in addition to gender. For example, 48.6% of women with disabilities face a moderate to high risk of automation compared to just 32.0% of men with disabilities (Frenette and Frank, 2020). Therefore, emphasizing the importance of understanding gender and other differences in skills and access to training because future labour market impacts will not be equal for various groups of men and women.

2.2. Defining Precarious Work

Precarious work is a complex issue that has serious implications for individuals, communities, the labour market, and the economy. To understand the extent of

precarious work and to provide a foundation for my analysis, I identify a series of indicators to define and understand precarious employment.

In Canada, there is no official definition for precarious work, making it difficult for Canadians and policymakers to measure, track and understand the extent of precarity (Fong, 2018 and HUMA, 2019). As a result, one cannot truly "distinguish Canadians who unwillingly face precarious conditions from those who choose these types of work arrangements" (Fong, 2018, p. 4). Despite there being no official definition for precarious work, many have researched precarity and have characterized it broadly. For example, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) published a report in 2019 identifying five critical dimensions of precarious employment. The five dimensions include compensation, job security, working conditions, opportunities for career development, and individual circumstances (HUMA, 2019). Similarly, others have characterized precarious employment by low wages, a lack of continuity and benefits, and risk of injury (Law Commission of Ontario, 2010). While precarious work remains an undefined and vague term, the lack of an official definition should not be a barrier to addressing this issue.

For this study, I identify and use four indicators to understand broad gender differences in precarious work in Canada. The four indicators are not a comprehensive list of all dimensions of precarious work, rather the indicators chosen are based on previous research and the availability of data. The four indicators are low-income, job permanency, involuntary part-time work, union coverage (these indicators are further discussed in Chapter 6.1.).

The first indicator, low-income comes from research that identifies low income as a defining factor of precarious work. Noack and Vosko (2011) specify low income as anything less than 1.5 times the minimum wage. Due to data limitations, I do not use the same 1.5 times the minimum wage threshold as my low-income indicator, rather I look at the share of women earning below $20.00 per hour. A flat $20.00 per hour threshold does not perfectly capture low-income across Canada due to regional differences. However, this indicator still helps determine gender differences between workers who are earning a relatively low wage. This indicator demonstrates that females account for a larger share of low-income workers (earning below $20.00 per hour). In 2018, 16.4% of

males earned below $20.00 per hour whereas 21.3% of females earned below $20.00 per hour (Statistics Canada, 2021a).

Second, job permanency is based on research that finds employment uncertainty or a lack of continuity or security to be a defining condition of precarious work (HUMA, 2019). The job permanency indicator specifically looks at individuals in non-standard work, this includes any temporary forms of work (casual, contract, term, seasonal or other temporary jobs). This indicator does not fully capture precarity because not all workers in non-standard work arrangements are subject to precarious working conditions (Fong, 2018; The Law Commission of Ontario, 2012). However, Canadian research on precarious work finds that precarious working conditions are concentrated in non-standard work (Topp and Lubowitz, 2019). Despite the challenge of measuring job permanency accurately, I use non-standard work as the second indicator of precarity but acknowledge that it does not perfectly capture precarious work. The second indicator shows that females account for a larger share of non-standard workers (temporary employees). In 2018, 6.4% of males were temporary employees whereas 6.9% of females were temporary employees (Statistics Canada, 2021b).

The third indicator, preference for full-time work, acknowledges that certain individuals may prefer to work in non-standard jobs (Fong, 2018; HUMA, 2019). The choice to work in non-standard work may be due to personal, health, family or other reasons. Therefore, to distinguish between those who choose non-standard employment and those who involuntarily work in non-standard employment, a third indicator looks at the involuntary part-time rate[1]. This indicator shows more females are involuntarily employed in part-time work compared to males. The involuntary part-time rate for males was 8.1% and 13.7% for females in 2018 (Statistics Canada, 2021c).

Finally, unionization is based on research from the Law Commission of Ontario (2012) who identify a lack of union coverage as a condition of precarious work. Typically, workers without union coverage do not experience a wage premium and have access to benefits like unionized workers do (Noack and Vosko, 2011). Furthermore, workers with union coverage are more likely to participate in workplace learning than non-union

[1] Statistics Canada defines the involuntary part-time rate as "the number of persons whose response was business conditions or could not find work with 30 or more hours by the total number of persons working part-time at their main or only job".

workers (Barnetson, 2018). I present union coverage rates for the private sector since precarious working conditions are more prevalent in the private sector compared to the public sector (Noack and Vosko, 2011). This indicator shows that in the private sector females are less likely to be unionized than males; in 2018, the union coverage rate in the private sector was 18.6% for males and 12.6% for females (Statistics Canada, 2021d).

The four indicators demonstrate that there is a gendered component to precarious work and suggests gender differences may also exist within other dimensions of precarity. The indicators highlight four negative consequences associated with precarious work, and another notable consequence that will be examined in this study is the lack of access to training. Considering that broader research finds structural inequalities are preventing women from accessing training opportunities (McKinsey, 2019), it is expected that gendered differences exist within precarious work where women are less likely to access training opportunities.

As for who precarious workers are, research has determined that certain groups are more likely to work in precarious jobs than others. These groups include women, racialized persons, and recent immigrants (Noack and Vosko, 2011; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012; Liu, 2019; Topp and Lubowitz, 2019). Considering individuals may belong to one or more of these groups, it is clear that negative outcomes will compound for certain women especially if they identify with multiple identities or groups. Other research demonstrates that workers without post-secondary education find themselves more likely to work in part-time or temporary jobs (HUMA, 2019). The indicators of precarity also show that other demographic groups may be disproportionately represented in precarious work. Looking at casual employment (a form of non-standard work) demonstrates how younger and older workers are more likely to work in casual employment. As a result, younger and older workers may experience even more precarity because of the temporary nature of their work (Fong, 2018). The disproportionate representation of different social and demographic groups in precarious work highlights the need to understand a variety of experiences, perspectives, and needs. Due to the narrow scope of data that is collected on training and precarious work, several demographic and social categories are excluded from labour market analysis. This presents a challenge for understanding who works in precarious employment and who has access to training opportunities.

Chapter 3.   Overview of Training in Canada

This chapter provides an overview of the training in Canada by making several distinctions about the training system. Including exploring who is responsible for providing training opportunities and what the Government of Canada has done thus far.

3.1. The Structure of the Canadian Training System

The Canadian training system helps people develop new skills[2] and prepare for entering new or taking on different jobs. The system is made up of four main components, post-secondary education (PSE), government labour market policies, workplace training, and community education (Barnetson, 2018). Various training opportunities are accessible before people join the labour market and for people who are both unemployed and employed. Depending on an individual's circumstances and needs, training may be provided by employers or various levels of government, and individuals with sufficient resources may even participate in training on their own.

Government training programs and policies exist at both the provincial and federal level and are referred to as active labour market policies. Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are programs and initiatives that help individuals find work and develop skills. The structure of the Canadian training system is outlined in Figure 1 and highlights the various ALMPs within the jurisdiction of the federal government. The majority of provincial and territorial ALMPs are funded through Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs) or Workforce Development Agreements (WDAs). A key distinction between these agreements is that LMDAs are primarily available to those eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. LMDAs enable the provinces and territories to deliver benefits, support measures and training as outlined in Part II of the *Employment Insurance Act*. Whereas WDAs allocate flexible funding to the provinces and territories and enable them to respond to various needs of workers in their jurisdictions, including supporting workers to maintain or find employment.

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[2] Skills are defined as developed capacities that people use in their jobs, to complete tasks, roles duties (Gyarmati et al., 2020).

Figure 1.   Map of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) in Canada
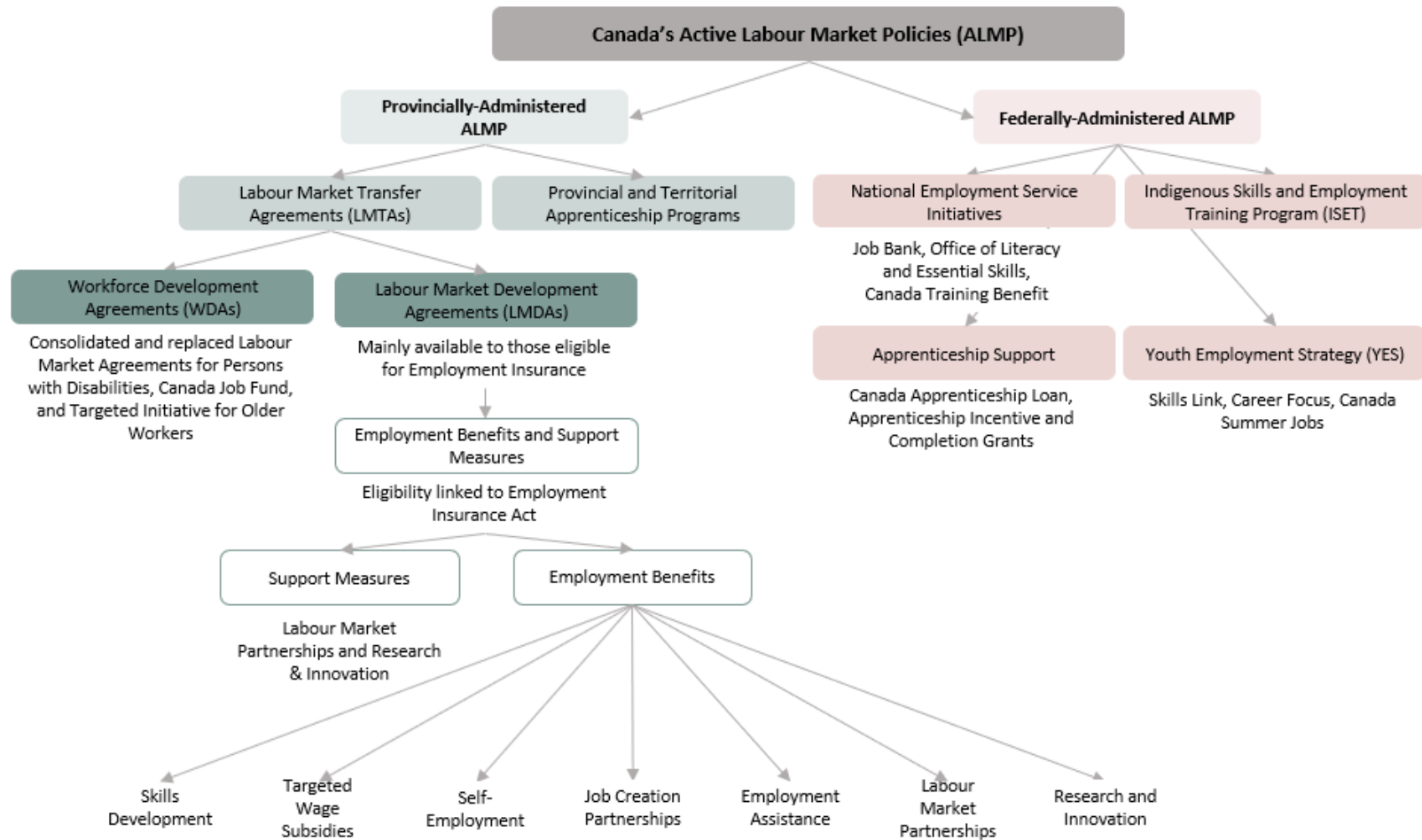
Source: Information adapted from Jansen et al., 2019.

