Reboot Plus Expansion

Interim Report

Blueprint

Future Skills Centre Centre des
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About the Future Skills Centre

The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and The Conference Board of Canada, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

About Blueprint

Blueprint was founded on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change.

Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively generate and use evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.

Preface

Canada's labour market is evolving rapidly, requiring responsive and evidence-based skills development programs. While many innovative programs emerge, scaling them beyond the pilot stage remains challenging. To address this, the Future Skills Centre (FSC) and Blueprint launched the **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio** and partnered with 10 organizations to support their scaling efforts. Blueprint works closely with each grantee to generate continuous evidence, moving beyond the traditional 'one study at a time' approach to enhance program improvement and scalability.

Aligned with the six-stage innovation cycle (see **Figure 1**), we focus on advancing interventions from the delivery phase (Stage 4) to the scaling phase (Stage 5), ultimately supporting sustainable systems change at Stage 6. For more about our evidence generation approach and model, see our *Scaling Design Report*.

Figure 1 | The six-stage innovation cycle

Needs Assessment
What's the issue?

1

Concept Generation
How might we address the issue?

2

Sustainable Scale/ Systems Change
How do we ensure sustainability and move the needle on systems change?

6

Research, Design, Prototype
How do we bring this concept to life and de-risk its development?

3

Scaling
How do we grow and maximize reach and impact?

5

4

Delivery and Iteration
How do we both **improve** our offering over time and **prove** that it works?

About this report

This report presents findings from the [Reboot Plus Expansion](#), a program designed to re-engage youth—those at-risk of not finishing high school or unsure of their academic and career trajectories—by providing them with training and exposure to post-secondary education (PSE) and the world of work. The project also aims to raise employer awareness of and willingness to engage and employ this demographic.

Our last *[Interim Report](#)* (September 2024) analyzed the expansion's first three delivery cycles at five colleges. It drew on administrative data; a participant baseline and exit survey and a survey of employers; and participant and staff interviews, gathered by Blueprint and Douglas College from September 2022 to December 2023.

This next *Interim Report* looks at two new delivery cycles, expanding on insights gathered previously with data collected up to January 2025. This provides us with larger sample sizes for our administrative data, baseline survey, and exit survey. We also present a three-month follow-up survey for Cycles 3 and 4 and continue to examine changes in participant skill levels from the start to the end of the program.

An upcoming *Final Report* will incorporate data collected from the winter and spring of 2025 and explore demand for the program and costs of administering it.

This update is organized into five sections:

1. **Introduction** (pp. 8–10) describes the policy context related to at-risk youth, stages of the Reboot Plus intervention, and program partners.

2. **About the Reboot Plus Expansion** (pp. 11–17) outlines the goals and components of the program and updates on program delivery and research.

3. **Methodology** (pp. 18–21) shares our approaches to evidence generation and our learning agenda, data sources, and limitations.

4. **Findings** (pp. 22–29) presents findings on program uptake, experience, early outcomes, and employer awareness.

5. **Conclusions** (pp. 30–31) summarizes our findings and next steps for the program and our reporting.

Executive summary

This *Interim Report* presents findings from the [Reboot Plus Expansion](#), led by Douglas College (DC) and PEERs Employment and Education Resources. It is designed to re-engage and improve outcomes for youth (aged 17–24) at-risk of not finishing high school (HS) or unsure of their academic and career trajectories. Via 16 weeks of classroom-based and off-site activities at college sites, Reboot Plus engages youth in career development and pathway planning support; raises awareness of this demographic among employers; and arranges for youth to meet with professionals and employers in their fields of interest.

Program staff liaise with local school boards to recruit participants; enlist boards of trade and chambers of commerce to recruit professionals; and provide instruction to youth along with wraparound support and ongoing, post-program assistance. The curriculum takes a holistic, flexible, low-pressure approach, incorporating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, experiential learning, Universal Design for Learning, and Hope-Centred Career Development. It also introduces youth to several career theories to accommodate diverse learning styles.

After operating the program for several years in BC, DC received Future Skills Centre funding in 2022 to bring the model to three new provinces: a partnership with Bow Valley College (AB), Humber College (ON), Fanshawe College (ON), and the College of the North Atlantic (NFL). Expanding the geographic reach and size of the populations served would test the scalability and portability of the model and expand the support to vulnerable youth.

This work is part of Blueprint's contribution to the **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio**, which involves collecting data on the program and capturing implementation and outcome data along its scaling journey. Our last *Interim Report* (September 2024) investigated the expansion's first three delivery cycles using administrative data; a participant baseline and exit survey and a survey of employers; and participant and staff interviews, gathered by Blueprint and Douglas College from September 2022 to December 2023. This next *Interim Report* looks at two new delivery cycles, expanding on previous insights with data collected up to January 2025. This provides us with larger sample sizes for our administrative data, baseline survey, and exit survey. We also present a three-month follow-up survey for Cycles 3 and 4 and continue to examine changes in participant skill levels from the start to the end of the program. Findings continue to show promising results:

- The program has reached 291 youth across five sites and cycles. The majority (81%) enrolled with Douglas College (57%) and Fanshawe College (24%). Those reached were among the target demographic of youth at-risk of not graduating high school (HS) and those requiring support in their transition out of it.

- Respondents were highly satisfied with the program. Among exit survey respondents from Cycles 1–4, 89% were satisfied with the program overall. These findings align with results from the previous report, which indicated that participants were satisfied with Reboot Plus and that they viewed facilitator support as a highlight of the program.

- Most respondents thought the program was useful; most believed it gave them clarity about their future and career and was useful in building self-awareness, building confidence, and encouraging the completion of HS.
- Reboot Plus aims to increase participants' general self-efficacy, interpersonal communication competencies, and job clarity through curriculum, cohort design, and access to PSE resources. We tracked changes in participants' self-rated skill levels from the start to end of the program through surveys. We saw an overall increase in participants' self-rated skills at program completion for respondents in Cycles 1, 2, and 4, with the highest level of statistical confidence for general self-efficacy and job clarity and slightly less confidence for interpersonal communication competence.
- Most employers and professionals who completed the post-program survey agreed they were more willing to join similar initiatives, support youth in entering the workforce, and introduce youth to colleagues, and saw the importance of helping young people start their careers. Fewer felt motivated to review their company's hiring and onboarding policies for youth.

What's next?

Future research and program refinements will be key to ensuring long-term success. We hope to improve survey response rates to overcome challenges in generalizing findings and hope to access additional drop-out data to gain a better understanding of retention. Examining longer-term participant employment outcomes through government databases may also provide a clearer picture of career trajectories post-program. Professional engagement efforts could benefit from further qualitative insights into how organizations integrate program learnings into their hiring and onboarding strategies.

Our *Final Report* will incorporate additional follow-up surveys and qualitative data to deepen insights into program effectiveness and sustainability. Along with the data discussed in this update, it will include a nine-month follow-up survey for Cycles 3 and 4; exit, three-month follow-up, and employer surveys for Cycle 5; and baseline, exit, and employer surveys for Cycle 6. It will incorporate administrative data from all cycles and qualitative data from all participant and staff/partner interviews. This report will explore program costs (based on Cycles 2–6) and demand and provide a more thorough analysis of experience and outcomes.

1. Introduction

In 2023, approximately 11% of youth in Canada (aged 15–29) were neither in employment, education, or training[1]—a group often called "NEET youth" (Not in Employment, Education or Training) or "opportunity youth."[2] Because of their lack of work and education experience, these young adults face increased risks of long-term economic difficulties and labour market barriers.[3] Youth without high school (HS) diplomas are particularly at risk of becoming NEET; 37% of Canadian youth without HS diplomas were NEET in 2018-19.[4] Moreover, NEET youth often come from disadvantaged, racialized communities with limited resources and local opportunities.[5] Many of these individuals want to work,[6] but without accessible support options, they frequently find themselves NEET for long periods.

