Improving Employment Outcomes For Albertans with Disabilities:

Taking Action in the New Millennium

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Prepared by

Alberta Disabilities Forum

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Summer 2000

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Preface - About the Alberta Disabilities Forum

The Alberta Disabilities Forum was established on January 15, 1998 by a group of 26 provincial not-for-profit organizations as a way of sharing information and ideas with the objective of speaking with a unified voice on issues of interest to Albertans with disabilities.

Values and Principles

1. People with disabilities are entitled to supports and choices, which enable them to fully participate in the community.
2. Everyone has equal value and worth.
3. People with disabilities are contributing members of society with equal rights and responsibilities.
4. People with disabilities must have a determining voice in the design and delivery of the programs and services they require.
5. People with disabilities need to be fully informed about issues that affect them and their families.
6. Unified and consistent public statements will promote understanding of issues affecting people with disabilities.
7. Organizations can accomplish more by working together.
8. The resolution of issues affecting people with disabilities will benefit others in society.
9. While efforts are directed towards unity and consensus, members' divergent views are acknowledged, respected and valued.

Goals

1. To identify interests which are common to all members.
2. To facilitate communication, cooperation and coordination among members.
3. To disseminate information across the province.
4. To identify gaps and needs and facilitate solutions regarding the design, delivery and funding of services and supports.
5. To educate the broader public about disability issues.
6. To influence legislators, authorities and policy makers.

Membership

Today, ADF has 30 members in good standing.

Executive Summary

According to the most recent Statistics Canada data available (Health and Activity Limitation Survey – HALS, 1991), many Albertans with disabilities tend not to fare well in relation to employment. In general, persons with disabilities tend to be more underemployed, unemployed, or not participating in the workforce at all, compared to persons without disabilities.

The Alberta Disabilities Forum (a group of 30 provincial not-for-profit organizations) has a strong interest in improving employment outcomes for Albertans with disabilities. *Improving Employment Outcomes for Albertans with Disabilities: Taking Action in the New Millenium* makes a contribution in this regard by taking general stock of where we are and making recommendations for future action.

In 1999, Canada's National Quality Institute (NQI) developed the *Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector*, which are recognized around the world. These criteria are described in this document and were used as the framework within which people with disabilities and their families, employers, service providers and service staff were asked about the supports and services that currently exist and about how to improve them.

A total of 50 interviews were conducted across Alberta: 15 persons with disabilities, 15 executive/senior managers of not-for-profit organizations, 15 employers of persons with disabilities, and 5 front-line service staff. Overall, the survey results revealed that while there are some effective practices in Alberta, there is significant room to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. The observations and insights of interview participants were used as the basis to make the following recommendations:

NQI Criteria, Sections 1 & 2 – Leadership and Planning

From all of the data collected, it is clear that the system as a whole lacks a clearly articulated and supported framework or approach to performance management (planning, performance measurement and performance improvement). There appears to be little appreciation that the lack of a coordinated approach limits progress in relation to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Currently, different parts of the same system cannot have even the most basic conversation about performance management because there is neither a common language nor a common framework.

Further, 87% of people with disabilities reported that the system as a whole is not well coordinated or helpful. Interviewees pointed out that government ministries and programs appeared to develop their policies and programs in relation to their own narrow mandates. For example, 100% of interviewees reported that they feared being denied access to income supports if they failed at their attempts to seek employment. Further, 87% of those interviewed identified the lack of reliable accessible transportation as a barrier to employment.

20% noted that transportation has been identified as a barrier to employment for over 20 years, yet little progress has been made in this regard.

Finally, 73% of the executive/senior managers interviewed reported that they needed to improve their knowledge base in relation to measuring performance within their organizations.

1. It is recommended that government ministries provide funding to train ministry and not-for-profit managers/staff in the area of performance management. Funding for training should be made available immediately and should be ongoing to ensure that managers and staff upgrade their knowledge as practices improve.

2. It is recommended that relevant ministries, people with disabilities, advocacy organizations and leaders from the not-for-profit service sector lead a collaborative effort aimed at developing a comprehensive performance management framework to guide the delivery of employment supports and services in Alberta. There are many excellent models from which to draw. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Malcolm Baldridge framework and the National Quality Institute framework. Planning in respect of this recommendation should begin immediately.

3. It is recommended that relevant governments focus and coordinate their public policy objectives, programs, performance measures and resources on improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities, rather than exclusively on their own separate mandates. Relevant government ministries and/or departments include, but are not limited to, Human Resources Development Canada, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Health (personal supports and assistive devices), Community Development (housing) and municipal departments responsible for transportation. Collaborative, outcome focused business planning should begin immediately. It is also recommended that linkages be made with the Alberta Disability Strategy being developed by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

NQI Criteria, Section 3 – Citizen/Client Focus

It is clear from the data that people with disabilities have challenged government ministries and not-for-profit service providers to immediately:

4. Aim higher. Think long-term employment and careers with decent salaries and benefits, rather than short-term jobs at minimum wage. Adjust performance measures for the system and service providers accordingly. Remember, what gets measured gets done.

5. Invest in penetrating a broader range of labour market segments. 13% of people with disabilities observed that the majority of people with disabilities end up working in a small number of labour market segments (e.g., food services, janitorial).

6. Invest in supporting people with more severe disabilities to enter the workforce.

87% of people with disabilities interviewed identified employer attitudes toward people with disabilities as a barrier to employment.

7. It is recommended that relevant government ministries invest in educating employers about the capabilities of people with disabilities. Planning in this regard should commence immediately.

8. It is recommended that relevant government ministries plan and implement high leverage strategies to encourage and support employers to hire people with disabilities (e.g., tax incentives, more support to modify workstations).

NQI Criteria, Section 4 – People Focus

80% of the organizations interviewed reported high staff turnover (up to 50% per year). 87% identified low wages as the main driver of high staff turnover and difficulty in recruiting qualified staff.

9. It is recommended that relevant government ministries immediately increase funding for agency staff salaries in order that service providers can recruit and retain qualified human resources.

87% of organizations stated that they received no funding to support basic staff training.

10. It is recommended that relevant government ministries recognize that most not-for-profit organizations do not have the fiscal resources necessary to provide ongoing training for service personnel. It is also recommended that relevant government ministries provide not-for-profit service providers with the resources necessary to train their staff.

