

Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada – Fact Sheet

Background

The Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada (IWSCC) is a Canadian non-profit created to allow both Veterans and people with disabilities who own businesses to be officially recognized as Diverse Suppliers. We assist business owners through a certification process that can expand their business opportunities to include Canada's leading brands and public-sector organizations. The IWSCC provides ongoing education and mentoring.

We work with corporate and public-sector members to help them connect with and understand the needs of Veterans and people with disabilities as Diverse Suppliers. The focus is to align large organizations with the right Diverse Suppliers to ensure proper fit. In addition, the IWSCC offers best practices for procurement to be more inclusive, easy to understand and use effectively.

In addition, the IWSCC conducts research and creates advanced educational programs for employers looking to make the shift from cultures of accommodation to those of inclusion. The programs provide advanced research studies in partnership with leading non-profit and institutional partners to look at emerging trends, new methods and practical applications for true equality in the workplace.

Every Canadian has a right to meaningful work. For Veterans and those with disabilities, that right is more of a privilege or not recognized at all. Across Canada, they are denied employment, paid less than their peers and are less likely to hold management positions. Further, until now, Canadian disabled business owners and Veterans have not had access to certification as Diverse Suppliers.

Some quick facts...

- In 2011, the employment rate of Canadians aged 25 to 64 with disabilities was 49%, compared with 79% of Canadians without a disability.
- Approximately 1 in 2 university graduates, with or without a disability, held a professional occupation. However, graduates with a disability were less likely to hold a management position and earned less than those without a disability, especially among men.
- "A recent U.S. survey found U.S. veterans 45% more likely than the non-veteran population to be self-employed. If the Canadian experience is similar, the percentage of self-employed veterans in Canada would be about 15%." Financial post - 2014
- From the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary. *"a substantially higher rate of people with disabilities are self-employed (11.8%) compared to the general population (6.6%)."*
- Parker Harris, S., Renko, M., & Caldwell, K. (2013) in *Accessing Social Entrepreneurship: Perspectives of People with Disabilities and Key Stakeholders*, writes that "Social entrepreneurs with disabilities represent a source of innovation and productivity and, if afforded equal access and opportunity, social entrepreneurship is an employment strategy that can lead to economic self-sufficiency and empowerment".

- *“For policy makers, our research has two main messages: First, ‘one-size-fits-all’ types of training programs for entrepreneurs may not cater to the specific needs of entrepreneurs with disabilities. A heavier emphasis on building mentoring relationships and providing business knowledge is needed for this group since they enter the start-up process with lower levels of education and more restricted access to social support than other entrepreneurs. Second, making sure that people with disabilities do not fall further into poverty is essential if we want to encourage entrepreneurship in this group.”* (Entrepreneurial entry by people with disabilities - Maija Renko, Sarah Parker Harris and Kate Caldwell; The University of Illinois at Chicago, USA)

For decades, these groups have started their own business as a means of survival because of critical challenges to entering the workforce. Over time, entrepreneurship has become the standard for many in this community with a driving commitment to proving to the world that people with disabilities and Veterans are valuable members of the business community.

The IWSCC now gives not just a voice, but a platform to ensure the same opportunities for procurement and employment as any other Canadian entrepreneur or employee.

Leadership and Staffing

IWSCC is co-led by Deidre Guy and Jeff Wilson, both with a long history of management and start-up experience.

Jeff Wilson background and qualifications

- An entrepreneur since 1997
- 19 years leadership in global marketing
- Specialized in customer experience and inclusive design methodology and theory
- Founder Adaptability Canada, a specialized Inclusive Design, and Construction company serving the Canadian public and private sector
- Experienced and In-demand speaker and presenter
- Diagnosed with Bi-Polar Mood Disorder in 1999

Deidre Guy background and qualifications

- Management positions in sales, operations and client services for over 25 years
- Experienced speaker and presenter
- Involved in diverse supply as both supplier and corporate member for over 3 years
- Diagnosed with Depression in 1995

IWSCC Board of Directors

- Deidre Guy, COO Adaptability Canada, CEO and Director IWSCC
- Jeff Wilson, CEO Adaptability Canada, President/Chair IWSCC
- Don Huff, CEO Eco strategy, and Director IWSCC
- Additional members representing all stakeholders

Committee of Advisors - IWSCC will have a Committee of Advisors consisting of up to 9 members drawn from partner and member organizations.

Current Staffing

- Deidre Guy – Business and Program Development
- Veronica Yeung – Outreach Coordinator (F/T)
- Jennifer Fischer – Certification and Supplier Support (F/T)
- Sarah Schwab – Accounting (P/T)

Future Staffing

- Sponsor recruitment and event management (F/T)
- Certification and Supplier Support (P/T)
- Program Development (Inclusive Workplace Research and Education) (F/T)

3-year Plan for IWSCC Development

Year 1 Focus – Launch and develop Supplier Diversity program & ongoing research (procurement and business needs of disabled & Veteran business owners in Canada)

Year 2 Focus – Launch and develop Inclusive Workplace program and growth of Supplier Diversity

Year 3 Focus – Ongoing support and growth for IWSCC as a whole

Funding Model

- Corporate sponsorship and membership – program development and operational costs
- Supplier membership – cost recovery model on suppliers
- Government funding – focused on program development and operational costs
- Event revenue – cover costs of events and marketing
- Training and education materials
- Consulting services

Partner Participation Model

The IWSCC deploys a collaborative participation model giving a voice to all members and partners in program development and value delivery. A human-centered (inclusive) design methodology for all communications ensures everything we do is easy to understand, easy to use, easy to share and easy to participate. The Committee of Advisors allows all stakeholders an opportunity to represent their needs and ensure fair and equitable representation in the IWSCC.