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Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society
Institut de recherche et de développement sur l'intégration et la société

The Employment of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Canada: A Statistical Profile

*Researched and written by
Cameron Crawford,
Director of Research, IRIS*

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Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS)
Kinsmen Building, York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto (North York), Ontario M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 661-9611
Fax (416) 661-5701
TDD: (416) 661-2023
www.irisinstitute.ca

Researcher and Author

Cameron Crawford

Cameron Crawford is Director of Research,
Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS).

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The Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS) provides research, new ways of thinking, inspiration and education to advance the citizenship, inclusion, human rights and well-being of people with intellectual and other disabilities. It builds on the legacy L'Institut Roehar Institute. IRIS is an independent Canadian research, policy, social development and educational think tank for the community living movement in collaboration with the broader disability community.

IRIS' specific areas of research and resource development are: social inclusion and life beyond institutions; disability-related supports; education, literacy and learning; child development and family life; human rights, ethics and technology; personal safety and security, employment and income; social policy and change.

IRIS' grounding assumptions are that, like others, people with intellectual and other disabilities want to be safe, included, valued, equal, free. IRIS:

- Liaises and collaborates with other experts;
- Analyzes the social and economic realities facing people with intellectual and other disabilities and gives voice to their lived experiences;
- Links issues of disability to broader research, policy, program and social development issues and agendas;
- Attracts and develops skilled researchers and analysts;
- Distributes others' research and resources that warrant positive attention;
- Provides a broad Canadian perspective and in-depth coverage;
- Ensures its research is non-partisan, objective and meets the highest quality standards;
- Points to supportive policy and program options; and
- Helps move research and new knowledge into action through seminars, presentations, training and other knowledge mobilization strategies.

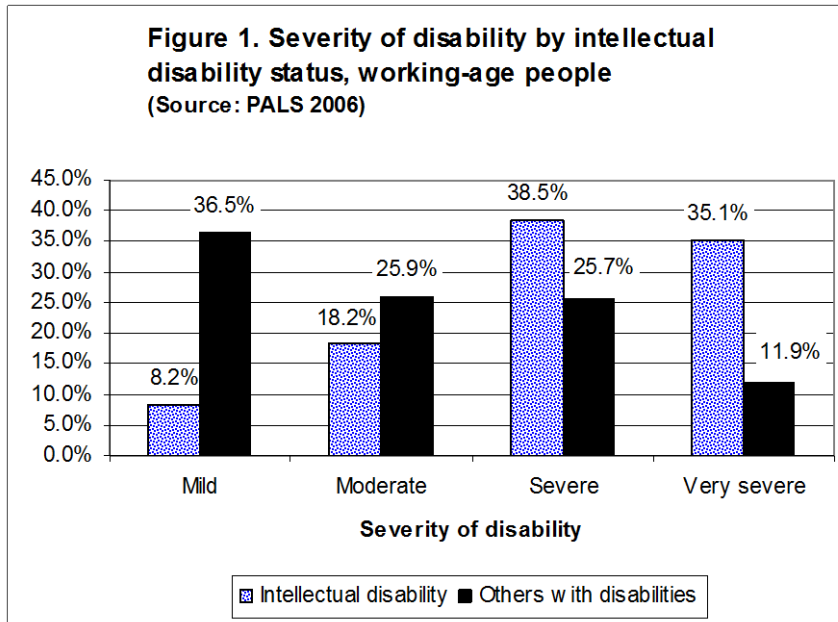
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Executive Summary

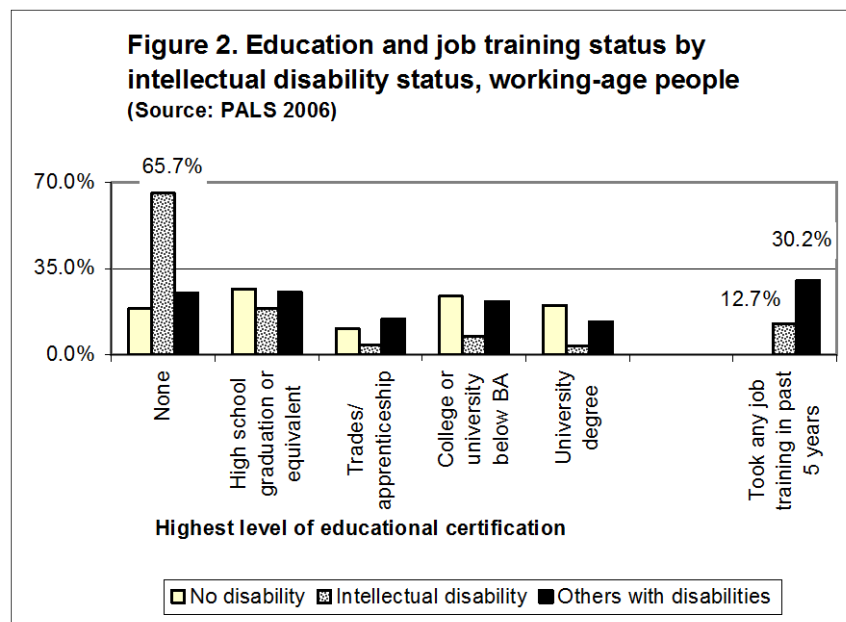
This report shows that people with intellectual disabilities are highly vulnerable with respect to employment and the open labour market in Canada. Depending on how 'intellectual disability' is defined, from about 1% to 3% of the population has this disability. In many jurisdictions it is referred to as 'developmental disability'. It involves significant limitations in intellectual functions and behaviours required for everyday social life and in practical skills that most people perform without major difficulty.



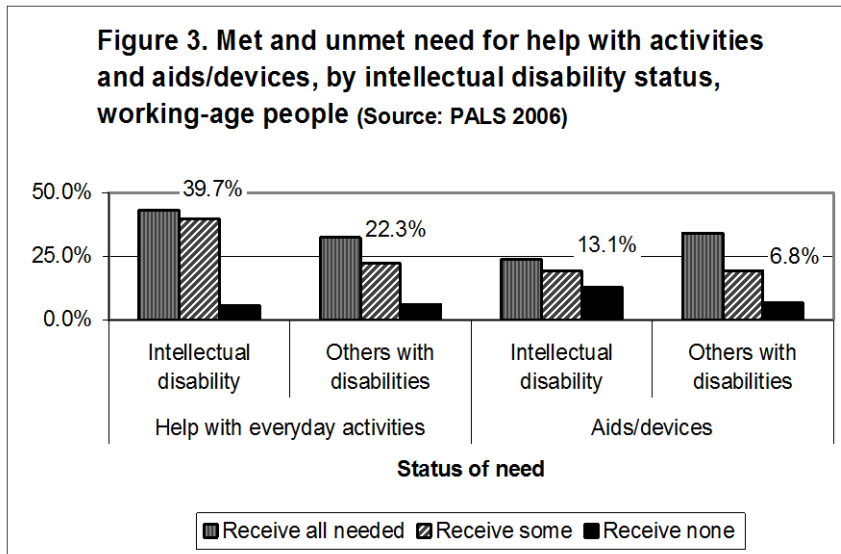
Canada's flagship disability survey, the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) of 2006, yields an estimate of 0.7% of the working-age population (15 to 64 years) with intellectual disabilities. PALS, then, yields a conservative estimate of the

prevalence of this disability that reflects a quite severely disabled group of people; they are much more likely than others to have disabilities that Statistics Canada classifies as 'severe' or 'very severe' (Figure 1).

The education level of people with intellectual disabilities is much lower than that of others with disabilities and people without



disabilities; two-thirds have no formal educational accreditation, not even high school graduation. They are also considerably less likely than others with



disabilities to have taken work-related training in the past five years (Figure 2).

