



**Future Skills Centre**

Centre des **Compétences futures**

Project Insights Report

# Upskilling Canadians for In-Demand Tech Careers



## PARTNERS

NPower Canada



## LOCATIONS

Alberta  
British Columbia  
Nova Scotia  
Ontario  
Quebec



## INVESTMENT

\$3,891,000



## PUBLISHED

October 2024

## ☰ Executive Summary

NPower Canada's programs aim to provide unemployed and underemployed individuals from equity-deserving groups with the skills needed to launch meaningful digital careers. The programs part of this pilot project, which took place from May 2020 to August 2024, used a randomized controlled trial in Ontario and Alberta to assess the impact of NPower Canada's Junior Information Technology programs on participants' employment and earnings outcomes. The goal of this project was to equip participants with the basic tech skills and job placement opportunities to obtain junior-level jobs in ICT. This project specifically targeted adults facing labour market disadvantages due to race, gender, immigration status or disability.

### KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 Employment rates among participants increased by 25 percentage points from baseline to the 12-month follow-up.
- 2 Newcomers to Canada found additional value in the program through opportunities to gain Canadian work experience, build networks and understand workplace culture, which led to higher satisfaction compared to Canadian-born participants.
- 3 The median salary for employed participants increased by 66.7%, from \$24,000 at baseline to \$40,000 at 12 months post-program.

## ▶ The Issue

NPower Canada's Junior Information Technology programs address the challenge of underemployment and unemployment among individuals from equity-deserving groups, particularly those facing systemic barriers in the labour market. The programs focus on providing digital skills training and professional development to help participants secure tech-enabled jobs.

Efforts to support marginalized individuals in the labour market have often struggled with scalability and sustainable impact. Traditional employment programs may not have fully addressed the specific needs of equity-deserving groups, such as the need for foundational digital skills, professional networks and an understanding of workplace culture in Canada. NPower Canada's program attempts to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive, sector-based employment solution.



## 🔧 What We Investigated

NPower Canada's Junior IT Analyst and Junior Data Analyst programs provide sector-specific training for individuals from equity-deserving groups. The programs offer a mix of digital skills training, professional skills development and wraparound supports. They are delivered online to accommodate various participant needs. The randomized controlled trial conducted during this project assessed the impact of the programs on participants' employment, earnings and further education outcomes.

NPower's programs offer free, accessible training that includes both independent and group work. Their programs aim to provide participants with the tools needed to secure sustainable employment in the digital economy.

The interim evaluation report explores the following questions:

- What are early insights into participant experiences in the program?
  - Is the program reaching its target population?
  - Do participants complete the program? Are they satisfied with the model? What do they see as strengths and areas for improvement? What factors hindered completion for those who did not complete, and what additional supports might be needed?
- What are early insights into the outcomes of participants?
  - What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants and across program streams?

## ✓ What We're Learning

The program reported high completion rates (86%) and satisfaction levels among participants, with 79% recommending the program to others. Participants particularly valued the free, online availability of the program, the structure and pacing of the curriculum and the support from dedicated staff.

However, challenges were noted in the pacing of content for participants with varying experience levels, the overreliance on Coursera content, and the misalignment between skills/interests and job opportunities.

Employment outcomes were positive; employment rates increased 25 percentage points and median earnings increased 66.7% from \$24,000 at baseline to \$40,000 at 12 months post-program. These results highlight the program's potential to make a significant impact on participants' career trajectories, despite some challenges in content delivery and job alignment.

## ★ Why It Matters

The success of NPower Canada's programs highlights the value of sector-based training for equity-deserving groups, particularly in providing practical skills, work experience and networking opportunities. Policymakers and workforce development professionals should note the program's adaptability and alignment with labour market needs as key factors in boosting employment and earnings. This project underscores the importance of flexible, targeted training models for supporting marginalized populations. It also offers valuable insights for shaping broader workforce development policies.



### **State of Skills: Enhancing Career Prospects and Well-Being for Canadian Youth**

Focus on early career guidance programs to introduce youth to a range of career paths, empowering them to make informed decisions with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility.

## ► What's Next

The final report will include the full randomized controlled trial results. It will compare outcomes between the treatment and comparison groups and provide more detailed analyses by program stream and socio-demographic characteristics. This will help to further refine the program's approach and identify opportunities for scaling and improving its impact.

Have questions about our work? Do you need access to a report in English or French? Please contact [communications@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:communications@fsc-ccf.ca).

### How to Cite This Report

Blueprint. (2024). Interim Project Insights Report: Upskilling Canadians for in-demand tech careers NPower Canada. Toronto: Future Skills Centre. <https://fsc-ccf.ca/projects/npower/>

Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Future Skills Program



Upskilling Canadians for In-Demand Tech Careers is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.