To address these challenges, Douglas College (DC) and the Burnaby School District in British Columbia partnered in 2015 to design 'Education Reboot.' Education Reboot combined a flexible delivery approach with in-class curriculum to offer a bridge to post-secondary education (PSE) for youth who were not on track to completing HS. The program ran from 2015–2018 while expanding its goals, length, and number of school district partners and students reached.

In 2020, the Future Skills Centre (FSC) provided innovation stream funding to expand Education Reboot into its second generation, 'Reboot Plus.' This version was delivered in three, 16-week semester-style 'cycles' through a partnership between DC, the Burnaby and Surrey School Districts, PEERs Employment and Education Resources, and the Boards of Trade in Burnaby and Surrey, BC. Reboot Plus engaged youth in career development and pathway planning support; b) raised awareness of this demographic among employers; and c) provided opportunities for youth to meet with and discuss career pathways with employers and professionals in their fields of interest.

Given the model's potential to meet Canada's skills needs and its feasibility to scale, the program became one of 10 interventions to form FSC and Blueprint's **Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio**. In 2022, partners received funding for a third generation—the 'Reboot Plus Expansion'—which brought the model to new school districts in BC and to three new provinces in partnerships with Bow Valley College (Alberta), Humber College (Ontario), Fanshawe College (Ontario), and the College of the North Atlantic (Newfoundland). Expanding the geographic reach and size of the

1 Statistics Canada. (2024, May 14). *Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)*. https://www160.statcan.gc.ca/prosperity-prosperite/neet-eng.htm

2 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2024). *Who are opportunity youth?* https://www.aecf.org/blog/who-are-opportunity-youth

3 Davidson, J., & Arim, R. (2019*, November 1). A profile of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Canada, 2015 to 2017*. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019020-eng.htm

4 Statistics Canada. (2019, July 5). *The transition from school to work: the NEET (not in employment, education or training) indicator for 20- to 24-year-olds in Canada*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2019001-eng.htm

5 Cukier, W., Mo, G. Y., Karajovic, S., Blanchette, S., Hassannezhad, Z., Mohamed, E., & Higazy, A. (2023, March). *Labour market implications for racialized youth*. Future Skills Centre and Ted Rogers School of Management Diversity Institute. https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-03-Labour-Market-Implications-for-Racialized-Youth.pdf

6 Blueprint. (2018). *Towards a better understanding of NEET youth in Ontario: Findings from the "Made in Ontario" NEET Youth Research Initiative.* https://global-uploads.webflow.com/5f80fa46a156d5e9dc0750bc/5fd223a5e5a89c9087781f02_NEET-draft-DEC2020.pdf

populations served would test the model's scalability and portability and expand support availability to vulnerable youth. **Box 1** provides a summary of program leads, partner organizations, and roles.

Box 1 | Program leads and partners

Douglas College (DC). As project lead, DC works with partners to support and monitor delivery at each site; ensures completion of all required research activities; and oversaw data collection, analysis, and reporting for Cycles 1 and 2.

PEERs Employment & Education Resources. Co-leads and manages the program with DC; oversees employer outreach and partnerships with the boards of trade; and maintains an employer database. PEERs manages a website, blog, and social media campaign to enhance stakeholders' awareness of Reboot Plus and youth participants. In the first phase of the expansion, a PEERs employee acted as a **Project Partnership Coordinator** who supported the expansion, working collaboratively with post-secondary institutions and partners, and acting as the key contact for operational, program delivery, and research implementation issues.

Post-secondary institutions implement and deliver the program and support research activities and participate in the noted cycles, which refers to multi-week programming delivered in a school term (either the winter or fall).

- Bow Valley College (BVC), Alberta. Cycle 2.
- Douglas College (DC), British Columbia. Cycles 1–6.
- Fanshawe College (FC), Ontario. Cycles 2–6.
- Humber College (HC), Ontario. Cycle 2.
- College of the North Atlantic (CNA), Newfoundland and Labrador. Cycles 2, 3, 5, and 6.

At each college site, there are five core roles:[7]

Program Manager. Oversees the program and manages staff, budget, and research. Liaises with school districts, boards of trade/chambers of commerce, and the college community. Runs local team meetings and participates in national project group meetings.

Facilitator. The primary contact for participants. Delivers the Reboot Plus curriculum, co-develops participant learning and action plans, administers assessments, and provides essential skills training. Works with the Career Liaison in both in-person and hybrid modes.

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7 These are the recommended roles for each college; in practice, not every college site had all five roles, and in some instances, one individual held more than one role.

Career Liaison. Identifies and recruits professionals for informational interviews and guest speaking. Develops workshop materials, conducts training sessions, and provides one-on-one career coaching. Works with the Facilitator in planning and delivering the program.

Community Outreach. Supports the Career Liaison in promoting and marketing the project, identifying potential employers and professionals for informational interviews, and works directly with the boards of trade and chambers of commerce to source and identify individual professionals and employers to match the participants' interests.

Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce. Representatives from boards and chambers promote the program to the public; promote the participants' areas of interest; and identify/encourage professionals within their membership and business networks to participate.

- Burnaby Board of Trade (BC)
- Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce (BC)
- Surrey Board of Trade (BC)
- London Ontario Chamber of Commerce (ON)
- Bay St. George Chamber of Commerce (NFL)

Local professionals and employers. Provide informational interviews and in-class guest speaker appearances to youth participants, sharing their career journeys and work experiences. They also serve as research subjects themselves.

School districts. District representatives identify and refer potential participants and may provide additional support or resources as needed. At individual schools, administrative staff secure buy-in from teachers and counsellors for project participation, sign participation agreements, and liaise with college Program Managers to resolve inter-institutional issues. Teachers and counsellors support youth participants by encouraging participation and attendance. They may attend program sessions and advise the Facilitator and Career Liaison on any issues affecting participants' performance.

- Burnaby School District (BC)
- New Westminster School District (BC)
- Surrey School District (BC)
- Maple Ridge School District (BC)
- Richmond School District (BC)
- Thames Valley District School Board (ON)

2. About the Reboot Plus Expansion

2.1. Program goals

Reboot Plus is an innovative education and career development program designed to re-engage youth (17–24) facing barriers to school and work while shifting employer perceptions about their potential. The program helps at-risk youth reconnect with career and education pathways, build confidence and self-efficacy, and develop social skills. It also fosters employer awareness of the strengths and capabilities of non-traditional youth, promoting more inclusive hiring practices.
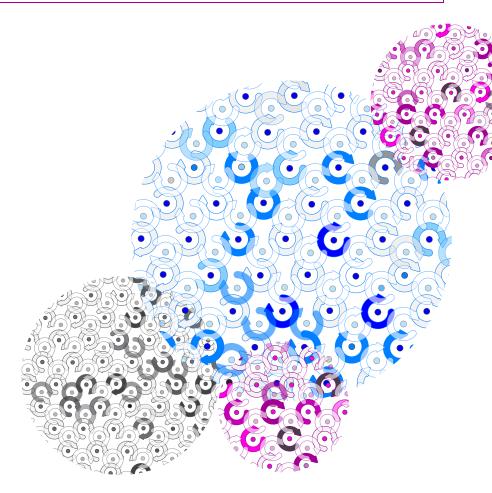
2.2. Process

Below, we outline the startup activities for college staff at each participating site.

1) **Staff training.** College staff receive a *Program Manual* and *Facilitator's Guide*. Staff are expected to review these materials to understand the program structure, objectives, and delivery methods. The *Program Manual* emphasizes the importance of staff training in various principles, outlined in section **2.3**.

2) **Partnerships and agreements.** The *Program Manual* outlines the importance of establishing formal partnerships with local school districts, boards of trade, and chambers of commerce. It recommends signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with school boards, boards of trade, and chambers of commerce to clarify roles and responsibilities.

