

**POLICY OPTIONS FOR OVERCOMING SYSTEMATIC
BARRIERS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH
VISION LOSS**

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Abstract

Working age adults with visual impairments in BC are not achieving the same level of employment as people with disabilities in general. People with visual impairments perceive three main barriers to employment: employers' attitudes or willingness to hire people with visual impairments, lack of ongoing support for employers in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments and employers' lack of understanding of the job candidate's capabilities. This study investigates the barriers employers face in hiring people with visual impairments through two methodologies; semi-structured interviews and case studies. My analysis finds that the most effective mechanism for helping employers understand the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments is to expose employers to working with people with visual impairments. Recommendations include implementing a BC Public Service Agency initiative to encourage public sector leadership in employing people with visual impairments.

Executive Summary

Underrepresentation of people with disabilities in the workforce is predominant in Canada and those with visual impairments are among the most unrepresented. In British Columbia (BC), the employment rate of people with disabilities is 56%. The employment rate for working age adults with visual impairments is 35%. The reasons for this difference are unclear. There are 41,000 working age adults with visual impairments in BC. If employed at the same rate as people with disabilities there would be an additional 8,610 British Columbians participating in the workforce and economic life. Increasing employment opportunities for people with visual impairments is important as employment provides a sense of identity and accomplishment, higher self-esteem and higher levels of independence. In addition, there are economic costs of unemployment. First, there are the direct and indirect economic costs to government. The direct cost of disability gain payments paid out to an unemployed person with a visual impairment is \$15,402 annually. The indirect cost of increased mental health care for an unemployed person with a visual impairment is \$402 annually. Second, the opportunity cost to an unemployed person with a visual impairment is the income they would earn if employed, approximately \$42,230 annually.

Policy Problem and Methodology

The policy problem investigated in this capstone is: working age adults with visual impairments in BC are not achieving the same level of employment as disabled people in general. Despite software developments that make computers accessible to people with visual impairments, in 2002, 26% of BC employers felt that vision loss was the most difficult disability to accommodate.

Two methodologies are used in this study. First, semi-structured interviews with public and private sector employers are used to uncover the barriers employers face in hiring people with visual impairment. My analysis of the interviews finds that employers are open to hiring people with visual impairments; however, they do not have the tools or

resources to properly evaluate how a job candidate with a visual impairment can accomplish the hard and soft skills a job requires. International case studies are used to investigate government policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions used to support employers in hiring people with disabilities. My analysis finds that countries using targeted educational training programs or web based resources for employers interested in hiring people with visual impairments increased the employment rate of people with visual impairments. However, a gap in employment rate between people with visual impairments and people with disabilities still exists in these countries.

Policy Options and Recommendations

Policy options are developed following the key findings from the analysis. The ability of each policy option to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments in BC is evaluated based on the measures of four criteria:

- Effectiveness in increasing the number of employed people with visual impairments.
- Acceptability among stakeholders.
- Equity among employers
- Cost effectiveness of the policy.

Three policy options are developed in this research. The first option is to implement a targeted education-training program for all employers who are interested in employing people with visual impairments. The second option is to implement targeted web-based resources for employers seeking to understand the work place capabilities of people with visual impairments. The third option involves a BC Public Service Agency Initiative to encourage public sector employers to be leaders in employing people with visual impairments. Public sector Human Resource managers are required to both participate in educational training on the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments and work with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to flag public sector positions easily accessible to people with visual impairments. In addition, this option provides exposure to working with people with visual impairments for both public and private sector employers by expanding CNIBs Employment Program for

People with Disabilities contract to allow them to administer the Work Experience and Public Service Training Program for their clients.

In the cost benefit analysis, the Public Service Agency Initiative emerged as the most effective option in increasing the employment rate of people with visual impairments. This option employs the most people with visual impairments of all the option and is the most cost effective. The reasons for its effectiveness are twofold. First, it provides the public sector with the support needed to be leaders in employing people with visual impairments. Second, it provides both private and public sector employers with exposure to working with people with visual impairments through work experience programs.

Dedication

To my Dad, without whose love and support this would not have been possible.

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1: Introduction

Underrepresentation of people with disabilities in the workforce is predominant in Canada and those with visual impairments are among the most unrepresented. In British Columbia (BC), the employment rate of people with disabilities is 56%. The employment rate for working age adults with visual impairments is 35%. The reasons for this difference are unclear. There are 41,000 working age adults with visual impairments in BC. If employed at the same rate as people with disabilities there would be an additional 8,610 British Columbians participating in the workforce and economic life. Increasing employment opportunities for this group is important as employment provides a sense of identity and accomplishment, higher self-esteem and higher levels of independence. In addition, the cost savings to BC's provincial government is \$129 million annually if an additional 8,610 people are employed.

The availability of easily adaptable technology for screen reading and screen magnification in the 1990's expanded the range of jobs available to people with visual impairments. Yet the employment rates of people with visual impairments remains lower than for people with disabilities as a whole. Previous research has identified three major barriers to employment perceived by people with visual impairments: employers' attitudes or willingness to hire people with visual impairments, lack of ongoing support for employers in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments and employers' lack of understanding of the job candidate's capabilities. These barriers suggest that addressing the barriers employers face in hiring people with visual

impairments may help to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments.

Research in the US and the European Union attempts to address the barriers to employment for people with visual impairments by focusing on two areas. First, how to improve the job readiness skills of people with visual impairments and second exploring the frustrations employed and unemployed people with visual impairments encounter when searching for employment. Despite the evidence that people with visual impairments feel their largest barriers to employment, come by means of the employers little research has been conducted that focuses on employers and the barriers they face in hiring people with visual impairments. A handful of US studies have been conducted that survey employers who have already hired a person with visual impairments to explore how they overcame any challenges. These studies suggest employers who have hired people with visual impairments had concerns regarding accommodation, extra effort in training the employee and providing a fair interview process (Wolfe, 2002). In Canada only one study interviews employers who have already hired people with visual impairments. In BC one study explores the challenges employers face in hiring people with disabilities in general (BCMCPWD, 2004). Currently, no studies exist, nationally or internationally, that attempt to explore the barriers employers who have never hired a person with visual impairments face when considering hiring a job candidate with visual impairments.

In order to investigate these barriers, two methodologies are used in this study. First, semi-structured interviews with private and public sector employers are used to investigate the barriers employers face in hiring people with visual impairments in order

to uncover why the difference in employment rates persists. Analysis of the interviews revealed that the largest barrier employers' face when considering hiring a job candidate with visual impairments is the ability to understand how the job candidate can perform the hard and soft skills the job requires. Second, case studies are conducted to investigate how governments in Sweden, New Zealand and the US support employers in hiring people with visual impairments. The case study analysis revealed that these countries use four main policy instruments to support employers in employing people with disabilities; anti-discrimination legislation, initiatives to encourage the public sector to be leaders in employing people with disabilities, financial support and education and awareness campaigns. Though these policy instruments appear to have decreased the difference in employment rates in these countries a gap still exists.

The results of the analysis indicate that BC's provincial government may increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments in three ways. First, providing targeted education training programs for employers who are interested in employing people with visual impairments. Second, expand the web-based resources for employers seeking to understand the work place capabilities of people with visual impairments. Third, implementing initiatives to encourage public sector employers to be leaders in employing people with visual impairments and provide exposure to working with people with visual impairments to both public and private sector employers. Policies that encourage public sector leadership in employing people with visual impairments and provide employers with exposure to working with people with visual impairments are recommended.

The study is organised as follows. Section 2 provides definition and facts surrounding the policy problem and an overview of the economic cost and social implications of unemployment. Section 3 outlines previous research on employment barriers for people with visual impairments. Section 4 provides a detailed definition of the policy problem and outlines key stakeholders. Section 5 outlines the legislative context in BC for both private and public employers. Section 6 outlines the methodology and data collection used in this research. Section 7 and 8 outlines data analysis. Section 9 outlines policy objectives and criteria by which to evaluate policy options. Sections 10-11 outlines and analyzes policy options and provide recommendations and a conclusion.

2: Definitions and Facts

The following section defines visual impairment; outlines the state of employment for people with visual impairment and outlines the economic cost and social implications of unemployment.

2.1 Definition of Visual Impairment

The World Health Organization divides the definition of visual impairments into three categories: moderate visual impairment, severe visual impairment and blindness. A person is moderately visually impaired if they have, after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, a visual acuity of less than 20/70 but better than 20/200 in their better eye. To be classified as severely visually impaired a person's visual acuity must be worse than 20/200 but better than 20/400 or have a visual field of less than 10%. In addition, this definition of severe visual impairments is used to classify whether someone is legally blind. Finally, the WHO outlines three levels of blindness; visual acuity worse than 20/400, finger counting and no light perception (WHO, 2009). For the purpose of this study the term visual impairment will refer to the range of visual impairments from severe (legal blindness) to no light perception (total blindness).

2.2 Employment Rate for People with Visual Impairments

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) defines the employment rate as the fraction of the population over the age of 15 working for pay and thus in a position to earn income to take care of themselves and their families. The

unemployment rate is defined as the fraction of the population who is not in the labour market but actively seeking a job (HRSDC, 2010). The employment rate has been chosen over the unemployment rate for this study as 58% of working age adults are no longer looking for work or have indicated that they are retired and thus are not captured by the unemployment rate (STAS CAN, 2006).

The most underrepresented group in the workforce in Canada are people with disabilities. In BC, people with disabilities are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities. Currently, there are approximately 290,000 working aged people with disabilities, 41,000 have visual impairments (BC Stats, 2009). People with visual impairments are among the most underrepresented disability in the labour market. In 2006, the employment rate for people with visual impairment was 35% compared to 56% for people with disabilities. Of the remaining 65%, 7% were unemployed, 37% not in the labour force and not retired and 21% not in the work force and retired (STATS CAN, 2006). These numbers indicate a large percentage of working age adults with vision impairment have given up seeking employment and are not participating in the work force. Though the employment rate for people with disabilities in BC has increased from 52%, in 2001, to 56%, in 2006, there remains a difference of 21 percentage points between the employment rate of people with disabilities and people with visual impairments (BC Stats, 2009).

This difference in employment rates persists despite the fact that educational attainment by people with visual impairments is similar to that of people with disabilities in general. A 2005 survey conducted by the Canadian Institution for the Blind (CNIB) finds that 19% of working age adults with visual impairments had undergraduate degrees

and 15% had a college diploma. In 2009, 17.1% of people with disabilities had an undergraduate degree and 17.6 %, a college diploma (BC STATS, 2009). Lower levels of educational attainment are often linked to higher rates of unemployment; however, this does not appear to be a factor in the low employment rate of people with visual impairments.

2.3 Jobs Available to People with Visual Impairments

Before the 1990s people with visual impairments did not have access to computers. For this reason job opportunities for people with visual impairments were limited to entry level or sheltered employment positions. However, improvements in technology have opened the door to a wide range of employment possibilities. In the early 1990s, computer software programs became available that allowed people with visual impairments to access computers. One such program, JAWS, reads information on the screen back to the user for those who can no longer read print. Another program, Zoomtext, enlarges the screen and font size for those who have difficulty reading regular size print. There are also programs that scan printed material and then read it back to the user. These programs became readily available to employees and employers in the mid 1990s and cost between \$500 and \$2,000 a program. These programs have expanded the number of job opportunities available to people with visual impairments; however, there has not been an impact on their employment rate.

2.4 Economic Cost of Unemployment

Unemployment generates both direct and indirect economic cost to government and opportunity cost to individuals who are unemployed. Direct economic costs include

the opportunity cost of lost productivity and the increase in expenditures on social support programs such as disability gain payments. Indirect costs arise from the impact of unemployment on personal well-being. People who are unemployed tend to have higher rates of depression, anxiety and disturbed sleep which lead to higher mental health care costs.

The opportunity cost to society of lost productivity is the result of the underutilization of the labour force, a scarce resource. As a result, the economy produces at a level that is below potential. In BC, financial consequences for the provincial government of lost productivity include a reduction in personal income tax revenue along with lower consumption tax revenue, as those with lower incomes spend less on goods and services. The lost potential tax revenue due to the reduced productivity of people with visual impairments was estimated by Access Economics (2009) to be \$4,204 per person per year.¹ Assuming that all unemployed people with visual impairments are receiving \$10,800 in disability gain payments, the benefit for the provincial government to employing an adult of working age with a visual impairment is potentially \$15,000 annually.