Research from the Advisory Council on Economic Growth finds that Canada's skills development system is not equipped to meet future labour market challenges (Department of Finance, 2017). The Council notes a significant gap in the state of Canada's skills development infrastructure where the current system primarily supports individuals before they enter the workforce and when they leave it (when they unwillingly become unemployed). As a result, a third category of people remain unsupported; this third category refers to workers who have limited access to training opportunities during their working lives (Department of Finance, 2017). Consequently, workers may lack the skills needed to succeed in their current jobs and the skills needed to transition into different jobs. This presents the basis for needing greater public investment in training initiatives so that workers have opportunities to develop their skills throughout the entirety of their working lives. To improve workers' access to training, there are several initiatives from the Government of Canada that are outlined in the next subsection (Chapter 3.2).

3.2. The Role of the Canadian Government

To improve Canadian's ability to access training, the federal government proposed the Canada Training Benefit in the 2019 Budget. The Canada Training Benefit helps workers obtain the training required to keep their jobs or to help prepare for new jobs (Department of Finance Canada, 2019a). There are several elements included within the Canadian Training Benefit including a non-taxable Canada Training Credit of $250 per year, the Employment Insurance (EI) Training Support Benefit to provide workers with up to four weeks of income support and leave provisions that allow workers to take time off to train (Department of Finance, 2019a). The Canada Training Credit portion of this benefit was only recently introduced, and it remains to be seen what the impacts will be on improving Canadian workers' abilities to access training opportunities. Furthermore, the Government of Canada signalled its intent to launch the EI Training Support Benefit in 2020. The EI Training Support Benefit would provide up to four weeks of income support through the EI program. Eligible workers could access up to four weeks within a four-year period if they took time off to train (ESDC, 2019b). However, due to COVID-19 nothing has been implemented thus far. It is unclear if the federal government will still proceed with the EI Training Support Benefit since it was not

explicitly highlighted in the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion's supplementary mandate letter from January 2021[3].

Lifelong Learning Plans (LLPs) also support workers' abilities to fund training and education opportunities. LLPs enable workers to withdraw savings out of their Register Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) to fund training and education endeavours (Munro, 2019). RRSPs are intended to be a savings and investment tool that Canadians can use to save for their retirement. However, since many precarious workers are low-wage workers, it is unlikely that they will have opened and contributed a substantial amount to their RRSPs (Munro, 2019). Furthermore, withdrawals under Lifelong Learning Plans are exempt from taxes, but people are required to repay the withdrawal amount within 10 years. The repayment conditions and potentially low contribution levels emphasize the ineffectiveness of this initiative for precarious workers.

The department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) houses the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) which provides funding to help people access literacy and essential skills training. They fund projects through grants and contributions to help people gain the necessary skills to succeed at work. The OLES focuses on funding projects that help those with low levels of skill and those who face multiple barriers to employment. They specifically choose innovative projects that have a proven track record of success and could be scaled up (ESDC, 2021). In 2018, a study was published evaluating the OLES; it covered fiscal years 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 and determined that Canada continues to require literacy and essential skills programming, federal support in this area is required, OLES work does do duplicate work of other funders, and further research and analysis efforts are required (ESDC, 2018). Although performance information is not uniform, it was determined that the activities of the OLES' have met their expected outcomes (ESDC, 2018). The Government of Canada also funds a variety of active labour market policies through provincial and territorial Workforce Development Agreements. This includes provincial and territorial Job Training Grants which are available to workers who need access to training opportunities. In BC, employers must apply on behalf of their employees to access these grants (Work BC,

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[3] The Canada Training Benefit was included in the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion's mandate letter from December 2019 with the expectation that it would launch in 2020. The Canada Training Benefit which includes the EI Training Support Benefit was first introduced as a part of Budget 2019.

2021) and this requirement is also standard across other provinces and territories. While the federal government provides the funding for these grants, the provinces and territories are responsible for their design and delivery. Design elements such as eligibility requirements vary by jurisdiction, but the grants may provide a flat amount for training or they may cover a portion of training costs. Some provincial and territorial grants even target specific streams of workers to ensure that those who need training the most, can access it.

Though these initiatives demonstrate significant efforts to train workers, the Department of Finance and the Future Skills Council have stated that more needs to be done, especially since major labour market disruptions like automation are expected to drastically change the skills being demanded (Department of Finance, 2017). As the labour market continues to evolve, proactive approaches must be developed to support workers with future transitions (ESDC, 2020a). In most occupations, almost one-quarter of work activities are expected to be automated (Department of Finance, 2017). Thus, emphasizing the need to support workers' abilities to train, reskill, and upskill so they remain resilient as the labour market evolves. Researchers from the Brookfield institute have projected which sectors are expected to experience employment growth, including the health sector and STEM-related occupations (Rivera et al., 2020).

3.3. The Skills Spectrum

Training initiatives support a wide range of workers with varying skill abilities. Depending on who delivers and receives training opportunities, training initiatives may target individuals who need to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills or more advanced technical skills. Given the wide range of skills that are demanded in the labour market, it can be a complex task to determine what type of training is appropriate for different workers.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has developed an Essential Skills Framework that outlines nine essential skills that all workers should possess. These nine essential skills also serve as the foundation for learning all other skills (ESDC, 2020b and Braham and Tobin, 2020; Gyarmati et al., 2020). The nine essential skills include reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use/digital skills, thinking, oral communication, working with others, and continuous learning

(ESDC, 2020b and Braham and Tobin, 2020). Many of the nine essential skills are associated with literacy, but others cover non-literary related skills like thinking, digital and continuous learning. These nine skills were identified through extensive research and are were determined to be used daily in almost every job (ESDC, 2020b). For my research, I focus on improving access to training opportunities that develop essential skills.

This study will focus on essential skills for two main reasons. First, essential skills are the basis for learning other skills (Braham and Tobin, 2020). Foundational and basic skills allow people to succeed in the labour market by helping them obtain jobs, succeed in their jobs or adapt to changes in the workplace (Braham and Tobin, 2020). This highlights the need for all workers to possess essential skills or have opportunities to obtain them through training. Second, workers with lower levels of education are more likely to work in precarious employment (HUMA, 2019; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012). Given the importance of essential skills, individuals working in precarious employment will likely need opportunities to develop them. For these reasons, improving access to developing essential skills is an objective of this study.

3.4. Responsibility for Training Investments

A paramount challenge for the federal government is to determine responsibility for providing and funding training opportunities. Research finds that the responsibility for providing training is unclear (Cukier, 2020). In certain instances where public support for training is lacking, corporations have taken the lead to reskill and upskill their workers. Corporations cite building an agile workforce and supporting corporate social responsibility and philanthropic strategies as reasons for implementing training initiatives (Cukier, 2020). However, the lack of clarity surrounding the responsibility for providing training results in the burden of training falling onto workers (Munro, 2019). This leaves many workers unable to access training due to barriers, including a lack of resources; Munro (2019) notes that this is the reality for underemployed and precarious workers.

The uncertainty surrounding the responsibility for training contributes to workers having unequal access to training opportunities. Despite the lack of obligation for employers to offer training, some employers do offer training to their employees. Yet, in comparison to other OECD countries, Canadian employers invest a relatively small

amount in training their employees (Cukier, 2020). Uneven investments in training highlight an inequity, where those that do receive workplace training are more likely to be highly skilled and educated. This is because employers finance training for their most educated employees since they perceive this will have a higher return on investment (Munro, 2019). Consequently "the workers who most need training and development opportunities to continue working are least likely to receive them" (Munro, 2019, p. 20).

The lack of clarity surrounding the responsibility for providing training is especially detrimental to women in precarious work as they are more likely to have lower levels of education and skills (Law Commission of Ontario, 2012; Noack and Vosko, 2011). Negative employment outcomes that precarious workers typically experience (low wages, job instability) make it clear that their employers will not provide them with training opportunities. Additionally, workers in precarious employment will not have the resources to access essential skills training. Therefore, governments (both provincial and federal) must be responsible for providing essential skills training. This will ultimately afford precarious workers access to essential skills training and other training opportunities in the future.