3) **Curriculum and logistics.** The *Facilitator's Guide* provides a detailed curriculum with which Facilitators familiarize themselves. It discusses how to secure classroom and office space, as well as technological logistics, including tools and resources for both Facilitators and participants.

4) **Outreach and promotion.** The *Program Manual* outlines the need to develop participant recruitment and promotional materials and encourages attendance at board of trade events and connection with the local business community to create awareness. Outreach efforts, including social media posts and website updates, are recommended to promote the program. Promotion is supported by the program's national social media campaign and monthly blog posts, which detail aspects of the program, partners, and participants themselves.

Table 1, on the following page, explains the four-step participant journey: from identification and referral to participation in the program.

Table 1 | Participant journey

Participant journey	
1. Identification and referral	Staff from participating school districts identify students aged 17–24 at risk of not completing HS. HS teachers and counsellors refer students to the program and encourage participation. Alternative referral pathways include social services, community or school-based support programs, friends, family members, and self-referral.
2. Program introduction and registration	Participants learn about the program through information sessions (in-person or online, group or one-on-one), individual phone calls, and emails. Interested individuals complete a registration form provided by Facilitators.
3. Assessment and enrolment	Facilitators conduct intake interviews to assess participants' interests, motivation, and basic language skills.
4. Program participation	Enrolled participants attend classes at one of the college sites. The program follows a 16-week curriculum (adapted to 12 weeks for some cohorts), with two 2-hour classes per week, which are delivered in-person. Classes are led by the Facilitator and supported by the Career Liaison.

Table 2 summarizes each model component: class activities, action plans, employer and professional engagement, wraparound supports, school credits, and post-program support.

Table 2 | Reboot Plus model component descriptions

Model component	Description
Curriculum: Skills development and career exploration	Participants engage in 16 weeks of activities, with two 2-hour classes per week (which involve both in-class activities and trips outside the classroom). The curriculum emphasizes three key phases: **i)** self-discovery and skills assessment; **ii)** education and career pathway exploration; and **iii)** connecting personal attributes to educational and career opportunities. There are no 'core' components; instead, DC provides a suggested weekly course schedule with lesson plans, including objectives, outcomes, activities, durations, and resources. Facilitators are encouraged by the *Facilitator's Guide* to adapt content and delivery of the classwork to their students' needs. See **Appendix A** for a list of suggested topics. Class topics and activities include: • **Essential skills training:** Participants develop crucial workplace skills identified by Employment and Social Development Canada's *Skills for Success*, enhancing their employability and ability to navigate work, learning, and life. • **Theory-informed instruction:** As discussed in section **2.3.**, the program adopts a flexible, inclusive approach, meeting youth 'where they are' without imposing disciplinary pressure on performance or attendance. Participants are encouraged to take part in as many activities as they can, with the understanding that they will not be penalized for missing such activities, and they are welcome back to the program at any point during the same 'cycle' if they do. The program incorporates experiential learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Hope-Centred Career Development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), enabling participants to engage in self-reflection, envisioning, and confidence- and agency-building in their career planning. • **Workforce preparation:** This includes resume and cover letter building; job search skills; interview practice; and understanding employment standards and workplace health and safety rights. • **Career exploration:** Participants complete self-assessments to identify their values, personality traits, interests, and skills; conduct research into career paths aligned with personal attributes; and develop their networking skills. • **Post-secondary education exposure:** Participants explore admission requirements and pathways and are introduced to apprenticeship opportunities. Notably, participants receive on-site campus tours. • **Soft skills development:** The curriculum helps assess and build communication skills, emotional intelligence, goal setting, and planning.

Model component	Description
Action planning	Participants complete an **'action plan'** over the course of the program with Facilitator guidance. This document outlines the student's next steps for education and/or career and can take various forms depending on the students' needs and comfort levels (some are PowerPoint decks, for example). The action plan is meant to be completed by the end of the program as a kind of 'capstone project.'
Employer and professional engagement	Once career interests are identified, participants have opportunities to **connect with employers and professionals**, with the goal of setting up between **two to four 45-minute informational interviews** for each participant in sectors and careers of their interest (in practice, students are supported to conduct as many interviews as required to establish their education and career plans). As this can be an uncomfortable step for some participants, Career Liaisons introduce the process by organizing interviews in small groups or pairs. Participants can also explore multiple, self-identified areas of interest through two guest speakers, who share their professional experiences with the whole classroom.
Wraparound supports	Participants have access to **additional, flexible supports** as needed to encourage their attendance, including transportation vouchers for taxis and public transportation, supper club invitations, counselling, and beyond.
School credit	In some areas, participants who have not graduated from HS can receive credit for one HS course by completing the program. This is dependent on agreements between colleges and school boards.[8]
Ongoing support post-program	After the program ends,[9] staff provide participant **check-ins** and **support** with: • researching programs and schools; • writing school and job applications; • finding and applying for sources of funding for future education; • connecting with support services and student groups; and • preparing for interviews.

8 For example, participants may receive credit for the BC High School Career Life Connections course upon completion.

9 Each college noted that this was an ongoing service with no time limitations capping the support offered to participants post-program.

2.3. Principles of the model design

Addressing the varied needs of NEET- and NEET-adjacent youth requires considering more than just employment. Evidence suggests that successful programs often include elements that help increase self-esteem and relationship-building skills alongside academic instruction. Multifaceted interventions that offer flexible, tailored, wraparound supports and address motivational and confidence-building skills can significantly improve engagement and outcomes, especially at key transition points for 16–18-year-olds.[10]

Part of the challenge in reaching this demographic is their struggle with school attendance.[11] Although not a homogenous group, many NEET youth express antipathy toward education. A psychosocial profile of NEET youth in Canada highlights some common challenges, including poor self-reported physical and mental health, high instances of mood and anxiety disorders, and low levels of life satisfaction.[12] They are also more likely to be from underprivileged and/or racialized communities[13] or Indigenous.[14] These students often require individual attention, experiential opportunities, and the ability to move through learning at their own pace.

In response, the Reboot Plus model takes a holistic approach, offering flexible, low-pressure environments. It incorporates principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), experiential learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Hope-Centred Career Development (HCCD), and introduces participants to a variety of career theories to accommodate a diversity of learning and engagement styles.

Attending a post-secondary environment is also a core part of the Reboot Plus model. Participants engage in programming on a college campus, where they experience a setting distinct from their K–12 education. This shift in environment—more autonomous, adult-oriented, and less hierarchical—offers participants a tangible and in-situ exposure to what post-secondary education can offer. Being in this space often helps reframe how they view themselves as learners, increasing their sense of ownership, engagement, and possibility.

Holistic elements. By integrating holistic elements, Reboot Plus aims to help participants chart career pathways and improve self-esteem and interpersonal skills. The curriculum builds key communication and emotional intelligence skills while offering strategies to balance mental and physical health and build equanimity. It also provides participants with opportunities to interact with employers and professionals in participants' fields of interest, as well as a range of supports designed to help youth re-engage with education and career development.

10 Learning and Work Institute. (2020, March). *Evidence review: What works to support 15 to 24-year olds at risk of becoming NEET?* https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Evidence-Review-What-works-to-support-15-to-24-year-olds-at-risk-of-becoming-NEET.pdf

11 Holliman, A., Schoon, I., Hurry, J., & Waldeck, D. (2023, April). Understanding and reducing NEET: Perspectives of schoolteachers and career advice service providers. *Youth*, *3(2)*, 579–595. https://doi.org/10.3390/youth3020039

12 Davidson & Arim, 2019.

13 Cukier et al., 2023.

14 Blueprint, 2018.

Flexible, low-pressure approach. The program's flexible delivery structure allows participants who step away to rejoin at any time during the cycle, ensuring continuous support without pressure. The program does not require formal completion of any activity or assignment and does not penalize participants for missing program elements. However, attending approximately 70% of classes is strongly encouraged by Facilitators and all participants are encouraged (and supported) to complete a personal education and career action plan.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Reboot Plus places significant emphasis on fostering DEI. Many participants belong to equity-seeking groups; given that some participants have experienced bullying or abuse, the program adopts a trauma-informed approach and provides comprehensive, individualized support. Rather than catering to a one-size-fits-all model, Reboot Plus honours the unique circumstances and experiences of each participant.