People with intellectual disabilities are nearly twice as likely as others with disabilities to have partly-met needs for help with everyday activities such as meal preparation, everyday

housework, heavy household chores, getting to appointments/ errands, personal finances, child care because of the respondent's disability, personal care, nursing care/ medical treatment at home and moving about at home. They are also about twice as likely as others with disabilities to have none of their needs met for assistive aids / devices, such as for mobility, agility, hearing, seeing, communicating, learning and pain management (Figure 3).

Only about a quarter of people with intellectual disabilities were working when PALS was conducted compared with about half of others with disabilities and about three-quarters of people without disabilities. People with intellectual disabilities are about six times more likely than others to have never worked (Figure 4).

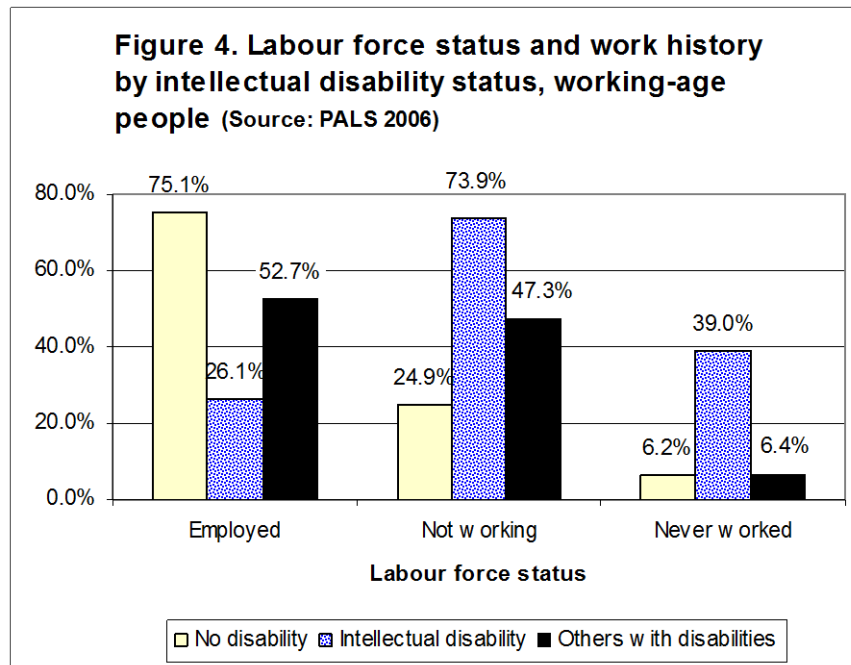
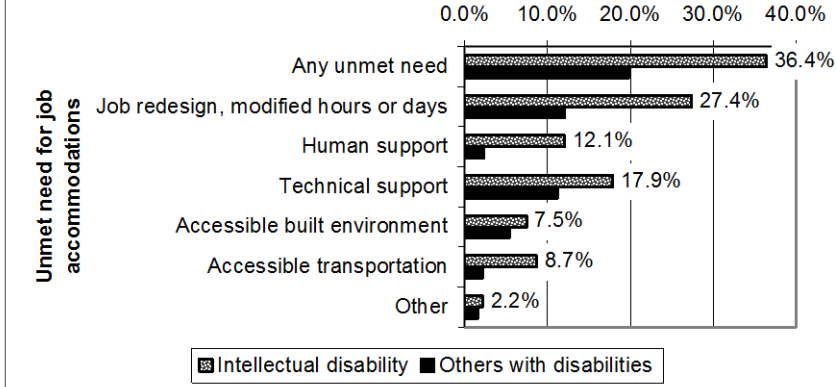


Figure 5. Unmet needs for job accommodations (people active in the labour force sometime from 2001 to 2006) by intellectual disability status, working-age people (Source: PALS 2006)

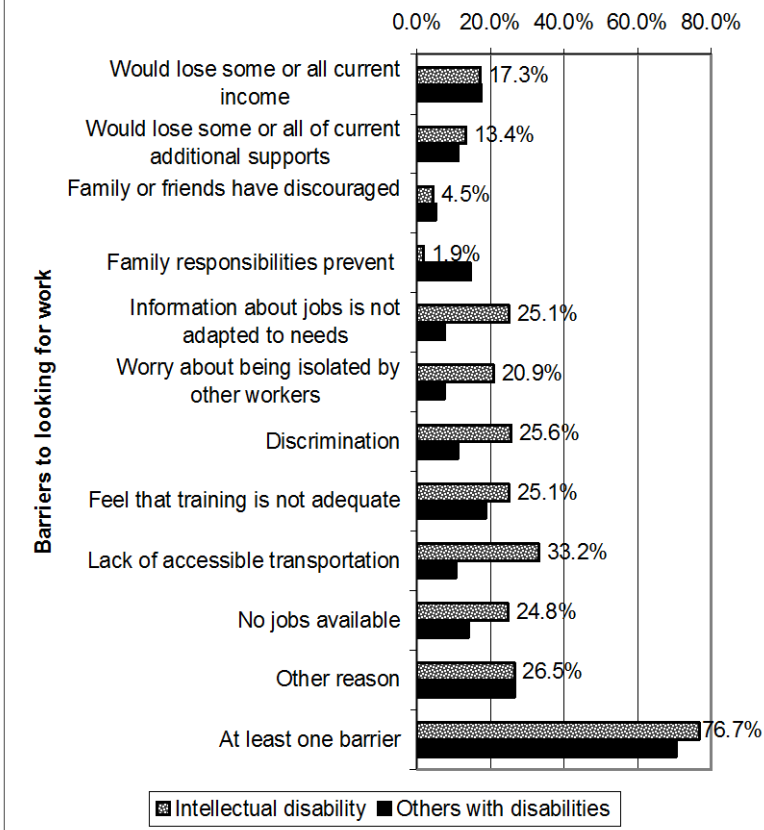


People with intellectual disabilities are more likely than others to lack the supports they require in order to be able to work (Figure 5). The unmet need for modified work days, hours or duties is the largest area of unmet need, followed by technical and human supports

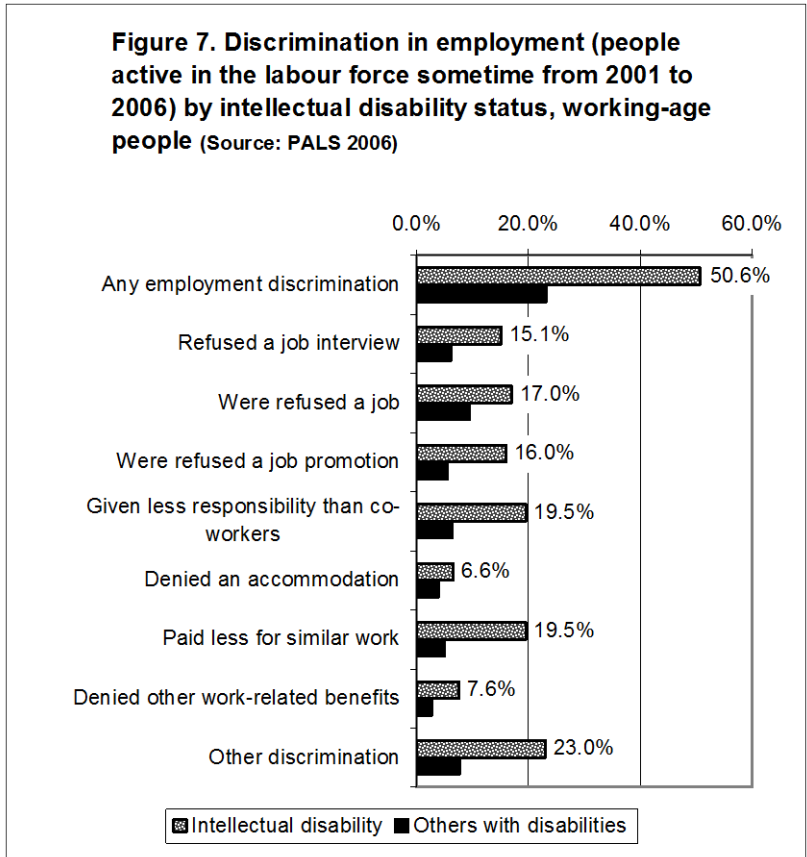
on the job, which are discussed in more detail in the body of this report.

