



# OpportuNext Evaluation Report

June 2025



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# 1. About the evaluation

OpportuNext was created by The Conference Board of Canada (CBoC) with funding from the Future Skills Centre (FSC) to explore how data and technology can provide a more nuanced, data-driven understanding of the Canadian employment landscape. The platform was launched in 2021.

This report contains the findings of an evaluation of OpportuNext. The evaluation took place between December 2024 and June 2025, and was conducted by With Intent Strategies. The evaluation aimed to assess the tool's execution and impact in relation to its objectives of improving outcomes for job seekers, employers, and job placement organizations. In addition, this evaluation sought to provide forward-looking recommendations for future iterations and strategic directions of OpportuNext.

## 1.1 Executive Summary

The OpportuNext Evaluation Report assesses the platform's design, implementation, engagement, and outcomes from December 2024 to June 2025. OpportuNext, developed by The Conference Board of Canada (CBoC) with funding from the Future Skills Centre (FSC), aims to provide data-driven insights into the Canadian employment landscape, facilitating better career decisions for job seekers, employers, and job placement organizations. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, including documentation review, key informant interviews, a survey hosted on the OpportuNext site, and a focus group with Career Development Practitioners (CDPs).

Findings indicate that OpportuNext has achieved meaningful reach, including outside initial promotional periods, and CDPs are a core user base. However, there remains room for improvement in fully operationalizing processes for learning about users and ensuring regular updates to underlying data. Survey results suggest users find the platform easy to use but, as with most tools of this nature, are less certain of its impact on decision-making, while focus group participants clarified where additional guidance and context – such as linked training opportunities and job postings – could improve the tool's usefulness for career planning. The report concludes with recommendations to strengthen engagement activities and partnership-building around the tool in the short to medium term, and to explore development of features supporting more complex data analysis in the longer term.





## 1.2 Abbreviations

Throughout this report, the following abbreviations are used:

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ARIA	Accessible Rich Internet Applications
CBoC	Conference Board of Canada
CDP	Career Development Practitioner
FSC	Future Skills Centre
GC	Government of Canada
HR	Human Resources
HRIS	Human Resources Information System
KMb	Knowledge Mobilization
LFS	Labour Force Survey (from Statistics Canada)
LMI	Labour Market Information
MOST	Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
NOC	National Occupational Classification
O*NET	Occupational Information Network
OaSIS	Occupational and Skills Information System
PGWP	Post-graduate Work Permit
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PSI	Post-secondary Institution
SIN	Social Insurance Number
StatsCan	Statistics Canada
USA	United States of America
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines





## 2. About the contributors

### **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 (PSIs) 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 CBoC, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

### **Conference Board of Canada**

The [Conference Board of Canada \(CBoC\)](#) is the foremost independent, applied research organization in Canada. They are dedicated to building a stronger future for all Canadians by delivering unique, evidence-based insights into Canada's toughest economic and social challenges. They aim to equip leaders in government, business, and civil society with trusted research and unparalleled connections to make informed decisions that will define the Canada of tomorrow. Their work is driven by a commitment to excellence, evidence, collaboration, ownership, integrity, and passion.

### **With Intent Strategies**

[With Intent Strategies](#) is a consultancy that works with governments, foundations, nonprofits, and academic institutions. We work with our clients to help navigate major challenges and big opportunities. Our focus on outcomes over outputs delivers outlandishly creative solutions for measurable results. This includes extensive experience working on program evaluations in the nonprofit sector, and working with government, foundations, and community stakeholders to support learning and make effective use of program data.





## 3. About OpportuNext

The following primarily adapts information from "[OpportuNext Guide: Preparing for the Workforce of Tomorrow](#)," created by CBoC.

OpportuNext is a free online tool designed to help individuals and organizations navigate Canada's rapidly evolving job market. Developed by CBoC in partnership with the FSC, OpportuNext offers skills-based career pathway exploration, aiming to empower users to make data-driven decisions for career transitions, workforce development, and long-term labour market planning.

The platform's core is a skill-matching algorithm, which enables jobs to be categorized in terms of **viability** (closeness to the person's existing skill set) and **desirability** (with positive growth prospects, and the same or better salary). It is regularly updated and incorporates current, historical and forecast labour market data by region, occupation, and skills.