NQI Criteria, Section 5 – Process Management

Only 13% of the organizations interviewed reported using formal process measures as one indicator of efficiency and effectiveness.

11. It is recommended that both not-for-profit organizations and relevant government ministries implement modern work process management techniques to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Work in this regard should commence immediately.

NQI Criteria, Section 6 – Partner/Supplier Focus

Overall, interview data reveals considerable strain in the relationships between government funders and not-for-profit service providers.

12. It is recommended that relevant government ministries and leaders from the not-for-profit service sector work together to identify common concerns and make specific plans to improve their relationships and the performance of the system. Work in this regard should commence immediately.

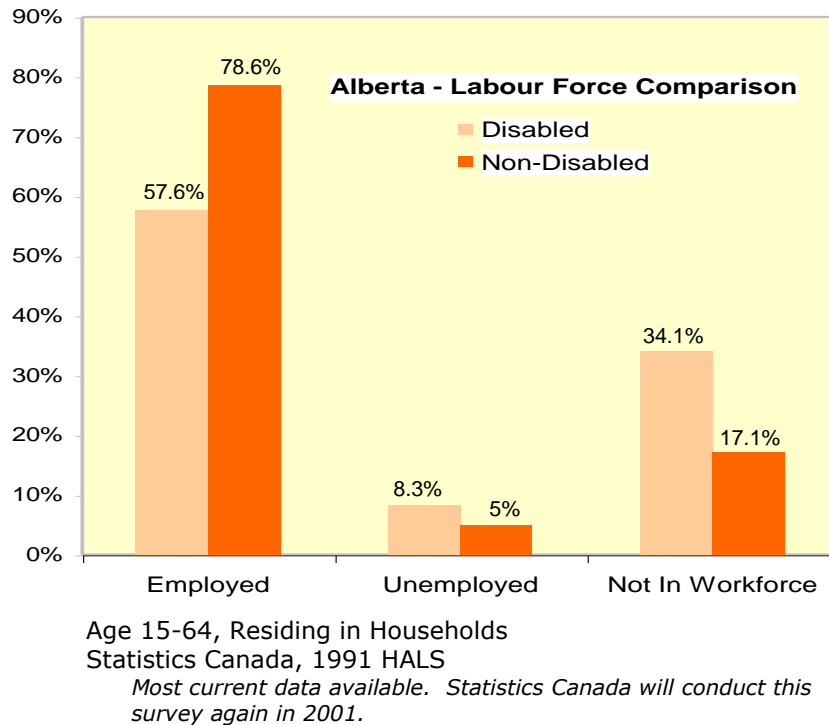**NQI Criteria, Section 7 – Organizational Performance**

Interview data suggests that within the system as a whole, there is a general tendency to measure inputs and outputs rather than outcomes.

13. It is recommended that government ministries and not-for-profit service providers include outcome measures within their coordinated performance management frameworks (see Recommendation #2).

14. It is recommended that relevant government ministries invest in research and demonstration projects aimed at improving the strategies that are used to deliver employment supports and services. It is also recommended that links with academia be developed to ensure valid and reliable research and evaluation approaches.

15. It is recommended that relevant government ministries and the leaders of not-for-profit service providers recognize and celebrate made-in-Alberta solutions. There are many excellent examples right here at home.

Also included in this document are sources of information related to improving the performance of organizations and measuring the effectiveness of particular strategies used to deliver employment supports and services (see Appendix 1 and 2).

I.   Introduction – The Issue

Volumes have been written about the experiences of persons with disabilities in Canada's labour market. In general, people with disabilities tend not to fare well in relation to employment. The following graph compares the experiences of disabled and non-disabled workers in Alberta.

Alberta - Labour Force Comparison

	Employed	Unemployed	Not In Workforce
Disabled	57.6%	8.3%	34.1%
Non-Disabled	78.6%	5%	17.1%

Age 15-64, Residing in Households
Statistics Canada, 1991 HALS
Most current data available. Statistics Canada will conduct this survey again in 2001.

The graph clearly demonstrates that there is a great deal of room to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

There are, of course, many variables that influence employment outcomes for all people. Some of these variables are controllable. Some are not. The focus here will be on selected variables that are wholly within the control of those who have an interest in employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

II.   Purpose and Organization of This Paper

The Alberta Disabilities Forum has a strong interest in improving employment outcomes for Albertans with disabilities. This document will make a contribution in this regard by taking general stock of where we are and making recommendations for future action.

The Forum believes that improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities is a top priority. Visionary leadership and bold, coordinated action are required if significant inroads are to be made and sustained. Non-strategic, piecemeal action will only result in small gains for a few people.

Of course, the Alberta Disabilities Forum does not pretend to have all of the answers. We do, however, believe that people with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers and other stakeholders have perspectives and wisdom that may be harnessed in the drive for better employment outcomes.

The purposes of this document are to:

1. Identify the characteristics of top-performing organizations from the literature. The assumption here is that top-performing organizations are more likely to achieve better service outcomes than are less competent organizations (in this case, better employment outcomes for people with disabilities).

2. Using the characteristics of top-performing organizations as a framework, report on what people with disabilities, their families, employers and service providers had to say about the supports and services that currently exist and about how to improve them.

3. Identify sources of information related to improving the performance of organizations and measuring the effectiveness of particular strategies used to deliver employment supports and services. These sources are identified in Appendix 2.

This document is presented in 10 parts. Included are: I. Introduction; II. Purpose and Organization of this Paper; III. General Methodology; IV. The Improvement Imperative; V. Applying the NQI Criteria; VI. Low Expectations Limit Potential; VII. Principles Underlying the NQI Criteria; VIII. Summary of NQI Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector; IX. Comparing the Quality Criteria of Top-Performers with Our Own Performance in Alberta; and X. Conclusion and Recommendations. Two appendices are included: NQI Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector and List of Resources.

III.   General Methodology

During the last decade, much has been written about the characteristics of top-performing organizations and the so-called 'quality movement'. Much of this literature originates in the business sector. Although not transferable across the board, it is generally agreed that many business models, approaches and methods may be adapted for use in the public and not-for-profit sectors.

In 1999, Canada's National Quality Institute (NQI) developed the *Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector*. These criteria are recognized around the world. They are based on extensive research and investigations of the workings of successful organizations in all sectors. Selected NQI criteria were used as the framework for this review. Interview questionnaires related to selected criteria were developed. These questionnaires were tailor made for people with disabilities and/or their families, employers and service providers.