Experiential Learning is a core element; this approach posits that learning occurs through a process of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation—that individuals learn best when they engage in concrete experiences, reflect on their actions, develop new concepts, and then apply them through active experimentation. Learning is a cyclical process, where each stage is interdependent and contributes to the overall experience, fostering an understanding of the material studied and enhancing personal growth and development.[15]

Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The Reboot Plus model is rooted in CAST's principles of UDL, which advocate for programs that centre the needs of learners—in this case, youth with economic and psychological barriers—and acknowledge that not all people are able to complete work in the same way. UDL accommodates this diversity by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression, allowing learners to choose how they interact with content.[16]

Hope-Centred Career Development (HCCD). The Reboot Plus model places hope at the centre of career development, helping participants identify their values, interests, and skills to pursue future pathways with confidence. Key HCCD competencies include self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting, planning, and adapting, aiming to foster resilience and positive attitudes. Curriculum activities progressively build upon one another, mirroring HCCD's emphasis on developing interconnected career competencies to help participants maintain a sense of agency and optimism as they explore careers and develop their skills.[17] The program's employer interviews are also emblematic of HCCD in action: by engaging directly with professionals about real-life pathways—including career pivots, missteps, and personal stories—participants gain valuable insight that supports career clarification and informed, self-directed planning.

15 Institute for Experiential Learning. (2024). *What is experiential learning?* https://experientiallearninginstitute.org/what-is-experiential-learning/

16 CAST. (2024). *Universal Design for Learning guidelines version 3.0.* https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

17 Amundson, N. E., Goddard, T., Niles, S. G., Yoon, H. J., & Schmidt, J. (2016). *Hope centred career interventions: Research project – final report.* MixtMode, UBC, William & Mary, The George Washington University, & CERIC. https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/hope-centred-career-interventions-research-project/?wpdmdl=19267&refresh=66bc48a978f3b1723615401

Introductions to varieties of career theories.
The Reboot Plus curriculum introduces career planning through the lens of a variety of career theories, including Chaos Career theory,[18] Life-Career Rainbow theory,[19] and Planned Happenstance theory.[20]

2.4. Project timeline

The Reboot Plus Expansion is assessing program scalability to new contexts and identifying key factors for successful implementation. The goal is to apply a co-design approach to expand the program's reach and translate the values and ethos of the program to other sites.

As shown in **Table 3**, as of the time of data collection for this report, four cycles of Reboot Plus Expansion have been delivered. Cycle 5 was approaching its end and Cycle 6 is planned to commence in winter 2025. A "cycle" refers to multi-week programming delivered in a school term (either the winter or fall). Data collection activities for our reports will end in June 2025.

Table 3 | Project timeline (as of Jan. 20, 2025)

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Cycle 6
Timeline	Fall 2022	Winter 2023	Fall 2023	Winter 2024	Fall 2024	Winter 2025
Length	16 weeks	16 weeks	12 weeks[a]	12 weeks[a]	16 weeks	16 weeks
Research lead[b]	DC	DC	BP	BP	BP	BP
Postsecondary institutes	DC	BVC, CNA, DC, FC, HC	CNA, DC, FC	DC, FC	CNA, DC, FC	CNA, DC, FC

[a] The program was shortened for Cycles 3 and 4 to account for delays in the funding agreement.

[b] DC was the research lead until Cycle 2, for which BP conducted staff/partner interviews. BP became the lead from Cycle 3 onwards although DC continued to collect professional surveys.

18 Chaos Career theory emphasizes the dynamic, unpredictable nature of career paths, noting that chance events and external influences significantly shape those journeys. Challenging notions of linear progression and certainty, it advocates for adaptability and resilience in the face of change and uncertainty. For more, see: Pryor, R. G. L., & Bright, J. (2003). The chaos theory of careers. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, *12*(3), 12–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620301200304

19 Life-Career Rainbow theory visualizes life as a rainbow; each arch represents a stage from birth to late adulthood. It posits that we play multiple roles simultaneously throughout life—such as child, student, worker, parent, and citizen. These vary at different life stages, each associated with specific career-related tasks and challenges. The theory emphasizes that our careers are dynamic, lifelong processes influenced by personal and environmental factors—that career choices are essentially expressions of self-concept, holistically evolving with other aspects of life.
For more, see: Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers: An introduction to vocational development.* Harper & Bros.

20 Planned Happenstance theory emphasizes the role of chance events in career development, asserting that individuals can prepare for unplanned opportunities. Instead of attempting to predict a specific career path, individuals should develop skills that allow them to recognize and seize unexpected opportunities. Key skills include enhanced curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk-taking, which enable individuals to navigate the unpredictable nature of life and work. For more, see: Mitchell, K. E., Levin, A. S., & Krumboltz, J. D. (1999). Planned happenstance: Constructing unexpected career opportunities. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *77*(2), 115–124. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1999.tb02431.x

3. Methodology

3.1. Learning agenda

This *Interim Report* answers the following questions:

- **Program uptake:** Is the program reaching its target group?
- **Program experiences:** Are participants satisfied with their experience in the program?
- **Early outcomes:** What early outcomes are youth achieving following participation in the program?
- **Employer awareness:** Did employers become more aware of this youth population as potential job candidates?

3.2. Blueprint's common outcomes framework

Our measurement approach includes indicators specific to Reboot Plus Expansion and indicators drawn from our common outcomes framework, described in **Box 2**.

Box 2 | Common outcomes framework

Our measurement approach includes indicators that are specific to an intervention as well as a set of common indicators that are measured for every intervention in the Portfolio. These common indicators are drawn from Blueprint's common outcomes framework, which was developed in consultation with our partners and was informed by review of employment-related outcomes frameworks and measurement approaches both within Canada and internationally. They include:

- Intermediate outcomes that reflect 'in-program' participant experiences and gains (e.g., program satisfaction and skills development).
- Long-term outcomes, such as employment and educational attainment.

Using a consistent approach to measuring outcomes is part of our commitment to understanding how each intervention in the Portfolio is reaching people across Canada and allows us to measure long-term outcomes using Statistics Canada's Social Data Linking Environment.

For more information on Blueprint's common outcomes framework, see **Appendix B**.

3.3. Data sources and sample sizes

Douglas College (DC) and Blueprint shared data-collection activities. For this report, we gathered quantitative data, including administrative and survey data, to answer our questions. We include longitudinal analysis of surveys to assess changes in participant skill levels from the start to the end of the program. A paired t-test was used to assess differences, and Cohen's d was used to measure their strength. Unlike the last report, this update does not include participant and staff/partner interviews; these qualitative findings from the previous report are summarized in section **4.2.**

For the *Final Report*, we will analyze data from all six cycles (including participant baseline and exit surveys for Cycles 1–6, participant three-month follow-up surveys for Cycles 3–5, and nine-month follow-up surveys for Cycles 3 and 4),[21] as well as administrative data, employer surveys, and participant and staff/partner interviews from Cycles 4–6. We will use cost/time worksheets from Cycles 2–6 to explore costs of running the program and Statistics Canada and other government data holdings to estimate program demand. We will also analyze variations in participant experience and outcomes across delivery sites and socio-demographic groups.

Table 4, on the following page, outlines data sources, organizations collecting the data, and participant responses.