Existing research demonstrates the need to better understand the extent of training in Canada, including who has access to it, who offers it and why. In the context of this study, the resulting challenge will be to understand differences in access to training opportunities for various workers in precarious employment and determine how to appropriately respond to these differences.

Chapter 4.   Policy Problem and Stakeholders

Women are disproportionately represented in precarious work and have limited access to training opportunities. This presents risks to various groups of women in precarious work in both the short and long term. Accessing training opportunities is crucial considering that precarious workers are more likely to have low levels of education. In the short term, these issues create a cycle of precarity and can result in economic vulnerability because the workers who need training the most, are the least likely to receive it. In the long term, this reality has more serious implications for the Canadian labour market and economy. Research finds that women who exhibit certain characteristics, face a higher risk of job transformation compared to men (Frenette and Frank, 2020). These characteristics align with the realities of precarious work and include having no postsecondary credentials, low literacy or numeracy proficiency, low employment income, and working part-time. Without adequate skills or access to training, women in precarious work may be ill-equipped to adapt to labour market transformations.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated labour market inequities and has emphasized the need for targeted support. The pandemic has had disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups and employment outcomes have been unequal. This underscores the need to support vulnerable workers, including supporting precarious workers with improving their ability to access training opportunities. This will enable these workers to withstand future employment shocks. Therefore, given the short- and long-term implications for various groups of women in precarious work and the impacts of COVID-19, there is a need to provide targeted access to training opportunities.

In the context of this policy problem, relevant stakeholders include women in precarious employment, their employers, training providers and other non-profits advocating on behalf of precarious workers. My research specifically prioritizes examining women working in precarious employment who do not have access to training opportunities and considers vulnerable groups found within precarious employment including but not limited to immigrants, persons with disabilities, and racialized persons.

Chapter 5.   Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the two methodologies I use to analyze the policy problem and inform the development of policy options. The primary research method is quantitative analysis and the secondary method is a literature review. The primary research method analyzes gender differences in precarious work and access to training. The secondary research method confirms these findings using literature.

Regarding quantitative analysis as the primary method, through both descriptive and inferential quantitative analysis, the primary methodology identifies the extent of gender differences in precarious work, trends related to accessing training, and what independent variables impact access to job-related training for men and women.

For descriptive statistics, using Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, I present and analyze gender differences within four indicators of precarious work. The four indicators I use are low-income, non-standard work, involuntary part-time work, and union coverage rates in the private sector. These findings demonstrate differences in labour market outcomes for men and women. I also present descriptive statistics from the 2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to show trends regarding access to training. And, for regression analysis, I conduct multivariate logit regression analysis to identify what independent variables impact access to job-related training for men and women. My analysis focuses on examining access to training in the workplace and the dependent variable is whether respondents were able to access job-related training in the previous 12 months.

Through my research, I identified several independent variables that could potentially impact access to job-related training. I also examined the PIAAC dataset to determine if these variables existed and could be included in the models. Considering all the intersecting identities that women may associate with, I initially hypothesized that income, education, age, firm size, having children, working in the private sector, having a disability, being a native English or French speaker, racial identity, Indigenous identity, having relevant work experience, union membership, and immigrant status could all be potential variables that may impact the odds of accessing job-related training. Many of these variables were excluded from the models because they were not available in the

dataset or lacked statistical significance at the variable selection stage (eliminated through a stepwise regression).

The variables that are selected for the models are outlined in Table 1. For both the female and male models, I hypothesize whether the independent variables improve or worsen the odds of someone accessing training. The odds ratios (OR) in Table 1 represent the odds of an outcome occurring when a condition is present versus when that condition is absent. An odds ratio greater than 1 (OR > 1) demonstrates the increased odds of accessing training given a specific condition. Whereas an odds ratio less than 1 (OR < 1) demonstrates the decreased odds of accessing training given a specific condition[4]. Furthermore, I also hypothesize whether the female ORs will be greater or less than the male ORs for each predictor. This distinction helps clarify whether access to job-related training is better or worse for females compared to males[5].

Table 1.   Independent Variables and Hypotheses

Hypotheses			
Independent Variables	**Female Model**	**Male Model**	**Difference in ORs**
Sector of Work (public or non-profit sector vs. private sector)	H_{0F} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1F} : OR < 1	H_{0M} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1M} : OR < 1	Female OR < Male OR
Firm Size (<250 employees vs. >250 employees)	H_{0F} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1F} : OR > 1	H_{0M} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1M} : OR > 1	Female OR < Male OR
Education (high school or less vs. post-secondary)	H_{0F} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1F} : OR < 1	H_{0M} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1M} : OR < 1	Female OR < Male OR
Relevant Work Experience (none, less than 12 months, 12 to less than 36 months, more than 36 months)	H_{0F} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1F} : OR > 1	H_{0M} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1M} : OR > 1	Female OR < Male OR
Income (income percentile categories: <25%, 25 to <50%, 50 to <75%, >75%)	H_{0F} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1F} : OR < 1	H_{0M} : OR ≥ 1 H_{1M} : OR < 1	Female OR < Male OR
Income^2 (quadratic transformation of Income variable)	H_{0F} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1F} : OR > 1	H_{0M} : OR ≤ 1 H_{1M} : OR > 1	Female OR < Male OR

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[4] Odds ratios are used when the dependent variable is binary (only has two possible outcomes). For example, the dependent variable for this analysis is whether or not people accessed job-related training in the last year (yes or no). This analysis looks at whether a variety of independent variables (age, education, income etc.) can predict if a person accessed job-related training. The OR values describe the increased or decreased odds of accessing training across different independent variables. For example, if in the female model the firm size variable had an OR of 1.20, this would demonstrate that females working in larger firms are 1.20 times (or 20%) more likely to access training than females working in smaller firms.

[5] I hypothesize that ORs in the female model will always be less than ORs in the male model. This demonstrates that females are always less likely to access training regardless of the predictor being examined.

Regarding the secondary method, this study uses a literature review to supplement and confirm the findings from the quantitative analysis. The literature review also helps inform Chapters 7 and 8 where policy objectives, evaluative criteria, and policy recommendations are presented.

Chapter 6.   Quantitative Analysis

This chapter presents a summary of results and discusses the findings from the quantitative analysis of Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Data analysis was conducted using R and Excel.

6.1. The Gendered Nature of Precarious Work

In Chapter 2.2, I highlight gender differences within four indicators of precarious work using the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is collected monthly and provides estimates of labour market conditions throughout Canada. For annual LFS estimates, Statistics Canada makes seasonal adjustments to account for seasonal variations. As noted previously, the findings suggest there is a gendered component to precarious work. This section restates these findings and discusses their relevance and implications.

In Table 2, the indicators show that women make up a larger share of workers who are low-income, in non-standard jobs, involuntarily employed in part-time jobs; and within the private sector, the union coverage rates are lower for women. Not only are these gender differences present in 2018 LFS data, but for over 10 years, these gender differences between males and females have endured. Despite changes and advancements that have improved overall labour market outcomes for many Canadians, the indicators continue to demonstrate how women are disproportionately impacted by precarity.

Table 2.   Indicators of Precarity

Indicator	Males	Females
1. Share of Workers Earning Below $20.00	16.4%	21.3%
2. Share of Non-Standard Workers	6.4%	6.9%
3. Involuntary Part-Time Rate	8.1%	13.7%
4. Union Coverage Rate (Private-Sector)	18.6%	12.6%

Source: Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, 2018 (Tables 14-10-0318-01, 14-10-0072-01, 14-10-0029-01, and 14-10-0132-01).

Examining these gender differences in the context of training helps to explain the implications for women in precarious work. For example, due to relatively low levels of training investments by employers, the responsibility to participate in training falls onto workers (Munro, 2019). Yet, considering these indicators of precarity it is unlikely that low-income, non-standard, and part-time workers have the resources to participate in training. Similarly, non-unionized workers shoulder the same responsibility for training since they are the group least likely to be offered training (Barnetson, 2018). Accordingly, precarious workers face barriers accessing training opportunities and the gendered nature of precarious work reveals the disproportionate impacts on women.

6.2. Who Accesses Training

I present descriptive quantitative statistics using the 2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to identify trends related to accessing training. I also use inferential statistics to identify which independent variables influence access to training for men and women.

The 2012 PIAAC is an international survey conducted in over 40 countries; it assesses and analyzes adult skills in areas of literacy, numeracy and problem solving (OECD, 2013). Canada participated in the first wave of this survey and the total number of participants who participated in the 2012 PIAAC was 26,683. The data for this survey was collected between November 2011 and June 2012.

Data from the PIAAC sample demonstrates that participation in job-related training and activities is unequal between men and women. In the year before the survey, men were more likely to access on-the-job training (34.2%) from their employers compared to women (31.9%). A larger share of men (75.3%) participated in job-related activities compared to women (66.3%). Job-related activities include participating in job-related training, seminars or workshops, open or distance education, and private lessons. Of those who participated in job-related activities, a larger share of men (70.7%) reported that their employers provided a full grant to cover the costs of the activities. Whereas a smaller share of women (63.4%) reported that their employers provided a full grant to cover the costs of the activities. As a result, training participation rates are higher for men than women, and employers are more likely to cover the costs associated with job-related activities for men.

To understand reasons for unequal access to training, one could hypothesize that more men access job-related training because they are more likely to need training or are more interested in it. This may explain why employers are more likely to cover the costs of training for men compared to women. . However, despite that reasoning, data from the PIAAC demonstrates that a larger share of women (33.5%) wanted to participate in job-related training compared to men (27.7%) but did not access it in the previous year. This suggests that barriers are preventing women from accessing training, and these barriers either have no impact or have a less severe impact on men. To further understand these barriers and how they have differential impacts on women and men, I analyze two logit models to determine what independent variables impact access to training.