Among people with disabilities who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006, but not in the labour force when PALS was conducted, more than three-quarters with intellectual disabilities experienced one or more of the barriers to employment shown on Figure 6. Lack of accessible transportation, inadequate training, discrimination, information about jobs not adapted to needs and concern about being isolated on the job all suppress job search activity, as do concerns about losing income security and disability benefits such

Figure 6. Barriers to looking for work, by intellectual disability status, working-age people not in the labour force but active in within it sometime from 2001 to 2006 (Source: PALS 2006)



as drug plan and subsidized housing, which are available to some people if they remain outside of the labour force.

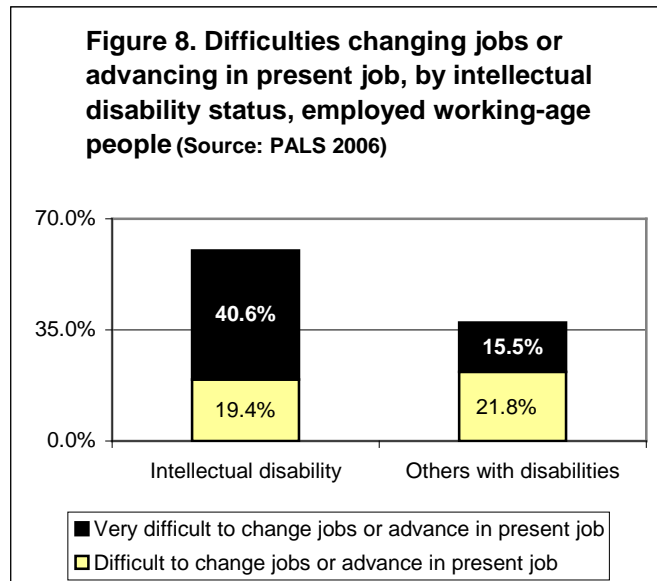


Indeed, discrimination in the labour market would seem to be a bigger problem for people with intellectual disabilities taken as a whole. About half of the former who have been recently active in the labour force have experienced at least one of the forms of employment discrimination shown on Figure 7, compared with fewer than a quarter of others with disabilities. Being

refused a job interview, a job and a promotion are common problems for people with intellectual disabilities, as are being given less responsibility than other workers and being paid less for similar work.

Given that people with intellectual disabilities tend to be highly vulnerable with respect to employment and the labour market, it is not too surprising that many who have jobs consider it difficult to change jobs or to advance in their present job; four in ten consider it very difficult (Figure 8).

The next sections of this report cover the findings in detail and the final portion points to policy and program directions for addressing these issues.



I. Introduction

This report looks at the employment situation of people with intellectual disabilities in Canada. It is based on the Participation and Activity Survey of 2006 (PALS), which has been Statistics Canada's 'flagship' survey on disability.

The report focuses on people who self-identified on PALS or who were identified by proxy as being told by a doctor, psychologist or other health professional that they have a developmental disability or disorder. Internationally, 'intellectual disabilities' has become more commonly used than 'developmental disability' (International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities, n. d.) and the former term is used throughout this paper.

The report provides comparisons against people with other disabilities, i.e., who have a disability but answered "no" to the question on developmental disability. Where feasible, comparisons are also drawn with people without disabilities. Where the latter comparisons have not been drawn, that is because the information was not gathered by the 2006 Census, which is the information that was ported over into the PALS data file for the non-disabled population.

The report provides general demographic information, as well as a brief exploration of functional limitations and needs for disability-related supports that people with intellectual disabilities may be experiencing. That information serves as context for the sections of the report that explore education, job training and employment.

At the focus of the report are working-age people, that is, people 15 to 64 years of age. For the sake of simplicity, the phrase "working-age people" is not repeated at every turn.

As well, some of the actual respondents in PALS were proxies for people with disabilities. This report does not distinguish between proxy and non-proxy responses and, again for simplicity's sake, uses phrasing as if people with disabilities were the respondents.

II. General Demographics

A. Definition and Prevalence

There is no single definition of intellectual disability or commonly agreed upon prevalence estimate. The definition adopted by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), and which the American government and advocacy groups in the United States also use, is as follows:

Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18 (AAIDD, 2011).

An extensive formal assessment of cognitive and adaptive functioning is implied in the AAIDD definition.

Depending on the source, the estimated prevalence of intellectual disability ranges from less than 1% to nearly 3% of the population (McLaren & Bryson, 1987; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, 2009). Rates of intellectual disability tend to be higher in developing countries (World Health Organization, 2001).

The 'point blank' question on intellectual (developmental) disability that was used in PALS 2006 yields a conservative prevalence estimate of 0.6% of the working-age population. As is discussed in another section of this paper, 'yes' responses to the question reflect a population that is quite severely disabled. As well, there is considerable stigma in self-identifying or being identified by others as having a developmental or intellectual disability (Cooney, Jahoda, Gumley & Knott, 2006; Salvatori, Tremblay, & Tryssenaar, 2003). It is likely, then, that PALS understates the extent of intellectual disability in the Canadian adult population.

The PALS question asked:

Has a doctor, psychologist or other health professional ever said that you... had a developmental disability or disorder? These include, for example, Down syndrome, autism, Asperger syndrome, mental impairment due to a lack of oxygen at birth, etc.

It is understood that autism and Asperger syndrome do not always involve intellectual disability. However, the vast majority of people who are classified as 'yes' in response to this question in PALS have one or more difficulties with cognitive functioning, i.e., general learning difficulties, assessed Learning Disability, difficulties remembering things or difficulties with emotional well-being, any of which limit the amount or kinds of activities the respondents can do.

B. Geographic Distribution

Table 1 shows the geographic distribution of working-age people with intellectual disabilities. The intellectual disability rates are highest in Saskatchewan (0.9%), Nova Scotia (0.8%) and Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and British Columbia (all at 0.7%). The rates are lowest in the northern territories (0.3%), Alberta and Quebec (both at 0.5%). Those high and low rates help explain the relatively high and low 'concentrations' of people with intellectual disabilities in the distribution across

provinces and territories shown on Table 1, taking the percentage of people without disabilities as the benchmark for comparison.

Table 1. Distribution by province / northern territories by intellectual disability status, and intellectual disability rates

Province / territory	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities	Intellectual disability rate
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	0.7%
Prince Edward Island	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Nova Scotia	2.7%	3.9%	4.3%	0.8%
New Brunswick	2.2%	2.8%	2.9%	0.7%
Quebec	25.1%	19.4%	16.4%	0.5%
Ontario	38.0%	39.2%	42.5%	0.6%
Manitoba	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%	0.6%
Saskatchewan	2.8%	4.1%	2.9%	0.9%
Alberta	10.6%	9.2%	10.5%	0.5%
British Columbia	12.8%	15.4%	14.4%	0.7%
Northern territories	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Total	18,915,210	129,310	2,302,280	0.6%

Source: PALS 2006

C. Age and Gender

People with intellectual disabilities tend to be younger than others with disabilities but are distributed across the age spectrum similarly to people without disabilities. For example, 14.9% of working-age people with intellectual disabilities are 55 to 64 years, compared with 14.8% of people without disabilities but 34.5% of others with disabilities (Table 2). In contrast, 29.3% of people with intellectual disabilities are 15 to 24 years compared with only 6.7% of others with disabilities but 20.9% of people without disabilities. Recent research has found that the life expectancy of people with intellectual disabilities has been improving and is similar to that of people without disabilities (AAIDD, n.d.; Horwitz et al., 2000).