A total of 50 interviews were conducted across the province: 15 persons with disabilities, 15 executive/senior managers of organizations, 15 employers of persons with disabilities, and 5 front-line service staff.

Interview participants made observations and recommendations to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Their perspectives are reported in this document. They are organized as they relate to selected NQI criteria.

Further, literature and Internet searches were undertaken to identify sources of information that will be useful to those who aim to improve their performance and employment outcomes for Albertans with disabilities.

IV.   The Improvement Imperative

The Quality Revolution

Powerful forces are changing the landscapes of both the business and public sectors. In business, for example, a whole new emphasis has been placed on satisfying customers and measuring corporate performance. This movement has been nothing less than a revolution. Empowered customers are demanding better goods and services. Businesses that satisfy their customers will survive and prosper. Those that don't will perish.

In the public and not-for-profit sectors too, citizens are demanding more effective public services, better value-for-money and greater accountability for the expenditure of public funds. As a result, more emphasis has been placed on measuring and improving performance in both sectors. However, progress to date is generally characterized as tentative and piecemeal.

Public and Not-For-Profit Sectors at a Crossroad

The Alberta Disabilities Forum believes that government ministries and service providers that are responsible for the delivery of employment supports and services owe it to citizens who use these services to be the very best that they can be. The stakes for people with disabilities are high. Improvements must be made. Otherwise, many people with disabilities will not develop their full potential and will continue to live in poverty. People with disabilities are tired of waiting. They do not want to wait for gradual improvements. They want results now, not near the end of their lives. Some government ministries and service providers may be satisfied with small incremental improvements. People whose lives are slipping away are not. They want action now.

> *"I feel pretty bad. I'm in my 50s. Most of the time I have been unemployed.*
> *I have had jobs but most of them were temporary. I haven't been able to*
> *save any money. I hate being poor."*
> > *Interview Participant*

Public sector and not-for-profit organizations that are responsible for the delivery of employment supports and services are at a crossroad. They can either satisfy themselves with small incremental improvements in performance or they can chart a bold new course.

The Alberta Disabilities Forum agrees with one of the interview participants who said that Alberta is rife for a performance revolution. The question is how, exactly, can government ministries and service-providers position themselves to achieve dramatic improvements in

employment outcomes? Once again, interview participants made observations and recommendations in this regard.

V. Applying the NQI Criteria

Significant improvements in employment outcomes would undoubtedly be gained if all organizations responsible for the delivery of employment supports and services were to use the NQI or other comparable criteria or standards as a framework for measuring and improving their performance. However, individual organizations do not exist in a vacuum. Each is an interdependent part of a larger system that is responsible for the delivery of employment supports and services. The Alberta Disabilities Forum is of the opinion that employment outcomes could be improved dramatically if the entire system coordinated its responsibilities and activities in relation to the NQI or other comparable criteria. This review, therefore, will focus both on individual organizations and the system as a whole. The following diagram depicts the major elements of the system and their primary responsibilities.
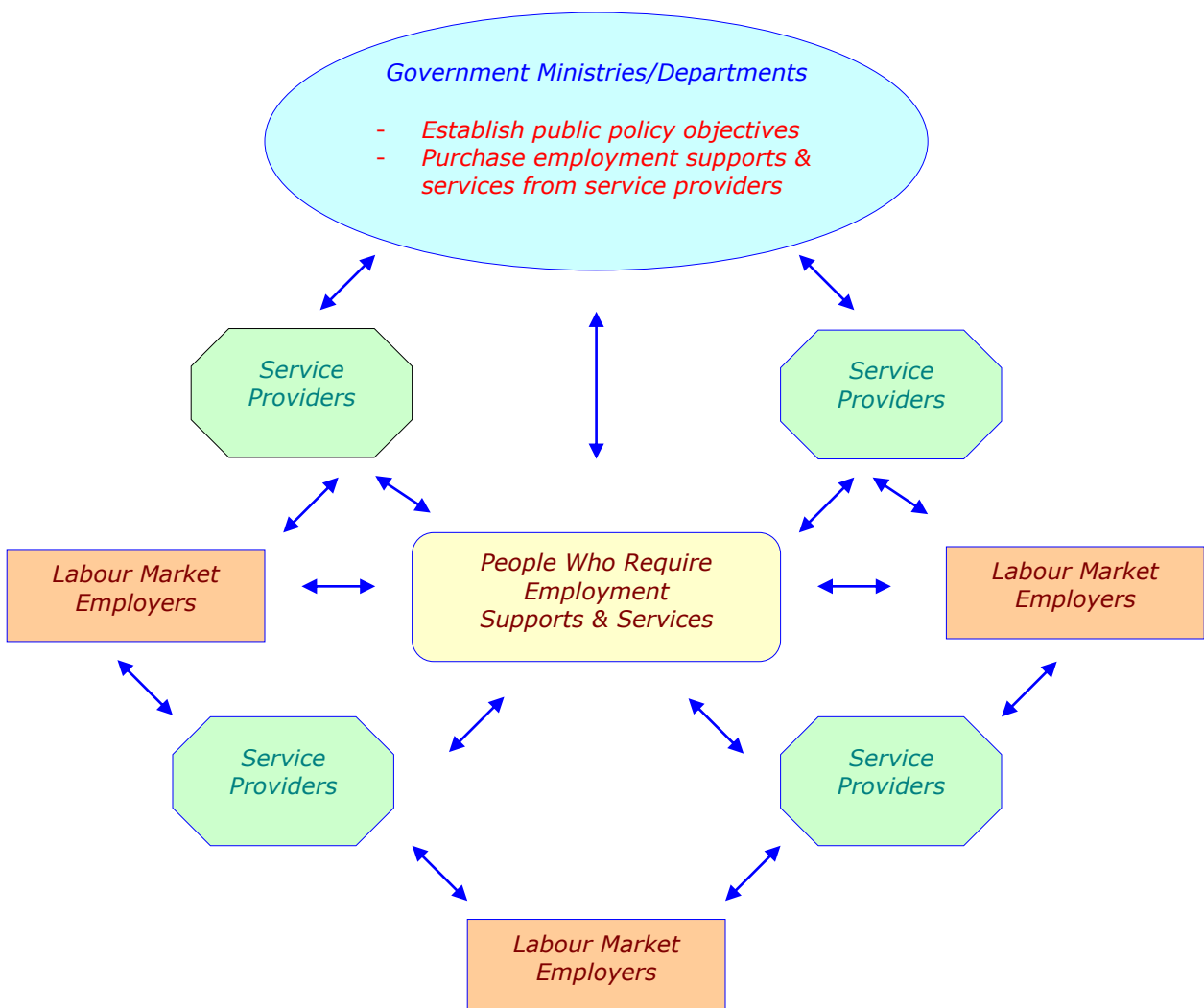
"Many organizations do deliver high quality supports and services. However, as a whole, the system that delivers employment supports and services for persons with disabilities is mediocre. I think we are rife for a quality revolution in Alberta."