6.3. Analysis of Female and Male Logit Models

I conduct regression analysis using the 2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to determine what variables impact access to training for women. I use two models to help identify what independent variables impact the odds of being able to access job-related training[6]. In the female logit model, there were 7,119 respondents and in the male logit model, there were 6,459 respondents included in the analysis (see Appendix B for sample characteristics). For my analysis, I define statistical significance at the $p<0.05$ level and have ensured that both models pass diagnostic tests. The original R outputs for both the female and male multivariate logit models are in Appendix A and show the marginal effect on the link function (see Appendix C for raw R outputs). To determine the odds ratios for each independent variable, I convert the marginal effect on the link function to an odds ratio. This is done by taking the exponential value of beta for each independent variable

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[6] In both logit models, the dependent variable is access to job-related training in the year prior to the survey. For the dependent variable, y=0 indicates that a respondent has not accessed job-related training and y=1 indicates a respondent has accessed job-related training. Some independent variables initially identified from the dataset were excluded due to their lack of statistical significance or because they violated model diagnostic tests.

$\exp(\beta) = \frac{odds(y|x+1)}{odds(y|x)}$. The odds ratios from the multivariate logit regression analysis are

displayed in Table 3 along with p-values, standard errors, and robust errors[7].

Table 3.   Multivariate Logit Regression Results

Characteristics	Participated in On the Job Training in the Previous 12 Months (No vs. Yes)							
	Female Logit Model (n = 7,119)				Male Logit Model (n = 6,459)			
Independent Variables	Odds Ratios	p-value	Standard Errors	Robust Standard Errors	Odds Ratios	p-value	Standard Errors	Robust Standard Errors
Sector of Work (public/non-profit vs. private)	0.562	<0.001	0.053	0.053	0.700	<0.001	0.057	0.057
Firm Size (<250 employees vs. >250 employees)	1.346	<0.001	0.065	0.064	1.544	<0.001	0.065	0.065
Education (high school or less vs. post-secondary)	1.312	<0.001	0.058	0.058	1.352	<0.001	0.057	0.057
Relevant Work Experience (none, less than 12 months, 12 to less than 36 months, more than 36 months)	0.997	0.913	0.024	0.024	1.059	0.017	0.024	0.024
Income (income percentile categories: <25%, 25 to <50%, 50 to <75%, >75%)	0.876	0.407	0.159	0.158	0.722	0.107	0.202	0.198
Income² (quadratic transformation of Income variable)	1.095	0.001	0.029	0.029	1.115	0.002	0.035	0.034

[7] p-values highlight the level of statistical significance for each independent variable. A p-value of <0.05 is considered statistically significant for this analysis. Standard errors and robust standard errors estimate the accuracy of predictions. Robust standard errors are reported for logit models in the case that the model's errors are heteroscedastic (they are normally distributed).

In the female model, a total of four variables were found to have a statistically significant effect on accessing on the job training in the year prior to the survey. Sector of work, firm size, education, and a squared income variable was statistically significant and had effects that were consistent with my hypotheses in Table 1. This includes the female odds ratios being smaller than the male odds ratios across variables. In the female model, relevant work experience was hypothesized to improve the odds of accessing training, but it was not statistically significant.

In the male model, a total of six variables were found to have a statistically significant effect on accessing on-the-job training in the year prior to the survey. Sector of work, firm size, education, relevant work experience, and a squared income variable was statistically significant and had effects that were consistent with my hypotheses. As predicted, the odds ratios in the male model were larger than the odds ratios for these variables in the female model.

The outputs show that working in the private sector reduces the odds of accessing training when compared to the public and non-profit sectors. However, for females (OR = 0.562) the odds of accessing training are less than for males (OR = 0.700). This suggests that in the private sector, females may face additional barriers to accessing training.

Working in a larger firm with over 250 employees improves the odds of accessing training for both females and males. For females (OR = 1.346) the odds of accessing training are less than the odds for males (OR = 1.544). This also suggests that within larger firms, females may face barriers to accessing training compared to males.

With respect to education, having a post-secondary level of education improves the odds of accessing training for both females and males. Yet, for females (OR = 1.312) the odds of accessing training are less than for males (OR = 1.352). As a result, the odds of accessing training improve slightly more for males compared to females. Again, this points to a potential barrier that educated women may face when accessing training.

Relevant work experience was statistically significant in the male model but not in the female model. The odds of accessing training increases for males (OR = 1.059) as they gain more work experience. This highlights a challenge where males with relevant

work experience are more likely to access training than females who have relevant work experience.

Finally, the income variable alone was not significant; however, a quadratic transformation demonstrates that the odds of accessing training improves after a certain income level. This was shown in both the female and male models although, the relationship between the quadratic income variable and access to training was slightly less for females (OR = 1.095) than it was for males (OR = 1.115). While the odds ratios are very similar, females in higher-income percentiles are slightly less likely to access training when compared to males.

In conclusion, the logit models generally show that the odds of access training are unequal between females and males. Even when the odds of accessing training are increased, as they were for firm size, education and income, the magnitude of the increase is less for females than for males. These findings also highlight additional challenges that females face when accessing job-related training. Due to data constraints, this analysis was unable to include variables such as racial identity, Indigenous identity, sector of work, and union membership. Model diagnostics and significance testing also eliminated variables that I believed to be important predictors; this includes immigration status, hours worked, age, language spoken, and being a parent. Further research should look at more recent data with additional explanatory variables to better understand barriers that women face when accessing training.

6.4. Summary of Analysis

Findings

Women are disproportionately represented in low-income, non-standard, involuntarily part-time work, and have lower union coverage rates than men within the private sector. This demonstrates how gender differences are present within four indicators of precarious work and are also expected to exist with respect to accessing training.

Other findings demonstrate that access to on-the-job training is unequal between men and women; a larger share of men (34.2%) reported accessing training from their employers compared to women (31.9%). Additionally, a larger share of men reported

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that their employers provided a grant to cover the full costs of job-related activities (70.7%). Comparatively, a smaller share of women (63.4%) reported that their employers provided them with a full grant. These findings highlight gender differences in training and gender biases regarding an employer's willingness to cover costs associated with job-related activities. The regression analysis identified sector of work, firm size, education, and a squared income variable as statistically significant predictors in the female model. Whereas relevant work experience was not statistically significant in the female model.

Together, these findings indicate that there is a gendered component to precarious work, access to training is unequal between men and women and variables such as sector of work, firm size, education, and income are needed to explain these differences.

GBA+ Analysis

GBA+ is used by the federal government as an analytical process to assess how policies impact women, men, and gender diverse people differently (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021). The intention of using GBA+ is to assess systemic inequalities that may exist with respect to existing and proposed policies and programs. Since this study seeks to provide the federal government with policy recommendations to support women in precarious work, a GBA+ analysis is required.

Using the GBA+ process to analyze the quantitative research findings demonstrates that there are significant research gaps. As outlined previously (see Research Methodology Chapter 5) this study intended to analyze differences in access to training for differently situated women. However, the dataset that was accessible (PIAAC) did not include sufficient variables such as racial identity, Indigenous identity, and immigrant status. As a result, the quantitative analysis only explains differences in access to training for men and women but not for different groups of women. Using a different dataset such as the 2018 Longitudinal and International Study of Adults (LISA) could potentially result in a more robust analysis that may better explain access to training for different groups of women. Therefore, using the GBA+ process, demonstrates that the quantitative research findings are not robust and sufficient to meet the GBA+ requirements. Further analysis is required to understand how access to

training varies for different groups of women. Future research should consider language, ethnicity/race, religion, age, disability, geography, culture, sexual orientation, and education as variables that would impact a women's ability to access training. Lastly, the GBA+ process highlights the need for accessible and robust data that accounts for identifying factors (beyond just gender).

Limitations

There are some notable limitations to highlight, including the quantitative analysis focusing on access to job-related training. Though this study's focus is on women in precarious work and essential skills training, this limitation is acceptable because an essential skills training variable was not present in the dataset. Further, understanding access to job-related training is important because it is likely to be the most accessible form of training for women in precarious work given their limited resources. As noted, many variables were excluded from the quantitative analysis because they did not exist in the data. Future research should include additional explanatory variables to better understand what barriers exist for different groups of females and males when accessing training. To better explain access to training, a more robust analysis with a different dataset should analyze other demographic and social variables, including but not limited to immigrant status, Indigenous identity, sector of work, racial identity.

A final limitation is that the regression analysis only analyzes differences in training access for men and women rather than for men and women in precarious work. This limitation could be addressed in the future if a standardized definition for precarious work is developed. While not ideal, the regression analysis still provides important insights about how access to training differs between males and females, and the descriptive statistics help explain broad gender differences regarding precarious work.

Chapter 7.   Literature Review

Although there is limited research available to understand access to training for women in precarious work, there is sufficient literature on training and skills development in Canada. Additionally, some literature is available on the gendered nature of training in Canada. The findings from Chapter 6 are analyzed and confirmed in this chapter.

7.1. Firm Size and Sector of Work

Canadian literature on firm size and sector of work seems to align with the findings of the regression analysis. Larger firms are significantly more likely to provide training to their employees than smaller firms (Cooke et al., 2009). The literature cites two reasons for this. First, limited resources restrict small- and medium-sized firms from investing in training; second, small- and medium-sized firms are also subject to high employee turnover rates, making it impractical for employers to invest in training (Department of Finance, 2017). As a result, workers in small and medium-sized firms are more likely to fund their own training compared to workers in larger firms (OECD, 2020). Another study looks at differences in workplace training between large and small-sized firms and finds 90% of large firms (with over 500 employees) offer workplace training. Whereas less than 50% of small firms (with less than 20 employees) offer training (Munro, 2019).