In addition to direct costs, unemployment leads to the indirect costs of increased health care expenditures predominantly in the area of mental health. Mental health consequences of unemployment include anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, self-harming behaviour and low self-esteem. In 1996, the Canadian Public Health Association estimated the additional health care expenditure was \$312 per unemployed person per

¹ Estimates are based on an average income of \$40,082 at an average direct tax rate of 6.4% and an average indirect tax rate of 7.8%

year (CPHA, 1996). The inflation rate in Canada between 1996 and 2009 was 28.8%² therefore the approximate cost of increased health care per unemployed person in 2009 is \$402.³ Finally, family caregivers of people with visual impairments may also incur additional indirect costs through corresponding mental health care costs and loss of work place productivity.

The annual per person costs of \$15,402 may appear to be low; however, when looked at on a provincial scale the costs are more significant. Currently there are 41,000 working age adults with visual impairments in BC. If the employment rate of working age adults with visual impairments increased 21 percentage points to be equal to the level of employment for all people with disabilities in the province, 8,610 additional people would be participating in the work force. The province could potentially gain approximately \$36 million in tax revenue and save about \$93 million in disability payments annually. In addition, \$3.4 million in health care expenditures could be saved. So, if visually impaired adults had the same employment rate as all other disabled people on average, the Province could save \$129 million annually.

People with visual impairments also incur private opportunity costs. This opportunity is measured by the income they would be receiving if they were employed. The median income in BC is \$42,230. Therefore, if an additional 8610 people with visual impairments were employed the total economic benefit is approximately \$492 million.

² I use the Bank of Canada's Inflation Calculator monthly Consumer Price Index data to compute the change in CPI between 1996 and 2009. (Bank of Canada, 2010). The CPI in December 1996 was 89.7. The CPI in December 2009 was 144.8 which is a 28.8% increase.

³ The report used data from Saskatchewan to extrapolate to the rest of Canada. As Saskatchewan then had the lowest per capita health costs in Canada the cost per person is likely to underestimate the true cost.

2.5 Social Implications of Unemployment

Participation in the work force is a fundamental part of how people define themselves in the society. Employment provides individuals with a sense of purpose, well being and belonging. On the other hand unemployment leads to social exclusion, poorer mental health, self image and self worth (Evans, 2000). Social exclusion refers to what individuals experience when they are isolated from societal activities for reasons outside of their control (Buchardt, 1999). For example, if an individual is searching for employment but is continually unsuccessful due to discrimination they may experience social exclusion. Without social networks provided through employment or community activities individuals suffer from lower self esteem and poorer mental health (Buchardt, 1999). Social exclusion is strongly linked to unemployment as employment provides individuals with networks that are critical to social inclusion (Evans, 2000). People with visual impairments experience social exclusion in a more profound way. Ninety percent of communication is done visually therefore; those who are visually impaired miss out on social communication in both work and leisure activities (Wolffe, 1999).

From the social justice perspective, people with visual impairments have the right to not be discriminated against in the workplace if they have a desire to be employed. Article 33 of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia states that employers cannot discriminate in their employment practises based on race, gender or disability (Government of British Columbia, 2010). If employers experience difficulty in adhering to the HRCBC when considering a job candidate with visual impairments then the province has a duty to support their legislation by helping employers overcome these difficulties

In summary, working age adult in BC are not reaching the same levels of employment as people with disabilities despite advances in technology that allow them to access computers and, both the economic cost and social implications of their unemployment are substantial.

3: Barriers to Employment

When asked in 2004, working age adults with visual impairments indicated three major barriers to employment: employers' attitudes or willingness to hire people with visual impairments, lack of ongoing support for employers in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments and employers' lack of understanding of the job candidate's capabilities (CNIB, 2005).

The first barrier to employment is employer's attitudes towards hiring people with visual impairments. It has become increasingly socially appropriate for employers to adopt positive attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities; however, a discrepancy remains between expressed willingness to hire people with disabilities and actual practices (Hernandez, 2000). Additionally, employers' attitudes tend to differ based on types of disability. While positive attitudes exist towards hiring those with mobility or pain impairments, studies indicate employers feel challenged when it comes to hiring someone with moderate to severe mental illness or people who are blind. Negative attitudes towards employing people with mental illness or visual impairments may be due to lack of experience or negative experience with people in these categories (Gilbride, 2000).

A 2002 BC provincial survey of employers found there is a greater societal awareness of people with disabilities in the work force as well as a greater awareness and acceptance of hiring people with disabilities. However, employers also indicate that this does not always translate into action or behaviour change. Those surveyed indicated the

majority of the increased involvement with people with disabilities is due largely to legislation and the employers' duty to accommodate (MCEPWD, 2004).

The second barrier to employment is a lack of support for employers in hiring people with visual impairments. BC employers indicate multiple challenges to hiring people with disabilities including:

- the cost of accommodations,
- lack of awareness of resources available to support accommodation needs of people with disabilities,
- fear of the unknown and
- fear of hiring people with disabilities

In addition, 26% percent of surveyed BC employers indicated sight impairment as the disability with the greatest barrier to work (MCEPWD, 2004).

The third barrier to employment for people with visual impairments is employers' lack of understanding of the work place capabilities of people with visual impairments. Over half of the working age visually impaired respondents in a CNIB survey conducted in BC felt that lack of understanding of a job candidates workplace capabilities is one of the largest barriers they face in obtaining employment (CNIB, 2005). Surveys done in New Zealand and the US came up with similar results. Working age adults with visual impairments in New Zealand felt lack of understanding about a visually impaired person's potential as a job candidate is a major barrier to employment (La Grow, 2005). Finally, potential employees with visual impairments in the United States felt their disability made potential employers focus more on their lack of ability rather than their capabilities (Crudden, 2005).

These workplace capabilities refer to both the hard and soft skills a job requires. Hard skills pertain to the skills necessary for the position such as data entry or filling

skills. Soft skills refer to written communication, flexibility, adaptability and interpersonal communication skills (Hansen, 2008). If employers do not understand how job candidates with visual impairments can accomplish the hard and soft skills of a job, they may second-guess their decision to hire them (Pontow, 1999).

In summary, working age adults with visual impairments feel there are three major barriers to employment:

- employers' attitudes or willingness to hire people with visual impairments
- lack of ongoing support for employers in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments
- employers' lack of understanding of the job candidate's capabilities

This suggests that addressing the barriers employers face in hiring people with visual impairments may increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments.

4: Policy Problem and Key Stake Holders

The following section outlines the policy problem and the stakeholders who are most affected by the problem. The policy problem is: working age adults with visual impairments in BC are not achieving the same levels of employment as people with disabilities in general. Despite software developments that make computers accessible to people with visual impairments, 26% of BC employers feel that vision loss is the most difficult disability to accommodate (MCEPWD, 2004). However, employers may benefit from employing more people with visual impairments in two ways. First, one million new job openings are expected between 2003 and 2015. Second, a dwindling 15-24 age group and increasing number of retirements, combined with moderate inter-provincial migration, will mean a decreasing labour supply. This dwindling labour supply increases opportunities for employers to hire and develop employees from the untapped labour market of workers with visual impairments (BCMCEPD, 2004).

In reviewing this policy problem, three major and two minor stakeholders are identified. The major stakeholders include individuals with visual impairments, the provincial government and employers. Minor stakeholders include non-government organizations and family caregivers. These stakeholders are identified through a literature review and casual conversations with field experts. People with visual impairments will benefit from employment in three ways; better health outcomes, an increased self-esteem and higher living standards. For the provincial government an increase in the employment rate for people with visual impairments both increases productivity and tax

revenue through direct and indirect taxation and decreases reliance on social support payments. Employers benefit from employing people with visual impairments in two ways. They are better able to meet their employment equity goals and they have a wider pool of candidates to choose from when looking for the best person for the job. NGOs benefit from a potential increased funding for programs to help their clients obtain employment. Finally, family caregivers benefit from increased health and the satisfaction of seeing their visually impaired family member obtaining independence.

5: Support for BC Employers in Employing People with Disabilities

This section discusses current government supports for BC employers in hiring people with disabilities. These supports include both federal and provincial anti-discrimination legislation and BC government initiatives to support employers in employing people with disabilities.

5.1 Legislation

Both federal and provincial governments have legislation concerning employment equity. The federal government enacted the Employment Equity Act (HRSDC, 2010) in 1996 in order to correct the inequalities experienced by women, aboriginal people, people with disabilities and members of visible minorities in the work place. This act applies to federally regulated industries such as banks, broadcasters, telecommunication companies, railroads, airlines, federal crown corporations and corporations controlled by two or more provincial governments (HRSDC, 2010).

Organizations falling outside federal jurisdiction, which constitutes the majority of employers in BC, must comply with the provincial Human Rights Code⁴. Section 13.1 of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia states:

a person must not refuse to employ or refuse to continue to employ a person, or discriminate against a person regarding employment or any term or condition of employment because of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation or age of that person or because that person has been convicted of a

⁴ The Canadian Human Rights Code applies only to employers who fall under federal jurisdiction

criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or to the intended employment of that person. Under the Code employers cannot exclude workers from normal participation in the workplace when it is possible to make arrangements, such as changes to the workplace or working conditions, to include them. When a worker's special needs are covered by human rights laws an employer must comply with the duty of reasonable accommodation to modify working conditions to meet those special needs where it is possible to do so without serious hardship to the operation of the business (Government of British Columbia, 2010).

Employers in BC must adhere to either the Federal Employment Equity Act or the BC Human Rights Code. Both state that discrimination of an employee based on disability, including visual impairments, is prohibited. In addition, employers have to adhere to the duty of reasonable accommodation. The duty of reasonable accommodation requires that employers adapt the workplace environment to meet the accommodation needs of the employee with a disability as long as it does not generate undue financial hardship on the employer.

BC public sector employers must follow some additional guidelines in terms of employment equity. Article 33, of the agreement between the BC Public Service Agency and the BC Government Services and Employment Union, states that the Government of British Columbia is committed to providing a work environment free of any adverse discrimination and will subscribe to the principles of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia. In addition, public sector employers are required to implement employment equity programs to create a work environment that:

Is representative of the diverse population it serves; and to ensure that individuals are not denied employment, advancement or training opportunities within the public service for reasons unrelated to ability to do the job. (Article 33, BCPSA, 2006)

The agreement also requires a union/management steering committee on employment equity to advise employers on employment equity issues and

initiatives and review ministry action plans to ensure employers are meeting their employment equity goals.

5.2 Government Initiatives

In Canada, social programs, including employment support programs, fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces. However, the federal government has an Office of Disability Issues (ODI) within HRSDC. The ODI supports the development of disability policies and programs through research and work with National disability organizations, provinces and territories. In addition, collaboration exists between the Government of Canada and the province of BC on disability issues. The 2004 Labour Market Agreement for People with Disabilities (LMAPWD) is a cost sharing agreement to support the development and delivery of programs and services for people with disabilities (HRSDC, 2008).

In 2002, the province of BC introduced the 2002 Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities to provide increased support to people with disabilities in achieving their employment goals (BCMHS, 2002). Components of the Employment Strategy include the Employment Program for People with Disabilities (EPPD) and the Minister's Council on Employment for People with Disabilities. These components address the barriers to employment for people with disabilities from the side of the employee and the employer. While the EPPD programs prepares people with disabilities for job success, the Ministers Council provides information and guidance as to what employers need to successfully recruit and retain people with disabilities as employees. The two components are developed in turn in the following paragraphs.

First, EPPD is a client-centred program that provides services to people with disabilities to increase their self-reliance and assist them to pursue their employment goals through building job skills and work experience. Supports for employers include funding to cover the costs of accommodations for the workplace and employment crisis services through job coaches (BCMHSO, 2008). Job coaches provide guidance for the employees and employers on a case-by-case basis when accommodation issues arise during the first few months of employment. In addition, job developers market the program and the case for hiring people with disabilities to employers. However, only 2% of EPPD clients are visually impaired while they represent 14% of all disabled people.