Table 2. Intellectual disability status by age group

Age groups	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
15-24	20.9%	29.3%	6.7%
25-34	19.6%	16.3%	9.5%
35-44	22.7%	17.7%	18.5%
45-54	22.1%	21.7%	30.8%
55-64	14.8%	14.9%	34.5%
Total	18,915,210	129,310	2,302,280

Source: PALS 2006

People with intellectual disabilities tend to be males (58% compared with 46.2% among others with disabilities and 49.6% of people without disabilities).¹

¹ This finding is consistent with research in genetics. See, for example, Ropers, et al. (2003).

D. Living Arrangements

In terms of living arrangements, people with intellectual disabilities are less likely than others with disabilities (21.9% vs. 58.8%) and people without disabilities (57.9%) to be members of married or common law couples. They are about as likely as people without disabilities to live alone (11.1% and 9.1%, respectively) but less likely than others with disabilities to do so (17.4%). However, they are considerably more likely than others with disabilities (10.9% vs. 3.6%) and people without disabilities (4.3%) to live with one or more unrelated others somewhere other than the family home.

At 43.1%, they are much more likely than others with disabilities (9.8%) and people without disabilities (21%) to be never married adult sons or daughters living with one or both parents. They are also more likely than others with disabilities (10.3% vs. 3.4%) and people without disabilities (3%) to be extended family members of others who live in the same household, i.e., tied by kinship to others in the household but living neither as a member of a married or common law couple nor as an adult son or daughter with one or both parents.

People with intellectual disabilities are unlikely to be lone parents (2.8% vs. 6.9% of others with disabilities and 4.7% of people without disabilities).

III. Functional Limitations and Need for Disability Supports

A. Severity of Disability and Multiple Disabilities

People with intellectual disabilities captured by PALS are, as a group, quite severely disabled. Some 38.5% have disabilities that fall within Statistics Canada's 'severe' range of disability and 35.1% in the 'very severe' range. Among others with disabilities, 25.7% have disabilities in the severe range and 11.9% in the very severe range.

The severity scale that Statistics Canada has developed essentially classifies people according to the number of functional impairments, level of difficulty people have performing functional tasks such as moving about or communicating and the number of contexts in which people experience those difficulties (Statistics Canada, 2007). The standard definitions of intellectual disability indicate that most people with this condition have a 'mild' level of disability and it has been argued that most tend to 'disappear' into the general population in large surveys such as the Census and PALS (U.S. Public Health Service, 2001).

Table 3. Intellectual disability status by multi-disability status

Types of disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
General learning difficulties	61.6%	14.0%
Assessed Learning Disability	69.6%	9.6%
Seeing	24.9%	18.0%
Hearing	19.1%	21.6%
Spoken communication	62.2%	10.9%
Mobility	62.5%	64.4%
Agility	65.4%	62.2%
Memory	45.8%	11.0%
Emotional/psychological ²	39.9%	19.6%
Pain-related	55.0%	76.0%

Source: PALS 2006

In that people with intellectual disabilities surveyed by PALS have relatively severe levels of disability, it is not surprising that they are much more likely than others to be dealing with more than one disability. Their additional disabilities are shown on Table 3. The most common are in the areas of general learning difficulties, assessed Learning Disability, mobility, agility and

spoken communication. Accordingly, job accommodation and other supportive measures will typically need to be framed with a view to addressing multiple needs.

B. Range of Cognitive Difficulties

PALS did not ask about specific cognitive difficulties experienced by people with disabilities. However, the predecessor Health and Activity Limitation Survey of 1991 (HALS) did explore such issues. Based on the results of that survey, people with intellectual disabilities were likely to be dealing with a range of cognitive difficulties (Crawford, 2004a).

For instance, on average they had difficulty with 3 out of 4 basic academic tasks such as learning how to read, write, spell or do basic mathematics (i.e., adding and subtracting). Others with disabilities had difficulty with only one of these tasks on average. As well, on average people with intellectual disabilities had difficulty with 4 out of a total of 7 tasks that included: telling right from left; doing the right thing at the right time; explaining ideas when speaking; doing activities that involve many steps (such as following a recipe); solving day to day problems; understanding people they don't know very well; and talking to people they don't know very well. Others with disabilities had difficulty with only one of these tasks on average.

On any one of these tasks, people with intellectual disabilities were much more likely to report difficulties (Table 4).

² This includes phobias, depression, schizophrenia, drinking or drug problems and others.

Table 4. Learning and other cognitive difficulties experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and others with disabilities*

	Intellectual Disability	Others with disabilities
Difficulty learning how to read	69.8%	11.4%
Difficulty learning how to write	69.2%	9.2%
Difficulty learning how to spell	72.1%	15.8%
Difficulty learning basic mathematics	64.7%	11.4%
Have difficulty telling right from left	35.6%	5.6%
Often told not doing right thing at right time	48.9%	8.9%
Have difficulty explaining ideas when speaking	66.4%	20.1%
Difficulty doing activity with many steps	55.9%	10.0%
Often have difficulty solving day to day problems	55.4%	9.4%
Need help to understand people you do not know	53.7%	10.7%
Need help to talk to people you do not know well	57.1%	10.3%

*Respondents may report more than one difficulty.
Source: HALS 1991

Job accommodation measures, then, need to take into account the difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities are likely to have with literacy and numeracy, possible confusion in carrying out everyday tasks and following instructions, and possible difficulties in social interactions and communication with others.

C. Needing and Receiving Help with Everyday Activities

Table 5. Intellectual disability status by whether help is needed and received in everyday activities

Status of need	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Do not need or receive help	11.2%	39.2%
Receive all the help needed	43.3%	32.4%
Receive some of the help needed	39.7%	22.3%
Receive none of the help needed	5.9%	6.1%
Total	128,460	2,223,770

Source: PALS 2006

As Table 5 shows, most people with intellectual disabilities (88.8%) need some level of help from others with everyday activities. Those activities include: meal preparation; everyday housework; heavy household chores; getting to appointments/errands;

personal finances; child care because of the respondent's disability; personal care; nursing care/ medical treatment at home; and moving about at home. While 43.3% with intellectual disabilities have needs in this area that are fully met compared with 32.4% of others with disabilities, 45.6% with intellectual disabilities have some level of unmet need, with 39.7% receiving some help and 5.9% receiving none of the help needed. Among others with disabilities, 28.4% have unmet needs for help, with 22.3% receiving some and 6.1% receiving none that is required.

D. Need and Use of Aids and Devices

Table 6. Intellectual disability status by whether aids/devices are needed and received

Status of need	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Do not need or receive aids/devices	43.6%	39.4%
Receive all the aids/devices needed	23.9%	34.3%
Receive some of the aids/devices needed	19.4%	19.5%
Receive none of the aids/devices needed	13.1%	6.8%
Total	129,310	2,302,280

Source: PALS 2006

More than half (56.4%) of people with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities (60.6%) need aids or devices to assist with mobility, agility, communication, learning, pain

management and so on. Table 6 shows that the level of partial or completely unmet need is comparatively high for people with intellectual disabilities (32.5% vs. 26.4%).

IV. Education and Training

A. Level of Educational Certification

Table 7. Highest educational certification, by intellectual disability status

Highest certification	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
None	18.8%	65.7%	25.1%
High school graduation certificate or equivalent	26.8%	18.9%	25.4%
Trades/ apprenticeship	10.5%	4.0%	14.4%
College or university below bachelor degree	23.8%	7.7%	21.7%
University degree	20.2%	3.7%	13.5%
Total	18,914,830	128,840	2,302,160

Source: PALS 2006

The overall education level of working-age people with intellectual disabilities is quite low, with 65.7% having no formal educational certification, including a high school graduation diploma. This is the

case among 25.1% of others with disabilities and 18.8% of people without disabilities (Table 7). Only 15.4% with intellectual disabilities have some form of post-secondary certification compared with 49.6% of others with disabilities and 54.5% of people without disabilities.

People 20 to 64 years of age with intellectual disabilities were about as likely as others with disabilities (10.9 and 9.1%, respectively) to have attended school at some point from September 2005 to May 16, 2006, but less likely than people without disabilities (14.9%).