Accordingly, the literature on firm size supports the findings of the regression analysis, since larger firms are a statistically significant predictor of access to training. The literature does not provide analysis regarding the gendered impacts of firm size on training, so further research is required. The literature and the regression analysis suggest the need to support women working in small and medium-sized firms as they are least likely to access training opportunities. This signals the need to address employer decisions in small and medium-sized firms as it relates to training decisions.

It is generally understood that both public and private sector employers spend relatively little on training in Canada. Bi-annual survey work conducted by the Conference Board of Canada reveals that spending on employee training and development activities has decreased for nearly two decades and only begun to

increase in 2014 (Munro, 2019). While research shows that investments are relatively low across sectors, there is little researched focused on differences between sectors.

One Canadian study does look at this difference and even finds that gender differences exist between the private sector and the public and non-profit sectors. For men, the private sector is associated with training premiums whereas, for women, it is associated with training penalties (Dostie and Javdani, 2020). The study suggests that the differences in access to training have to do with women's overrepresentation in the non-profit sector or discriminatory practices of employers (Dostie and Javdani, 2020). This study supports the results of the regression analysis because the odds ratio in the male model (OR = 0.700) is greater than the odds ratio in the female model (OR = 0.562). In other words, for females, the private sector is associated with a larger decrease in the odds of accessing training. As a result, females are less likely to access training in the private sector compared to males. These findings suggest that in the private sector, both women and men face challenges accessing training but the barriers to accessing training are larger for women.

7.2. Income and Education

Much of the literature finds that low income is a significant barrier to accessing training. Research finds that high-income workers are more than 50% likely to access self-funded training than low-income workers (Lewchuk et al., 2015). A large majority of workers cite insufficient time and costs as a barrier to accessing training (Department of Finance Canada, 2017). One study even noted that sometimes training cannot be accessed even when it is paid for, due to the costs associated with foregone income and additional expenses like childcare (Munro, 2019). Considering broader employment trends where women are more likely to be low income, it is clear that women face challenges accessing training.

For education, research finds workers with low levels of education are less likely to access training (Cooke et al., 2009; OECD, 2013; Law Commission of Ontario, 2012; Munro, 2019). This is due to businesses prioritizing employees who provide the greatest return on their training investment (Cooke et al., 2009; Munro, 2019). As a result, training is given to highly educated workers who are prioritized by employers compared to workers with lower levels of education. Other research notes the interconnected nature

of income and education where those with less education are likely to work in low-wage jobs where they are less likely to receive training (Cooke et al., 2009).

The findings from the regression analysis are mostly supported by the literature and show that higher levels of education and income are associated with increased access to training. In the context of gender differences, the findings also demonstrate how the odds of accessing training are reduced for women. This is because women are overly represented in precarious jobs which are characterized by low levels of income and educational attainment. This highlights the need to address employer's training decisions for women with low-incomes and low levels of education.

The literature and regression analysis demonstrates that several variables impact women's access to training. These variables include women working in the private sector, working at firms with less than 250 employees, having no post-secondary education, and earning a low income. While the lack of training opportunities in the private sector and in small and medium-sized firms must be addressed. A lack of income and education are the most significant barriers that women face in order to access training. This is due to the resources and foundational skills required to not only participate in training but also to be aware of training opportunities and to be considered for them.

Chapter 8.   Criteria, Measures, and Policy Options

This chapter outlines the criteria, measures, and policy options that I use for this study. Five overarching criteria are used to evaluate three policy options and their details are presented below.

8.1. Criteria and Measures

The criteria used to analyze the policy options include effectiveness, equity, administrative ease, stakeholder acceptance, and cost. Table 4 presents a summary of the criteria and measures I use to conduct the policy analysis. Each criterion is evaluated using three measures and is scored between 1 and 3. A score of 3 suggests positive outcomes for that criterion, a score of 2 suggests moderate outcomes and a score of 1 suggests negative or minimal outcomes. Broader literature and the findings from the quantitative analysis are used to evaluate the policy options and determine the recommendation.

Table 4.   Criteria and Measures

Criteria	Definition	Measure	Coding
Effectiveness			
Access to Training	Extent to which the policy improves access to training for women in precarious work	Significantly increases access to training	High (3)
		Moderately increases access to training	Medium (2)
		Minimally increases access to training	Low (1)
Enables Labour Market Resilience	Extent to which the policy enables women in precarious work to withstand future employment challenges	Significantly increases resilience	High (3)
		Moderately increases resilience	Medium (2)
		Minimally increases resilience	Low (1)
Equity			
Improves Access for All Women	Extent to which the policy improves access to training for different groups of women in precarious work	Improves access for many groups of women in precarious work	High (3)
		Improves access for some groups of women in precarious work	Medium (2)
		Improves access for a few groups of women in precarious work	Low (1)
Administrative Ease			
Ease of Implementation	Ease of implementation based on changes/development of policies/programs and level coordination with stakeholders	Easy to implement (minimal changes/development and little coordination required)	High (3)
		Manageable to implement (some changes/development and some coordination required)	Medium (2)
		Challenging to implement (significant changes/development and lots of coordination required)	Low (1)
Stakeholder Acceptance			
Overall Stakeholder Support	Extent to which employers, workers, training providers, non-profits support the policy	Supports	High (3)
		Divided support or neutral	Medium (2)
		Not supportive	Low (1)
Cost			
Cost to Government	Estimated cost to the government in Canadian dollars per year (relative to other options)	Minimal costs (relative to other options)	High (3)
		Moderate costs (relative to other options)	Medium (2)
		Significant costs (relative to other options)	Low (1)

8.1.1. Effectiveness

The main objective of this study is to improve access to training for women in precarious work who face a high risk of job transformation. Therefore, effectiveness is used as the key criterion to determine whether or not an option should be recommended. To analyze the options in terms of effectiveness, there are two criteria used. First, to determine if a policy option is effective, it must improve access to training for women in precarious work. If a policy option significantly increases access to training it receives a high ranking. A policy option that somewhat increases access to training receives a medium ranking, and an option that minimally increases access to training receives a low ranking. Second, because women in precarious work face job transformation risks (see Chapters 3.3 and 4), they need to be able to withstand future labour market interruptions and challenges. Therefore, this study evaluates the policy options in the context of enabling labour market resilience for women in precarious work. If a policy option significantly increases the resilience of women in precarious work to withstand employment challenges, the option is rated high. If a policy option moderately increases their resilience it is rated medium and if a policy option minimally increases their resilience it is rated low.

8.1.2. Equity

To ensure that all types of women in precarious work have access to training opportunities, equity is included as a criterion for the analysis. This means the options analyzed must improve access to training for a variety of women in precarious work. In addition, this criterion should consider the intersection of gender with other identifying factors like age, geographical location, racial identity, abilities among other categories. For example, an option must improve access to training for not only women in precarious work who live in urban centres, but also for women in precarious work who live in rural or remote communities. If an option improves access for many groups of women in precarious work, it is rated high. If an option improves access for some groups of women in precarious work, it is rated medium; and if an option improves access for a few groups of women in precarious work, it is rated low.

8.1.3. Administrative Ease

Another important consideration for evaluating the policy options is the ease of implementation. There are two major components of administrative ease that warrant consideration. First, the development of new policies and programs or the changes to existing policies and programs is a crucial consideration. Both need to be considered in terms of the number of changes needed and the magnitude of changes required. Evaluating policy options with these criteria in mind will highlight important implementation challenges that may exist for each policy option. Second, the level of coordination between stakeholders also needs to be considered. Various training initiatives will impact and rely on stakeholders (employers, workers, training providers) for the policy option to be properly implemented. Therefore, the level of coordination between stakeholders needs to be understood and evaluated for each policy option. If a policy option requires minimal changes to policies and programs and little coordination with stakeholders, then it is rated high. If a policy option requires some changes to policies and programs and some coordination with stakeholders, then it is rated medium. If an option requires significant changes to policies and programs and a lot of coordination with stakeholders, then it is rated low.

8.1.4. Stakeholder Acceptance

The degree to which employers, workers, training providers and non-profits will support a policy option is considered in the analysis. Stakeholder acceptance is measured by the degree of expected support from employers, workers, training providers, and non-profits. In general, if stakeholders are supportive of the policy option, it is rated high. An option is rated medium if stakeholders are divided or have neutral feelings about the option, and an option is rated low if there is little or no support for the option.

8.1.5. Cost

To determine the impact of the policy options on the federal government's budget, cost is included as a criterion for the policy analysis. The estimated cost of each option is analyzed in relative terms (compared to the other options) and considers administrative and implementation costs for the policy options. Where possible, costs

are given as a numeric value in Canadian dollars per year. If a policy option costs a minimal amount relative to other options it is rated high, if an option has moderate costs relative to other options it is rated medium and if an option has significant costs relative to other options it is rated low.

8.2. Policy Options

This study analyzes three policy options to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work. The details of the three options are provided below.

8.2.1. Option 1: Enhancing the Canada Training Benefit

The first option is to enhance the Canada Training Benefit (CTB) by creating a top-up for the Canada Training Credit (CTC) that targets a subset of vulnerable workers and by implementing and adjusting the EI Training Support Benefit.

The first part of this option will enhance the Canada Training Credit by creating a $100 top-up for those earning below a certain income threshold each year. This option would also change rules regarding the maximum annual credit that can be claimed for eligible training expenses. Currently, individuals can only claim the lesser of 50% of eligible tuition fees paid or the Canada training credit limit for the year. This option would allow individuals to claim 100% of eligible tuition fees or their annual training credit limit for the year (see Appendix D for threshold comparisons). The Canada Training Credit Top-Up would provide low-income workers with an additional $100 credit per year to access training opportunities.