In order to encourage public sector employment of people with disabilities through the EPPD program the Public Sector Training Program (PSTP) provides on the job training for people with disabilities in the public sector. The work experience obtained through this program also increases awareness among employers of the capabilities of people with. Anyone with a disability who is capable of work and enrolled in the EPPD program can apply to PSTP through their local vocational service consultants who match them with training positions in host ministries. PSTP benefits both the host ministry and the participants. The program pays for 50% of the participants wages and helps ministries meet their employment equity goals. Participants acquire six months of on the job skills training and experience. Upon completion of the program participants are able to apply for in-service positions with the provincial government for up to nine month. Seventy percent of PTSP participants go on to obtain permanent positions in either the public or private sector (BCMHR, 2004).

Second, the 2002 Minister's Council is made up of employers and community members. They advise the Ministry of Housing and Social Development on solutions and strategies for increasing the employment, employability and independence of people with disabilities. For example, the council conducted a survey of over 500 BC employers to evaluate employer's experiences, approaches, challenges and best practices in hiring people with disabilities (MCEPWD, 2004). The results of the survey outlined the needs of employers concerning hiring people with disabilities. Employers indicated a need to raise awareness and understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with disabilities and need for better information and coordination of services for employers. Recommendations included increased availability of awareness training on workplace capabilities of people with disabilities, a one-stop shop resource guide for employers, and an awareness campaign focused on the work place capabilities of people with disabilities (BCMCEPWDI, 2004).

Several initiatives and programs resulted from the recommendations of the Ministers Councils' survey. For example, the provincial government challenged communities to increase employment for people with disabilities by 10% by 2010, dubbed the 10 by 10 challenge. Communities that participated in the challenge received one-time unconditional grants from the \$1.86 million Measuring Up Fund to assist them in meeting the challenge. The Disability Support for Employment Fund (DSEF) is a \$25 million endowment fund that provides grants through the Vancouver Foundation to the charitable, non-profit sector in BC. The DSEF funds innovative projects that allow communities organizations to assist people with disabilities secure and retain meaningful employment, self-employment or volunteer work. Finally, the Workable Solutions

website is a 'one stop shop' resource for employers seeking information concerning hiring people with disabilities.

5.3 Non Government Organization Programs

In BC, there are several NGOs that provide general employment services for people with disabilities. The Open Door Social Services Society (ODSSS) is a not-for-profit organization that provides leisure and employment programs for people with disabilities so they may achieve personal growth and economic independence. Services to employers are free of charge courtesy of EPPD, discussed in section 5.2, funding and include: pre-screening applicants, post placement support and follow up, employer and employee support through ongoing training and workshops, and employment crisis support. Employers can also access disability facts sheets on different disability types, including visual impairments, which answer resource and accommodation questions (ODSSS, 2010). Triumph Vocational Services is another non-profit organization that delivers the EPPD program to their clients. Its employer services include in-house seminars that provide up-to-date information about the costs, practicalities, and legal issues involved in employing people with disabilities. Triumph also provide pre-screening of job candidates to ensure they have the right skills and qualifications for the position, onsite assistance with accommodations and workplace set-up, on-site training for the employee and employer and on-site follow up.

Both Open Door and Triumph are generalist organizations and are not equipped to provide employment support for people with disabilities with specialised needs. Clients with visual impairments receive employment counselling services from CNIB. Currently CNIB has one employment councillor for all of BC. CNIB receives some funds through

the EPPD program for employment services for their clients; however, educational and awareness training for employers is not included in their services.

In summary, BC employers must adhere to the BC Human Rights Code and the reasonable duty to accommodate. Supports for employers in hiring people with disabilities exist; however, none are targeted specifically at employing people with visual impairments. These generalist programs have not been successful in increasing the employment rate of people with visual impairments. The next three chapters outline the methodology and research analysis undertaken to explore the barriers employers feel exist to employing people with visual impairments.

6: Methodology

To explore the barriers employers feel exist to employing people with visual impairments I use two methodologies. My primary methodology is made of the analysis of the results of semi-structured interviews with employers; and my secondary methodology is a case study analysis of policies used in Sweden, New Zealand and the US that support employers in hiring people with disabilities. In this section I outline the methodology used for my semi-structured interviews. I outline the methodology for my case studies in chapter 8.

Interviews are not conducted with people with visual impairments frustrated in their search for a job for several reasons. Extensive research has already been done that asks people with visual impairments what they feel their barriers to employment are. The results of these studies indicate that people with visual impairments feel the main barriers to employment are employers' attitudes and lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments (La Grow, 2005 & CNIB, 2005). This study attempts to take previous analysis one step further in two ways. First, by speaking with employers it may be possible to confirm employers do experience barriers to hiring people with visual impairment. Second, speaking with employers may provide insight in how to best support employers in overcoming the barriers they face in hiring people with visual impairments.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with employers as they foster a two-way conversation. A set of open ended interview questions were prepared for the interviews;

however, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to ask questions in an order that flowed with conversation and the ability to ask additional questions to probe further the underlining perceptions employers have towards hiring people with visual impairments. The open-ended nature of the interviews also allowed the employer the time and scope to discuss in detail their feelings on hiring people with visual impairments. Hence, I collected subjective, qualitative data about the feelings and emotions behind employers' perceived barriers to hiring people with visual impairment that would not have been observed in a structured interview or a survey. I conducted a thematic analysis of the interviews to better understand the meaning behind employers' feelings towards hiring people with visual impairments. The questions in the interviews followed three themes to assist in conducting my analysis: attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities in general, attitudes towards hiring people with visual impairments and support employers' feel they need to recruit and retain employees with visual impairments.⁵

Regarding the first methodology, I conducted seventeen interviews with employers from the public and the private sector between April 20th and July 26th 2010. Among them, 12 took place in Vancouver, and 3 in Victoria. Two interviews took place over the phone as the employers were located in Toronto and Edmonton. I divided private sector employers into two sub-groups, those with under 100 employees and those with over 100 employees in accordance with Industry Canada's definition of small and large employers. I interviewed seven large private employers and six small private employers through face-to-face and phone interviews. In addition, I interviewed four

⁵ The interview questions can be found in Appendix A

public sector employers. Employers were selected from BC's and Canada's top 100 employers list (Canada's Top 100 Employers, 2010) as well as BC Best Employers to Work For list published by BC Business Magazine (BC Business Magazine, 2010). I contacted employers through phone calls, emails or personal contacts. One limitation of this methodology is a possible selection bias. During the interview process, I discovered that the majority of employers had previous experience working with people with disabilities and in some cases people with visual impairment, although none had been involved in the hiring of these individuals. Thus, it is likely that the employers who were interviewed were already more open to hiring people with visual impairments because of previous exposure to working with people with disabilities. I expected employers to express that they have a lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. However, I was surprised at how open and honest interviewed employers were about their challenges in hiring people with visual impairments and their willingness to providing constructive solutions.

Different results may have been generated if none of the employers had had previous exposure to working with people with disabilities. They may have been more closed in their discussion of the challenges they face in hiring people with visual impairments. However, qualitative research only provides results for the employers interviewed and cannot be extrapolated to other groups. Therefore, there is no way of knowing what the results would be if only employers with no previous exposure to working with people with disabilities were interviewed.

The next section outlines the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and discusses key themes that came out of the analysis.

7: Employers Perceived Barriers to Hiring People with Visual Impairments

I used a thematic analysis to evaluate qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews. I grouped my interview questions under three broad themes: attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities, attitudes towards hiring people with visual impairments and supports employers need to overcome barriers to hiring people with visual impairments. The analysis is additionally broken down into private and public sector employers.

7.1 Attitudes towards Hiring People with Disabilities

Employers with prior positive exposure to working with people with disabilities hold a more positive view about hiring them again in the future (Hernandez, 2002). As the majority of interviewed employers had previous experience working with people with disabilities they are likely to be more open to hiring people with visual impairments in the future than employers with no previous experience. However, all employers interviewed revealed challenges to employing people with disabilities in general and people with visual impairments specifically.

7.1.1 Public Sector Employers

Barriers to employing people with disabilities: When asked what the barriers, concerns or drawbacks are to hiring people with disabilities, public sector employers had four concerns: how would the job be done, what modifications were needed, safety of the

individual and the extra time needed to prepare the new employee for the job. This includes extra time needed to set up workplace accommodations and providing accessible on the job training and orientation.

the first thing to come to my mind is what position are they going into and what would we need to do to get them into that position, do we need to modify anything. I would also be concerned about their safety and again it depends on the disability and the position. (Public Sector #2)

It's not a concern. It would require more preparation on my part and the part of the team in that we would need to carve out time in advance of arrival to assess the workstation. There are just a few more preparatory conversation that would need to happen with the new hire than might normally take place so you need to prioritize the time in order to help the individual be as productive as possible and as quickly as possible on the job. I know that sometimes the organization doesn't do the prep and as a result, we scramble upon the arrival of the new hire whether it's the workstation or type of work, that's probably the biggest bit for me, is making the time prep. (Public Sector 1)

Culture versus policy: Public sector employers are well aware of their mandated employment equity goals and are eager to have a workforce representative of the people they serve. They value the guidance the Human Rights Code of British Columbia and their employment equity goals give them in hiring people with disabilities. However, it is the desire to foster a culture of diversity in their organization that motivates them to hire people with disabilities more so than policies.

7.1.2 Private Sector Employers

Barriers to employing people with disabilities: Private sector employers are aware of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia and their duty to accommodate people with disabilities in the workplace. When asked what the barriers, concerns or drawbacks are to hiring people with disabilities private sector employers all responded instantly with

“there are no barriers and we do not discriminate”. Employers indicated that the only thing that mattered was whether the potential employee could do the job.

I think at the end of day is the only concern... is it going to get in the way of them doing the job... It is nothing about the disability. It is whether they can do the job or not. (Small private #5)

As an organization and me as a HR professional I think it's an important part of what we do, I think we look at recruiting people based on ability, and that what we screen for, the fact that a person with vision loss needs to do their work differently is fine. It's just part of what we do. It's really not something that slows us down at all (large Private #1)

These responses are reflective of prior research that indicates an increased global awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities in the workplace. This increased awareness has led to a desire to be seen as an organization that is open to diversity in the workplace

Culture versus policy: The larger the employer the more likely they were to have an HR policy regarding accommodations for current employees or a policy on being an equal opportunity employer. However, those that did have policies tended not to use them. For them, being an employer that is open to diversity comes from the culture of the organization, not from policy. All private employers, whether they had policies or not, expressed that having a culture of openness to diversity in the workplace is the driving motivation for them to hire people with disabilities. Large private employers stood out above the others in priding themselves on having a culture of diversity and being a flexible employer based on their core values and vision of their organization. These responses continue to support the trend towards a global awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities in the workplace.

Table 1 summarizes how many times private and public sector employers expressed the above-mentioned barriers to hiring people with disabilities.

Table : Barriers or Concerns Expressed by Private and Public Employers in Regards to Employing People with Disabilities

Barriers	# of small private employers indicating a concerns	# of large private employers indicating a concerns	# of public employers indicating a concerns
How would the job be done	2/6	4/7	2/4
What kind of modifications. Accommodations are needed	4/6	4/7	4/4
safety	0/6	0/7	2/4
Extra time needed in orientation and training	1/6	0/7	1/4
Dependant on Type of Disability	3/6	1/7	2/4

Table 1 shows that despite employers' assertion that there are no barriers to employing people with disabilities both private and public employers have two major concerns when it comes to employing people with disabilities. First, how the job would be done and second what accommodations are required. In addition, half of the public and small private employers indicated that their concerns would depend on the type of disability the job candidate had.

7.2 Attitudes towards Hiring People with Visually Impaired

In order to uncover employers' attitudes towards hiring people with visual impairments I asked them two questions. What their first concerns would be if they came across a job candidate that was visually impaired and what would ease those concerns.

7.2.1 Public Sector Employers

Public sector employers indicated the main barrier to employing people with visual impairments is their lack of understanding of what a person with a visual impairment could or could not do.