Interview Participant

VI. Low Expectations Limit Potential

It was pointed out several times during the interviews that our expectations of people could either encourage or truncate their growth and development. One interview participant commented on how many times she had raised her own personal expectations of people with disabilities. She went on to say that her expectations were totally of her own making. She wondered how many people might have been limited by her attitudes.

> *"I'm sick of doing this kind of work. I guess people don't expect me to be able to do very much. I think I might surprise them."*
>
> *Interview Participant*

> *"Because of employer attitudes toward people with disabilities, many doors are closed to me before I even knock."*
>
> *Interview Participant*

No matter how well individual organizations or systems perform, our expectations and attitudes could limit what is possible. We must not be the ones to limit the growth and potential of others. Rather, we must ensure that our attitudes and beliefs support others to be all they can be.

VII. Principles Underlying the NQI Quality Criteria

The NQI Quality Criteria for the Public Sector are based upon the following principles:

Cooperation, Teamwork and Partnering

Teamwork is nurtured and recognized. Cooperation, within and between public service organizations and inside and outside sector borders is a cornerstone for the development of win-win relationships.

Leadership through Involvement and By Example

Developing a quality approach involves transforming both thinking and behavior. This can only be achieved if the management is actively involved in facilitating, reinforcing and leading the changes necessary for improvement.

Primary Focus on Clients/Stakeholders

To achieve goals, the primary aim of everyone must be to fully understand, meet and strive to exceed the needs of clients and stakeholders.

Respect for the Individual and Encouragement for People to Develop Their Full Potential

Critical for quality improvement are the values that foster mutual respect between people who work together; communication and personal development are directly related to these values.

Contribution of Each and Every Individual

Everyone must have the opportunity to use his or her creativity and make a positive contribution to the pursuit of excellence.

Process-Oriented and Prevention-Based Strategy

Any organization, in any sector, is made up of a network of independent processes that add value. Improvement is achieved through changing these processes to improve the total system. Managing by focusing purely on results alone is fruitless, since results are determined by the system in use. If the system is not changed in a fundamental way, the results will not improve. To facilitate long-term improvements, a mindset of prevention rather than correction must be applied to eliminate the causes of errors and waste.

Continuous Improvements of Methods and Outcomes

No matter how much improvement has been accomplished, there are always practical ways of doing even better, and of providing improved service delivery or products.

Factual Approach to Decision-Making

Decisions are based upon measured data and an understanding of the cause and effect mechanisms at work. They are not simply based on instinct, authority or anecdotal data.

Obligations to Stakeholders, Including a Concern for Responsibility to Society

An organization is seen as part of society, with important responsibilities to satisfy the expectations of its people and all other stakeholders.

VIII. Summary of NQI Quality Criteria for the Public Sector

A summary of the NQI Criteria, organized in seven sections, is outlined below. A more comprehensive description of the Criteria is included as Appendix 1.

Section 1 – Leadership

This section focuses on those who have primary responsibility and accountability for the organization's performance, usually referred to as executive/senior management. Good leadership is based on a foundation of ethics and values that reflect quality principles. In this section, the quality of leadership within an organization is measured by evidence related to the following:

1.1   Strategic direction (mission, mandate, accountability framework, objectives, monitoring and evaluation)

1.2   Leadership involvement in quality improvement

1.3   Results of leadership actions.

Section 2 – Planning

This section examines linkages between the planning process and each of strategic direction, improvement and measurement of performance.

2.1   Development and content of improvement plan

2.2   Assessment of the organizations strengths and opportunities for improvement

2.3   Results of actions through improvement planning

2.4   Continuous improvement.

Section 3 – Citizen/Client Focus

This section examines the organization's focus on client-centered service and/or product delivery, to achieve client/stakeholder satisfaction.

3.1   Voice of the client/stakeholder

3.2   Management of client/stakeholder relationships

3.3   Measurement of client/stakeholder satisfaction

3.4   Results of actions on citizen/client focus

3.5   Continuous improvement.

Section 4 – People Focus

This section examines the development of a human resource plan for meeting the organization's goals and achieving excellence through people. Also examined are the organization's efforts to foster and support an environment that encourages people to reach their full potential. People are the prime resource of any organization and success is directly related to how the organization develops its human resources. Treating people with respect and trust, and providing them with the opportunity to contribute ideas or speak out on issues of concern, without fear of retribution, are of paramount importance.

4.1   Human resource planning

4.2   Participatory environment

     a. The organization involves its people in addressing issues related to well being, for example, health, safety and environmental concerns

     b. Barriers preventing people from doing their best work are identified and removed

4.3   Continuous learning

4.4   Employee satisfaction

4.5   Results of actions from a focus on people

4.6   Continuous improvement.

Section 5 – Process Management

This section examines how work is organized to support the organization's strategic direction, with a focus on the management of key processes as well as continuous

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improvement. Process management applies to all activities within the organization, in particular to "key" processes; those that are critical for success and normally have a major impact on meeting citizen/client needs. Process improvement priorities are derived from goals established within the improvement plan.

Processes are value-adding transformations involving people and other resources such as materials and information, and may be of two basic types: service related or product related. Service related processes include data and information, and the expertise to transform them into value for the client. Product related processes include the raw materials and expertise from various functions to manufacture a product. Other factors include customer requirements, measurement data, team effectiveness, levels of individual knowledge and skills, leadership, training and development, etc.

It is important to simplify and prioritize these key processes as they relate to the primary mission of the organization. They need to be continually analyzed and improved.

5.1   Process definition

5.2   Process control

5.3   Process improvement

5.4   Results of actions in process management

5.5   Continuous improvement.

Section 6 – Supplier/Partner Focus

This section examines the organization's external relationships with other organizations, institutions and/or alliances that are critical to its meetings its strategic objectives.