### 3.1 Data and Insights

OpportuNext leverages historical and forecast labour market data, updated regularly by region, occupation, and skills. Salary information is based on Census 2021 data from Statistics Canada (StatsCan). The 5- and 10-year growth prospects are derived from CBoC's "Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology" (MOST), an employment by occupation forecast. Data for occupation attributes like skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, tools, training and education is sourced from the Canada-specific Occupational and Skills Information System (OaSIS), with earlier versions having used the American Occupational Information Network (O\*NET), as well as Vicinity Jobs databases.

### 3.2 Search Features

The OpportuNext site is free, bilingual, open to use, and requires no account setup to access its features. Users can access the occupation search feature from the landing page (or a range of other pages) in two primary ways:

- **Search by Job Title:** Users can input a current or desired job title and province to view relevant career options.
- **Search by Education:** Users can input their education level, field of study, and province to see relevant career options.





## 3.3 Results Display

After a user executes a search query, they will be shown a page which includes information associated with the occupation they searched, followed by similar occupations which are displayed below this as “top career options.” In addition to the title of each occupation, each result item includes the following information:

- **Similarity score:** For searches conducted using the “Search by Job Title” interface, “similarity score” is the first field displayed. It is a percentage, and occupations with the highest similarity score are displayed first in the results. Similarity scores between occupations are calculated by comparing OaSIS and Vicinity Jobs data for each occupation, using a technical algorithmic approach (cosine similarity), looking at skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, tools, training, and education.
- **Educational similarity score:** For searches conducted using the “Search by Education” interface, this replaces the “similarity score” field. The first result, which displays “Educational similarity: 100%” is the occupation of the largest number of people holding that degree. All occupations further down the results list are derived by calculating similarity to the first result. This similarity calculation varies slightly from the “Search by Job Title” similarity score, to ensure results are closer to the field of study searched.
- **Salary range:** Salary information is based on Census 2021 data from StatsCan. It is specific to the geography selected.
- **5-year and 10-year growth prospects:** A rating for the growth prospects (i.e. increase in number of individuals employed) for each occupation derived from CoBC’s MOST forecast model. It is specific to the geography selected, and may be expressed as one of 5 ratings
  - Any negative numbers (0 or less) = “Very Poor”
  - Greater than 0% but less than or equal to 2% = “Poor”
  - Greater than 2% but less than or equal to 5% = “Fair”
  - Greater than 5% but less than or equal to 10% = “Good”
  - Greater than 10% = “Excellent”
- **Typical education:** Most common educational qualifications for people within an occupation. Sourced from OaSIS, as well as Vicinity Jobs databases. It is specific to the geography selected.
- **“In demand” indicator:** Where applicable, an icon indicating that the occupation appears frequently in recent job posting data from Vicinity Jobs databases.

## 3.4 Filtering Feature

After executing a search query, a user can apply one or more filters to the results:





- Jobs offering similar or higher pay
- Jobs most in demand (i.e. displaying the “in demand” indicator)
- Jobs with good or excellent longterm growth prospects
- Jobs with similar or lower educational requirements

## 3.5 Detail and Comparison Features

After executing a search query, a user can click on a “details” button for any occupation in the results, or click a “compare” checkbox on one or multiple occupations. This leads to another page that displays the same information as the results page for the selected occupation, with the addition of the following additional occupation attribute fields:

- **Knowledge:** a list of areas of knowledge associated with the occupation (e.g. Personnel and Human Resources; English Language)
- **Tools and technologies:** a list of tools and technologies associated with the occupation (e.g. Microsoft Excel; Oracle HRIS)
- **Top skills:** a list of skills associated with the occupation, each accompanied by a tooltip icon that can be clicked to display a definition (e.g. Critical Thinking, defined as “Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems”)

Data for occupation attributes like skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, tools, training and education is sourced from OaSIS, as well as Vicinity Jobs databases.

The compare feature uses a table to display details for each job selected for comparison. In this view, Knowledge, Tools and Technologies, and Top skills are presented as gaps, and are only listed for compared occupations if they are not also associated with the first occupation.





## 4. Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework, developed collaboratively with FSC and CBoC, guided the assessment of the OpportuNext platform. It focused on how data sources would be used to analyze the tool's design, implementation, engagement, and outcomes in relation to its objectives.