I would just need an understanding of what they can do and what they are capable of. If they have any special requirements, and what those would be? (Public Sector #2)

In addition to needing to know how people with visual impairments perform job tasks, public sector employers were concerned with safety.

I would say safety, personal safety, what environmental adjustments would have to be made. (Public Sector #3)

7.2.2 Private Sector Employers

Both small and large private sector employers echoed the public sector in needing to know how a potential employee with a visual impairment could perform job tasks.

Well I think I would need to understand how it would work, and would it work for all positions or just certain types of positions and what modifications we would need to do to accommodate that and how, you know what would be some of those challenges? How we could address those challenges and whether it was sort of in our resources to be able to do that? (Small Private #3)

I think again it goes back to what the job is and what the requirement is, and it depends whether it's complete vision loss or not a complete loss of vision... I would then have to take a look at the position because we deal with computer and data entry on a daily basis and how that could be accommodated. (Small Private #2)

The lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments was evident when one employer explained they had recently interviewed a candidate who was visually impaired, but did not think it was a good job fit because it was a data entry, computer based job. If an employer does not understand how a person with a visual impairment can access a computer, read hand written or typed materials or interact with colleagues and clients they may second-guess hiring that candidate.

Table 2 summarizes barriers to employing people with visual impairments expressed by private and public employers.

Table 2 Barriers to Employment of People with Visual Impairments Expressed by Private and Public Employers

Barriers/Concerns	# of small private employers indicating a concerns	# of large private employers indicating a concerns	# of public employers indicating a concerns
Depends on the Type of Job	4/6	2/7	1/4
How the job would be done	5/6	4/7	3/4
Types modifications/ accommodations needed	5/6	5/7	3/4
Depends on the level of Vision Impairment	3/6	0/7	1/4
Would need to know how they can work with computers	2/6	0/7	1/4

Table 2 indicates that both public and private employers have the same concerns about hiring people with visual impairments as they do about hiring people with disabilities in general. The majority of employers are concerned with how a job candidate who is visually impaired can perform the job tasks and what accommodations are needed. Both small private and public employers made references to needing to know how people with visual impairments access computers. This underlines the lack of understanding employers have concerning the work place capabilities of people with visual impairments.

7.2.3 Soft Skills

All interviewed employers indicated they only hire a job candidate if they are the best person for the job regardless of race, gender and disability. When interviewing a job candidate, employers need to evaluate whether the job candidate can accomplish all the soft skills, such as written and interpersonal communication skills, required to be successful in the position. However, if employers do not have the tools and resources to properly evaluate how a job candidate with visual impairments can perform these skills they may hesitate in hiring them (Pontow, p 25. 1999). Concerns regarding how to evaluate the ability of a job candidate with visual impairments to accomplish soft skills were expressed by interviewed employers.

It's not necessarily a taboo subject but it's the fear of the unknown and ok well that person can't see. What are they going to do in meetings if they can't see the person speaking or have to introduce themselves, what if? What if? What if? (Large private #7)

In addition, employers revealed that the most effective mechanism for overcoming their 'fear of the unknown' is exposure to working with people with visual impairments.

We notice in our employment systems review if an individual has an opportunity to work with someone with a disability, they very quickly drop all their preconceived notions. It's almost instantaneous. It's quite remarkable; they just need the opportunity (Large Private #2)

So those are some of the benefits, is that you open the employees' eyes. That "Wow" someone with a vision loss can work in IT because you would think that they would not be able to, so you kind of break down those barriers for everyone in the organization. That is a definite benefit. (Large Private #7)

Though the interviews revealed a willingness to hire people with visual impairments employers lack the tools and resources needed to properly evaluate the work place capabilities of a job candidate with visual impairments in comparison to a job candidate without disabilities. In addition, interviews suggest that exposure to working

with people with visual impairments may be the most effective mechanism to change employers understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.

7.3 Support for Employers

In this sub-section I analyse what public and private sector employers indicated as most important in terms of support in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments.

7.3.1 Public Sector Employers

Need for education and training: Employers in the public sector feel there is a need for more exposure to people with visual impairments, more information on their capabilities and HR support for obtaining resources in recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments.

Educational awareness needed for HR advisor so they can have processes in place when situations arise, also education on resources and programming out there is needed (Public Sector #2)

We would need an understanding what accommodations the organization would have to make, this would be for anyone with a disability (Public Sector #3)

so in terms of awareness I think that is the big one, so because we have relationship with the Rich Hansen foundation... once or twice a year we run a day in a chair event where senior leaders, and they are strategically selected depending on their roles that might actually intersect with making policy changes, the property safety guy, so they are in a chair for a day and they have these moments and they share their experiences with other in the office and rick Hansen ambassadors will come out as well and have conversations about their lives with employees. (Public Sector #1)

Need for Financial Support: Public sector employers all indicated that cost of accommodations would not be a concern when considering hiring a job candidate who is visually impaired. Only one public sector employer mentioned interest in wage subsidies.

7.3.2 Private Sector employers

Need for education and awareness Training: When asked what would ease their concerns in regards to hiring a person with a visual impairment the overwhelming response was a need for more information in order to understand the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments and their accommodation needs. They were very open to the idea of having educational resources readily available to them in some way, but also indicated they had limited resources and would not even know where to start looking for such resources.

That is always the challenge in the smaller organizations because you have finite resources... I have worked in bigger organizations where you have all these resources open to you where you can get sort of large screen or these different things very easily. I wouldn't even know where to begin to be honest with you (Small private #3)

I am sure there would be a lot of questions around computers and printing and there would have to be education on how it's all dealt with, what impact it has on daily life and cost impact and those types of things, so more education (small private #5)

I would say that in the external community because I do quite a lot of volunteer work, my peers in other organizations don't really understand policy instruments that are available that help people with vision loss to help them lead very successful careers. There is not enough of that. (Large Private #1)

Definitely, I mean the more information available to business out there the better for them to make informed decisions because currently I am not sure where business could turn too. It would be institutions like the CNIB, but other than that, I don't know where they would go, Google? (Large private #6)

I think sometimes that is the piece that is missing because it scares employers. It's the unknown. If I don't know what it is or the effect it's

going to have on my business or what it will cost me, that's where the scary piece comes in for employers (small Private #2)

I think the awareness piece is extremely important, as you may know many people who are in a position to hire do not know what is available technologically speaking to accommodate potential employees with vision loss... Everyone who sees a wheel chair knows what a wheelchair is, well how many people know that a computer has the ability to read back the information on the screen? Not as many right? So I think I would underscore that (large Private #1)

Financial Support: Both large and small private employers indicated concerns over cost of accommodation depending on the level of cost. When asked about specific costs of programs like JAWS or Zoomtext, (i.e., \$500 to \$2000) both small and large private employers indicated they would not be concerned with such a cost.

It is just the cost of doing business (small private #4)

I am sure it would have to; I mean if you have the right person but it was going to cost 20 thousand to overhaul the head office to hire them, so you know what the investment is going to be. If its 500 dollars then it's totally different, so cost would have to be weighted to it, realistically (small private #5)

No that is a small drop in the pond; it is when the costs are getting up into the 10s of thousands of dollar that the duty to accommodate would be questioned (large private #6)

However, the majority of these employers also expressed an interest in knowing about any programs that provided reimbursement for accommodation costs.

Table 3 summarizes supports mentioned by interviewed employers that they felt would help them overcome the barriers they face in hiring people with visual impairments.

Table 3: Supports Indicated by Employers that would help them in Overcoming Barriers they Face in Hiring People with Visual Impairments

Support	# of small private employers indicating a concerns	# of large private employers indicating a concerns	# of public employers indicating a concerns
Education and awareness on the abilities of people with visual impairments	5/6	7/7	4/4
Education and Awareness on the accommodation needs of people with visual impairments	5/6	7/7	4/4
HR support	3/6	3/7	1/4
Technical Support	0/6	2/7	2/4
Financial support to cover cost of accommodations	2/6	0/7	0/4
Wage subsidies	0/6	1/7	1/4

Table 3 outlines two important themes. First, that 16 of the 17 employers from both private and public sectors feel that education and awareness on the workplace capabilities and accommodation needs of people with visual impairments is needed in order to understand how a person with a visual impairment can be the ‘best person for the job’. Second, financial support is not what employers are looking for to motivate them to hire employees with visual impairments.

7.4 Results

Both private and public sector employers expressed the same attitude towards employing people with disabilities. All those interviewed insisted no barrier existed to employing people with disabilities in general. Though there is a desire to be seen as an employer who is open to employing people with disabilities, barriers to employing people with disabilities may differ depending on the type of disability. Both private and public employers expressed that their main barrier to employing a person with a visual impairment is their lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.

None of the employers interviewed had human resources policies regarding employing people with disabilities. Those who have HR accommodation policies indicated they did not feel that they were motivating factors to employing people with disabilities. Their motivation comes from a work culture that is open to diversity; however, despite this desire to be open to diversity there is still hesitation in hiring people from certain disability groups such as people with visual impairments. Both private and public sector employers indicated hiring a person with disabilities depends on the type of disability, the ability of the individual to perform the job tasks and modifications or accommodations required. Even public sector employers, who are mandated to meet employment equity goals, feel they would need to have a better understanding of the job capabilities of people with visual impairments before they hired a job candidate with visual impairments.

Public and private employers indicated they need support in the form of education and awareness in order to better understand the work place capabilities and

accommodation needs of people with visual impairments. Employers indicated the need to see how a person with a visual impairment performs specific job tasks in order to be comfortable with employing them. Large private employers and public employers also indicated a need for HR support in best practices in hiring and retaining people with visual impairment. All employers indicated they did not have the time to research best practices on their own and would prefer resources and materials that are readily available to them either from other employers or from the government.

Financial support does not appear to be a motivating factor for employers interviewed in this study. When asked what concerns they would have when hiring a person with a visual impairment, employers never mentioned cost of accommodation. In addition, the majority of employers indicated they would not use financial incentives such as wage subsidies as they hire on skill and ability. Employers indicated they would never hire a person because they had a disability therefore, financial incentives such as wage subsidies would not encourage them to hire a person with a disability.

Soft skills make up a large portion of what motivates employers to hire a job candidate. Both public and private employers indicated they lack the tools and resources to properly evaluate how a job candidate with visual impairments can perform hard and soft skills required for the position. An understanding of how people with visual impairments can accomplish soft skills may take more than just education and awareness training. Research has shown that previous exposure to people with disabilities increases the likelihood of an employer hiring a person with that disability. Therefore, exposure to working with people with visual impairments may be the most effective mechanism to help employers overcome their ‘fear of the unknown’.

In summary, employers have a desire to hire a job candidate with a visual impairment if they are the best person for the job. However, employers face the following barriers when considering hiring a person with a visual impairment:

- They lack the tools and resources to properly evaluate how a job candidate with a visual impairment can perform the hard and soft skills the position requires.
- Employers have limited time and resources to investigate the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.

Employers need support in the following areas in order to feel confident in hiring people with visual impairments.

- Employers indicated they need educational awareness training in order to understand how a person with a visual impairment can do the job.
- Employers need easy access to resources that provide them with best practices in employing people with visual impairments either from government or other employers.
- Employers indicated that exposure to working with a person with visual impairments is an effective mechanism to overcome their lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments

The following section examines how other countries support employers in the recruitment and retention of people with visual impairments.

8: Case Study Analysis

I used case studies as a secondary methodology to analyze how other jurisdiction support employers in hiring people with visual impairments in order to lower the difference in employment rates of people with disabilities and people with visual impairments. The countries selected are Sweden, New Zealand and the United States. My primary reason for choosing these countries is that their employment rates for people with visual impairments is higher than that of BCs'. In addition, the difference in their employment rates between people with visual impairments and people with disabilities is smaller than that of BCs. Table 4 outlines the different employment rates for each country.⁶

⁶ Caution is required when comparing employment and unemployment rates in other countries as statistical data for blind and visually impaired people is limited and unreliable. If there is data, it is gathered from national charities for the visually impaired through small sample surveys. Data on employment rates for the US and New Zealand may be more useful as employment data comes from national surveys and use similar definitions for employment and unemployment rates as Canada. I used the differences between employment rates for people with disabilities and people with visual impairments for jurisdictional comparison to overcome some of the statistical inconsistencies.