B. Difficulties in Formal Education

People with intellectual disabilities are more likely than others to report experiencing a range of difficulties due to disability in their educational history (Table 8). For the majority (72.5%), their choice of career has been influenced. Most attended some form of special education (63%), took fewer courses or subjects (61.9%) and took longer to achieve their present level of education (64.4%). For about a third their education was interrupted for long periods of time (32.9%) or they changed their course of studies (37.1%). Nearly half (44.5%) changed schools because of their disability and about one in five (19.9%) had to leave their home community to attend school. About one in five (18.9%) had additional expenses for schooling because of disability.

In contrast, people with intellectual disabilities are less likely than others with disabilities to have returned to school for training (16.3% vs. 25.3%).

Educators, trainers, co-workers and service providers seeking to establish a rapport with people with intellectual disabilities would do well to take into account and make provision for the frustration and failures that many have experienced during their formal education.

Types of educational experiences	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Began school later than others the same age	22.5%	11.8%
Career was influenced	72.5%	40.3%
Changed schools because of condition	44.5%	11.2%
Changed courses	37.1%	17.9%
Went back to school for retraining	16.3%	25.3%
Had additional expenses for schooling	18.9%	12.4%
Education was interrupted for long periods of time	32.9%	21.7%
Attended a special education school or special education classes in a regular school	63.0%	13.1%
Took fewer courses or subjects	61.9%	23.4%
Took courses by correspondence or home study	12.4%	13.4%
Had to leave home community to attend school	19.9%	10.3%
Took longer to achieve present level of education	64.4%	24.6%
Total	~87,170	~830,820

* The total number of respondents varies slightly across this battery of questions, which is indicated by '~'.

Source: PALS 2006

C. Work-Related Training

A quarter (25.1%) of people with intellectual disabilities who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006, but not in the labour force and not retired when PALS was conducted, cited inadequate training as a factor that prevented them from looking for work (Table 18).

Only 30.4% of people with intellectual disabilities were asked and answered whether they had taken training at any point from 2001 through 2006, compared with 58.0% of others with disabilities. Some 41.8% of people with intellectual disabilities who were asked the questions indicated they had taken some training compared with 52.1% of others with disabilities.

Table 9. Types of work-related training from 2001–2006, by intellectual disability status

Types of training	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Classroom	49.5%	54.8%
On the job	60.3%	61.1%
Other training	27.6%	25.1%
Total any training	16,460	696,130

Source: PALS 2006

classroom-based training (49.5% vs. 54.8%).

Table 9 shows the kinds of training taken by people with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities. Overall the patterns are similar, with on-the-job training being the most common modality. However, people with intellectual disabilities are somewhat less likely to have taken

Table 10. Experience of barrier(s) to work-related training among people active in the labour force at some point from 2001–2006, by intellectual disability status

Barriers?	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Any barrier(s) to training	56.6%	39.4%
Too busy	7.0%	15.8%
Condition/disability	23.4%	10.5%
Cost	16.8%	10.8%
Inaccessible location	5.1%	3.7%
Inadequate transportation	4.5%	3.1%
Courses not adapted to needs	6.0%	3.7%
Other barrier(s)	10.2%	7.9%
Total	40,590	1,351,490

Source: PALS 2006

Most people with intellectual disabilities who were asked had experienced one or more barriers to training (56.6%) compared with 39.4% of others with disabilities (Table 10). Aside from issues relating to disability, which presented barriers for 23.4% of people with intellectual disabilities who were asked the questions, cost was the most widely experienced barrier, affecting 16.8%.

V. Labour Force Status, Employment-Related Needs and Issues

A. Level of Employment

People with intellectual disabilities were considerably less likely than others with disabilities to be employed when PALS was conducted (26.1 vs. 52.7%, respectively) and much less likely than people without disabilities (75.1%). They are less likely than others with disabilities to be retired, however (8.8% vs. 20.2%).³

When asked whether they were working in the reference week, 37.0% with intellectual disabilities indicated that they were not and that they were completely prevented from working because of their condition. In part that assessment may be a function of the severity of their disabilities. However, as shown elsewhere in this report, that assessment may also in part be a result of the comparatively large number of barriers to employment that this group faces, the comparatively high levels of discrimination they experience in employment and their comparatively low levels of education and access to work-related training. Among others with disabilities, 17.1% consider themselves completely prevented from working because of their condition.

Age group	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
15-24	58.1%	15.5%	49.8%
25-34	81.4%	41.0%	62.3%
35-44	84.4%	32.6%	64.7%
45-64	75.6%	24.9%	48.3%
Total	18,914,830	128,840	2,302,160

Source: PALS 2006

Table 11 shows the employment rates by age group and intellectual disability status. Only 15.5% of youth 15 to 24 years with intellectual disabilities have jobs compared with half (49.8%) of their counterparts with other disabilities and nearly six in ten in the same age group without disabilities (58.1%).

Indeed, people with intellectual disabilities make up 19.7% of people with disabilities in the 15 to 24 age group but 33.9% of those with disabilities in this age group who are not in the labour force, i.e., neither working, seeking nor available for work.

Towards the retirement end of the working-age spectrum, only about a quarter of people with intellectual disabilities have jobs (24.9%), which is about half the employment rate of others in this age range with disabilities (48.3%) and about a third the rate of their non-disabled counterparts (75.6%).

³ We do not have a comparable retirement rate for people without disabilities.

B. Work History

Indeed, people with intellectual disabilities are much more likely (at 39%) than others with disabilities (6.4%) and people without disabilities (6.2%) to indicate that they have never worked in their lives.

Most people with intellectual disabilities have tenuous attachment to the labour force. Nearly two-thirds (63.6%) have never worked or last worked more than a year before PALS was conducted, compared with about a third of others with disabilities (36.7%) and about one in seven without disabilities (14.6%).

Among people with any employment in 2005, only 38.3% with intellectual disabilities worked full-time for 49 to 52 weeks. This was the case for considerably more of their counterparts with other disabilities (47.9%) and no disability (55.2%).

Those with intellectual disabilities who worked in 2005 worked fewer weeks on average (38) than their counterparts with other disabilities (42 weeks) and without disabilities (44 weeks).

C. Hours of Work

People with intellectual disabilities who reported any hours of work in the 2006 Census reference week reported fewer hours of work on average (30.1) than others with disabilities (37.2) and people without disabilities (39.4).

People who were unemployed or not in the labour force but not retired when PALS was conducted were asked about their preferred work hours if they were to find a job. Most with intellectual disabilities (70.1%) indicated that they would prefer part-time work compared with less than half of others with disabilities (42.6%) who were asked the question.

D. Earnings and Total Income

The vast majority of people with intellectual disabilities who were working when PALS was conducted were working for wages, salary, tips or commission (92.3%). The same was the case for most employed people with other disabilities (86.1%). Only 4.5% of working people with intellectual disabilities were self-employed without paid help when PALS was conducted, compared with 7.7% of other working people with disabilities and 4.5% of their counterparts without disabilities.

For working-age people with intellectual disabilities and any employment income in 2005, their average earnings were \$18,172 compared with \$29,669 among others with disabilities and \$37,944 among people without disabilities.

More than a quarter of working-age people with intellectual disabilities (26.9%) were in households with total after tax incomes below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO) the year before PALS was conducted. The LICO is an unofficial yet widely used measure of poverty (National Council of Welfare, 2010). Some 19.7% of others with disabilities had incomes below the LICO and among people without disabilities, 10.2%.

Those numbers do not tell an accurate story about people not living with family members, however. Among people with intellectual disabilities who live alone, 73.6% have incomes below the LICO and among those living with unrelated others, 85.6%. Among other people with disabilities the respective rates are 52.0% and 59.2% and among people without disabilities, 23.4% and 40.2%.