6.1   Partnering

6.2   Results of actions in supplier focus

6.3   Continuous improvement.

Section 7 – Organizational Performance

This section examines the outcomes from the overall efforts for quality improvement, and their impact on organizational accomplishments.

7.1   Service/product quality

7.2   Organization results

7.3   Client/stakeholder satisfaction

7.4   Employee satisfaction and morale

7.5   Financial performance.

IX. Comparing the Quality Criteria of Top-Performers with Our Own Performance in Alberta

"Quality is not the absence of defects as defined by management, but the presence of value as defined by people who use supports and services."

Unknown

"Let's stop blaming the things we can't change and work on the things we can".

Interview Participant

The following table highlights some of the perspectives, observations and insights of interview participants who were asked to comment on how well their own and other organizations performed in relation to selected criteria. In the final analysis, the observations and insights of interview participants related to virtually all of the NQI criteria.

NQI Quality Criteria For the Public Sector	Observations, Perspectives and Comments Of Interview Participants
Section 1 – Leadership	3 15 of 15 (100%) of the organizations (executive/senior managers) interviewed reported they had mission or mandate statements.
	3 All (100%) reported that they used strategic planning processes to chart their courses.
	3 All (100%) reported that they monitored the extent to which strategic objectives were met.
	3 11 (73%) reported that they needed to improve their knowledge base in relation to measuring the performance within their organizations.
Section 2 – Planning	3 3 of 15 (20%) of organizations reported that they had formal improvement plans. The rest reported to have informal plans.
	3 3 (20%) observed that the system, as a whole, did not have an improvement plan.
	3 2 (13%) commented that many organizations do deliver top quality supports and services. However, as a whole, the system that delivers employment supports and services is mediocre, at best.
	3 5 (33%) commented that there is no formal planning at the systems level.

Section 3 – Citizen/Client Focus	3	13 of 15 (87%) people with disabilities interviewed reported that they were satisfied that the organizations that they received employment supports and services from were focused on their needs and desires.
	3	8 (53%) reported that their vocational aptitudes and interests were taken into account when planning and executing training or service plans.
	3	13 (87%) reported that the system as a whole was not well coordinated or helpful. For example, 12 (80%) participants commented on how income support program policies acted as barriers to improving employment outcomes.
	3	13 (87%) identified employer attitudes toward people with disabilities as a barrier.
	3	9 (60%) reported dissatisfaction with temporary jobs, low wages and the lack of basic benefits.
	3	1 (7%) participant commented that the focus was on "jobs," not "careers for people with disabilities."
	3	5 (33%) participants commented on how difficult it was to obtain assistive devices for work.
	3	6 (40%) commented on the lack of relevant training in relation to the demands of the labour market (e.g., computer training).
	3	1 (6%) participant pointed out that a lot of money is invested in teaching people how to fill out application forms and writing resumes. The participant observed that the fewest number of jobs are gained by responding to job advertisements. It was recommended that a greater investment be made in other job finding strategies such as tapping the "hidden job market."
	3	2 (13%) participants commented on how it seemed that the majority of people with disabilities ended up working in a small number of labour market sectors (e.g., food service industry and the janitorial sector). It was recommended that other labour market sectors be penetrated (e.g., trades, high tech. Industry).
	3	3 (20%) observed that little effort is focused on employment for people with more severe disabilities.
Section 4 – People Focus	3	13 of 15 (87%) organizations (executive/senior managers) interviewed commented on the extreme difficulty of recruiting qualified staff.
	3	12 (80%) reported high levels of staff turnover.
	3	12 (80%) commented on the high expense of training and orienting large numbers of unqualified staff. 12 (87%) organizations stated they received no funding to support basic staff training.
	3	Small progressive organizations appear more able to retain

staff. 5 of 5 (100%) staff members interviewed attributed their longevity to exciting, progressive work environments.

	3	13 of 15 (87%) people with disabilities interviewed identified low wages as the major driver of staff turnover.
	3	3 of 15 (20%) organizations reported that formal training was provided to employees in the areas of performance management and quality improvement. Organizations that did not provide training reported that the cost of training was the most significant barrier.
Section 5 – Process Management	3	15 of 15 (100%) reported that they continuously made efforts to improve their work processes.
	3	2 of 15 (13%) organizations reported that they used formal process measures as one indicator of efficiency and effectiveness.
Section 6 – Supplier/Partner Focus	3	12 of 15 organizations reported that their funders were top-down oriented rather than partnership driven.
	3	14 (93%) stated that there was a general lack of trust between funding bodies and service providers.
	3	5 (33%) reported they had cooperative relationships with their funders.
	3	8 (53%) reported that they feared having their funding arbitrarily removed or reduced.
	3	12 (80%) reported that they received no support from funders for research or pilot projects.
	3	1 (7%) observed that the system thinks it is in the business of delivering employment supports and services, rather than in the business of achieving employment outcomes for its clients. The interview participant pointed out that there is a big difference between the two.
	3	10 of 15 (67%) employers interviewed reported that their attitudes about the capabilities of people with disabilities had improved over time.
	3	7 (46%) employers reported that it was an extra cost to them to hire people with disabilities (e.g., work site modifications, training costs).
	3	12 (80%) employers reported that they did not feel confident in providing training on the job for some employees.
	3	12 (80%) employers expressed satisfaction with the training provided by service providers.
	3	2 (13%) organizations identified a need to support employers to hire more people with disabilities (e.g., tax incentives).

Section 7 – Organizational Performance	3	9 of 15 (60%) organizations interviewed tended to measure inputs and outputs rather than results or outcomes.
	3	10 (67%) stated that their funders focused mostly on measuring fiscal expenditures and units of service delivered, rather than outcomes.
	3	1 (7%) reported aiming for Malcolm Baldridge certification.
	3	1 (7%) reported to have been shortlisted for an award by the NQI.
	3	1 (7%) organization (representing an association of organizations) is aiming to have its own standards aligned with those of the NQI and Quality Council of Alberta.

X. Conclusion and Recommendations

"Quality is everybody's business."
Interview Participant

NQI Criteria, Sections 1 & 2 – Leadership and Planning

From all of the data collected, it is clear that the system as a whole lacks a clearly articulated and supported framework or approach to performance management (planning, performance measurement and performance improvement). There appears to be little appreciation that the lack of a coordinated approach limits progress in relation to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Currently, different parts of the same system cannot have even the most basic conversation about performance management because there is neither a common language nor a common framework.