Table 4 Difference in Employment Rates between People with Disabilities and People with Visual Impairments in Sweden, New Zealand and the United States

Country	Employment rate for people with disabilities	Employment rate for people with Visual Impairments	Difference in Employment rates
Sweden	62%	50%	12%
New Zealand	52%	39%	13%
United States	56%	42%	14%

In addition, these countries are similar to B.C in that they have all implemented disability policies with the objective of full inclusion and participation in all areas of society including employment. All three countries have various programs to support and prepare people with disabilities to be successful in the labour market. These countries differ from BC as disability policy falls under federal jurisdiction; however, this difference should not have an effect on the analysis.

All three countries have comprehensive programs that support people with disabilities in developing job readiness's skills; however, the focus of the case study is programs and initiatives other countries have implemented to support employers in hiring people with disabilities. Unfortunately, there is little information on policies targeted towards supporting employers in hiring people with visual impairment. Therefore, the focus of the case studies is on general disability policies to support employers that encompass people with visual impairments. Table 5 outlines each characteristic used for measurable of analysis for each country and explains how it is measured.

Table 5 Evolution Framework

Characteristic	Measure
Legislation	What type of legislation is in place regarding discrimination against people with disabilities in the work place
Government Initiatives	What government initiative exist to support employers in the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities
Financial Support	What government programs are in place to provide employers with financial support in hiring people with disabilities
Education and Awareness	Are there any government supported programs in place to provide employers with the resources, education and awareness needed to help in overcoming barriers to in hiring people with disabilities

The four characteristics are taken from background research concerning the barriers to employment for people with disabilities in general. Anti-discrimination legislation provides the guiding principles to both public and private sector employers in developing employment practices concerning hiring people with disabilities. Government initiatives provide the public sector with the tools to be leaders in employing people with disabilities and private employers HR support in employing people with disabilities. Financial incentives provided by government for public and private sector employers are used in some jurisdictions as a motivator to employing people with disabilities. Finally, educational training and awareness programs are used in some jurisdictions to help employers overcome their lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with disabilities.

The following sub-section outlines the policies and initiatives that fall under each characteristic for each county. A comparative table for all the characteristics and the countries can be found in section 8.4.

8.1 Sweden

Legislation: There are two pieces of anti-discrimination legislation regarding employment in Sweden, the 2008 Discrimination Act and the Employment Security Act. The Discrimination Act addresses discrimination and promotes equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age in the work place. Employers may not discriminate against people enquiring about or applying for work, applying for or carrying out a traineeship, or available to perform work or is performing work as temporary or hired labour or employees. The Employment Security Act prohibits employers from firing an employee on the grounds that they are disabled. Employers must seek out rehabilitation, task reorganization or technical aids which will allow the employee to remain in their position (EBU, 2010).

Government Initiative: SAMHALL AB, a state-owned company established under the 1980 Sheltered Employment Act, provides meaningful work to people with disabilities. Forty percent of SAMHALL employees must have a severe disability with a salary equal to labour market norms. The grant from the central government covers 85–90% of the wages paid to employees (EirOnline, 2007). In addition, the public sector sheltered work program targets people with socio-medical or psychiatric disabilities. They are placed into jobs with municipal or central government authorities as a step towards a return to the open labour market. Participants receive a normal wage and

employers receive a 100% wage subsidy; however, there is no obligation to provide ongoing work (O'Brien, 2004).

Financial Support: There are three programs that provide financial support for employers; the Technical Aid and Adaptation Program (TAAP), Personal Assistance Programs and the Subsidized Work Program. TAAP provides the disabled employees an allowance for personal technical aid and the employer may receive funding to adjust the workplace. Two Personal Assistance programs provide funds to employers for appointing employees to assist the disabled person in their work when needed. Specific training and other tailored adjustments when starting a new job are also provided. A wage subsidy is provided to the employer and personal support to both the employer and employee for up to a year. The subsidized work program provides grants to employers for participants whose working capacity is so reduced due to physical, mental, intellectual, or socio-medical disabilities, that no other employment is possible. Job seekers are referred to vacancies by the public labour office and a wage subsidy is negotiated with the employer. Employers can receive up to 80% subsidy of wages, or a job coach based on monthly wage. Job coaches are also available through a supported employment program to support employees and employers on the open labour market maintain successful employment outcomes. Finally, employers may access the Employment Subsidy for Disabled People program that provides private employers subsidies of 40%-100% of the wage, depending on the severity of the disability, for 4 years (O'Brien, 2003).

Education and Awareness The Swedish Disability Federation is an umbrella body that works to influence official policy and shape public opinion through education and awareness on behalf of their members. Around 50 organizations for people with

disabilities under the Disability Federation umbrella receive funding to help them pursue their activities.

8.2 New Zealand

Legislation: Currently there is no anti discrimination legislation in New Zealand. Employers must rely on the Human Rights Act that prohibits discrimination and recognises that ensuring equality for disabled people requires different treatment in certain circumstances so that they can participate in employment, education and access to goods and services. In addition, employers have a duty to provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities (NZHRC, 2010).

Government Initiatives: The Mainstream Employment Programme's (MEP), funded by the Ministry of Social Development, encourages the public sector workforce to reflect the people it serves through the provision of work opportunities for people with disabilities. The program provides wage subsidies, training, and other support to help people with significant disabilities get work in the State sector. A 100% wage subsidy is provided for the first year of employment, and 50% wage subsidy for the second year. Costs of training, support and accommodations are covered and ongoing follow up support for both the employer and employee is provided (NZMSD, 2010) The government provides support for private sector employers through the Employers' Disability Network which is designed by employers to provide a forum for employers to connect with services and expert advice in the disability area. The network provides an opportunity for employers to talk about the perceptions of employing people with a disability, and to move from disability awareness to the development of practical solutions. The Ministry of Social Development supports the network by providing a

secretariat service and an advisory group that provide vision and information on developing the Network and support the effectiveness of its implementation (NZMSD, 2010).

Financial Support: Workbridge is a government funded employment service program for people with disability that administers the Job Support Funding and the Job and Modification Grants on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development. The Job Support Funding provides funds for employers for work place assessments, workplace modifications, job coaches, special accommodation equipment, and disability awareness training for colleagues in order to provide smooth entry into the workplace. Employers may also access Modification Grants to fund modifications to increase workplace accessibility or to purchase special adaptive equipment (WorkBridge, 2008).

Education and Awareness: New Zealand's federal government provides funding for targeted educational and awareness training for employers who are interested in hiring people with visual impairments. The Ministry of Social Development provides funding for the Royal New Zealand Federation for the Blind's employment services. These services include broadening employers' awareness of the benefits of employing a blind, deaf blind or vision-impaired worker. The RNZFB's Employer Awareness team covers general blindness awareness training and employer-specific training. The training provides employers with an understanding of the untapped labour market, an opportunity to dispel the myths and stereotypes around what blind and vision-impaired workers are capable of, and where they can access financial and practical assistance in hiring people with visual impairments (RNZFB, 2010).

8.3 The United States

Legislation: The 1990 Americans with Disability Act (ADA), prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability. Title 1 of the ADA requires that employers provide people with disabilities an equal opportunity to compete for all available positions in their business. The ADA prohibits discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, pay, social activities, and other privileges of employment. Employers also have the duty to reasonably accommodate an employee with a disability unless it results in undue hardship (CRDDRD, 2005, p 1).

Government Initiatives: The ADA requires the federal government be a leader in employing people with disabilities. Section 501 mandates federal agencies submit an annually updated affirmative action program plan for the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Agencies with 1,000 or more employees must maintain a special recruitment program for people from nine targeted disabilities groups, which include blindness. Specific goals must be established for the employment and advancement of those employees. Appointed Disability Program Managers issue a monthly report to management showing the agency's progress in hiring, advancement, and retention of people with targeted disabilities (NCD, 2009).

Financial Support: Various tax credit incentives are available to employers to cover the costs of accommodations required when hiring a person with a disability. The Disability Access Credit is a tax incentive to encourage small businesses compliance with the ADA by refunding accommodation costs that exceed \$250 but not \$10,250 by 50% for a maximum credit of \$5,000 a year. To be eligible for the DAC companies gross

annual receipts cannot exceed \$1 million or employ more than 30 people. Eligible expenses include providing qualified readers, taped texts, and other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments (JAN, 2010).

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program assists people with disabilities in preparing and entering the competitive work force. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 authorizes annual funding to state VR agencies to achieve the goals of the program. Funding supports On-The-Job Training Programs set up by VRs with an employer for an individual client. The VR can share in the payment of the wages for the employee for a limited time on a negotiated schedule. The position must be permanent full time, and pay above minimum wage. Finally, The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire nine targeted groups of job seekers including people with disabilities. It reduces employers' federal income tax liability as much as \$2,400 for each new adult with a disability hired (JAN, 2010).

Education and Awareness: The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), funded by the federal government, is a consulting service/network that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN's consultants offer one-on-one guidance on workplace accommodations, the ADA and related legislation, and self-employment and entrepreneurship options for people with disabilities. Assistance is available both over the phone and online. Those who can benefit from JAN's services include private employers of all sizes, government agencies, employee representatives, and service providers, as well as people with disabilities and their families (JAN, 2010). In addition, the Federal government also funds "The What

You Can Do” campaign organized by community and Business organizations. The campaign established a website that offers a range of educational resources designed for employers interested in hiring people with disabilities including public service announcements videos. The videos, broadcasted nationally, challenge assumptions about people with disabilities and employment.

The Federal government also provides targeted funding to national organizations for the blind and visually impaired to promote awareness to employers about the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) provides resources to employers, job seekers, professionals and family in the areas of education, employment and access to technology for people with visual impairments. AFB’s Carer Connect provides free resources for those looking for work, employers, professionals and family members. Included in Career Connacht’s resources for employers are informational videos highlighting employees with visual impairments and their employers. In addition, there are resources pertaining specifically to workplace accommodations for people with visual impairments and HR best practices in retaining employees with visual impairments. Finally, employers may also access education and training through State Vocational Rehabilitation Centers for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VR). Some of these vocational rehabilitation centers provide job accommodation assessments and conduct awareness training for a company's management and supervisory personnel (AFB, 2010).

Table 6 Summary of Country Characteristics

Country	Legislation	Government Initiatives	Financial Support	Educational/Awareness Training for Employers
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination Act • Employment Security Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAMHALL • Public Sheltered Employment (85-100% wage subsidy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAAP covers accommodation costs • Personal Assistance Program provides funding for employee assistants salaries • Disability Employment Subsidy Program (40-100% for 4 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds for specific disability groups for awareness campaigns
New Zealand	Human Rights Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEP provides wage subsidies to public sector employers, 100% for the first year, 50% for the second • Disability Employers Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Support Fund covers accommodations • Modification Grants covers modifications to the workplace to increase accessibility 	RNZFB employer awareness program targeted for potential employees who are blind or visually impaired.
US	Americans with Disabilities Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal sector employment targets of 3% through ADA legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage subsidies through VR which vary on a case by case basis • tax incentives to cover accommodation costs up to \$5,000 a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAN provides resources and support to employers through consultation • What We Can Do Campaign, national campaign showcasing the abilities of people with disabilities • AFB provides education and awareness to employers on hiring people with visual impairments

8.4 Key Findings

Broadly speaking these countries use four policy instruments to support employers in recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities:

- Federal anti-discrimination legislation for people with disabilities
- Federal government initiatives to be leaders in employing people with disabilities
- Financial support for employers and
- Financial support for awareness and educational campaigns and programs

Each country uses varying combinations of these policy instruments that all appear to lead to a smaller difference in employment rates between people with visual impairments and people with disabilities. Therefore, it is difficult to pull out one policy that is the most effective in increasing the employment rate for people with visual impairments. The four policy instruments are evaluated for each country; however, more importance is given to the two characteristics that employers indicated as areas in which they required support. Government support and in providing resources and best practices in employing people with visual impairments and targeted education training and awareness on the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.