Table 12. Selected income sources in 2005 by intellectual disability status

Income sources	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Workers' Compensation	5.2%	8.0%
CPP/QPP Disability	23.5%	16.2%
Private insurance	5.8%	8.2%
Motor vehicle accident insurance*	1.8%	2.2%
Veterans pension*	—	0.9%
Social assistance	43.7%	14.8%
Any of the above income sources	60.1%	36.1%
Any government income transfer	77.1%	67.5%
Total	116,380	2,054,830

* Very low frequencies. Use figures with caution.

Source: PALS 2006

Most people with intellectual disabilities (77.1%) received income from one or more government programs in 2005, as did most others with disabilities (67.5%).

Table 12 shows that nearly half (43.7%) of people with intellectual disabilities received provincial/territorial social assistance at some point in 2005 compared with only 14.8% of their counterparts with other disabilities. About a quarter (23.5%) with intellectual disabilities received income from the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan Disability benefit compared with about one in

E. Estimated Hourly Wage

Table 13. Estimated hourly wage by intellectual disability status

	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Average weeks worked in 2005	44	38	42
Average hours worked in reference week	39.4	30.1	37.2
Total estimated hours worked in 2005	1733.6	1143.8	1562.4
Total earnings	37,944	18,172	29,669
Estimated hourly wage	\$21.89	\$15.89	\$18.99

Using the average weeks worked in 2005 and hours worked in the reference week, Table 13 shows the estimated total hours worked in 2005 by intellectual disability status. Dividing average earnings by the estimated total hours yields estimated hourly earnings shown on the bottom row of the table. It is estimated that working people with intellectual disabilities earn about three

dollars less per hour than other workers with disabilities and six dollars less than workers without disabilities.

F. Skill Utilization

While the level of employment is low among people with intellectual disabilities, over half who are employed (57.6%) feel that their job gives them the opportunity to use all their skills, education and experience. This is considerably lower, however, than among employed others with disabilities (76.3%).

Over half of employed people with intellectual disabilities (59.1%) feel their job requires their present level of education compared with nearly three-quarters of others with disabilities (71.5%).

Among those with intellectual disabilities who do not feel their job requires their present level of education, the vast majority (83.0%) feel that their job requires *less* education. The same is true for the vast majority (80.4%) of other employed people with disabilities who do not believe their job requires their present level of education. These findings suggest that significant numbers of employed people with disabilities are not fully using their skill set and in that sense are underemployed.

G. Type of Work

Employed people with intellectual disabilities are more likely (at 32.7%) than others with disabilities (26.5%) and people without disabilities (24.2%) to have sales and service jobs (Table 14). There is also a relatively high concentration of people with intellectual disabilities in processing, manufacturing and utilities (14.1%) and trades, transport, equipment operation and related jobs (18.1%).

Table 14. National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2006, in 8 grouped categories, of people with employment at some point in 2005 or 2006, by intellectual disability status

NOC	No disability	Intellectual disability	Other people with disabilities
Management; Business, finance, administrative	27.7%	20.1%	25.7%
Natural and applied sciences and related	7.0%	2.5%	5.0%
Health; Social science, education, government service and religion	13.6%	4.3%	13.9%
Art, culture, recreation, sport	3.3%	2.8%	3.7%
Sales and service	24.2%	32.7%	26.5%
Trades, transport, equipment operators and related	14.5%	18.1%	15.5%
Primary industry	3.6%	5.5%	3.8%
Processing, manufacturing, utilities	6.1%	14.1%	5.9%
Total	16,149,720	46,950	1,457,910

Source: PALS 2006

H. Workplace and Employer Characteristics

Slightly more than a quarter of employed people with intellectual disabilities (27.2%) are union members compared with more than a third (35.2%) of other employees with disabilities.

Roughly the same proportions of employed people with intellectual (33.6%) and other disabilities (35.1%) are in workplaces with fewer than 20 employees. Employed people with intellectual disabilities, however, are less likely to be in workplaces with a hundred or more employees (24.4% vs. 36.8%). They are more likely to be in workplaces with 20 to 99 employees (42% vs. 28.1%).

Workers with intellectual disabilities are somewhat less likely than other workers with disabilities (61% vs. 66.9%) to be with employers that operate at more than one location. The picture is similar for people with intellectual and other disabilities who work for multi-site employers; the majority (72.3% and 73.9%, respectively) are with employers that have 100 or more employees.

In terms of distribution across industrial sectors (Table 15), people with intellectual disabilities tend to be concentrated in administration and support or waste management services (10.5%), accommodation and food services (10.8%), retail trade industries (17.7%) and transportation and warehousing industries (9.2%).

Table 15. North American Industrial Classification (NAIC) of people employed at some point in 2005 or 2006, by intellectual disability status

NAIC	No disability	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
11-Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; 21 Mining, oil and gas extraction	4.2%	5.7%	4.1%
22-Utilities	0.9%	0.0%	0.7%
23-Construction	6.4%	4.2%	6.2%
31-33 Manufacturing industries	12.2%	8.2%	11.8%
41-Wholesale trade industries	4.6%	2.8%	3.0%
44-45 Retail trade industries	11.5%	17.7%	10.9%
48-49 Transportation and warehousing industries	4.4%	9.2%	5.7%
51-Information and cultural industries	2.4%	3.1%	2.1%
52-Finance, insurance; 53-Real estate, leasing; 54-Professional, scientific, technical; 55-Management of companies and enterprises	13.1%	5.2%	11.6%
56-Administration and support; Waste management	4.2%	10.5%	5.3%
61-Educational service industries	6.5%	2.9%	6.4%
62-Health and social service industries	9.9%	8.9%	11.5%
71-Arts, entertainment and recreation	2.2%	1.9%	2.0%
72-Accommodation and food services	7.3%	10.8%	6.0%
81-Other service industries	4.7%	3.2%	5.9%
91-Public administration	5.5%	5.6%	6.7%
Total	16,151,050	46,940	1,457,920

I. Job Accommodations Needed

In terms of accommodations needed for employment, people with intellectual disabilities who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006 were considerably more likely than others with disabilities to need human support at work, job redesign or modified days or hours of work and accessible transportation (Table 16). They are about as likely as others to need various built environmental features at work, such as appropriate parking, or accessible elevator or washrooms. They are also about as likely to require one or more technical supports such as:

- Technical aids such as a voice synthesizer, a TTY or TDD, an infrared system or portable note-taker
- Computer with Braille, large print, voice recognition, or a scanner
- Communication aids, such as Braille or large print reading material or recording equipment
- Modified or ergonomic workstation
- Special chair/ back support

Table 16. Need and unmet need for job accommodations / supports for employment, people active in the labour force at some point from 2001 – 2006, by intellectual disability status

	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Any accommodation / support required	65.1%	44.8%
Job redesign, modified hours or days	43.9%	27.7%
Human support	22.7%	3.5%
Technical support	23.0%	21.9%
Accessible built environment	11.9%	10.3%
Accessible transportation	15.6%	4.2%
Other	3.4%	3.9%
Any unmet need	36.4%	19.8%
Job redesign, modified hours or days	27.4%	12.1%
Human support	12.1%	2.3%
Technical support	17.9%	11.2%
Accessible built environment	7.5%	5.4%
Accessible transportation	8.7%	2.2%
Other	2.2%	1.6%
Total	73,690	1,536,750

Source: PALS 2006

(12.1%).

Overall, more than two thirds (65.1%) with intellectual disabilities need at least one of the employment supports shown on Table 16, compared with less than half (44.8%) of other people with disabilities.