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9. It is recommended that relevant government ministries immediately increase funding for agency staff salaries in order that service providers can recruit and retain qualified human resources.

87% of organizations stated that they received no funding to support basic staff training.

10. It is recommended that relevant government ministries recognize that most not-for-profit organizations do not have the fiscal resources necessary to provide ongoing training for service personnel. It is also recommended that relevant government ministries provide not-for-profit service providers with the resources necessary to train their staff.

NQI Criteria, Section 5 – Process Management

Only 13% of the organizations interviewed reported using formal process measures as one indicator of efficiency and effectiveness.

11. It is recommended that both not-for-profit organizations and relevant government ministries implement modern work process management techniques to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Work in this regard should commence immediately.

NQI Criteria, Section 6 – Partner/Supplier Focus

Overall, interview data reveals considerable strain in the relationships between government funders and not-for-profit service providers.

12. It is recommended that relevant government ministries and leaders from the not-for-profit service sector work together to identify common concerns and make specific plans to improve their relationships and the performance of the system. Work in this regard should commence immediately.

NQI Criteria, Section 7 – Organizational Performance

Interview data suggests that within the system as a whole, there is a general tendency to measure inputs and outputs rather than outcomes.

13. It is recommended that government ministries and not-for-profit service providers include outcome measures within their coordinated performance management frameworks (see Recommendation #2).

14. It is recommended that relevant government ministries invest in research and demonstration projects aimed at improving the strategies that are used to deliver

employment supports and services. It is also recommended that links with academia be developed to ensure valid and reliable research and evaluation approaches.

15. It is recommended that relevant government ministries and the leaders of not-for-profit service providers recognize and celebrate made-in-Alberta solutions. There are many excellent examples right here at home.

"Talk is cheap. Where's the beef?"
Interview Participant

The Alberta Disabilities Forum wishes to sincerely thank all that gave generously of their time and wisdom during interviews.

Appendix 1

NQI Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector

Listed below are the NQI Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector (1999).

Section 1 – Leadership

This section focuses on those who have primary responsibility and accountability for the organization's performance, usually referred to as senior management. Good leadership is based on a foundation of ethics and values that reflect quality principles.

1.1. Strategic Direction

    a. A mission and mandate statement is in place and has been communicated to all levels in the organization.

    b. Key success factors and priorities have been determined and are linked to strategic direction, for example, the accountability framework for the organization.

    c. Strategic planning incorporates ambitious objectives necessary to achieve the mission and mandate, and is communicated to all levels in the organization.

    d. Implementation of strategic planning is monitored and reviewed.

1.2. Leadership Involvement

    a. The senior management team demonstrates a commitment to quality improvement, for example, through direct involvement in improvement initiatives.

    b. The senior management team works together to reduce barriers between functions, and promote teamwork and open communications.

    c. Responsibility, accountability and leadership for improvement are shared throughout the organization.

    d. Reward and recognition for senior management are linked to quality principles.

    e. Responsibility to society in general is considered in the decision-making processes.

    f. Ideas and practices on quality improvement are shared internally, with other public service organizations and sectors.

1.3. Results of Leadership Actions

    a. Indicators of effectiveness of leadership in setting strategic direction and demonstrating leadership in the quality principles.

    b. Indicators of the level of understanding in the organization, of the mission, mandate and strategic direction.

    c. Extent of direct involvement by senior management in the implementation of quality principles and in improvement initiatives.

    d. Extent to which shared leadership on quality is demonstrated throughout the organization.

    e. Extent of senior management involvement in sharing ideas and quality practices internally and with other public service organizations and sectors.

Section 2 – Planning

This section examines the planning process in regards to the linkage of planning to strategic direction/intent, in regards to improvement and the measurement of performance to assess progress.

2.1   Development and Content of Improvement Plan

   a. Improvement planning is derived from overall strategic direction (links to 1.1(c)).

   b. Key improvement issues have been identified, prioritized, measured and improvement goals set, including any actions regarding external partnering arrangements for the delivery of client services.

   c. The improvement plan has been communicated inside and outside the organization, and is monitored and reviewed.

2.2   Assessment

   a. Formal assessments, using criteria that reflect quality principles, are conducted to determine the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

   b. The organization analyzes assessment findings to help determine priorities for improvement.

2.3   Results of Actions Through Improvement Planning

   a. Indicators of the degree of understanding, throughout the organization, of the priorities and goals established in the improvement plan.

   b. Indicators of effective implementation of the improvement plan throughout the organization.

   c. Levels and trends in quality assessment findings (for example, ratings and/or scores).

2.4   Continuous Improvement

   a. The organization evaluates, refines and works at improving its planning and assessment processes.

Section 3 – Citizen/Client Focus

This section examines the organization's focus on client-centered service and/or product delivery, to achieve client/stakeholder satisfaction.

3.1   Voice of the Client/Stakeholder

   a. Clients/stakeholders and/or client groups have been defined.

   b. Information is gathered, analyzed and evaluated to determine client/stakeholder needs, including evaluation of potential partnering and/or third party service delivery arrangements.

   c. The future needs of current and potential clients are gathered and used.

3.2 Management of Client/stakeholder Relationships

a. There is full consensus, throughout the organization, on the importance of meeting documented service standards, and of achieving client/stakeholder satisfaction.

b. There are methods and processes in place that make it easy for clients/stakeholders to provide input on their needs, seek assistance and complain.

c. The organization responds to client/stakeholder inquiries and complaints promptly and effectively.

d. The organization has developed a good level of client/stakeholder confidence in its services and/or products provided, through meeting service delivery standards and/or product specifications.

3.3 Measurement of Client/Stakeholder Satisfaction

a. The organization measures client/stakeholder satisfaction to gain information for improvement.

3.4 Results of Actions on Citizen/Client Focus

a. Levels and trends of performance in dealing with client/stakeholder inquiries and complaints compared to established service delivery standards.

b. Levels and trends in regard to client/stakeholder appeals, and, where applicable, in regard to product related areas such as refunds, repairs, and replacements.

3.5 Continuous Improvement

a. The organization evaluates and works at improving its approach to citizen/client focus.