To address these critical aspects, the evaluation was structured around a set of key questions. These questions were designed to assess the platform's performance to date and identify areas for future development and enhancement. The overarching evaluation questions guiding this report were as follows:

### Design & Implementation

- **Evaluation Question 1A:** How did design and implementation of the platform influence its ability to produce its intended outcomes for users?
- **Evaluation Question 1B:** What key future opportunities exist for platform development or use of related project resources (e.g. technology, datasets, audience, expertise)?

### Engagement

- **Evaluation Question 2A:** How has engagement with users and stakeholders influenced the platform's ability to impact outcomes?
- **Evaluation Question 2B:** What opportunities exist for platform engagement?

### Outcomes

- **Evaluation Question 3A:** What outcomes have been achieved by platform users?
- **Evaluation Question 3B:** How did the platform influence the outcomes experienced by actual users?
- **Evaluation Question 3C:** What opportunities exist for the platform to improve outcomes for current or future users?

For more information on the indicators and data sources associated with each of these questions, please refer to the Evaluation Framework in section 9.1. of the Appendix.





## 5. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of OpportuNext used a mixed-methods approach to answer key questions about its design, implementation, engagement, and outcomes, combining qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected through several streams, including key informant interviews, analysis of anonymous platform activity data, a survey administered through the platform, a focus group session, and a review of documentation provided by CBoC.

A preliminary output of the evaluation was an external Landscape Analysis of tools from other organizations or governments pursuing goals comparable to OpportuNext (section 6.1 contains an updated version of this). A connected preliminary output was a detailed analysis of the potential value proposition that the tool could pose to various user groups (section 6.4 contains an updated version). These items were shared with CBoC for early review and validation. A full draft of the report was also shared with CBoC and FSC teams associated with the evaluation for input before being finalized.

This multi-faceted data collection strategy aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the platform's performance and opportunities, informed by input by key stakeholders at appropriate stages.

### 5.1. Documentation review

A thorough review of relevant documents informed the evaluation. This included project proposals, internal project documentation, reports to the funder, and stakeholder tracking documents. These materials offered insights into the platform's intended strategy, design processes, and operational history.

For the full list of consulted documents, please see the section 9.4. of the Appendix at the end of this document.

### 5.2. Interviews

Key informant interviews were a central component of the data collection to gain in-depth understanding of the platform's outcomes and the mechanisms producing these outcomes.





## Objectives

The interviews aimed to gather perspectives on the tool's design and implementation, engagement strategies and their effects, and the various outcomes experienced or anticipated.

Questions focused on the interviewees' perspectives on OpportuNext-enabled successes, weaknesses, types of relevant users and needs, and potential future pathways.

## Interview protocols

Interview protocols were developed as part of the data collection plan. They guided semi-structured sessions with OpportuNext (CBoC) project team members, leadership, decision-makers, stakeholders, and users within partnered organizations.

Interview data were captured by a manual notetaker. This report avoids direct attribution of comments to specific individuals.

Each interview lasted for a duration of approximately 60 minutes.

## Participants

CBoC facilitated introductions to potential interviewees from different organizations. In total, there were 8 interviews conducted by the evaluation team, including:

- Group 1: Leadership / decision-makers
  - 1 interview with Director of Research at FSC
  - 1 interview with Vice-President at CBoC
- Group 2: Design/implementation/project team
  - 1 interview with Executive Director of Economic Research at CBoC
  - 1 interview with Data Scientist of Economic Research at CBoC
- Group 3: Users (partner organizations)
  - 4 interviews with individuals in senior management roles at partner organizations
    - All interviewees in this group are closely involved in using similar labour market information (LMI) within their organizations
    - One interviewee reported using OpportuNext directly
    - Two interviewees work in the education sector
    - Two interviewees work in corporations that offer data and technology products to institutional customers (including PSIs and nonprofits)

## Data management

Interview data were managed to ensure privacy, particularly if any personally identifiable information (PII) is collected, as outlined in the data collection plan. Qualitative data from





interviews were analysed to identify key patterns, insights, and themes related to process and outcomes. Notes related to specific interviews are stored in a secure cloud-based drive managed by With Intent, and will not be shared with individuals outside of the organization.