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21 Not all follow-up survey data can be included in the *Final Report* as the final data collection period ends in June 2025. This means we are unable to include the three-month follow-up survey for Cycle 6 and the nine-month follow-up surveys for Cycles 5 and 6.

Table 4 | Data sources and sample sizes (as of January 20, 2025)

Data source	Cycle and data collection party	Sample size	Description
Program administrative data	On enrolment: Cycles 1–5: Colleges On completion: Cycles 1–4: Colleges	**264 participants** (291 enrolled and 26 dropped out)	Collected and shared by colleges on the number of participants who enrolled, completed the program, and dropped out.
Baseline survey	Cycles 1 and 2: DC Cycle 3: N/A[a] Cycles 4 and 5: BP	**148/251** (59%)	Administered to all consenting participants (251) at the beginning of the program. Surveys included socio-demographic information and pre-training self-assessment of general self-efficacy, job clarity, and interpersonal communication competence.
Exit survey	Cycles 1 and 2: DC Cycles 3 and 4: BP	**88/254** (35%)[b]	Administered to participants at the end of the program to gather socio-demographic characteristics. Surveys included post-training self-assessments of general self-efficacy, job clarity, and interpersonal communication competence.
Three-month follow-up survey	Cycles 1 and 2: N/A[c] Cycles 3 and 4: BP	**35/49** (71%)[d]	Administered to participants three months after the program to collect employment and education outcomes.
Employer and professional surveys	Cycles 1–4: DC	184[e]	Anonymized survey administered by career liaisons to employers and professionals. Survey was sent each time they presented as guest speakers in the classroom or participated in informational interviews with participants to understand their perspectives on recruiting and hiring youth.

[a] No baseline survey was administered in Cycle 3 due to a delay in funding agreements.

[b] Only those participants who did not drop out received the exit and follow-up surveys. Note that this denominator is slightly larger than that of the baseline survey because no baseline survey was administered to Cycle 3.

[c] No follow-up surveys were administered to Cycles 1 and 2 because they were not included in part of DC's original research plan.

[d] At the time of this report's completion, 50 participants from Cycle 5 had not yet received their three-month follow-up survey. These participants will receive this survey in April 2025.

[e] Employers and professionals could participate in the program more than once so could have completed the same survey more than once.

See **Appendix C** for breakdowns of participant sample sizes across cycles and colleges.

3.4. Data limitations

Findings in this report should be interpreted within the context of certain limitations.

- **Limited generalizability and longitudinal tracking of quantitative findings.** Low baseline and exit survey response rates (**59%** and **35%**)[22] mean findings cannot be generalized to all program participants—the diversity of their perspectives may not be fully reflected in the data. Blueprint continues to experiment with ways to boost survey responses, including by:

    - working closely with program staff to enlist their assistance in getting participants to complete surveys;

    - implementing a default opt-in consent approach, automatically enrolling participants in research upon registration and providing them with an opt-out option later in the process;

    - using a short message service (SMS) to distribute online surveys and remind participants to complete them; and

    - increasing the incentive for the exit survey (participants received $20 previously).

- **Changes to survey designs and compressed cycles mean comparative limitations.** Survey questions were adjusted between the first two cycles (designed by DC) and later cycles (designed by BP), expanding the scope of the sociodemographic data collected at the intake and exit (see **Appendix D** for a comparison between the two survey designs). Programs for Cycles 3 and 4 were also compressed from 16 to 12 weeks due to administrative and funding delays, which meant no baseline survey was distributed for Cycle 3. While these differences may introduce comparative limitations across cycles, we have partially addressed this challenge by asking questions on disability, education, and job status retrospectively on the exit survey.

- **Changes in skills complicated by variability in baseline and exit survey timing.** Baseline surveys were shared with participants continuously depending on when we received their consent forms. Therefore, the period between the baseline and exit surveys, based on which we analyzed changes to skills, is not equal for all participants. While variations range from a few days to a few weeks, findings on changes to skills should be interpreted with some caution.

- **No dropout data before Cycle 4.** The total number of participants who remain in the program began to be collected consistently across all the delivery sites after Cycle 4 (except for CNA, for which we have data for Cycles 2 and 3 as well). Blueprint is currently working with DC and Fanshawe College to explore ways to access the missing data. See **Appendix C** for a list of which cycles and sites are missing drop-out data.

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22 The baseline survey achieved higher response rates than the exit survey due to differences in follow-up opportunities. During the period when students would receive the baseline survey, students would be in class for fix to six weeks, allowing facilitators to provide frequent in-person reminders. In contrast, after program completion, facilitators relied on text reminders, which proved less effective than direct engagement. This limited post-program contact likely contributed to the lower exit survey response rate.

4. Findings

4.1. Program uptake

4.1.1. How many participants were reached?

As shown in **Table 5**, the program reached **291** youth across **five** sites and **five** cycles. The majority (**81%**) enrolled with Douglas College (**57%**) and Fanshawe College (**24%**). The program does not have an explicit recruitment target number; it seeks to enrol as many as delivery staff capacity will allow. Douglas College consistently met its delivery capacity based on facilitator and liaison availability, ensuring the program operated at full capacity within the constraints of its resources.

Table 5 | Program enrolment (including dropouts)

	Douglas College	Fanshawe College	College of the North Atlantic	Bow Valley College	Humber College	Totals
Cycle 1 (Fall 2022)	28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28
Cycle 2 (Winter 2023)	48	36	5	25	11	125
Cycle 3 (Fall 2023)	21	7	5	N/A	N/A	33
Cycle 4 (Winter 2024)	31	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	35
Cycle 5 (Fall 2024)	39	23	8	N/A	N/A	70
Total no. and % of participants	**167** (57%)	**70** (24%)	**18** (6%)	**25** (9%)	**11** (4%)	**291** (100%)

Source. Administrative data

Enrolment numbers were limited due to a combination of funding delays, shortened recruitment timelines, and partnership dynamics that impacted outreach efforts.

- Recruitment in Cycle 1 and 2 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While school districts had returned to face-to-face instruction, administration and staff reported post-COVID work fatigue and a diminished ability to attend to external initiatives, programs, and services.

- As noted, Cycles 3 and 4 had comparatively lower enrolment numbers due to funding delays and tighter recruitment windows. This was especially the case for Fanshawe College, which navigated a lack of clarity among school board partners regarding their role in identifying and referring suitable students. Transportation barriers in some areas further limited student participation.

- Bow Valley College and the College of the North Atlantic lacked agreements with secondary school boards, which limited direct referrals. BVC adopted a broader recruitment approach, improving outreach but lacking the precision needed to connect with at-risk youth. CNA focused on youth no longer engaged in the school system, making them inherently more difficult to reach. Without school board partnerships to facilitate direct engagement, CNA relied primarily on its own student base, which was misaligned with the target demographic. Confidentiality restrictions further constrained outreach efforts, as CNA staff were unable to contact potential recruits identified by schools.

- Despite its formal partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Humber College encountered challenges in securing program buy-in from schools. The presence of similar transition programs within the TDSB led to some competition for referrals.

These factors underscore the importance of strong institutional partnerships, clear referral pathways, and targeted outreach strategies to engage at-risk youth. While these challenges are unsurprising as an element of initial scaling of a partnership-based model, they provide clear direction for opportunities to improve reach.

4.1.2. Did the program reach its target demographic?

The program reached its target demographic of youth at-risk of not graduating high school (HS) and those requiring support in their transition out of it. Survey data show the mean age of participants was **19**, **65%** were in HS, and the group possessed several other characteristics of the target population:

- **46%** attended more than one HS and **30%** reported having a negative overall experience of HS;

- **41%** contributed financially to their household and **32%** were on government assistance;

- **34%** self-identified as having a disability;

- **22%** were immigrants to Canada (**46%** of whom started the program within five years of immigration to Canada);

- **24%** self-identified as gender-diverse (**14%** of whom identified as transgender); and

- **37%** belonged to visible minority groups (i.e., non-white and non-Indigenous), and **32%** as Indigenous.