Section 4 – People Focus

This section examines the development of a human resource plan for meeting the goals of the organization, and achieving excellence through people. Also examined are the organization's efforts to foster and support an environment that encourages people to reach their full potential. People are the prime resource of any organization and success is directly related to how the organization develops its human resources. Treating people in the organization with respect and trust, and providing them with the opportunity to contribute ideas or speak out on issues of concern, without fear of retribution, are of paramount importance.

4.1 Human Resource Planning

a. Human resource planning supports the organization's goals and objectives.

b. There are methods in place to recruit, select and manage the performance of people, and steps are taken to minimize any detrimental effects of restructuring.

4.2 Participatory Environment

c. The organization ensures that people, at all levels, understand the strategic direction and the improvement plan, and are committed to achieving its goals and purpose.

d. People are involved in improvement initiatives.

e. People's suggestions and ideas are encouraged and implemented.

f. People are encouraged to innovate and take risks in order to achieve goals.

g. The organization involves its people in addressing issues related to well being, for example, health, safety and environmental concerns.

h. Barriers that prevent people from doing their best work are identified and removed.

4.3 Continuous Learning

a. The organization determines training and development needs to meet goals in the improvement plan, and responds to these needs.

b. The organization evaluates the effectiveness of training and development programs.

c. The organization encourages people to widen and/or expand their individual skills.

4.4 Employee Satisfaction

a. The organization measures people satisfaction at all levels, and links the feedback to future improvement opportunities.

b. The organization identifies the contribution of its people, and links recognition to the quality principles and quality improvement objectives in the organization.

4.5 Results of Actions From a Focus on People

a. Indicators of the effectiveness of training and education, in particular in the area of quality improvement principles and methods.

b. Indicators of involvement levels in improvement activities that link directly to the goals and objectives of the organization.

c. Indicators of awareness and involvement in addressing issues related to well being, for example, health, safety and environmental concerns.

d. Levels and trends of employee suggestions and ideas submitted, and implemented.

e. Levels and trends in employee turnover rates, absenteeism and grievances.

4.6 Continuous Improvement

a. The organization evalues and works on improving its focus on people.

Section 5 – Process Management

This section examines how work is organized to support the organization's strategic direction, with a focus on the management of key processes as well as continuous improvement. Process management applies to all activities within the organization, in particular to "key" processes; those that are critical for success and normally have a major impact on meeting citizen/client needs.

Process improvement priorities are derived from goals established within the improvement plan. Processes are value-adding transformations involving people and other resources such as materials and information. Processes may be of two basic types: service related or product related. Service processes include data and information, and the expertise to transform them

into value for the client. Product related processes include the raw materials and expertise from various functions to manufacture the product. Other factors include customer requirements, measurement data, team effectiveness, levels of individual knowledge and skills, leadership, training and development, etc. It is important to focus on the key processes and to simplify and prioritize these processes as they relate to the primary mission of the organization. It is these key processes that need to be continually analyzed and improved.

5.1   Process Definition

    a. Key processes capable of delivering services and/or products that meet client needs, are designed and documents.

5.2   Process Control

    a. Key processes are monitored to ensure consistency in services and/or products provided.

    b. Problems are analyzed, root causes identified, and actions taken to prevent recurrence.

5.3   Process Improvement

    a. Key processes are analyzed to determine opportunities for continuous improvement, through incremental refinement and/or fundamental redesign, including potential for reallocation of service deliver.

    b. Process improvements are implemented and monitored, and all changes are documented to ensure consistency in service delivery and/or products provided.

    c. Clients and suppliers are involved in continuous improvement activity, for example, in problem-solving and improvement teams.

    d. External information is gathered and used to compare performance and to identify opportunities/ideas for improvement.

5.4   Results of Actions in Process Management

    a. Indicators of the effectiveness of the design process for new services and/or products, such as cycle times and frequency of process design changes.

    b. Levels and trends in process capability and cycle time for key service delivery and/or production processes.

5.5   Continuous Improvement

    a. The organization evaluates and works on improving its approach to process management.

Section 6 – Supplier/Partner Focus

This section examines the organization's external relationships with other organizations, institutions and/or alliances that are critical to its meetings its strategic objectives.

6.1   Partnering

    a. The organization selects capable suppliers/service providers through the use of appropriate information and criteria.

b. The organization establishes cooperative working relationships with key suppliers/service providers, and encourages innovation to assure and improve the quality of services and products.

c. The organization shares information with its key suppliers/service providers to help them improve.

d. The organization involves its key suppliers/service providers in the development of new services and/or products.

6.2 Results of Actions in Supplier Focus

a. Levels and trends of suppliers/service providers in their process capabilities and cycle times.

b. Levels and trends in the quality and value of provided services and/or products.

c. Extent of involvement of suppliers/service providers in new services and/or product planning and development.

6.3 Continuous Improvement

a. The organization evaluates and works on improving its focus on suppliers/partners.

Section 7 – Organizational Performance

This section examines the outcomes from the overall efforts for quality improvement, and their impact on organizational accomplishments.

7.1 Service/Product Quality

a. Levels and trends of the quality of services and/or products provided, for example, attainment of service standards and/or product specifications, and indicators of reliability, error rates, response times, etc.

b. Organization Results

a. Levels and trends in overall performance accomplishments and measures of program outcomes, i.e., the actual impact of the organization's actions.

7.2 Client/stakeholder Satisfaction

a. Levels and trends in client/stakeholder satisfaction.

b. Levels and trends in client/stakeholder confidence.

c. Levels and trends in client reach.

7.3 Employee satisfaction and Morale

a. Levels and trends in employee satisfaction and morale.

7.4 Financial Performance

a. Levels and trends in measures of overall financial performance (i.e., adherence to budgets, expenditure management, revenues management, cost reduction/control, asset management).

Appendix 2

List of Resources

Leadership

Belasco, J. A. & Stayer, R. C. (1993). *Flight of the Buffalo. Soaring to Excellence, Learning to Let Employees Lead*. New York: Warner Books.

Brown, M. G., Hitchcock, D. E., & Willard, M. L. (1994). *Why TQM Fails and What to Do About It*. New York: Irwin Professional Publishing.

Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta). *Aboriginal Rehabilitation Counsellor's Training Manual*. Edmonton: Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta).

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Conner, D. R. (1998). *Leading at the Edge of Chaos. How to Create the Nimble Organization*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc..

Drucker, P. F. (1980). *Managing in Turbulent Times*. New York: HarperBusiness.