## List of questions

General themes for interview questions covered:

- Understanding of the platform's goals and objectives.
- Types of users active on the platform and their experiences.
- Value the platform has brought to users (job seekers, employers, job placement organizations).
- User needs and how well the platform meets them.
- Alternative pathways to relevant outcomes.
- Suggestions for future improvements and directions.

For a detailed list of questions that were addressed in each interview group, please consult section 9.2. of the Appendix.

## 5.3. Survey

An online survey was administered via the OpportuNext site to a segment of users who had met a threshold for engagement (e.g. executed a query). The survey was later emailed to subscribers of CBoC newsletters as well. It was first published online on April 22, 2025. Information included in this evaluation represents responses that were collected up to May 30, 2025.

### Objectives

The survey aimed to understand user experiences and how the platform could be improved. It gathered data on user categorization (i.e. the personal or professional scenarios motivating use of the tool), platform usability, information quality and relevance, and the likelihood of the platform improving employment or education decisions.

### Data management

The survey did not collect any PII. The raw response data were collected and managed by the OpportuNext web management team and shared with the evaluation team for the purposes of analysis and incorporation into the evaluation report.





## Questions

The survey questions were formulated with the goal of understanding user profiles and their primary reasons for using the platform, gauging overall satisfaction, and assessing key aspects of the user experience. Qualitative feedback was also gathered through open-ended comments.

Two sets of questions both in English and French were prepared, seven questions in each. We aimed for the survey to be concise and short, estimated to take less than 5 minutes to complete until the end.

The full list of survey questions can be found in the section 9.5. of the Appendix section, at the end of this document.

## 5.4. Focus Group

A focus group session, with the purpose of exploring the utility of OpportuNext, was conducted on May 12, 2025, involving individuals working with jobseekers.

Following a quick demonstration of OpportuNext's main functions, discussions centered on the types of information most useful to participants and their clients, the platform's ease of use, and potential improvements or additional features. Participants were offered a \$100 gift card as an honoraria for their time and input.

### Objectives

The primary objective of this session was to understand how Career Development Practitioners use digital tools and labour market data to support their clients, with a specific focus of the discussion on OpportuNext.

This method was integral to the evaluation plan as it allowed for direct feedback on the platform from a demographic who would frequently be in a position to use the information the tool provides. In the absence of the ability to contact actual users directly for interviews, or collect a more significant number of survey responses, the focus group was intended to inform evaluation questions about (hypothetical) user outcomes and future platform development that could improve outcomes.

### Participants

5 Career Development Practitioners were recruited to attend the focus group. Out of this group 3 attended the online session.





These participants were recruited voluntarily through a form that was shared with participants of a CBoC event that featured an audience primarily of CDPs. Questions in the sign-up form ensured participants were CDPs, and met other relevant criteria.

These practitioners brought experience in supporting various types of jobseekers, providing valuable insights from a service-delivery perspective. Their specific roles included:

- **Participant 1:** An Employment Support Worker, working with various categories of newcomers to Canada, including those needing support exploring possible career changes, international students seeking part-time jobs, and postgraduate work permit (PGWP) holders/new graduates seeking job opportunities.
- **Participant 2:** A Graduate Careers Coordinator, working with a diverse group of graduate students and providing career coaching by helping students clarify career goals, research target companies, build profiles, and network.
- **Participant 3:** A Career Information Advisor in secondary schools, working with high school students by providing advice on post-secondary education, including program selection and academic prerequisites.

## Data management

The focus group session was recorded, with the recording stored in Zoom Cloud and accessed only by the With Intent Strategies evaluation team for analysis. Participants' consent to record and use the information they provided was given with the commitment that individual participants would not be named or identified in the final evaluation report. The information collected will not be used for any purposes other than informing the evaluation's findings.

## Questions

The discussion during the focus group was guided by a series of questions and activities. Participants were first asked context questions about the types of jobseekers they work with, their capacity in that work, and the specific LMI they find most useful for themselves and their clients.

After a brief period of independently exploring OpportuNext to conduct a search relevant to a recent client, reflection questions prompted them to discuss what they attempted to learn, the outcome of their search, and any blockers they encountered while using the tool. Further discussion then allowed for more open-ended feedback.

The session lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

The full list of questions addressed in the focus group can be found in section 9.3. of the Appendix.