Table 6, on the following page, presents survey respondent characteristics from Cycles 1–5.[23]

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23 As different socio-demographic questions were asked in DC's survey (administered to Cycles 1 and 2) and Blueprint's survey (administered to Cycles 3–5), denominators of response rates in the table below are not always aligned (see **Appendix D**). While we did not administer the baseline survey for Cycle 3, we administered the exit survey, which included socio-demographic questions asked retrospectively. Eighteen participants of Cycle 3 completed it.

Table 6 | Participant socio-demographics

Item	Responses	% of sample[a]
Age	<17 years	**3%** (4/142)
	17–20 years	**75%** (106/142)
	20–24 years	**20%** (29/142)
	24 years or greater	**2%** (3/142)
	Mean age	19 years
Gender	Boy/man	**49%** (73/148)
	Girl/woman	**41%** (61/148)
	Gender non-binary (including gender-fluid, gender-queer, and androgynous)	**9%** (13/148)
	Two-spirited	**1%** (1/148)
Transgender		**14%** (11/81)
Ethnic groups	Visible minority (i.e., non-white and non-Indigenous)	**37%** (50/136)
	Indigenous	**32%** (27/84)
Immigrants		**22%** (29/133)
Newcomers (arrived in Canada < 5 years ago when enrolled in program)		**46%** (13/28)
Disability (any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing, or functional limitation that, in interaction with a barrier, could hinder a person's full and equal participation in society)		**34%** (23/68)
Financial status	Contributing financially at home	**41%** (26/64)
	On government assistance	**32%** (24/76)
Education	In HS	**65%** (50/77)
	Attended more than one HS	**46%** (64/139)
	Very or somewhat negative overall experience of school	**30%** (20/66)

Source. Baseline survey (Cycles 1–5)

[a] Denominators include manually coded responses to open-text boxes (such as "not listed above—please specify below") but do not include those who did not provide an answer or selected "prefer not to answer."

4.2. Program experiences

4.2.1. Are participants satisfied with their experience in the program?

As shown in **Table 7**, respondents were highly satisfied with the program. Among exit survey respondents from Cycles 1–4,[24] **89%** were satisfied with the program overall. Ratings were consistent across cycles (ranging from a low of **86%** to a high of **94%**).

These findings align with results from the previous *Interim Report*, which indicated that participants were satisfied with Reboot Plus. As described in that report, participants viewed facilitator support as a highlight of the program.

Table 7 | Overall satisfaction

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
				Sum of agreement options	
Overall program satisfaction	**1%** (1/82)	**2%** (2/82)	**7%** (6/82)	**32%** (26/82)	**57%** (47/82)
				89% (73/82)	

Source. Exit survey (Cycles 1–4)

Note. Program satisfaction integrates two questions: one from Cycles 1–2, where participants rated the program on a 5-point scale ranging from "Really did not enjoy it" to "Really enjoyed it," and one from Cycles 3–4 using the 5-point scale outlined in the table.

These findings align with results from the previous *Interim Report*, which indicated that participants were satisfied with Reboot Plus. As described in that report, participants viewed facilitator support as a highlight of the program.

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24 The exit survey was not yet administered for Cycle 5 during data analysis.

In addition to tracking overall participant satisfaction, Blueprint added a set of questions in Cycle 3 to understand participant perceptions of how useful Reboot Plus was in helping them achieve various outcomes. As shown in **Table 8**, respondents thought the program was useful and helped them gain confidence and clarity about their futures. It was most useful in giving participants clarity about their future and career (**92%**) but also was seen as useful in building self-awareness (**72%**), building confidence (**72%**), and encouraging the completion of HS (**72%**).

Table 8 | Perceptions of program utility

Was Reboot Plus ...	Not useful	A little useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
			Sum of agreement options	
... useful in encouraging the completion of HS?	14% (5/36)	14% (5/36)	19% (7/36)	53% (19/36)
			72% (26/36)	
... useful in giving more clarity about future and career?	0%	8% (3/39)	23% (9/39)	69% (27/39)
			92% (36/39)	
... useful in building confidence?	10% (4/39)	18% (7/39)	31% (12/39)	41% (16/39)
			72% (28/39)	
... useful in building self-awareness?	8% (3/39)	21% (8/39)	36% (14/39)	36% (14/39)
			72% (28/39)	

Source. Exit survey (Cycles 3–4)

Participant and staff interviews—detailed in the previous *Interim Report*—elaborate on what both participants and staff saw as key drivers of high satisfaction. In summary:

• Participants believed the curriculum was well-structured and enhanced their career awareness and confidence through self-discovery, exposure to college facilities, and career exploration. Participants praised facilitators and career liaisons for their supportive, empathetic, and non-judgmental approach and for meeting youth 'where they were.'

• Participants noted increased confidence in tackling life situations, more positive feelings, and

better clarity about their career-related goals. Those in HS reported an increased resolve to earn their HS diploma and mapped a clearer pathway to doing so.

• Facilitators praised the detailed and flexible curriculum, which provided sufficient material and

instructions and allowed room for adaptation.

• Staff and partners noted effective recruitment strategies for participants, including signing agreements with school boards, granting HS credits for completing the program, and multi-platform marketing campaigns.

4.3. Early outcomes

4.3.1. What early skills outcomes are youth achieving post-program?

Reboot Plus has two desired outcomes: skill increases and education attainment (including finishing HS and pursuing higher education). Although the program provides job- and career-related training, it does not expect participants to secure quality employment in the short term. Rather, it focuses on longer-term educational and occupational/career-planning through the development of action plans that identify realistic trajectories and next steps.

Education attainment outcomes are expected to take a longer time to materialize than skill-related outcomes — they require enrolment and completion to measure, which are both bounded by school-year schedules. As we are still collecting sufficient data to report on education, this section focuses on shorter-term, self-reported skill gains among participants, for which we have robust data as of program exit.

Skills: General self-efficacy, interpersonal communication, and job clarity

Reboot Plus aims to increase participants' general self-efficacy, interpersonal communication competencies, and job clarity through the curriculum, cohort design, and access to PSE resources.

• **General self-efficacy** indicates optimism when dealing with difficulties in life and the belief that one's actions can be responsible for good results. It is differentiated from domain-specific self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or tasks.[25]

• **Interpersonal communication skills** include self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation,

assertiveness, interaction management, altercentrism (the ability to adjust one's perceptions based on others in a conversation), expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy (the ability to reduce perceived distance in conversation), and environmental control.

• **Job clarity** indicates clarity in career goals, pathways, and job search strategies.[26]

We tracked changes in participants' self-rated skill levels from the beginning to the end of the program through surveys. To ensure consistency, we used the same validated scales in both the baseline and

25 We used a validated scale for general self-efficacy. See: Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). *General self-efficacy scale (GSE)* [Database record]. APA PsycTests. https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Ft00393-000

26 Self-efficacy and interpersonal communication skills had 10 items and job clarity had five. Self-efficacy was rated on a 4-point scale and scored 1–4. Interpersonal communication skills and job clarity were rated on 5-point scales and scored 1–5.

exit surveys and included only those participants who completed both surveys for each skill. For each participant, we calculated the average skill rating from both surveys and compared them to see how their scores changed. We then grouped participants based on whether their skills increased, decreased, or stayed the same.

To test whether these changes were statistically significant, we used a paired t-test with p-values.[27] Further details about the rating scales and calculations can be found in **Appendix E**.

As shown in **Table 9**, there was an overall increase in participants' self-rated skills at program completion for respondents in Cycles 1, 2, and 4.[28] We have the highest level of statistical confidence for general self-efficacy (**+56%**) and job clarity (**+66%**) and are less confident for interpersonal communication competence (**+48%**) based on the p-value (p=0.29).