The second part of enhancing the Canada Training Benefit includes proceeding with implementing the EI Training Support Benefit and adjusting eligibility criteria. To be eligible for the benefit under the EI program, workers would need to qualify for the benefit with 420 hours of insurable employment. The benefit would offer four weeks of income support (paid at 55% of average weekly insurable earnings up to a maximum). This option would also include a supplemental top-up for low-income workers. This would be modelled off the EI Family Supplement, but the low-income threshold would be increased to the current market basket measure threshold and indexed with the rate of

inflation. Individuals would not be eligible for benefits over the weekly maximum of $595. This option would provide workers with some income support while they take time off to access training.

Together these measures improve precarious workers' abilities to access training opportunities. The Canada Training Credit will enable workers to finance training and the EI Training Support Benefit provides financial support while workers take time off to train.

8.2.2. Option 2: Funding Essential Skills Proposals

The second option increases funding available through the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) to fund proposals that specifically support essential skills training for women in precarious work.

The OLES currently provides funding to organizations that address literacy and essential skills gaps in priority areas. Funding is currently allocated through the Consolidated Revenue Fund - Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills (ALLESP) and Employment Insurance (EI) Part II - National Essential Skills Initiative (NESI) (ESDC, 2021). Since precarious workers face challenges qualifying for EI, the additional funding for this option would be provided through the Consolidated Revenue Fund rather than EI Part II.

In 2019, the budget used by the OLES under the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP) was approximately $25 million (Public Services and Procurement Canada, 2020). This option should increase the total 2019 funding amount by 50% (approximately $12.5 million) over the next two fiscal years. Beyond the next two fiscal years, the Government can undertake a cost-benefit analysis to assess the effectiveness of the additional funding. If beneficial, the Government can scale up the funding allocated to essential skills training for various groups of women in precarious work. To ensure that organizations meet their specified targets, the additional OLES funding will be made available as contribution agreements rather than grants.

As part of this option, the funding will be available through solicited or unsolicited submissions and an Open Call for Proposals and Concepts will be established. Using existing administrative capabilities, the OLES can make transformative investments in

training initiatives to improve access for women in precarious work. To effectively do this, the OLES should develop a framework to assess submissions; this will ensure that funded projects target those working in the private sector and at smaller firms as well as vulnerable groups working in precarious work such as racialized women, immigrant women, or women with disabilities. As a result, this option is flexible and can improve access to essential skills training for various groups of women working in precarious employment. For example, the OLES has already provided funding to specifically target and support immigrant women working in Calgary's service industry and marginalized and socially excluded women in BC (OLES, 2017a; OLES, 2017b). Additional funding allocated to the OLES would support funding for proposals like these and would ensure access to training is improved for women in precarious work.

8.2.3. Option 3: Essential Skills Hub

This option is to develop an Essential Skills Hub to centralize essential skills training across Canada. The development of this hub would be funded by the Government of Canada and would be developed and designed in consultation with the provinces and territories, training providers, post-secondary institutions, employers, and workers. The hub could be developed in collaboration with the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Literacy and Essential Skills Network and/or through the Government of Canada Federal Network on Essential Skills. As part of this option, the Government would also subsidize essential skills training to provide training opportunities to Canadians requiring essential skills training.

The first goal is to establish a centralized place to access all essential skills training – the Essential Skills Hub. This may be in the form of a website and mobile app to consolidate all essential skills training programs that are provided with both online and in-person. The hub will be a central point of access and will include courses, webinars, online modules, and other learning activities. These activities would be available through the hub and delivered by various training providers and non-profits that already have significant expertise and experience. Examples of participating organizations may include the YWCA, ABC Life Literacy Canada, and the Nunavut Literacy Council among many others (see Appendix E for a list of potential stakeholders). The hub would leverage existing public and private training initiatives that exist across the country. To reduce barriers to accessing training, including for those in the private sector and smaller

firms, the hub would provide workers with one point of entry to access essential skills training.

The second goal of the hub is to provide appropriate essential skills training to a variety of workers across Canada. The hub would list numerous training providers in a directory and would categorize and sort training opportunities by various characteristics (skill development area, region of service, target population, cost). The list would include training providers who have specialized expertise and experience offering tailored training opportunities. For example, individuals (or their employers) could browse the hub to find training opportunities targeting workers with minimal English or French skills or workers with limited digital skills. Instead of these workers (or their employers) having to pay out of pocket to access training, the Government of Canada would subsidize (full and or partial) costs associated with essential skills training and enrollment to participate would be open to specific individuals in target populations. Further, accessibility considerations will need to be incorporated in the design and development of the hub. This will ensure the hub is accessible to various groups of precarious workers across Canada.

Chapter 9.   Evaluation of Policy Options

In this section, the policy options are evaluated using the criteria and measures outlined in Table 4. The evaluation of the options is based on broader literature and the findings of the quantitative analysis. The results of the evaluation are presented in Table 5 at the end of the chapter.

9.1. Analysis Policy 1: Enhancing the Canada Training Benefit

Effectiveness

Enhancing the Canada Training Credit by providing a $100 annual top-up to low-income earners and allowing 100% of eligible training expenses to be covered by the credit may marginally improve access to training for women in precarious work. First, the credit can only be accessed by income tax filers. Second, since the credit only provides $250 annually, workers would need to wait several years to "save" credits in their notional accounts to pay for training. However, when enough credits are saved, workers could apply the credit to 100% of training expenses; this may marginally improve access to training over the course of several years. As such, the Enhanced Canada Training Credit does little to improve access to training for precarious workers because they face significant financial barriers and this enhancement does not address these barriers. In particular, the costs of essential needs (housing, childcare, food) will take precedence over accessing training. Because the Enhanced Canada Training Credit is only eligible to be used towards tuition, and financial barriers may be significant for women in precarious work, the credit may remain unused by women in precarious work. Therefore, this option will do little to improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work.

The second component of this option is to implement the EI Training Support Benefit to provide income support to workers if they take time off to train. This option would establish a lowered threshold (420 hours) to access the benefit and would also provide a top-up to low-income workers (aligned with the market basket measure). The EI Training Support Benefit would provide income support for a maximum of 4 weeks. However, even with the reduced hours threshold, women face challenges qualifying for

Employment Insurance (EI) due to them being disproportionately represented part-time work. These workers would also require support from their employers to take time off to train. Given the characteristics associated with employers of precarious workers, it is unlikely that many employers would be supportive. However, women in precarious work who can access the EI Training Support Benefit will be more likely to access training as they will have access to income support while they are not working. Therefore, this component of option 1 also demonstrates that there will be minimal improvement in accessing training due to the eligibility challenges women in precarious work face.

In general, the two components of this option do little to improve access to training for women in precarious work. As such, this option would also minimally improve resilience to withstand future employment challenges for women in precarious work. This is because minimal access to training will not provide women in precarious work with the skills, abilities and competencies needed to withstand future employment challenges. For these reasons, the option is rated low in both categories of effectiveness.

Equity

Option 1 is most likely to benefit women in precarious work who speak English or French and who have an average level of education (or essential skills). Native English or French speakers will be able to navigate the very complex federal government program that is EI. It is also expected that immigrants and other racialized groups may be unaware of federal programs (especially new initiatives) and therefore will not apply. As a result, this option is likely to improve access to training for some groups of women in precarious work and is therefore rated medium.

Administrative Ease

With respect to implementing changes to Canada Training Credit, this would be relatively easy to do since it is already an established program through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Furthermore, it would be easy for the CRA to use income tax data to identify who qualifies for the $100 annual top-up. The EI Training Support Benefit is slightly more challenging to implement but would not be difficult since it would be a new benefit under the Employment Insurance (EI) program which already has an existing infrastructure for program administration. Since this option would build on

existing programs and would require little coordination with stakeholders, this option can be easily implemented and is rated high.

Stakeholder Acceptance

Stakeholder views are likely to be mixed. Employers would be supportive of the Government covering the costs associated with training. However, they may also object to having their employees take off substantial periods of work to access training. This objection may be especially true for employers of precarious workers since they barely provide acceptable working conditions and arrangements. Workers, non-profits and training providers will be supportive of this option as it increases the likelihood of accessing training. However, it is expected that these groups will be highly critical of the small credit amount; and these groups are expected to express disapproval regarding eligibility for the EI Training Support Benefit as many workers in precarious employment will not qualify. Although stakeholders would generally be supportive of this option, there are major components that they would take issue with. As a result, stakeholder support would be divided, and this option is rated medium.

Cost

The cost to the government for Enhancing the Canada Training Benefit will be substantial. In Budget 2019, when the first iteration of the Canada Training Benefit was introduced, it was estimated to cost $1.7 billion over five years and $586.5 million per year ongoing (Department of Finance, 2019b). Although the Canada Training Credit component has already been implemented, the proposed changes for this option will still cost a significant amount. Budget 2019 allocated approximately $700 million for the Canada Training Credit and estimated that just over $1 billion was needed to fund the EI Training Support Benefit (Department of Finance, 2019b). Given the reduced hours threshold and the low-income top-up proposed as part of this option, the cost for the EI Training Support Benefit alone will be well over $1 billion. Therefore, this option is rated low as the costs for this option will be over $1 billion over the first five years.

9.2. Analysis Policy 2: Funding Essential Skills Proposals

Effectiveness

Additional funding is only available to organizations specifically providing essential skills training to women in precarious work. Therefore, increasing access to training opportunities for women in precarious work. However, because funding is limited (to a 50% increase over the next two years), there will be a limited number of proposals that receive funding. This option improves access to training for a moderate number of women in precarious work however, it will not make significant increases due to funding limitations.

Since this option supports a moderate number of women in precarious work with accessing training opportunities, this would also improve their resilience to withstand future employment challenges. Accordingly, this option is rated medium since accessing training will improve essential skills required to withstand future labour market challenges for a moderate number of women.