## 6. Findings

The Findings section of this report is organized to provide a comprehensive overview of the tool's current state and potential future. It begins with a Landscape Scan subsection, which provides context by comparing OpportuNext to similar tools and outlining the broader context of LMI technology. This is followed by a summary of findings produced through the survey and focus group activities.

The final three subsections, Design/Implementation, Engagement, and Outcomes address the evaluation questions associated with those topics using all information collected. These subsections explore the platform's development and technical aspects, user interaction and outreach efforts, and both achieved and potential impacts of OpportuNext on users. The Findings section is followed by a Recommendations section which suggests a phased set of actions to increase the tool's impact, based on synthesis of findings.

### 6.1. Landscape Scan

There are other tools that operate in a similar manner and offer similar functionality to OpportuNext: leveraging LMI to help with mapping possible career paths. The emergence and evolution of these tools has been fueled by developments in the LMI landscape, including availability of data and the technologies to leverage it:

- Data created through use of relevant tax-related/census datasets, including economic data organized by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) or National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes
- Data created by large-scale surveying of workers or employers about occupations, including and the skills/competencies associated with them (e.g. O\*NET data, or the Canada-specific dataset OaSIS)
- In the last 5 - 10 years, new data created through continual scraping of postings on public job boards, including the skills/competencies associated with specific job titles (e.g. Lightcast, or the Canada-specific Vicinity Jobs)

This preliminary landscape scan compares OpportuNext with 4 other tools that are similar, but with meaningful differences in design or operating context.





## Skill Up

SkillUp ([www.skill-up.ca](http://www.skill-up.ca)), now inactive as of April 2025, was a platform developed by Cybera and launched in 2019 to serve jobseekers in Alberta, Canada. The tool provided detailed LMI for various industries, occupations, and job vacancies, drawing from data sources such as the O\*NET database, Vicinity Jobs database, and StatsCan's 2021 Census. Users had the capability to complete an interests quiz, with the option to save these results in a user profile to inform subsequent searches.

Aligning with OpportuNext's objective to enhance the accessibility, comprehensibility, and utility of LMI for individuals mapping career paths, SkillUp offered a geographically focused solution for Alberta-based users.

## My Colorado Journey


My Colorado Journey ([www.mycoloradojourney.com](http://www.mycoloradojourney.com)) is a platform developed by Pairin and launched in 2019. It is designed to assist users in Colorado, USA, with career and education planning. The tool utilizes data from the Colorado Department of Higher Education, Peterson's Data for Programs, and the Eligible Training Provider List. Key features include occupation search results customized by previous job titles and education, an interests quiz, user sign-in functionality, and a dedicated interface for support workers.

Like OpportuNext, My Colorado Journey aims to assist jobseekers, students, and career advisors with career exploration and planning. It differs in terms of its more specific geographic focus and its separate support worker and individual interfaces (both requiring login). Related to these interfaces, it also distinguishes itself by generating occupation results through a complex combination of user-submitted information (including previous jobs and education), and its ability to manage referrals to specific educational institutions. In late May 2025, it was announced that many features, including quizzes, user logins and support worker interfaces, would soon be retired or transferred to other tools. The next iteration of My Colorado Journey is described as focusing on its most-used features, enhancements to its career pathways feature (i.e. occupation-specific information) and its educational program search function.

## MySkills MyFuture

MySkills MyFuture (<https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org>) is a free online tool developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, and was first launched in 2010. It assists job seekers in identifying new career opportunities by matching their existing skills and work experience to occupations that require similar competencies. By entering a current or previous job title, users receive a list of related careers, along with information on job descriptions, average wages, necessary training, and local job openings.





MySkills MyFuture differs from OpportuNext in functionality primarily by offering linked information to actual job postings, employers, and relevant training. It does not provide explicit similarity scores or enable more than two occupations to be compared, but does provide more occupation-related information, including typical job duties and related video content. Unlike OpportuNext, it does not provide a search by education function.

## Job Bank







The Canada Job Bank site is operated by Employment and Social Development Canada. It aims to connect Canadians with job opportunities and assist employers in their recruitment efforts. In particular, employers seeking to hire temporary foreign workers must add their job postings in the Job Bank to be eligible for approval, as part of the Labour Market Impact Assessment process. For job-seekers, the website offers two distinct tools to support career planning: the Job Transition Tool (<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/job-transition>), and the School to Work Transition Tool (<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/school-work-transition>). They focus on a simple search using a single job title or educational qualification, and so they are functionally the most similar to OpportuNext of the tools reviewed here. These tools are the most recent additions on this list, having been implemented in 2024.