Table 9 | Changes in average scores

		General self-efficacy	Interpersonal communication competence	Job clarity
% of respondents whose change in average scores was:	Positive	**56%** (35/62)	**48%** (30/62)	**66%** (40/61)
	Negative	**29%** (18/62)	**40%** (25/62)	**18%** (11/61)
	Nonexistent	**15%** (9/62)	**11%** (7/62)	**16%** (10/61)
Average change in scores:		**+0.19** (p=0.00)	**+0.06** (p=0.29)	**+0.33** (p=0.00)

Source. Baseline and exit surveys (Cycles 1, 2, 4)

27 A paired t-test is a statistical method that compares the means of two paired measurements. Smaller p values mean more confidence that the difference is real.

28 The baseline survey was not administered to Cycle 3 due to a delay in the funding agreement. Additionally, the exit survey was not yet administered to Cycle 5 during data analysis for this report. No skills comparison can be made for these two cycles.

4.4. Employer and professional awareness

4.4.1. Did employers and professionals report an increased awareness of this demographic as potential job candidates?

As noted, participants meet with employers and professionals in their fields of interest for informational interviews. These individuals—identified by local boards of trade, chambers of commerce, Career Liaisons, staff professional networks, as well as previously participating employers—shared their career experiences with participants and completed a survey after each session.

Surveys from Cycles 1–4 show that professionals responded positively to the program and gained a greater awareness of youth as a potential talent pool. As shown in **Table 10**, most who completed the post-survey agreed they were more willing to join similar initiatives (**92%**), support youth in entering the workforce (**87%**), introduce youth to colleagues (**82%**), and saw the importance of helping young people start their careers (**81%**). Fewer (**60%**) felt motivated to review their company's hiring and onboarding policies for youth.

Table 10 | Employer and professional awareness

Since participating in Reboot Plus …	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
				Sum of agreement options	
… I am more willing to introduce youth participants to colleagues.	0%	1% (1/170)	17% (29/170)	36% (61/170)	46% (79/170)
				82% (140/170)	
… I am more motivated to support youth to attach to the workplace.	1% (1/172)	1% (1/172)	12% (21/172)	29% (50/172)	58% (99/172)
				87% (149/172)	
… I am more motivated to review my company's policies and practices related to recruiting and onboarding youth.	0%	3% (5/151)	36% (55/151)	34% (52/151)	26% (39/151)
				60% (91/151)	
… I am more willing to participate in similar initiatives.	1% (2/181)	0%	7% (12/181)	30% (54/181)	62% (113/181)
				92% (167/181)	
… I have an improved understanding of the importance of supporting youth to enter the workforce.	1% (2/175)	3% (5/175)	15% (27/175)	26% (45/175)	55% (96/175)
				81% (141/175)	

Source. Employer and professional surveys (Cycles 1–4)

5. Conclusions

5.1. Summary of findings

As of January 2025, the Reboot Plus Expansion reached **291** participants across **five** colleges in **four** provinces, targeting youth at risk of not graduating high school, needing transition support, and/or facing various challenges leading to educational and career disengagement. Data show promising findings, including:

- **Effective engagement with target youth.** The program successfully reached youth struggling with traditional education systems and facing financial difficulties and school instability. Recruitment strategies—leveraging school-board referrals and community outreach—proved effective in attracting a diverse and high-need participant base. High satisfaction rates among participants indicate that the program is meeting a need in career development support.

- **Holistic, flexible learning model driving positive outcomes.** The program's low-pressure, supportive approach allows participants to build confidence and agency over their futures. Facilitators play a crucial role and were rated highly for their knowledge, organization, and ability to adapt materials to individual needs. The structured yet flexible approach allowed for incremental skill-building, addressing both personal and career-development barriers.

- **Skills and education showing positive gains.** Participants demonstrated improvement in general self-efficacy (**56%**) and job clarity (**66%**), suggesting a stronger sense of direction post-program. Interpersonal communication competence improvements were less pronounced, indicating areas for curriculum refinement.

- **Increased employer engagement and awareness.** Employers reported greater awareness of the target demographic as a talent pool, with high willingness to participate in similar initiatives (**92%**). Most employers (**87%**) expressed increased motivation to support youth workforce entry. While employer awareness is growing, additional work is needed to translate awareness into concrete changes in youth hiring and retention (**60%** were prompted to review internal hiring practices).

Data gaps and areas for further investigation

Future research and program refinements will be key to ensuring long-term success. We hope to improve survey response rates (**59%** for the baseline and **35%** for the exit) to overcome challenges in generalizing findings across all participants. We also hope to access drop-out data for certain cycles to gain a better understanding of participant retention challenges. Examining longer-term participant employment outcomes through government databases may also provide a clearer picture of career trajectories post-program. Employer engagement efforts could benefit from further qualitative insights into how organizations integrate program learnings into their hiring and onboarding strategies.

5.2. What's next?

The *Final Report* will incorporate additional follow-up surveys and qualitative data to deepen insights into program effectiveness and sustainability. Along with the data discussed in this update, the *Final Report* will include a nine-month follow-up survey for Cycles 3 and 4; exit, three-month follow-up, and employer surveys for Cycle 5; and baseline, exit, and employer surveys for Cycle 6. It will incorporate administrative data from all cycles and qualitative data from all participant and staff/partner interviews. This report will explore program costs (based on Cycles 2–6) and demand and provide a more thorough analysis of experience and outcomes.

Appendix A

Table A1 | Program curriculum

	Topic	Description
Week 1	Orientation and onboarding	Introduction to course content and to the college environment
Week 2	Introduction to communication	Exploration of foundational communication skills for employment and networking contexts.
Week 3	Communication continued	Continued exploration of foundational communication skills and development of a "30-second speech"
Week 4	Information interviews and skills	Introduction to the purpose of information interviews, exploration of different communication strategies, and identification of skills using Transferable Technical and Personal Management skills checklists. The first guest speaker is brought to the class.
Week 5	Introduction to essential skills, values and interests	Participants are introduced to new essential skills and are taught to define their own skillset in different contexts and frameworks.
Week 6	Industries research and Workplace Essential Skills Assessment (WESA)	Introduction to the primary industries in each province and matching of participant interests and abilities to potential careers.
Week 7	Values and advanced 30-second speech	Exploration of participants' values and matching of these values to potential careers.
Week 8	National Occupational Classification Codes (NOC) and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment	Continued exploration of possible career areas and exploration of their MBTI types as they relate to possible careers.
Week 9	MBTI and essential skills exploration	Introduction to document use skills and continued exploration of MBTI concepts.
Week 10	Goals and skills portfolio	Continued exploration of document use, introduction to and practice of goal setting using a SMARTER Goals guide.
Week 11	Wellness and emotional intelligence	Reflections on emotional intelligence, identification of areas of strength and areas in need of attention, and introduction to mindfulness.
Week 12	Post-secondary	Exploration of post-secondary institutions, including discussion of costs, requirements, program options, and application processes. Participants take part in a college recruiting session and in a tour of the host college.
Week 13	Post-secondary tours	Guided tours of two new post-secondary schools.
Week 14	Cover letters, resumes and introduction to job interviews	Introduction to and practice developing resumes and cover letters, drawing self-assessment of skills and interests explored in previous weeks.
Week 15	Job interviews and action plans	Job interview practice, including key words on company websites that signal alignment with company cultures. Introduction to basic rules of employment and rights and responsibilities through the Employment Standards website.
Week 16	Action plans and celebrations	Final reflections and conclusions of action plans.