Equity

Since the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) has the ability to fund submissions that specifically target vulnerable groups working in precarious work, this option has the potential to benefit many groups of women. However, because the funding is limited only a certain number of submissions can be chosen. As a result, some groups of women in precarious work may receive increased opportunities to access training but not all women will. While this option does have the flexibility to address specific groups of women in precarious work, the limited funding cannot improve access to training for all. For this reason, option 2 is rated medium for equity.

Administrative Ease

This option would utilize the existing capabilities of the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) and would therefore be easy to implement. Since this option funds projects that specifically target vulnerable groups, the OLES should develop a new framework to assess the proposals. The framework needs to ensure that many groups of

women in precarious work benefit from the projects that get funded. For example, does the project improve access to training for racialized and or immigrant women? Or for other vulnerable groups of women in precarious work? Since the OLES is responsible for vetting submissions the only coordination required will take place with organizations who are applying for funding. For these reasons, this option is rated high because it requires minimal changes and little coordination with stakeholders.

Stakeholder Acceptance

Regarding option 2, stakeholders are likely to be supportive of funding targeted essential skills proposals. The initiatives receiving funding are likely to take place outside of the workplace and would not directly impact employers. Non-profits and training providers will be most supportive of this option as it provides additional opportunities for them to access funding. Generally, all stakeholders are expected to be supportive of this option, and therefore this option is rated high.

Cost

Option 2 will cost the least compared to the other options given the budget that is currently allocated to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES). A 50% increase to funding will mean this option would cost approximately $12.5 million over the next two years. This cost is substantially less compared to the other options given the size of the budget that the OLES started with. However, because this option has a relatively small cost associated with it, the option is rated high.

9.3. Analysis Policy 3: Essential Skills Hub

Effectiveness

Establishing an Essential Skills Hub will significantly improve access to training opportunities for women in precarious work (as well as many other workers). The reasoning for this is two-fold. First, workers will be more likely to access essential skills training if there is a central place where they can find a variety of training opportunities. Second, certain training initiatives will be subsidized and made available to workers through the hub, therefore, significantly increasing access to training. Since it is not

feasible to subsidize all essential skills training within the hub, some workers may still face barriers to accessing training. Further, language barriers may also prevent women in precarious work from knowing about the hub and properly accessing it. This barrier should be mitigated through proper design and communication decisions that account for diverse populations using the hub. This challenge may also be mitigated by having physical hub locations to support specific communities with essential skills training. Despite these issues, a consolidated place to access essential skills training will significantly improve access to training for many women in precarious work. This option is therefore rated high.

This option out of the three has the greatest potential to make significant impacts on accessing training opportunities since it effectively supports a wide variety of precarious workers. This option facilitates a culture of training by establishing a hub where precarious workers can easily access essential skills training. Further, once the hub is established it will continue to support many workers unlike options 1 and 2 which are tied to limited funding. The hub will enable many women in precarious work to develop essential skills and therefore, withstand future labour market interruptions and challenges. For these reasons, the Essential Skills Hub is rated high for enabling labour market resilience.

Equity

Subsidized training within the Essential Skills Hub will provide tailored training opportunities for many types of women in precarious work. This includes allowing workers to access training that is culturally appropriate for their specific needs. During the design and development of the hub, the Government along with stakeholders will identify groups of women in precarious work who require training and determine what training is most appropriate. This ensures targeted training is available for racialized groups, persons with disabilities, as well as rural and remote communities among other priority areas. Because this option is flexible and can be tailored to the needs of many women in precarious work, this option is rated high.

Administrative Ease

This option would require significant coordination and buy-in from a variety of stakeholders. It would require coordination among many stakeholders such as provincial, territorial governments, post-secondary institutions, private for-profit training providers, employers, and workers (see Appendix E for a list of potential stakeholders). The level and magnitude of required coordination will expand the timelines to implement the hub. Consequently, because of the large scope and the complex logistics of coordinating with many stakeholders, this option will be challenging to implement and is rated low.

Stakeholder Acceptance

In general, it is expected that stakeholders will be supportive. This option not only supports many women in precarious work, but it provides exposure and many opportunities for non-profits and training providers to reach workers who need training opportunities. Employers are likely to support this option since it provides training to a large group of workers. Employees are likely to support this option as it would make accessing training more convenient and would allow them to make informed choices about training opportunities. Since subsidized training opportunities will not necessarily be available to every worker who wants to participate, there may be some disapproval. Generally, all stakeholders are likely to be supportive of this option since it significantly improves access to training, and for these reasons, this option is rated high.

Cost

Option 3 is an entirely new option, and therefore the costs of developing an Essential Skills Hub cannot be accurately estimated. However, a similar entity, the Future Skills Centre, recently allocated $32 million to support 64 innovation projects. The 64 projects would help reskill and upskill Canadian workers who were displaced by the pandemic (Future Skills Centre, 2021). Despite not knowing the exact costs of developing a hub, based on the funding provided through the Future Skills Centre, the costs to develop an Essential Skills Hub are likely to be moderate relative to the other options. This is due to there being administrative costs but also the additional costs of subsidizing training within the hub. In terms of administrative costs, the development and

design of the Essential Skills Hub will likely take over 18 months due to the number of stakeholders involved; this will result in moderate administrative costs. Since this option also requires the Government to subsidize the cost of certain essential skills training programs there will also be ongoing costs associated with this option. The costs associated with subsidizing training opportunities within the hub will depend on the quantity and quality of training subsidized. However, the costs will not be less than $1 billion (Option 1) and are likely to be more than $12.5 million (Option 2). Therefore, this option is rated medium due to its moderate costs.

9.4. Evaluation Summary

A summary of the ranking of each option is outlined in Table 5 below. Options 2 and 3 were tied and both received the highest overall score and option 1 received the lowest score.

Table 5. **Summary of Policy Analysis**

	Option 1: Enhancing the Canada Training Benefit	Option 2: Funding Essential Skills Proposals	Option 3: Essential Skills Hub
Effectiveness			
Access to Training	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Enables Labour Market Resilience	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Equity			
Improves Access for All Women	Medium (2)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Administrative Ease			
Ease of Implementation	High (3)	High (3)	Low (1)
Stakeholder Acceptance			
Overall Stakeholder Support	Medium (2)	High (3)	High (3)
Cost			
Cost to Government	Low (1)	High (3)	Medium (2)
TOTAL	**10**	**15**	**15**

Chapter 10.   Recommendations

Given the evaluation results outlined in Chapter 9.4, this study recommends pursuing two options.

First, in the short term, the Government of Canada should Fund Essential Skills Proposals. Since women in precarious work face barriers accessing essential skills training, additional funding allocated to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) will provide targeted training to women in precarious work. It is recommended that this option be pursued first given the straightforward implementation requirements. Further, the design of this option supports a variety of women in precarious work since the OLES can vet proposals that support vulnerable women in precarious work. When compared to developing an Essential Skills Hub with many stakeholders, it is clear this option can be pursued immediately. This option will immediately provide women in precarious work with access to training opportunities until the Essential Skills Hub is implemented where many more women will have access to training. For these reasons, Funding Essential Skills Proposals is the recommended action for the Government to pursue in the short term.

Second, in the longer term, the Government should pursue developing and designing an Essential Skills Hub. The hub would provide significantly more women in precarious work with access to essential skills training opportunities. Because this option provides continuous opportunities to access training, this option enables many women in precarious work to develop skills and therefore withstand labour market disruptions. The Essential Skills Hub would have a significant impact on accessing training and enabling resilience for women in precarious work. However, due to the complex implementation requirements, the Essential Skills Hub is the recommended action for the Government to pursue in the longer term.

Considering the typical characteristics of precarious work, including low pay, job insecurity and unsafe working conditions, it is clear that incentivizing employers to improve access to training is unlikely. As a result, the federal government must take responsibility to improve access to training for women in precarious work. The recommended pathways to achieve this are Funding Essential Skills Proposals and developing an Essential Skills Hub.

To facilitate implementation, the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills should develop an inclusive framework to assess training proposals. The goal of the framework is to ensure that all types of women in precarious work access the essential skills training projects they are funding. The framework can be developed in consultation with stakeholders and should consider all potential barriers that women in precarious work may face. The Government should also undertake extensive consultation to adequately design the Essential Skills Hub; this is critical for ensuring that all types of women in precarious employment can access the training. The Government should seek to understand how different women in precarious work perceive, understand, and would use the supports. Moreover, data collection should be integrated as a major design component for both options as it will support future evaluation and analysis of these initiatives. Data collection will be key for evaluating the effectiveness of the options as well as conducting future analysis since minimal data is currently collected on training.

Chapter 11. Conclusion

Immense challenges are facing women in precarious work and the negative implications associated with precarity include receiving low pay, facing job insecurity, experiencing income volatility, and working in unsafe conditions. However, there is limited research and analysis on the gendered nature of precarious work. To address this gap, this study seeks to contribute to this body of research by analyzing one dimension of precarious work that women are subject to. Specifically, this study looks at women's lack of access to training opportunities as an area of major concern. The findings of this study demonstrate that women are disproportionately represented in precarious employment and women are less likely to access training opportunities. Further analysis demonstrates there are gender differences in the odds of accessing training when controlling for characteristics such as the sector of work, firm size, education level and income. Ultimately, these differences show how women are less likely to access training opportunities compared to men. Considering these findings, women and especially women in precarious work need additional support to access training. A lack of training impedes their abilities to obtain higher quality jobs and to improve both their short and long-term employment outcomes.

This study has demonstrated the need for the Government of Canada to take significant action to address this issue. The recommendations from this study include Funding Essential Skills Proposals through the Office of Literacy and Essential skills and developing an Essential Skills Hub with subsidized training opportunities. To effectively implement these recommendations, the Government should play a coordination and funding role to connect women in precarious work with training providers who already have expertise in providing tailored training opportunities. Additionally, the Government must consult with workers to ensure the hub is accessible and tailored appropriately to their needs.