The Canada Job Bank tools differ from OpportuNext by offering additional tabs with more extensive occupation-related information such as job duties and comparisons of wages by nearby geographical areas. A difference in the data involved is that occupations are linked to actual job postings on the Canada Job Bank, but this is the only job posting data source used (and the Vicinity Jobs dataset captures high demand across a much broader range of job boards). The search results are generally a much smaller list of highly related occupations. The School to Work Transition Tool displays statistics for the number of graduates working in each occupation, and this is how education-related results are displayed. This is a methodological contrast to OpportuNext, for which the first result is the occupation held by the most graduates and subsequent results are generated by their skill similarity score to the first occupation.

The comparison of the features for each of the analyzed tools is detailed in the two subsequent tables:





					  Transition tools
<b>Developed by</b>	Conference Board of Canada	Cybera	Pairin	U.S. Department of Labor	Employment and Social Development Canada
<b>Launch date</b>	2021	2019	2019	2010	2024
<b>Geography</b>	Canada	Alberta, Canada	Colorado, USA	USA	Canada
<b>Data sources</b>	O*NET / OaSIS database; Vicinity Jobs database; Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS); MOST	O*NET database; Vicinity Jobs database; Statistics Canada's 2021 Census	Colorado Department of Higher Education (updated annually); Petersons Data for Programs Eligible Training Provider List	O*NET database; Bureau of Labor Statistics labor market data	OaSIS database; Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform
<b>Metrics (Averages for Dec '24 - Feb '25 via SimilarWeb &amp; GC web)</b>	Monthly visits: 2,391 Monthly Unique Visitors: 1,243	Monthly visits: 1,192 Monthly Unique Visitors: 574	Monthly visits: 7,668 Monthly Unique Visitors: 3,588	Monthly visits: 20,400 Monthly Unique Visitors: Not Available	Monthly visits: 3,499 Monthly Unique Visitors: 3,269



<b>analytics tools)</b>	Visit Duration 00:00:37	Visit Duration 00:00:36	Visit Duration: 00:05:33	Visit Duration: 00:01:50	Visit Duration: 00:01:12
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	 OpportuNext	 SkillUp	 My Colorado Journey	 mySkills myFuture	 Job Bank Transition tools
<b>Search by job title</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Search by education</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interests quiz</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Custom selection of relevant skills</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Economic outlook and salary ranges</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Info on top employers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Info on available training</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





<b>Uses job posting data</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *only from Job Bank
<b>Multiple languages</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>User sign-in</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Support worker interface</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Overall comparison section

The tools compared to OpportuNext in this Landscape Scan section are referenced throughout the report where a specific comparison is relevant. The 3 themes discussed in this section assess differences between these tools in terms of broad design choices and constraints.


### Ease of use

Compared to other tools, OpportuNext has a simple interface enabling users to conduct searches, filter results, and explore related information. Access to less information (e.g. linked information on employers or on related training), or fewer tools to explore the information it contains (e.g. resume parsing/input or custom skill selection), may mean that OpportuNext doesn't enable users to access what would be most relevant to their needs. Conversely, as multiple interviewees have suggested, minimal features can ensure a much wider set of users find the tool accessible and easy to use (e.g. minimizing clicks needed to get to key information).

### Sign-in and use of personal data

Many tools incorporate sign-in functionality and collect some personal data from users, and OpportuNext notably does not. Omitting this functionality would reduce liabilities and costs associated with handling personal data, but puts significant limitations on what can be learned about user activities, needs, and outcomes. As illustrated by tools such as My Colorado





Journey (and noted by some interviewees) enabling CDPs or other institutional users to sign in and access more advanced tools can strengthen relationships / learnings with this core group of superusers and reinforce their ability to champion the tool for other user groups. However, requiring users to sign-in can also serve as a strong barrier to entry, so not requiring it can encourage more widespread use of the tool.