Drucker, P. F. (1986). *Managing for Results*. New York: HarperBusiness.

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Juran, J. M. (1989). *Juran on Leadership for Quality. An Executive Handbook*. Toronto: The Free Press.

Katzenbach, J. R. (1998). *Teams at the Top. Unleashing the Potential of Both Teams and Individual Leaders*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (1995). *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Robinson, D. G. & Robinson J. C. (1995). *Performance Consulting. Moving Beyond Training*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Scholtes, P. R. (1998). *The Leader's Handbook. A Guide to Inspiring Your People and Managing the Daily Workflow*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.

Organizational Effectiveness

Brown, S. A. (1992). *Total Quality Service. How Organizations Use It to Create a Competitive Advantage.* Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc..

Brown, S. A. (1995). *What Customers Value Most. How to Achieve Business Transformation by Focusing on Processes That Touch Your Customers*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.

Brown, S. A. (1997). *Breakthrough Customer Service. Best Practices of Leaders in Customer Support.* Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd..

Bryson, J. M. (1988). *Strategic Planning For Public and Nonprofit Organizations. A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

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Constantino, C.A. & Sickles Merchant, C. (1996). *Designing Conflict Management Systems. A Guide to Creating Productive and Healthy Organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

David. F. R. (1995). *Concepts of Strategic Management (5th ed.).* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Drucker, P. F. (1995). *Managing in a Time of Great Change.* New York: Truman Talley Books/Dutton.

Fogg, C. D. (1994). *Team-Based Strategic Planning. A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating and Implementing the Process.* New York: Amacom.

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Ostroff, F. (1999). *The Horizontal Organization. What the Organization of the Future Actually Looks Like and How It Delivers Value to Customers.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Peters, T. (1994). *The Pursuit of Wow! Every Person's Guide to Topsy-Turvy Times*. New York: Vintage Books.

Rackham, N., Friedman, L. & Ruff, R. (1996). *Getting Partnering Right. How Market Leaders are Creating Long-Term Competitive Advantage*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill.

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Public Policy

Wharf, B. & McKenzie, B. (1998). *Connecting Policy to Practice in the Human Services.* Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Wildavsky, A. (1996). *Speaking Truth to Power. The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Web Sites

Adaptive Technology Lab
http://www.washington.edu/tech_home/atl/DOCS/atl.use.html

Ability Network
http://www.ability/ns/ca

AccessAbility Resource Centre
http://www.erin/utoronto.ca/services/access/

ARC Services of Macomb
http://www.comnet/org/local/orgs/arc/index.html

The ARC Disability Resource List
http://www.thearc.org/misc/dislnkin.html#lists

Assistive Technology On-Line
http://www.asel.udel.edu/at-online/assistive.html

BCWorkInfoNet (BCWIN)
http://www.workinfonet.bc.ca/

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)
http://www.ccrw.org

Cantor & Associates, Workplace Accommodation Consultants
http://www.interlog.com/~acantor

Centrelink
http://www.workright.ort.au/archive/Media%20Releases/Minister%20Smith%2007April.htm

Closing the Gap Resource Directory
http://www.closingthegapcom/

Disabled Businesspersons Association (DBA)
http://www.web-link.com/dba/dba.html

Disability Employment Action Centre Inc. (DEAC)
http://www.vicnet.net.au/vicnet/community/deac.html

Disability Net (Good Practice Survey)
http://www.disabilitynet.co.uk/info/employment/index.html

Disability Information Resource Centre – South Australia (DIRC)
http://www.dircsa.org.au/

Disabled People's International (DPI)
http://www.dpi.org/links/html

DisOrgNet
http://www.independentliving.org/cgi-in/cgiswrap/indliv/donsearch.pl

DO-IT Project (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)
http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/Programs/programs.html

Dupont
http://www.dupont.com/corp/people/disabled

The Employability Institute in Vejbystrand
http://www.academy.bastad.se/~ami/amieng.shmtl

Employment Support Institute
http://www.vcu.edu/busweb/esi/

Face to Face
http://www.indie.ca/f2f

GATEWAYS
http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/gateways/intro.html

GLADNET (the Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training)
http://www.gladnet.org/

Integration of Handicapped Pupils in the Mainstream School System
http://www.uvm.dk/handicap.htm

Integrated Network of Disability Information & Education (INDIE)
http://www.indie.ca

Job Accommodation Network in Canada (JANCANA)
http://www.janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homecan.htm

LEAP/CIL (Centre for Independent Living)
http://www.janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/links/disres.htm

National Clearing House of Rehabilitation Training
http://www.nchrtm.okstate.edu/index_3.html

National Federation of the Blind
http://www.nfb.org

National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDAR)
http://www.nidar.ca/textonly/textonly.htm

National Institute for Life Planning
http://www.sonic.net.nilp

National Organization on Disability (NOD)
http://www.nod.org/

National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
http://www.rit.edu/NTID/services.html

National Transition Network
http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/htn/

Neil Squire Foundation
http://www.neilsquire.ca/text/ps-7.htm

NETWERCC
http://www.workinfonet.bc.ca/lmcidb/resource.cfm?pResID=149

Network for Persons with Disabilities (NEWD)
http://www.ability.ns.ca/entrepreneur

One-Stop Career Center Systems
http://www.icesa.org/national/docs/1stop2.html

Opportunity Knocks
http://www.fdetc.org/opportun.htm

ORW (Opportunities through Rehabilitation and Work Society)
http://www.corp.direct.ca/orw/who/tindex.html

The Pacer Centre
http://www.pacer.org

Regulation & Compliance
http://www.wgl.com/hr/regcomp.html

Tetra Society of North America
http://www.orcn.ahs.uwo.ca/TETRA/TSNA2.html

Trace Research and Development Center
http://www.trace.wisc.edu/

Treasury Board
http://www.interlog.com/~ceda/humanrights.html#Legislation

Upshaw
http://www.wwnet.net/~upshaw

Western Australian Disability Services Commission
http://www.dsc.wa.gov.au/

Wide Area Employment Network (WAEN)
http://www.waen.org

WorkAble Network – Vocational Training & Employment
http://www.workright.org.au/intro.html

WORK*ink*, The Virtual Employment Resource Centre
http://www.workink.com

WorkSearch
http://www.worksearch.gc.ca

Workwire
http://www.workwire.com/

World Association for Supported Employment
http://www.xs4all.nl/~ckamp/serv.html