Legislation: All three countries have basic legislation or a human rights code that prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation and disability. Employers must also adhere to the duty of reasonable accommodation for their employees with disabilities. The British Columbia Human Rights Code provides the same fundamental anti-discrimination legislation as jurisdictions in the case study. Employers tend to hold a global view of being open to hiring people with disabilities and are aware of the duty to accommodate. Therefore, the

Human Rights Code is already providing the fundamental guidelines to employers to be equitable in their hiring practices when considering a job candidate with a disability. Since interviewed employers indicated it was their culture of diversity that motivates them to hire a person with a disability more so than policy, changes to BCs current legislation are unlikely to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments.

Government Initiatives: All three countries encourage the public sector to be leaders in employing people with disabilities through wage subsidies or set targets. These initiatives may have helped to decrease the difference in employment rate between people with disabilities and people with visual impairments in these countries. The BC public sectors PSTP program encourages public sector employers to hire people with disabilities. However, participation in the PSTP program can only be accessed through the EPPD program. Only 2% of EPPD clients are visually impaired, while they represent 14% of the disabled population, therefore, people with visual impairments do not have full access to the PSTP program. There may be an opportunity to build on the PSTP program or create other initiatives to encourage public sector leadership in hiring people with visual impairments to meet the provincial governments' employment equity goals.

Financial Support: All three countries provide funds or tax credits to cover accommodation costs for private and public sector employers. In addition, all three countries provide wage subsidies to public and private employers to varying degrees. Since wage subsidies range from 100% for up to four years in Sweden to 60% for up to a year in the US it is unlikely these policies are the reason for the smaller difference in employment rates. Wage subsidy policies tend to infer that employers should employ

people with disabilities from a socially responsible point of view. However, employers interviewed revealed that they would not hire a person just because they had a disability. Employers are only interested in hiring the ‘best person for the job’ regardless of disability. Therefore, policies to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments through wage subsidies may be less effective than policies that provide targeted education training and awareness.

Education and Awareness: Both the US and New Zealand provide education training and awareness programs for employers on hiring people with disabilities in general; however, they also provide targeted education and awareness training or web based resource material for employers interested in employing people with visual impairments. These programs address barriers to employing people with visual impairments mentioned by interviewed employers; lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments and their accommodation needs and lack of support in HR best practices in supporting employees with visual impairments. BCs’ Workable Solutions website and initiatives like the 10 by 10 challenges support employers in hiring people with disabilities in general. However, these initiatives have not proven to be an effective mechanism in providing employers with the knowledge and understanding they need to overcome their ‘fear of the unknown’ in employing people with visual impairments. As 26% of BC employers indicate that visual impairments is the most difficult disability to accommodate there is a need for targeted education and awareness training and better HR resources to provide employer with the tools needed to evaluate the workplace capabilities of job candidates with visual impairments.

The major outcomes of the case study analysis include:

- Public sector leadership in employing people with visual impairments is needed to support employers in hiring people with visual impairments
- Targeted education training and awareness programs will help employers overcome their challenges in understanding the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments
- Targeted web based resources may provide employers with the tools they need to support them in recruiting and retaining employees with visual impairments.

In summary, the key findings in both the case study analysis and the employer interviews are.

- Employers have a desire to hire people with visual impairments but lack the tools and resources to evaluate their workplace capabilities in terms of hard and soft skills.
- Targeted education and awareness training and targeted web based resources are needed to support employers in overcoming their lack of understanding.
- Public sector leadership in employing people with visual impairments may narrow the difference in employment rates for people with visual impairments and people with disabilities.
- Exposure to working with people with visual impairments may be the most effective way to dispel any preconceived ideas of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.

The following chapters suggest policy options built on the findings of the employer interviews and case study analysis that may increase the employment rate for people with visual impairments in BC.

9: Policy Objectives, Criteria and Measures

This chapter defines the policy objectives necessary to improve employment of working age visually impaired adults in BC and describes the criteria and measures for the analysis of the proposed policy options.

9.1 Policy Objectives

The following objectives are set to measure effective policy options in increasing the employment rate of people with visual impairment. The long-term objective is to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments to 56%, the same level as people with disabilities in BC, in 10 years. An increase in the employment rate of 21 percentage points requires that 8610 additional people with visual impairments be employed in 10 years. The short-term objectives include:

1. Foster a positive environment to expose employers to working with people with visual impairments
2. Increase employers' knowledge and understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments.
3. Increase HR support for public sector employers in recruiting and retaining people with visual impairments in order to meet their employment equity goals.

Programs and initiatives may take time to be set up administratively before results are obtain; therefore, the short term is defined as increasing the employment rate for people with visual impairments by 6% or 2,583 people in 3 years.

9.2 Criteria and Measures

A set of four criteria provide the framework for evaluating each policy option. They are: effectiveness, stakeholder acceptability, equity and cost effectiveness. Three benchmarks are used for each measure corresponding to a rating of high, medium or low. Each rating will receive a score. A policy with a high ranking receives a score of 3, a medium ranking receives a score of 2 and a low ranking receives a score of 1. The total score is then used for each policy to rank the options. Table 7 summarizes the criteria and measures used for analysis.

Table 7 Criteria and Measures

Criteria	Definition	Measurement	Score
Effectiveness	Measures the # of people with visual impairments employed through the program or initiative.	574 -860 people 287- 574 people 0 – 287 people	High(3) Medium(2) Low(1)
Acceptability			
Among people with visual impairments	How many barriers to employment does the policy help overcome	addresses all three barriers addresses two barriers addresses one barrier	High(3) Medium(2) Low(1)
Employers Acceptability	Measures whether employers will incur financial or time cost or both as a result of the policy or initiative	No time or financial cost Either financial OR time cost Financial AND time costs	High (3) Medium(2) Low(1)
Government Acceptability	Measures how many additional employees will be required to implement the policy or initiative	No additional staff required One or two additional staff Several staff for a new division	High(3) Medium(2) Low(1)
Equity			
Equity	Measures the number of instances and the length of time of each incident required of employers to participate in the program or initiative.	One instance, with a set period of time commitment Repeated instances with a set period of time commitment Uncertain time commitment	High(3) Medium(2) Low(1)
Cost			
Cost Effectiveness	<u>Total Cost Effectiveness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual monetary cost of program Annual opportunity cost for people with visual impairments, Annual Social benefits of the program 	> - \$10 million -\$5million to -\$10million < -\$5 million	High(3) Medium(2) Low(1)

Effectiveness: Effectiveness is used to measure the number of people with visual impairments employed through the policies' program or initiative. The long term goal is to employ 8,610 additional people with visual impairments in 10 year, therefore, there needs to be an average of 861 newly employed people with visual impairments a year to meet the long term policy objective. In reality, the employment rate increase as a result of these policies will be exponential as more and more employers participate in the programs and initiatives. However, for the purposes of analysis 861 people with visual impairments need to be employed per year through the policies program or initiative to achieve maximum effectiveness of the policy option.

The largest barrier employers' face in hiring people with visual impairments is their lack of understanding as to how people with visual impairments can accomplish the hard and soft skills required for the position. Employer interviews revealed that one of the most effective ways of changing employers' understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments is through exposure to working with people with visual impairments. A US study of 3,024 special education students who participated in the Bridges School to Work Program between 1993 and 1997 found that 70% of participants who completed the 6-month internship program were offered full time positions within the organization (Luecking, 2000). Though exposure to working with people with visual impairments may be the most effective mechanism for changing employers' understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments there is also evidence that education training may have a positive effect on helping employers overcome their lack of understanding.

Another US study tested university business students' change in attitudes towards people with disabilities. Participants completed the Attitudes towards Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP) test before and after the educational training. The ATDP questionnaire consists of 20 statements that participants agree or disagree with based on a six-point scale to assess attitudes towards people with disabilities in two ways. First, to assess the degree to which a person perceives people with disabilities as similar to people without disabilities. Second, to assess whether people with disabilities and without disabilities should be treated the same. For example, agreeing to the statement, "People with disabilities are just as intelligent as nondisabled person" would indicate a positive attitude. The results of this study indicated that participants ATDP scores increased by 6% after one hour of educational training (Hunt, 2004).

Both exposure to working with people with visual impairments and educational training for employers is used to calculate the number of additional people with visual impairments employed through each policy. If a policy provides employers with exposure to working with people with visual impairments through an internship program it is assumed that 70% of the program participants will be permanently employed after they complete the program. If a program provides employers with educational training it is assumed that 6% of the 861 people needed to be employed per year to reach the long term policy objective will be employed or 52 people. The 6% is taken from the research that suggests that one hour of educational training generates a 6% change of attitude of people with visual impairments. Policies that employ an additional 574 to 861 people with visual impairments a year score high for effectiveness. Policies that employ an additional 288 to 574 people with visual impairments a year score medium for effectiveness.

Policies that employ fewer than 288 people with visual impairments a year score low for effectiveness.

Acceptability: This criterion measures the benefits and risks of the policy for each of the three stakeholder groups, e.i., people with visual impairments, employers and government separately. Each group is given a score out of 3 for acceptability. The averaged of the three acceptability scores is taken to calculate a total score for acceptability. People with visual impairments feel there are three main barriers to employment; employers' attitudes, lack of understanding of their workplace capabilities and lack of ongoing HR support for employers. Acceptability for people with visual impairments measures how many of these barriers the policy or initiative addresses. A policy that addresses only one of these barriers scores low for acceptability. A policy that addresses two of these barriers scores medium for acceptability. A policy that addresses all three barriers scores high for acceptability.

Employers indicate two concerns regarding acquiring an understanding of how a person with a visual impairment can be the best person for the job; time and financial cost. Employer acceptability measures whether the policy will generate any time or financial costs for employers. A policy that generates both financial and time costs for employers scores low for acceptability. A policy that generates either time cost or financial costs for employers scores medium for acceptability. A policy that generates no time or financial costs for employers scores high for acceptability.

Acceptability for government measures how many additional employees are required to implement the policy or initiative. A policy that requires enough employees to create a new division scores low for acceptability. A policy that requires one or two

additional employees for implementation scores medium for acceptability. A policy that requires no additional employees to implement the policy scores high for acceptability.

Equity: There are two groups affected by the equity criterion, people with visual impairments and employers. As discussed in section 2.1 there is a wide range of visual impairments. Those with complete blindness have different workplace accommodation needs than those with 20/200 vision. All policies options outlined in section 10 address different degrees of visual impairment equally; therefore, there is no need to address people with visual impairments in the equity criterion.⁷ For employers, equity measures accessibility to large and small employers. Large employers are defined by organizations with over 100 employees and small employers are defined as organizations with fewer than 100 employees. Large employers tend to have more time and resources to access educational training programs. Small employers' have more time and resource constraints, which may prove to be a barrier to accessing education programs which, require a time commitment. Therefore, policies that require greater time commitment for employers may be less equitable for small employers. A policy that requires a one-time time commitment from employers scores high for equity. A policy that requires a repeated scheduled time commitment over a set period scores medium for equity. A policy that has an uncertain or varying time commitment for employers' scores low for equity.

Cost Effectiveness: This criterion estimates the annual cost effectiveness of each policy option. As all policies are in addition to the status quo; therefore, current

⁷ Other disability groups may also be affected by these policy options. Though the focus of these options is on visual impairment, exposure to one disability type will increase awareness of disabilities in general and will have positive external effects on employment for all people with disabilities.

administrative costs are not accounted for. Cost effectiveness is measured by calculating the incremental monetary cost of implementing the program subtracting the sum of the benefits. The benefits include social benefits of cost savings to government and the opportunity cost of people with visual impairments.

The monetary costs include salaries of additional employees required to implement the program, advertising costs and costs of developing resource materials for employers. To calculate the opportunity cost the median income of British Columbians, \$42,230 is used (BC STATS 2009). The social benefits measure the cost savings to the government in decreased social assistance payments, decreased health costs and increased tax revenue per additional employed person with a visual impairment as discussed in section 2.3. The social benefit per additional employed person with a visual impairment in BC is \$15,402. It should be noted that cost to employers, financial and time, are not taken into account therefore, the cost to society is somewhat underestimated.

Since the benefits of these programs in government savings and opportunity costs of unemployed people with visual impairments is substantial compared to the monetary costs the cost effectiveness criterion is measured in broad terms. A policy whose cost is larger than -\$10 million, score high for cost effectiveness. A policy whose cost is between -\$5 million and -\$10 million scores medium for cost effectiveness. A policy whose cost is less than -\$5 million scores low for cost effectiveness.