Analyzing the research findings in the context of GBA+ highlights the need for further research to better understand the characteristics of who accesses training and who does not. Specifically, access to more robust data would help determine how differently situated women access training opportunities differently. Future research should look at more recent data that incorporates variables such as racial identity,

Indigenous identity, union status, and immigrant status. Women who identify with these and other categories are often characterized as those who are most likely to work in precarious jobs yet, data pertaining to these categories are limited and not easily accessible. As a result, our understanding and ability to analyze access to training for various groups of women is incomplete. For the Government to appropriately address this issue, additional research must be conducted so the analysis is more aligned with GBA+ principles. Conducting additional research and analysis will ensure that all groups of women in precarious work benefit from the policies and programs that aim to improve their access to training opportunities.

Additionally, future research will need to examine the outcomes of essential skills training opportunities to ensure they are equipping workers with the skills they require. This can be achieved through evaluating essential skills programming that is publicly funded through both the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) and the Essential Skills Hub. Evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of essential skills training opportunities will help determine if programming is effective and is appropriately tailored to meet the needs of targeted populations. In addition, this will help the Government understand what training programs are most effective and potentially worth scaling up. To enable robust evaluation efforts, the Government should incorporate data collection into these options where possible. Evaluation efforts are crucial for ensuring quality training opportunities are effective, appropriate, and provided to those who need them the most.

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Appendix A. 2012 PIAAC Questionnaire

Table A.1.   **List of 2012 PIAAC Questions and Responses**

2012 PIAAC Question Code	Question and Response
B_Q12c	During the last 12 months, have you attended any organized sessions for on-the-job training or training by supervisors or co-workers?* 1: Yes 2: No 6: Valid Skip 7: Don't Know 8: Refuse 9: Not Stated or Inferred
GENDER_R	Person resolved gender from BQ and QC check (derived) 1: Male 2: Female 3: Not stated or inferred
YEARLYINCPR	Yearly income percentile rank category (derived) 1: Less than 10 2: 10 to less than 25 3: 25 to less than 50 4: 50 to less than 75 5: 75 to less than 90 6: 90 or more
B_Q01a_T	Highest level of schooling (Trend-IALS/ALL) 1: Less than high school 2: High school 3: Above high school 4: Not definable 5: Valid skip 6: Don't know/refused 7: Not stated or inferred

2012 PIAAC Question Code	Question and Response
D_Q12c	Current work - Requirements - Related work experience 1: None 2: Less than 1 month 3: 1 to 6 months 4: 7 to 11 months 5: 1 or 2 years 6: 3 years or more 7: Valid skip 8: Don't know 9: Refused 10: Not stated or inferred
D_Q03	Current work - Economic sector 1: The private sector (for example a company) 2: The public sector (for example local government) 3: A non-profit organisation (for example a charity) 4: Valid skip 5: Refused 6: Not stated or inferred
D_Q06a	Current work - Amount of people working for employer 1: 1 to 10 people 2: 11 to 50 people 3: 51 to 250 people 4: 251 to 1000 people 5: More than 1000 people 6: Valid skip 7: Don't know 8: Refused 9: Not stated or inferred

*1. This type of training is characterised by planned periods of training, instruction or practical experience, using normal tools of work. 2. It is usually organised by the employer to facilitate adaptation of (new) staff. 3. It may include general training about the company as well as specific job-related instructions (safety and health hazards, working practices). 4. It includes for instance organised training or instructions by management, supervisors or co-workers to help the respondent to do his/her job better or to introduce him/her to new tasks, but can also take place in the presence of a tutor.

Source: PIAAC International Master Questionnaire https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/data/Translated_HTML_en-CA.htm

Appendix B. Sample Characteristics

Table B.1.   Sample Statistics – 2012 PIAAC

2012 PIAAC Variable Code	Variable/Response Category	Proportion of Overall Sample
YEARLYINCPR	**Income (yearly income percentile rank category)**	
	Less than 10	2.3%
	10 to less than 25	7.1%
	25 to less than 50	18.2%
	50 to less than 75	35.0%
	75 to less than 90	20.5%
	90 or more	16.9%
GENDER_R	**Gender**	
	Male	46.6%
	Female	53.4%
B_Q01a_T	**Highest level of schooling**	
	Less than high school	19.7%
	High school	24.9%
	Above high school	55.4%
D_Q12c	**Current work - Requirements - Related work experience**	
	None	27.5%
	Less than 1 month	4.7%
	1 to 6 months	13.6%
	7 to 11 months	5.3%
	1 or 2 years	22.4%
	3 years or more	26.5%
D_Q03	**Current work - Economic sector**	
	The private sector (for example a company)	66.7%
	The public sector (for example local government)	29.5%
	A non-profit organisation (for example a charity)	3.8%
D_Q06a	**Current work - Amount of people working for employer**	
	1 to 10 people	24.8%
	11 to 50 people	32.4%
	51 to 250 people	23.4%
	251 to 1000 people	11.9%
	More than 1000 people	7.6%

Appendix C. Raw Multivariate Logit Regression Outputs

Table C.1.   Female Logit Model for Accessing Training

	Dependent variable:	
	Job Training	
	Logit Model	Robust SE
	(1)	(2)
sector	-0.575***	-0.575***
	(0.053)	(0.053)
firm	0.297***	0.297***
	(0.065)	(0.064)
educ	0.272***	0.272***
	(0.058)	(0.058)
exp	-0.003	-0.003
	(0.024)	(0.024)
income	-0.132	-0.132
	(0.159)	(0.158)
I(income2)	0.091***	0.091***
	(0.029)	(0.029)
Constant	-0.541**	-0.541**
	(0.256)	(0.253)
Observations	7,119	7,119
Log Likelihood	-4,607.406	-4,607.406
Akaike Inf. Crit.	9,228.811	9,228.811

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table C.2.   Male Logit Model for Accessing Training

	Dependent variable:	
	Job Training	
	Logit Model	Robust SE
	(1)	(2)
sector	-0.357***	-0.357***
	(0.057)	(0.057)
firm	0.435***	0.435***
	(0.065)	(0.065)
educ	0.302***	0.302***
	(0.057)	(0.057)
exp	0.057**	0.057**
	(0.024)	(0.024)
income	-0.325	-0.325
	(0.202)	(0.198)
I(income2)	0.109***	0.109***
	(0.035)	(0.034)
Constant	-0.904***	-0.904***
	(0.321)	(0.315)
Observations	6,459	6,459
Log Likelihood	-4,265.299	-4,265.299
Akaike Inf. Crit.	8,544.598	8,544.598

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix D. Canada Training Credit (CTC) Examples

Jessica and May are both interested in participating in essential skills training courses. They are both low-income earners who would qualify for the $100 top-up through the Enhanced Canada Training Credit. The examples below outline how the Canada Training Credit and Enhance Canada Training Credit would impact their ability to access training.

Canada Training Credit (Current Scheme)

Jessica wants to participate in an essential skills training course that costs her a total of $200. After Year 1, Jessica has received $250 through the Canada Training Credit (CTC). However, the CTC can only cover a maximum of 50% of eligible training costs. Therefore, CTC only covers $100 and **Jessica must pay $100 out of pocket** for the training. **Jessica has $150 remaining** in her notional account to use in the future.

May wants to participate in an essential skills training course that costs her a total of $1500. She waits till Year 5 to take the training. The CTC can only cover a maximum of 50% of eligible training costs. Therefore, the CTC only covers $750 and **May must pay $750 out of pocket** for the training. **May has $500 remaining** in her notional account to use in the future.

	Annual Credit Received* (added to each Notional Account)	Maximum Claim for Eligible Training**
Year 1	$250	$250
Year 2	$250	$500
Year 3	$250	$750
Year 4	$250	$1000
Year 5	$250	$1250

*Assuming all eligibility criteria is met

**Can only be used towards 50% of eligible training and cannot exceed the individual's Canada training credit limit for the taxation year.

Enhanced Canada Training Credit (Proposed Scheme)

Jessica wants to participate in an essential skills training course that costs her a total of $200. After Year 1, Jessica has received a total of $350 through the Enhanced Canada Training Credit (CTC) and top-up. The **Enhanced CTC covers all eligible training costs** ($200) and **Jessica has $150 remaining** in her notional account to use in the future.

May wants to participate in an essential skills training course that costs her a total of $1500. She waits till Year 5 to take the training. The **Enhanced CTC covers all eligible training costs** ($1500) and **May has $250 remaining** in her notional account after Year 5.

	Annual Credit Received* (added to each Notional Account)	Top-Up (added to each Notional Account)	Maximum Claim for Eligible Training**
Year 1	$250	$100	$350
Year 2	$250	$100	$700
Year 3	$250	$100	$1050
Year 4	$250	$100	$1400
Year 5	$250	$100	$1750

*Assuming all eligibility criteria is met

**Can be used towards 100% of eligible training and cannot exceed the individual's Canada training credit limit for the taxation year.

Appendix E. Essential Skills Stakeholder List

The following is a list of potential stakeholders that the Government may consult with when establishing the Essential Skills Hub. The list is an example of some stakeholders who specialize in essential skills training however, this list is by no means comprehensive.

Multilateral Tables

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Literacy and Essential Skills Network

- eLearning Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Advisory Committee

- Essential Skills and Apprenticeship Community of Practice

- Government of Canada Federal Network on Essential Skills

Non-Profit Organizations

- YWCA Canada

- The Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT)

- PEI Literacy Alliance

- Nunavut Literacy Council

- Chilliwack Learning Community Society

- Essential Skills Ontario (ESO)

Employee Groups

- UNITE HERE Local 75

Educational Organizations

- Colleges and Institutes Canada