People with intellectual disabilities are also about twice as likely to find that least one of the job supports they require is not available to them (36.4% vs. 19.8%). Job redesign or modified work hours or days is the biggest area of unmet need, affecting 27.4% of people with intellectual disabilities who were asked about job supports. The gap between what is needed and actually available is also considerable in the areas of technical support (17.9%) and human support

J. Barriers to Labour Force Participation

Among people not in the labour force (i.e., neither employed, seeking nor available for work) and who were not retired but had employment at some point from 2001 through 2006, those with intellectual disabilities were more likely than others with disabilities to report that they were not looking for work because of at least one of the barriers shown on Table 17 (76.7% vs. 70.4%). Specifically, they were more likely to report that: information about jobs is not adapted to their needs (25.1% vs. 7.6%); they are worried about being isolated by other workers on the job (20.9% vs. 7.5%); they have been victims of discrimination (25.6% vs. 11.2%); they consider their training to be inadequate (25.1% vs. 18.8%); and they lack accessible transportation (33.2% vs. 10.6%). They are also more likely to report that no jobs are available (24.8% vs. 14.0%).

Table 17. Barriers to employment for those not in the labour force, not retired and who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 - 2006, by intellectual disability status*

Barriers	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Would lose some or all of current income if went to work	17.3%	17.5%
Would lose some or all of current additional supports such as drug plan or housing	13.4%	11.2%
Family or friends have discouraged going to work	4.5%	5.1%
Family responsibilities prevent from working	1.9%	14.7%
Information about jobs is not adapted to needs	25.1%	7.6%
Worry about being isolated by other workers on the job	20.9%	7.5%
Have been a victim of discrimination	25.6%	11.2%
Feel that training is not adequate	25.1%	18.8%
Lack of accessible transportation	33.2%	10.6%
No jobs available	24.8%	14.0%
Other reason	26.5%	26.6%
At least one barrier	76.7%	70.4%
Total	~33,200	~295,860

* The total number of respondents varies slightly across this battery of questions, which is indicated by '~'.

Source: PALS 2006

such restriction and in that year 26.1% of people with intellectual disabilities reported concern about losing income and 19.5% indicated concern about losing additional supports if working (Crawford, 2004a).

People who have been out of the labour force for an extended period of time tend to have a more severe level of disability, face comparatively greater challenges in the labour force and conceivably face greater risks to health and well-being if they were to lose income support or other supports for disability. PALS 2006 may understate the extent of such barriers.

K. Employment-Related Discrimination and Disadvantage

Among working-age people with disabilities who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006, 50.6% with intellectual disabilities experienced at least one of the forms of employment discrimination shown on Table 18 in the past five years due to their condition. Some 23.2% of others with disabilities reported any such discrimination. The rates of the distinct types of perceived discrimination shown on Table 18 are consistently higher for people with intellectual disabilities as compared with others with disabilities taken as a whole.

Of some interest is that people with intellectual disabilities are about as likely as others to report that barriers include concern about losing some or all of their current income if they were to work (17.3% vs. 17.5%) and concern about losing some or all of their current additional supports such as drug plan or housing (13.4% vs. 11.2%). Those similar results may be due to survey design and may have garnered responses of people relatively 'privileged' in terms of employment: the questions were only asked of people who had been active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006.

The 1991 HALS had no

Table 18. Experience of employment discrimination 2001 – 2006 among those active in the labour force at some point in those years, by intellectual disability status

Types of perceived discrimination	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Any employment discrimination	50.6%	23.2%
Among those who experienced discrimination		
Were refused a job interview	15.1%	6.2%
Were refused a job	17.0%	9.5%
Were refused a job promotion	16.0%	5.5%
Were given less responsibility than co-workers	19.5%	6.3%
Were denied a workplace accommodation	6.6%	3.9%
Were paid less than other workers in similar jobs	19.5%	4.9%
Were denied other work-related benefits	7.6%	2.7%
Other discrimination	23.0%	7.7%
Total	~53,420	~1,571,160

* The total number of respondents varies slightly across this battery of questions, which is indicated by '~'.

Source: PALS 2006

More than half of people with intellectual disabilities who were active in the labour force at some point from 2001 through 2006 and who answered 'yes' or 'no' to questions on disadvantage in employment consider themselves disadvantaged in employment (55.5%) or that an employer would likely consider them disadvantaged in employment (59.7%). Among others with disabilities those rates are, respectively, 35.4% and 39.8%.

L. Affirmative Action and Employment Equity

We simply do not know whether employed people with intellectual disabilities are presently more or less likely than others to be in workplaces with a program to increase the employment of people with disabilities, such as an employment equity or affirmative action program; PALS did not ask about such matters. Based on the predecessor survey to PALS, however, people with intellectual disabilities were more likely than other employed people with disabilities to be in such workplaces (Crawford, 2004a).

M. Job Change and Career Progression

Employed people with intellectual disabilities are nearly as likely as others with disabilities to report that, because of their disability, it is difficult to change jobs or advance in their present job (19.4% vs. 21.8%, respectively). However, they are considerably more likely to indicate that it is very difficult to change jobs or advance in their present job (40.6% vs. 15.5%).

When asked why their condition makes it difficult to change jobs or advance in their present job, people with intellectual disabilities were more likely than others to

report that their condition limits their ability to search for a job (20.4% vs. 14.7%) and that disability-related discrimination presents difficulties (25.5% vs. 13.9%). They are somewhat less likely to report that the difficulty is that their condition limits the number of hours they can work (31.8% vs. 35.4%). Other factors likely include people with intellectual disabilities' comparatively lower education level and greater difficulties in the education system, lesser access to training, underemployment and wider experiences of employment barriers.

N. Volunteer Work

Table 19. Kinds of participation in unpaid volunteer activities by those who did any in the reference year, by intellectual disability status*

Kinds of volunteer work	Intellectual disability	Others with disabilities
Organize or supervise activities or events for an organization	56.7%	35.8%
Canvass, campaign or fund raise	40.6%	38.2%
Sit as an unpaid member of a board or committee	36.0%	23.8%
Consulting, executive, office or administrative work	27.0%	20.7%
Provide information, help to educate, lobby or influence public opinion	28.8%	26.5%
Teach, coach, provide care or friendly visits	37.6%	33.3%
Collect, serve or deliver food or other goods	23.4%	24.8%
Other	52.5%	49.9%
Total	~23,750	~759,110

* The total number of respondents varies slightly across this battery of questions, which is indicated by '~'.

Source: PALS 2006

People with intellectual disabilities surveyed by PALS are somewhat less likely than others with disabilities to have taken part in unpaid volunteer work in the past year (34.8 compared with 39%). However, that finding may be an artefact of the relatively severe level of disability of people with intellectual disabilities surveyed by PALS. Other evidence suggests that a great many are involved in unpaid volunteer work instead of in paid jobs (cite). Table 19 shows the kinds of volunteer activities of people with disabilities who did any

based on PALS. With the exception of collecting, serving or delivering food or other goods, volunteers with intellectual disabilities would seem to be as involved, and in some activities more involved, than others with disabilities.

VI. Highlights and Conclusion

What was Statistics Canada's flagship survey on disability – the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) of 2006 – captures a conservative number of people with intellectual disabilities that are, overall, quite severely disabled.

The education level of people with intellectual disabilities is much lower than that of others with disabilities, with less than a third attaining a high school graduation certificate or higher. They have generally had a more troubled educational history than others with disabilities. For most people with intellectual disabilities, their choice of careers or courses has been affected in the balance. Many have changed schools, have left their community to attend school, have taken fewer courses, have changed their course of studies or had their education interrupted for long periods of time. Frustrations and failures with the educational process need to be taken into account by educators, trainers and employers.

Many people with intellectual disabilities cite inadequate training as a factor that prevents them from looking for work. Yet less than half who were asked whether they had taken any work-related training in the five years before PALS had actually done so, with on-the job training being the most commonly received. That said, people with intellectual disabilities are less likely than others with disabilities to indicate that they have *ever* returned to school for retraining. More than half who were asked indicated that they had encountered one or more barriers to training.

