



Employment and  
Social Development Canada

Emploi et  
Développement social Canada

# ***Inclusive Workplaces – Online Survey of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises***

## **Executive Summary**

### **Prepared for Employment and Social Development Canada**

Supplier Name: Environics Research  
Contract Number: CW22236197  
Contract Value: \$138,871.35 (including HST)  
Award Date: 2022-07-13  
Delivery Date: 2022-11-28

Registration Number: POR 015-22

For more information on this report, please contact Employment and Social Development Canada at: [nc-por-rop-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:nc-por-rop-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

**Ce sommaire est aussi disponible en Français**

**Canada**

# **Inclusive Workplaces Online Survey of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises**

## **Executive Summary**

Prepared for Employment and Social Development Canada by Environics Research

NOVEMBER 2022

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) commissioned Environics Research to conduct a quantitative online survey of 1,000 Canadian small and medium enterprises to explore attitudes toward inclusive workplaces and hiring persons with disabilities.

## **Permission to reproduce**

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from the Employment and Social Development Canada. For information regarding reproduction rights: [droitdauteur.copyright@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:droitdauteur.copyright@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada, 2022.

Cat. No.: Em4-34/2023E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-46609-5

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Milieus de travail inclusifs - Sondage en ligne auprès de petites et moyennes entreprises*

## Executive summary

### 1. Background and objectives

The mandate of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) includes taking measures to encourage and assist businesses across Canada in having workplaces that are inclusive and a key feature of this is to be inclusive of people living with disabilities.

This project includes both quantitative and qualitative research. The objectives of the quantitative research phase described in this report are to:

- Identify the main barriers, from an employer’s perspective, to hiring persons with disabilities;
- Measure where employers fall in the behavior change model (pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action) to develop strategies that move the audience towards action and hiring persons with disabilities;
- Establish a benchmark in attitudes, perception and behaviours among employers towards hiring persons with disabilities.

The findings from the qualitative research phase are available under separate cover.

### 2. Methodology

Environics Research conducted a quantitative online survey of 1,001 Canadians who are decision makers in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which are organizations with 1 to 499 employees. The survey was conducted from September 9 to 28, 2022. The survey sample was supplied by an online panel provider. It is a non-probability sample and therefore no margin of error can be calculated.

### 3. Cost of research

The total contract value was \$138,871.35 (including HST).

- Quantitative research phase value: \$85,315.00 (including HST).
- Qualitative research phase value: \$53,556.35 (including HST).

### 4. Key findings

#### Recruitment and human resources issues

- Most organizations report challenges in finding qualified employees at this time.
- The most common recruitment methods among organizations today are informal networking and online recruitment.

- When it comes to recruitment policies and protocols related to persons with disabilities, organizations most commonly provide accessibility and inclusion training, equity-based hiring policies, and inclusive workplace policies. Quotas and incentives are less common.

### **Recruiting persons with disabilities**

- Most organizations are at least somewhat comfortable hiring an employee with a disability and just under half are very comfortable.
- Organizations tend to give themselves high marks for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Significant proportions agree that employing people with disabilities will lead to a variety of challenges, such as employees with disabilities being harder to dismiss, more difficult to train and various other issues.
- Organizations surveyed expressed keen interest in learning more about how to hire persons with disabilities. There is also high interest in learning how to create an inclusive and accessible workplace.
- Most organizations either currently employ persons with disabilities or have in the past. One third have never done so. The most common reasons for not hiring persons with disabilities are that none have applied with the required education or qualifications or that no applicants self-identified as having a disability.
- Most organizations are at least likely to hire persons with disabilities in the next couple of years.
- Four in ten organizations report having taken steps toward hiring or recruiting persons with disabilities, such as using welcoming language and inclusion statements in job postings, informal word of mouth outreach and posting about openings in disability related publications.

### **Workplace accommodation policies**

- Most organizations have not ever had to deal with a workplace accommodation request. Organizations that have dealt with a workplace accommodation request report they always or usually provided the requested accommodation.
- Visual, memory and developmental disabilities are perceived to be the most challenging to accommodate among organizations surveyed.
- Employers feel the most helpful ways to create an inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities are offering flexible work arrangements, offering staff training programs on accessibility and inclusion, and having a supportive management culture.
- The main perceived benefits of hiring persons with disabilities are that it is good for society, helps businesses learn to adapt and promotes an inclusive work culture.
- Most organizations already offer a wide range of accommodations and adaptations or are willing to offer them in the future.

- Three quarters of organizations would at least consider hiring someone with a disability in the future.
- Most organizations believe they have already created an inclusive workplace or would like to do so.
- The most useful tools for helping organizations prepare to hire more persons with disabilities are practical resources on making workplaces more accessible and inclusive, connections with community organizations and information about financial incentives.

## 5. Political neutrality statement and contact information

I hereby certify as senior officer of Environics that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and the Directive on the Management of Communications. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Derek Leebosh  
Vice President, Public Affairs  
Environics Research Group  
[derek.leebosh@environics.ca](mailto:derek.leebosh@environics.ca)  
416-820-1963

Supplier Name: Environics Research  
Contract Number: CW22236197  
Total Contract Value: \$138,871.35 (including HST)

- Quantitative research phase value: \$85,315.00 (including HST)
- Qualitative research phase value: \$53,556.35 (including HST)

Award Date: 2022-07-13  
Delivery Date: 2022-11-28

For more information, contact [nc-por-rop-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:nc-por-rop-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