10: Policy Options and Analysis

The following section evaluates the trade-offs, strengths and weaknesses of policy options based on previously outlined criteria. Each policy options' scores are summed and ranked according to how they meet the objectives outlined in Section 9.2. The detailed results for the evaluation of the three policy options presented are given in Table 7 at the end of the chapter.

10.1 Policy Option #1: Educational Training Workshops for Private and Public Sector Employers

This policy addresses both public and private employers' concerns about hiring people with visual impairments. Currently, CNIB offers educational training workshops to community organizations such as seniors' residences and schools. CNIB staff travel to the organizations location and provide a two-hour workshop to educated employees on how to better support the needs of their visually impaired residents or students. Topics covered in the workshop include myths of visual impairment and hands on exposure to how people with visual impairments complete day-to-day life tasks.

These educational training workshops for community organizations are easily modifiable to educate both private and public employers on the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. Topics of discussion for the workshops include dispelling the myths and misconceptions of vision loss, the day-to-day challenges of people with visual impairments and how these challenges are overcome in the workplace. The workshops will also include demonstrations of different computer software

programs. At the conclusion of the workshops, employers are provided with a resource package and follow up contact will be made by CNIB staff to provide ongoing support for employers. Ten workshops will be held a year at CNIB's Vancouver office with 10-12 participating employers at each workshop. There will be a nominal charge of \$100 dollars per workshop for the employer. CNIB staff will in turn provide an annual report on the outcomes of the education training workshops and the employment rate of their working age clients annually.⁸

Existing inclusivity and diversity programs for employers provide them with general information on a wide range of topics including disability in the workplace. These programs have improved employer awareness of people with disabilities in the workplace; however, as the results of the interviews show they have not improved the awareness of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. There are two difficulties with trying to integrate an educational training program within pre-existing diversity and inclusion programs. The general information given concerning people with disabilities in the workplace does not provide employers with specific resources for hiring people with visual impairments. Therefore, a more targeted approach is needed.

However, it is also important to try and meet employers where they are to reduce their time and financial costs. Even large employers often have only one Human Resources person dedicated to diversity. Since diversity encompasses a wide range of groups such as race, gender, religion and sexual orientation HR personnel tend to focus on disability as whole rather than individual disabilities. In an attempt to integrate educational training into pre-existing inclusion and diversity programs CNIB staff will

⁸ A phone conversation with a CNIB Rehabilitation Councillor revealed that this was a feasible option.

also provide the educational workshop for BCHRMA's Diversity in the Workplace Roundtable once a year and BCHRMA's annual tradeshow.

Effectiveness: The two hours of education training provided to employers through this policy may lead to a 6% change of employers' attitudes towards people with visual impairments, or 52 additional people with visual impairments employed. Since there are 10 workshops a year with 10-12⁹ employers at each, there are a maximum of 120 employers provided with education training. For an additional 52 people to be employed only one in two employers would have to hire a person with a visual impairment. Even if every employer hired one person with visual impairments there would only be 120 additional employed people with visual impairment.¹⁰ Hence, this policy scores low for effectiveness, that is 1.

Acceptability: This policy addresses only two of the three barriers to employment for people with visual impairments. Educational training and exposure to people with visual impairments address employers' attitudes and lack of understating of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. Thus, the policy scores medium for acceptability of people with visual impairments. Employers must commit to a one-time commitment of at least two hours to attend the workshop and incur a nominal cost of \$100. Thus, the policy scores low for employers' acceptability or 1. No additional employees are required to make the small changes to CNIBs' EPPD contract required to implement the policy, therefore, Government acceptability scores high or 3.

⁹ 10-12 participants is the maximum number of participants in workshops currently run by CNIB

¹⁰ Estimates are based on workshops run at the CNIB as it is difficult to measure the number of employers who would attend the work shop at the BCHRMA roundtable and tradeshow. Any additional employer education obtained through the roundtable or tradeshow events is unlikely to lead to the employment of an additional 236 people required to move from low to medium effectiveness.

Equity: Educational training workshops are a one-time two-hour commitment. This one time commitment is more accessible to small private employers, therefore, this policy scores high for equity, or 3.

Cost effectiveness Under this policy, BCs' Ministry of Housing and Social Development will expand the EPPD contract with CNIB to provide funding to hire additional staff members to develop and run the workshops, develop and print workshop resource materials and advertise the workshops through BCHRMA. These educational workshops will employ an additional 52 people with visual impairments annually. Monetary costs of the program include cost of running the workshops and the salary of the employee running and administering the workshop. The cost of resource packages given to employers at the end of the workshops is \$12 per participant. Resource materials for 10 workshops with 10-12 participants each cost \$1,440¹¹ CNIBs' current Vocational Rehabilitation Councillor runs 20 workshops a year therefore; an additional part time position is required to run the educational workshops for employers. The average salary of CNIB service staff is \$44,000 per year¹². Salary for a part time position is \$22,000 per year. Cost of advertising the workshops through BCHRMA include:

- Advertisement on the HR Voice Website and newsletter is \$1,200 for per year
- Advertising in People Talk Magazine = \$1,200 per year
- Advertising through BCHRMA email blasts = \$900 per year
- Cost of a CNIB booth at the BCHRMA tradeshow \$2,000¹³

¹¹ The cost of a Vision Odyssey work shop was obtained through a conversation with CNIBs' Rehabilitation Councillor

¹² This average salary was obtained through an email conversation with CNIBs Manager of client Services

¹³ Cost of advertising with BCHRMA was obtained through their website www.bchrma.org

Cost Effectiveness Calculation:

Benefits:

Social Benefits= $\$15,402 * 52$ employed people = $\$795,667$

Opportunity Cost= $\$42,230 * 52$ employed people = $\$2,195,960$

Annual Benefits = $\$795,667 + \$2,195,960 = \$2,991,627$

Costs:

Annual Monetary Cost= $\$1,440 + \$22,000 + \$1,200 * \$2 + 900 + \$2,000 = \$28,740$

Annual Cost effectiveness = $\$28,740 - \$2,991,627 = - \$2,962,887$

This policy generates a cost less than -\$5million; therefore, the policy scores low for cost effectiveness

10.2 Policy Option #2: Targeted Resources for Employers

This policy addresses both public and private sector employers. Currently the Workable Solutions websites has a resource link providing employers with additional links to websites providing information on the accommodation needs of people with visual impairments. These resource links provide information about how people with visual impairments accomplish activities of daily living but do not provide employers with resources on how to accommodate the workplace or provide best practices in retaining employees with visual impairments. Interviewed employers indicated that they needed one place to go to access information regarding how people with visual impairments accomplished work tasks, what accommodations are required and how to best support them in the work environment.

In order to better supply employers with the resources they require to understand the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments the Workable Solutions website will expand to include informational pages similar to those of AFBs' Career

Connect webpage. Informational resources will include topics such as “Why Hire Blind or Visually Impaired Workers” or “Accommodations for Workers with Vision Loss” and “Employee retention”. In addition, a scenarios page will outline how people with visual impairments accomplish specific work tasks. For example, reading printed material or inputting data into a computer. In addition, two informational videos will be produced. The first video will showcase employers and their visually impaired employees, similar to AFBs’ “Hire a Vision” video. This video would show employees with visual impairments working with computers and completing other work task. The video will also include employers discussing their initial concerns about hiring people with visual impairments and how those concerns or challenges were overcome. The second video will showcase how a workplace can be easily adapted for an employee with visual impairments CNIB will be contracted to help develop these new resource materials. Interviewed employers indicated they had not heard of the Workable Solutions Website therefore, the websites expansion will be advertised through BCHARMA as they have the potential to reach 8,000 employers.

Effectiveness: A web based awareness campaign does not provide employers with any exposure to working with people with visual impairments or any educational training on their workplace capabilities. Employers will only seek out these resources if it is of interest to them therefore; there is no way of knowing how many employers will access these resources or how many additional people with visual impairments will be employed. This policy will likely have little effect on the employment rate of people with visual impairments. This policy scores low for effectiveness, or 1.

Acceptability: A targeted web based awareness campaign will increase employers understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairment for the employers who seek out these resources. However, this policy does not address attitudes of employers or provide them with ongoing HR support. Therefore, this policy scores low for acceptability, or 1. This policy incurs no time or financial costs to employers. Employers may freely access the website at their own leisure therefore, this policy scores high for employer acceptability, or 3. No additional government employees are required to implement this policy. Existing employees who are already in charge of maintaining the website will be able to update the resource materials and CNIB staff will be contracted to develop the additional resource materials. Therefore this policy scores high for government acceptability, or 3.

Equity: Employers can access the Workable Solutions website on their own time and for whatever length of time they wish. The website is equally accessible to small and large employers, therefore, the policy scores high for equity, or 3.

Cost Effectiveness: MHSD will expand CNIB EPPD contract to hire one part time employee for one year to assist in developing resource materials for the Workable Solutions website and coordinate the production of the informational video. One part time employee costs \$22,000 for one year. Costs of advertising the Workable Solutions updates with BCHRMA include.

- Advertisement on the HR Voice Website and newsletter is \$1,200 for per year
- Advertising in People Talk Magazine = \$1,200 per year
- Advertising through BCHRMA email blasts = \$900 per year

- The cost of producing 2 informational videos for the website is approximately \$50,000.¹⁴

The effectiveness score for this policy is low since employers do not experience any exposure to working with people with vision loss. As there is little attitude change of employers in concerning employing people with visual impairments as a result of this policy there is unlikely to be an increase in employment rate. If there is no increase in employment rate no social or private benefits are generated by this policy therefore, this policy only incurs monetary costs.

Cost Effectiveness Calculation:

Annual Benefits = \$0

Annual Monetary Costs= \$22,000+\$50,000+\$1,200+\$1,200+\$900= \$75,300

Annual Cost Effectiveness = +\$75,300

This policy generates a cost of less than -\$5 million therefore, the policy scores low for cost effectiveness, or 1.

10.3 Policy Option #3: Public Sector Initiative to Increase Employment of People with Visual Impairments

This policy addresses the need for the public sector to be leaders in employing people with visual impairments in two ways. First, it encourages public sector employers to employ people with visual impairments through HR initiatives. Second, this policy expands the work experience programs for the private and public sector to target an increase in work experience placements for people with visual impairments.

¹⁴ Cost of the informational video was approximated from the cost of producing AFBs; “Hire a Vision Video”

To encourage public sector employers to employ people with visual impairments the BC's Public Service Agency (PSA) will provide public sector HR managers with support and guidance. Under the Public Service Act the PSA is responsible for:

- developing and implementing employment equity policies and programs
- recruiting, selecting and appointing persons to the public service;
- developing, providing, assisting in or coordinating staff training, educational and career development programs (Public Service Act, 2010)

In order to ensure the number of public sector employees with visual impairments is representative of the population the Public Service Agency will work with CNIB staff to determine public sector positions that an employer could easily accommodate for an employee with a visual impairment. Suitable job postings will be flagged as easily accessible to people with visual impairments to support public sector employers in meeting their employment equity goals. In addition, the Public Service Agency will provide their HR managers with educational and awareness training on hiring people with visual impairments in collaboration with CNIB.

The Union/Management Steering Committee for each public employer will monitor the outcomes of this initiative to ensure the public sector employer is meeting its employment equity goals. The report will disaggregate the number of employees with disabilities by disability type to pull out the numbers of visually impaired employees are employed by the public sector.

In addition, the policy exposes both private and public sector employers to working with people with visual impairments through expanding CNIB's EPPD contract to allow CNIB to administer both the Work Experience Program and the Public Service Training Program (PSTP). These work experience programs provide people with disabilities an opportunity to develop job experience and skills in both the private and public sector through the EPPD program. In addition, these programs provide employers with six months of exposure to working with people with disabilities. Both private and public sector employers are also provided with on the job education on the participants' capabilities and funding for accommodations. Since only 2% of EPPD clients have visual impairments, the number of participants in these programs with visual impairments is small. In order to increase the number of work experience placements for people with visual impairments CNIB, in addition to providing 10 educational workshops to private sector employers, will administer the Work Experience Program and the Public Service Training Program for their clients. CNIB will facilitate 150 PSTP placements and 150 work experience placements¹⁵. CNIB will also provide an annual report on the employment rate of their clients.