Source. Facilitator's Guide

Appendix B

Table B1 | Common outcomes framework

	Outcome	Indicators
Socio-demographics	Sex and gender	Sex at birth
		Self-identified gender
	Age	Age
	Location	Province
		Region and municipality
	Marital status	Marital status
	Children and dependents	Children Dependents Household size
	Household income	Household income
	Education	Highest credential obtained
		Location of highest credential attainment
	Indigenous identity	Self-identified Indigenous identity
	Francophone status and languages spoken	First language spoken
		Official languages
		Language spoken at home
		Other languages spoken (at home)
	Citizenship status	Place of birth
		Year of arrival
		Citizenship status
	Racial identity	Self-identification as member of racialized group
	Disability	Self-identified disability
Employment status and history	Employment	Employment status
		Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full/part-time)
	Earnings	Hours worked/week
		Wages
		Annual earnings
	Industry and occupation of employment	NAICS code of job
		NOC code of job
	Work history	Time since last employed
		NOC code of job
		NAICS code of job
	Income source	Income sources

	Outcome	Indicators
Intermediate outcomes	Program completion	Successful completion of planned activities
	Participant satisfaction	Satisfaction with program
		Perceived utility of program
		Likelihood to recommend
Customized intermediate outcomes	Skills gains	Measured gains in specific skills
	Program-specific credential attainment	Attainment of program-specific credentials
Long-term outcomes	Employment and retention	Employment status
		Nature of employment (permanent, temporary, full/part-time)
		Retention
	Earnings	Hours worked/week
		Wages
		Annual earnings
	Benefits	Presence of benefits including: paid leave, health and dental coverage, pension plan
	Industry and occupation of employment	NAICS code of job
		NOC code of job
	Job satisfaction	Satisfaction with job
		Perceived opportunity for career advancement
		Perceived job security
	Enrolment in further education	Enrolment in further education
		Type of training
		Field of study
	Credential attainment	Attainment of high school or PSE credentials
		Field of study credentials

Appendix C

Table C1 | Participant sample size breakdowns (Jan. 20, 2025)

DC: Douglas College **CNA:** College of the North Atlantic **BVC:** Bow Valley College
FC: Fanshawe College **HC:** Humber College

Cycle 1	DC
Administrative data: Enrolment	28
Administrative data: Remaining with dropouts	missing
Baseline survey	11
Exit survey	5

Cycle 2	DC	CNA	FC	HC	BVC
Administrative data: Enrolment	48	5	36	11	25
Administrative data: Remaining with dropouts	missing	4	missing	missing	missing
Baseline survey	13	5	26	11	17
Exit survey	5	3	24	3	9

Cycle 3	DC	CNA	FC
Administrative data: Enrolment	21	5	7
Administrative data: Remaining with dropouts	missing	4	missing
Exit survey	12	4	2
Three-month follow-up survey	10	1	1

Cycle 4	DC	FC
Administrative data: Enrolment	31	4
Administrative data: Remaining with dropouts	26	2
Baseline survey	21	3
Exit survey	18	3
Three-month follow-up survey	21	2

Cycle 5	DC	CNA	FC
Administrative data: Enrolment	39	8	23
Administrative data: Remaining with dropouts	25	6	21
Baseline survey	23	6	12

Appendix D

Table D1 | BP vs. DC baseline and exit survey comparisons

Survey Question	BP	DC
Sex	Yes	Yes
Gender	Yes	Yes
Date of birth	Yes	Yes
Province	Yes	No
Income source (government assistance)	Yes	Yes
Postal code	Yes	No
Country of birth	Yes	Yes
Indigenous	Yes	Yes
Race/ethnicity	Yes	Yes
Disability	Yes	No
HS at baseline	Yes	No
Number of HSs during baseline	Yes	Yes
Courses needed to graduate at baseline	Yes	Yes
Employed at baseline	Yes	Yes
Number of hours worked at baseline	Yes	Yes
When did you start working?	No	Yes
HS at exit	Yes	No
Number of HSs during exit	Yes	No
Courses needed to graduate at exit	Yes	No
Employed at exit	Yes	No
College/university at exit	Yes	No
Additional programs at exit	Yes	No
Employed at exit	Yes	No
GSE	Yes	Yes
ICC	Yes	Yes
Job clarity	Yes	Yes
Confidence	Yes	No
Program satisfaction	Yes	Yes

Survey Question	BP	DC
Usefulness of Reboot Plus in: • completing HS • future career • confidence • self awareness	Yes	No
Program experience (in matrix format)	No	Yes
Recommend Reboot Plus	No	Yes
Percentage of sessions attended	No	Yes
Overall program rating	No	Yes
Who do they live with?	No	Yes
Languages spoken at home	No	Yes
Financial contribution towards household	No	Yes
Overall school experience	No	Yes
Why are you taking the Reboot Plus Program?	No	Yes
How confident are you about completing this program? Is there anything that might get in your way or slow you down?	No	Yes
How do you feel about learning new skills?	No	Yes
How do you feel about exploring career options and meeting employers?	No	Yes

Appendix E: Skills measurements

Table E1 | General self-efficacy (N=62)

Not at all true (1), hardly true (2), moderately true (3), exactly true (4)	Pre-program mean (SD)	Post-program mean (SD)
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	3.18 (0.56)	3.32 (0.57)
If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.	2.76 (0.67)	2.95 (0.53)
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	2.71 (0.76)	2.85 (0.77)
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	2.77 (0.78)	3.13 (0.64)
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	2.81 (0.81)	3.16 (0.79)
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	3.26 (0.65)	3.39 (0.64)
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	2.81 (0.87)	3.03 (1.02)
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	2.77 (0.73)	2.98 (0.71)
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	3.02 (0.59)	3.08 (0.64)
I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	2.98 (0.8)	3.14 (0.65)
Average	**2.91** (0.49)	**3.1** (0.47)
	Difference in mean = 0.19 p value = 0.00	

Source. Baseline and exit surveys (Cycles 1, 2 and 4).

Table E2 | Interpersonal communication competence (N=62)

Almost never (1), seldom (2), sometimes (3), often (4), almost always (5)	Pre-program mean (SD)	Post-program mean (SD)
I allow friends to see who I really am.	3.89 (1.06)	3.81 (0.99)
I can put myself in others' shoes.	3.81 (0.87)	3.9 (0.88)
I am comfortable in social situations.	3.11 (0.98)	3.03 (0.94)
When I've been wronged, I confront the person who wronged me.	3.24 (1.04)	3.27 (1.12)
My conversations are pretty one-sided.	2.69 (0.76)	2.63 (0.89)
My conversations are characterized by smooth shifts from one topic to the next.	2.95 (1.05)	3.29 (1)
My friends can tell when I'm happy or sad.	3.5 (1.11)	3.58 (0.9)
My communication is usually descriptive, not evaluative.	3.19 (0.94)	3.53 (0.69)
My friends truly believe that I care about them.	4.23 (0.97)	4.05 (0.86)
I accomplish my communication goals.	3.32 (1.04)	3.47 (0.97)
Average	**3.39** (0.58)	**3.46** (0.48)
	Difference in mean = 0.06 p value = 0.29	

Source. Baseline and exit surveys (Cycles 1, 2 and 4).

Table E2 | Job clarity (N=61)

Strongly disagree (1), somewhat disagree (2), neutral (3), somewhat agree (4), strongly agree (5)	Pre-program mean (SD)	Post-program mean (SD)
I have a clear idea of the type of job I want.	3.51 (1.15)	4.11 (0.9)
I have a clear idea of where I want to work.	3.18 (1.15)	3.77 (0.99)
I do not have very clear job search objectives.	3.05 (1.06)	2.56 (1.13)
I have a clear idea of the type of company I want to work for.	3.13 (1.12)	3.54 (1.21)
I have a clear idea of the type of work I want to do.	3.64 (1.13)	4.18 (0.81)
Average	3.3 (0.73)	3.63 (0.63)
	Difference in mean = 0.33 p value = 0.00	

Source. Baseline and exit surveys (Cycles 1, 2 and 4).