People with intellectual disabilities are much less likely than others with disabilities and people without disabilities to be employed, and are less likely to have *ever* been employed or to have been employed within the past year. Where employed, their hours worked in a given week tend to be lower those of other people with disabilities and those without and they tend to work fewer weeks per year. Their earnings are lower than others with disabilities and about half the earnings of people without disabilities. Irrespective of employment, where living alone or with unrelated others, the vast majority of people with intellectual disabilities are in low-income households. People with intellectual disabilities are also more likely than other people with disabilities receive income from the disability income system, in particular, social assistance or 'welfare'.

People with intellectual disabilities are more likely than others to consider themselves completely prevented from working because of their condition. However, where employed, most feel that their job gives them the opportunity to use all their skills, education or experience. That said, employed people with intellectual disabilities are less likely than others with disabilities to believe that their job requires their present level of education and most of the remainder believe their job requires *less* education, not more; many are underemployed. The work of people with intellectual disabilities tends to be concentrated in service and sales and in retail, administration and support,

accommodation and food services. They are less likely than others with disabilities to be self-employed.

Where available for work, people with intellectual disabilities are more likely than their counterparts with other disabilities to indicate that they would prefer part-time work. They are *much* more likely to experience significant difficulties changing jobs or advancing in their present job.

People with intellectual disabilities are likely to be dealing with more than one disability. They are also likely to be having difficulty with a range of basic educational and cognitive tasks. This helps explain why people with intellectual disabilities are more likely than others on average to need various accommodations in employment, education and training. More than two-thirds of people with intellectual disabilities who were asked indicated that they need at least one job accommodation and in particular modified job design or modified hours or days of work, human support in the workplace, a range of technical supports and accessible transportation.

Job accommodations and other supportive measures need to be framed with a view to addressing multiple needs, including agility, spoken communication and emotional/psychiatric issues in addition to cognitive issues experienced by people with intellectual disabilities. Supportive measures also need to take into account the possible confusion that people with intellectual disabilities may be experiencing in carrying out everyday tasks, in following instructions and the possible difficulties they may be experiencing in social interactions and communication with others.

We simply do not know whether employed people with intellectual disabilities are more or less likely than others to be in workplaces with a program to increase the employment of people with disabilities, such as an employment equity or affirmative action program. The best evidence we have, however, suggests that such workplaces are more effective than others in attracting and retaining people with intellectual disabilities (Crawford, 2004a).

Disproportionate numbers of people with intellectual disabilities who are not in the labour force are discouraged from seeking employment because of inaccessible information about available jobs, employment-related discrimination, worry about being isolated by co-workers and inadequate training. Many are also discouraged because of concern about losing some or all of their present income or other disability benefits, such as drug plan or housing.

People with intellectual disabilities are nearly twice as likely as others with disabilities to feel that they have been discriminated against in employment because of disability.

The employment situation of people with intellectual disabilities is generally quite difficult. Indeed, the lack of needed accommodations and various other supports has likely contributed to the disadvantages in employment and low income, education and level of training that many people with intellectual disabilities have experienced. In

contrast, where people with intellectual disabilities have the needed assistance with everyday activities and aids/devices, as well as transportation, reasonably good education and access to job-related training, the job prospects improve significantly (Crawford, 2004b). From a public policy and social development perspective, the findings suggest that more adequate provision of such supports through formal programs will help to improve the employment situation of people with intellectual disabilities.

More specifically:

- A more explicit and consistent focus could be placed across Labour Market Development Agreements on furthering the employment of people with disabilities in generic labour market programming under Part II of the *Employment Insurance Act* (Crawford, 2006b). People with intellectual disabilities should have equitable access to the programming. Ideally, access to Employment Benefits would not be so tied into eligibility for income support under EI, which bars many with intellectual disabilities from qualifying. Employment Benefits would ideally be available for extended periods of time for people who require this.
- Alternative programming such as that available under the Opportunities Fund could be made more fiscally robust to serve more people and to enable significant levels of ongoing employment support for people with challenging and complex needs. Again, eligible support would ideally be extended well beyond the program's three-year maximum (Service Canada, 2010) for people with ongoing support needs.
- Provincial social assistance programs could be designed so that people with low-income employment and part-time employment could continue to receive extended health and other disability-related benefits indefinitely. Presently, the prospect of losing such benefits that may be crucial to health and well-being can deter people from moving off social assistance into paid employment. The advantage of encouraging and positively assisting people to make this transition is that provinces and territories stand to save on income support transfers to individuals, even if expenditures for other benefits would continue.
- With federal assistance, provinces and territories could be encouraged to establish programs for disability-specific supports outside of social assistance programs so that even people with higher earned incomes would qualify for a significant measure of ongoing public assistance for disability-related needs. This is a particularly important consideration for employees whose workplace-based insurance plans do not provide adequate coverage for disability-related expenses. Such employees are at risk of exiting employment in order to secure the needed in-kind supports (e.g., medications) available through social assistance.
- Organizations that focus on furthering the employment of people with disabilities could be given positive financial incentives to work with people who have

complex employment-related needs instead of competing to serve people with less challenging needs who can be quickly and successfully placed in paid employment. These organizations could be assisted to scout out and profile 'success stories' in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. The organizations could also be encouraged to continue innovating such as under the Community Inclusion Initiative (Crawford, 2006a; Community Living Ontario, 2011) to tease out 'lessons learned' and to build effective business cases for employers to consider hiring, retaining and promoting people with intellectual disabilities.

- Organizations that need to provide intensive pre-placement support or ongoing support to employers interested in hiring/retaining people with intellectual disabilities could be more adequately financed to undertake such activities. Presently, once a person is placed in employment the case is typically closed and no longer eligible for ongoing financial support from governments, even though such support may be required in order for the individuals to maintain their employment.
- Small and mid-sized companies that need external financial assistance in order to make workplace modifications available (e.g., modified equipment or workstations) could have readier and more ample access to such support from governments through an 'accommodation fund'.
- Post-secondary educational institutions, adult literacy programs and employment training programs could be encouraged and financially supported to ensure accessibility and to adapt curricula and instructional practices to address the adult learning needs of people with intellectual disabilities. NGOs with expertise in the area of curricular and instructional adaptations could be financed to work over the long-term with colleges and other post-secondary programs and institutions to assist in making programs more inclusive and effective. People with intellectual disabilities could be provided the financing they require to undertake educational upgrading and training.
- The barriers to employment faced by people with intellectual disabilities are many and do not 'fit' neatly within any one sphere of government or governance. For example, accessible community transportation falls within the jurisdiction of municipalities, counties and other local levels of government. Employer discrimination is generally covered by provincial/territorial human rights legislation and commissions/tribunals, but some by the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the associated commission and tribunal. Employers may be receiving funding from a mix of federal and provincial/territorial governments under Part II of the *Employment Insurance Act*. In many cases they are also involved with local chambers of commerce. Employment service agencies may be receiving funding from the federal, provincial/territorial and local levels of government as well as from national, provincial/territorial and local charities. Schools fall within the jurisdiction of provincial/territorial education legislation and local school boards that span denominational, nondenominational and linguistic lines.

Community colleges and universities are self-governing.

If actual employment happens in local communities, local-level initiatives are needed to build local capacity to further the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. Perhaps a stream of funding under the Opportunities Fund, Community Inclusion Initiative, Social Development Partnerships Program or Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities could be dedicated for that purpose. Such a fund would be used to bring key stakeholders to the table – people with intellectual disabilities, family members, advocates, employers, service agencies, schools, colleges, universities, trainers, government employment counsellors – to share knowledge about best practices, develop local strategies and help finance accommodations for small to mid-sized employers to open employment futures for a population whose future is, in many instances, closed.

There are no ‘quick fix’ solutions for the difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities face in the Canadian labour market. However, adoption of the interventions proposed in this paper would go some distance towards closing the gap between employment sought and actually secured. Significant benefits could accrue to people with intellectual disabilities and their families, not to mention federal and provincial/territorial governments, employers and society at large (Crawford, 2005; Community Living Ontario, 2011; Chatham This Week, n.d.).

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