Effectiveness: This policy employs approximately 314 people with visual impairments a year. Seventy percent of the participants in the work experience programs will be employed through this policy, or 210 people. In addition, the education program for public sector HR managers and private sector employers will generate a 6% change in employer's attitudes for each sector. Therefore an additional 52 people will be employed in both the public and private sector. More than 287 additional people with visual

¹⁵ The public sector has an 18% share in employment in BC. 18% of 861 is 155. 150 PSTP placements are required for the public sector to reach the maximum annual employment of people with visual impairments.

impairments will be employed through this initiative, hence, this policy score medium for effectiveness, or 2.

Acceptability: This policy provides education and training to address public sector employers' attitudes towards employing people with visual impairments and lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. In addition, the initiative provides HR support for public sector HR managers in employing people with visual impairments. Long-term HR support is addressed by providing job coaches through the work experience placements. This policy option addresses all three barriers to employment and therefore, scores high for acceptability for people with visual impairments, or 3. The two-hour education training for public sector HR managers generates a time cost for employers. In addition, putting together a work experience placement, providing supervision and a portion of the wage for the employee generates a time and financial cost for both private and public sector employers. Therefore this policy scores low for employer acceptability, or 1. No additional government employees are required to change CNIBs EPPD contract in order to implement this initiative, therefore this policy scores high for government acceptability, or 3.

Equity: The time commitment of both public and private sector employers who participate in the work experience placements is uncertain. There is the initial time investment in organizing a work experience placement; however, there may be additional time needed to address accommodation needs of the employee throughout the placement. Small private employers may the work experience program inaccessible to them due to the uncertain nature of the time commitment. Therefore, this policy scores low for equity, or 1.

Cost effectiveness: The monetary costs include the cost of educational training for public sector HR managers and the expansion of CNIBs EPPD contract to provide funds for 10¹⁶ additional staff members to administer the Work Experience and PSTP programs for their clients. The 10 employees include 6 employment councillors with 50¹⁷ active clients each, two job developers to discuss work experience placements with employers, one program manager and one job coach to assess workplace accommodation needs. In addition one part time employee is needed to develop and run the educational workshops. The BC Public Service Agency will enlist CNIB services for education and awareness training for public sector HR managers in the 20 ministries, 11 crown corporations and 6 central agencies. Thirty-seven educational and awareness workshops are offered to public sector HR managers at \$400 a workshop throughout a one-year period. The cost of resource materials for participating employers in the private sector workshops are the same as in policy option #1. In addition, the provincial government pays a 50% wage subsidy to public sector employers in the PSTP program. The average salary for a 6 month placement is \$10,500.¹⁸ With 150 PSTP placements the provincial government will pay \$787,500 in wage subsidies.

Cost Effectiveness Calculations.

Benefits:

Annual Social Benefits= \$15,402*314 employed people = \$4,836,228

Annual Opportunity Cost= \$42,230*314 employed people = \$13,260,220

Annual Benefits = \$4,836,228+\$13,260,220= \$18,096,448

¹⁶ The number of additional CNIB staff needed to administer the Work Experience and PSTP programs was obtained through a phone conversation with CNIBs Employment Councillor.

¹⁷ CNIBs current employment councillor has 56 active clients on his case load.

¹⁸ The average salary was obtained through a phone conversation with CNIBs employment councillor

Costs:

Annual Monetary Cost= \$462,000+14,800+1,440+787,500 = \$1,265,740

Annual Cost effectiveness = \$1,265,740- 18,096,448 = - \$16,803,708

This policy generates a cost greater than -\$10 million, therefore, the policy scores high for cost effectiveness

Table 8 Evaluation Matrix

	Targeted Education Training Workshops	Targeted Resources for Employers	Public Service Agency Leadership Initiative
Effectiveness	Low(1)	Low(1)	Medium(2)
Stakeholder Acceptability	2	1.33	1.33
People with visual impairments	Medium (2/3=.67)	low (1/3=0.33)	High (3/3=1)
Employers	Low (1/3=0.33)	High(3/3=1)	Low(1/3=0.33)
Government	High (3/3=1)	High (3/3=1)	High (3/3=1)
Equity			
Equity	High (3)	High (3)	low (1)
Cost Effectiveness	Low(1)	Low(1)	High (3)
Total Ranking	7	7.3	8.3

10.4 Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations are based on how well a policy option fits with the objectives and criteria set for the policy. The Public Service Agency leadership initiative

obtains a higher score than the first two policy options. This option scores higher for effectiveness and cost effectiveness which indicates that the policy employs more people with visual impairments and is less costly to government. The reason for the higher effectiveness in employing people with visual impairments is two-fold. First, support is given to public sector employers in recruiting and retaining people with visual impairments in order to meet their employment equity goals. Second employers in the private and public sector are provided with exposure to working with people with visual impairments through the Work Experience and PSTP programs. Though there are some financial and time costs to employers they are small compared to the social and private gains to the provincial government and the unemployed individual with a visual impairment. Therefore, implementation of the Public Service Agency leadership initiative is recommended.

This policy benefits unemployed people with visual impairments in three ways. First, the work experience further develops their job skills and experience for future job applications. Second, the work experience provides an environment to improve their own advocacy skills in providing employers with information on their accommodation needs. Third, the exposure increases employers comfort level with discussing accommodation needs with future job candidates with visual impairments which may lead to a higher rate of successful interviews for people with visual impairments.

The results of this study may also be used by unemployed people with visual impairments to better prepare for the job interview. Numerous studies have shown that employers are looking for specific skills when considering a job candidate regardless of disability. These skills include reading, writing, interpersonal communication skills and

the ability to work with technology (Wolfe, 1999 p. 31). This study builds on this previous knowledge by revealing that people with visual impairments must convey clearly how they can accomplish these skills in an interview. The employer will then be able to properly evaluate the capabilities of a job candidate with a visual impairment in comparison with a job candidate without disabilities. People with visual impairments may consider the value in participating in internships or volunteer placements as a means to providing employers exposure to their workplace capabilities.

11: Conclusion

BCs' working age adults with visual impairments continue to be one of the most underrepresented groups in the work force despite advances in computer software that allow them to perform most day-to-day work tasks. With an employment rate of only 35%, many working age adults with visual impairments have given up searching for employment due to continued failure to obtain employment. Participation in the work force is a fundamental part of how people define themselves in the society. Increasing the employment rate for people with visual impairments both improves well being and self esteem through social inclusion and helps the provincial government to support its Human Rights Code of BC legislation. The annual economic cost of their unemployment to government is \$15,402 per person. Therefore, the annual cost savings to government if people with visual impairments were employed at the same rate as people with disabilities is \$129 million. Despite the large cost savings, the provincial government may hesitate to implement this initiative as it focuses on only one disability group. Before implementing any policy or initiative to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments the provincial government may considers the equity of the policy across all people with disabilities. This universal approach is not providing people with visual impairments the support needed to achieve the same employment levels of all people with disabilities. Therefore, targeted policies and initiatives are needed to increase the employment rate of people with visual impairments.

BC employers have expressed a willingness to hire people with visual impairments if they are the best person for the job; however, employers lack the tools and resources to properly evaluate how a job candidate who is visually impaired can accomplish the skills required for the job. Countries that have a lower difference in employment rate between people with visual impairments and people with disabilities all provide incentives for public sector employers to be leaders in employing people with disabilities and fund educational/awareness programs to support employers in hiring people with visual impairments. These policies appear to close the difference in employment rates; however, a difference in employment rates for people with disabilities and people with visual impairments still exists in Sweden, New Zealand and the US.

Previous research both with employers and people with visual impairments indicated a lack of understanding on the employers' side of how a job candidate with visual impairments can accomplish the hard skills of a job. This study suggests that understanding how a person with a visual impairment can accomplish the written, oral and interpersonal skills of the job may be the reason for the difference in employment rates between people with disabilities and people with visual impairments. During the interview process it is often the job candidates' ability to perform the soft skills of the job that motivate employers to hire a job candidate. An employer's lack of understanding of how a job candidate with a visual impairment can accomplish written and interpersonal skills may be the biggest barrier for an employer to overcome when considering hiring a job candidate with a visual impairment. These skills are difficult for an employer to evaluate without previous exposure to working with a person with a visual impairment.

Future studies in this area may wish to focus on employers and people with visual impairments who are employed. A comparison of employers who have not hired a person with visual impairments or other disabilities and employers who have hired people with disabilities may provide further insight into employers' lack of understanding of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. These two groups of employers may provide further insight into employers' preconceived notions of the workplace capabilities of people with visual impairments. Interviewed employers also spoke of being open to diversity as the motivating factor behind their willingness to hire a person with disabilities. Future studies may also wish to explore this further by speaking with employers who have hired people with visual impairments about their workplace culture. There may be value in interviewing people with visual impairments who are employed in order to investigate the effects of work place culture on the successful employment of people with visual impairments.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Section A explores barriers to employment for people with disabilities

1. Do you have any family members, friends or acquaintances with a disability, if so what kind of disability?
2. What are your concerns when hiring someone with a disability?
3. What do you think the positive aspects of employing people with disabilities are? The drawbacks?

Section B explores additional barriers to employment for people

4. Have you ever employed a person with vision loss?

If their answer is yes.....

5. What was the nature of their vision loss?
6. What were your first concerns in regards to employing someone with vision loss?
7. What has been your experience with having them in your employ?
8. How did you overcome organizational issues such as environmental adaptations, technology, communication procedures, meetings, employment policies, staff training?
9. How could the transition to employing someone with vision loss been made easier for your business?

If their answer is no....

10. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of vision loss?
11. What would be your main concerns with employing someone with vision loss?
12. What do you feel the benefits/drawbacks are of hiring someone with vision loss?
13. What would ease your concerns in regards to employing someone with vision loss?
14. How could the transition to employing someone with vision loss been made easier for your business?
15. Are you aware of any government program which give incentives to employers to hire people with disabilities, is this the government's role?

Section C seeks to explore the feasibility of policy alternative

16. Does your company have an HR policy regarding hiring people with disabilities?
If yes what is it? Have there been any challenges to implementing this policy?
17. What could be done to facilitate the implementation of your HR policy in regards to hiring people with disabilities, in particular vision loss?
18. How do you think your company could better accommodate employees with vision loss? How could your HR policy be made more effective in this area?
19. What employment practices or policies would you find most supportive when employing someone with vision loss?
20. What difficulties do you think would arise when implementing these employment practices or policies?
21. What would be your opinion of an in service program that exposed you and other employees to how people with vision loss complete day to day work related activities?
22. What would be your opinion of subsidies provided to employers to offset the purchase of adaptive equipment for employees with vision loss?
23. What would be your opinion of media champagne showcasing companies who employ people with vision loss would encourage other companies to hiring people with vision loss?
24. Ontario has begun to implement their Accessibility act which requires that all employers allow equal access to employment for all who are disabled, including those with vision loss. What would be your opinion of similar legislation being implemented in BC?
25. How many people does your company employ?
26. What percentage of your positions is clerical, administrative or customer service related?
27. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Public Sector Employers

Public Sector Employer #1: Vancouver, April 20th

Public Sector Employer #2: Vancouver May 7th

Public Sector Employer #3: Vancouver May 17th

Public Sector Employer #4: Vancouver May 28th

Large Private Employers

Large Private Employer #1: Toronto, May 12th (phone interview)

Large Private Employer #2: Vancouver May 14th

Large Private Employer #3: Victoria May 21st

Large Private Employer #4: Edmonton, May 28th (phone interview)

Large Private Employer #5: Vancouver May 31st

Large Private Employer #6: Vancouver, June 7th

Large Private Employer #7: Vancouver, July 9th

Small Private Employers

Small Private Employer #1: Vancouver May 27th

Small Private Employer #2: Victoria, June 3rd

Small Private Employer #3: Vancouver, June 14th

Small Private Employer #4: Vancouver, June 25th

Small Private Employer 5: Vancouver, July 9th

Small Private Employer 6: Vancouver, July 26th

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