



## Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada – Fact Sheet

The Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada (IWSCC) is a Canadian non-profit created to support Veterans and/or people with disabilities who own businesses. IWSCC certification allows these businesses to be officially recognized as Diverse Suppliers and participate in affirmative procurement programs. Our ongoing education and training provides business owners with opportunities for professional development. And we also conduct outreach to increase the general awareness of the value of a diverse supply chain and the unique needs of persons with disabilities.

### Our Mission

Every Canadian has a right to meaningful work; to support themselves and their families. For Veterans and/or people with disabilities, that right is more of a privilege or not recognized at all. Across Canada, they are denied employment, paid less than peers and are less likely to hold management positions.

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

In our work towards equal opportunity, we focus our efforts in two areas:

#### **Supplier Diversity Certification**

- IWSCC supports business owners through expansion of opportunities to include some of Canada's leading brands and public-sector organizations. IWSCC also provides ongoing education and business development mentorship.
- IWSCC helps corporate and government members understand the needs of Veterans and/or people with disabilities as Diverse Suppliers. We advise on procurement best practices which can make processes more inclusive, intuitive, and easy to understand and use.

#### **Inclusive Workplace Education Programs**

- IWSCC supports the shift of large employers from cultures of accommodation to a culture of inclusion for their disabled and/or Veteran employees. IWSCC research and educational programs developed in partnership with leading non-profit and institutional partners look at emerging trends, new methods and practical applications for true equality in the workplace.



## 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
- “A substantially higher rate of people with disabilities are self-employed (11.8%) compared to the general population (6.6%).” From the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary.

Our procurement plus education approach to creating impact for the veteran and the community is substantiated by research.

- “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”. Parker Harris, S., Renko, M., & Caldwell, K. (2013) in *Accessing Social Entrepreneurship: Perspectives of People with Disabilities and Key Stakeholders*
- “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



## 3-year Plan for IWSCC Development

The IWSCC was founded in late 2016 and is in the early stages of 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 of communication ensures everything we do is easy to understand, easy to use, easy to share and easy to participate in. The Committee of Advisors allows all stakeholders an opportunity to represent their needs and ensure fair and equitable representation in the IWSCC.

The IWSCC is based on a founding principle of partnering for success and we model true collaboration with partners, industry organizations, and Diverse Suppliers.