## Government backing

Tools such as MySkills MyFuture or the Canada Job Bank tools have an advantage in becoming financially sustainable in a landscape with many competing offerings due to being directly developed and continuously supported in funding by government departments. In contrast, tools produced by private organizations appear to take more innovative design risks and evolve at a faster pace than similar tools developed in other contexts. My Colorado Journey is a useful counterexample, as it is not operated by a government entity but appears well-integrated into state-run and university-run systems, and incorporates the widest range of features. The recent decision by Pairin to substantially reduce the functionality of My Colorado Journey and incorporate it into multiple other tools could indicate that such a wide range of features is not financially sustainable in the long term. Experimenting with features and collecting real world evidence on their use may have enabled helpful insights into what would offer the most value in a more streamlined tool. Over three years and three significant iterations OpportuNext has benefitted from long-term stable funding through FSC, of which CBoC is a consortium member. FSC's own funding through ESDC, however, is not guaranteed in the long term.

## 6.2 Summary of Survey Results

The survey hosted on the OpportuNext site collected a total of 22 responses before a final set of response data were shared with the evaluation team to inform this report. This is not a large enough sample to be considered representative of the population of users. CBoC is continuing to operate the survey and should be able to use the resulting data with greater confidence in future.

This is a summary of characteristics of users who responded:

- **Language:** 91% of respondents completed survey in English; 9% completed the survey in French
- **New vs. return users:** 77% are first-time visitors to the website; 23% have used the OpportuNext website before
- **Individual vs. institutional users:** 55% of respondents (including all return users) are institutional/professional career development practitioner (CDP) users seeking



information for their clients; 45% are individual users (seeking information related to their own career, or that of a friend, family member, or colleague)

The quantitative questions related to the OpportuNext site itself provided the following results:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Overall average score (n = 22)</b>	<b>CDPs average score only (n = 12)</b>	<b>Individual average score only (n = 10)</b>
<i>Ease of use</i>	<b>4.4</b> out of 5	<b>4.7</b> out of 5	<b>4.3</b> out of 5
<i>Quality of information</i>	<b>3.7</b> out of 5	<b>3.9</b> out of 5	<b>3.6</b> out of 5
<i>Relevance of information</i>	<b>3.8</b> out of 5	<b>3.9</b> out of 5	<b>3.7</b> out of 5
<i>Likelihood of improving decisions</i>	<b>3.4</b> out of 5	<b>3.5</b> out of 5	<b>3.3</b> out of 5
<i>Net Promoter Score</i>	-5%	-8%	0%

As noted above, the number of responses were too small for these results to sufficiently represent the population of users. They are merely indicative at this point. Key patterns that are beginning to emerge include the relatively high ratings for ease of use, and the higher ratings by CDP users than individual users in response to all questions except the likelihood of recommending the site (i.e. Net Promoter Score).

In interpreting the Net Promoter Scores, readers of this report should understand that possible scores range from -100% to 100%, and that 0 or above is typically considered a good score. Scores are calculated by segmenting responses to a question about likeliness to recommend (on a 10 point scale) into detractors (any responses of 6 or lower), neutrals (responses of 7 or 8), and promoters (responses of 9 or 10). The final percentage is equivalent to the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors. In the context of the small sample size, the above scores should be interpreted as relatively neutral.

These results, as well as written comments provided by survey respondents, are discussed throughout the findings section where they can be supplemented and contextualized by additional information.



## 6.3 Summary of Focus Group Results

During the focus group, participants explored the tool using the “search by job title” and “search by education” interfaces for 5 minutes. After this, they each reported back on what they had attempted to search and how their search had gone:

- **Participant 1: An Employment Support Worker**
  - **What they tried to learn:** They explored using the job title search for “administrative assistant” for both Ontario and Canada-wide. They were seeking to learn more about entry-level roles that may be viable for someone with a bachelor degree in business but who might be lacking relevant experience in the field.
  - **Intuitiveness/Blockers:** When using the education search interface, if they selected “no degree” or “bachelor degree” but did not specify a field of study, no results were generated. This was a significant blocker because many of their clients (e.g., students yet to graduate) may not have degrees or specific certifications when they begin their job search. They concluded that the job title search was effective, but the education search was not without a specified field of study.
  - **Usefulness of information found:** They were surprised and impressed by the 5-year and 10-year future trend outlooks for occupations similar to “administrative assistant,” noting instances where a job might be “good” in 5 years but “poor” in 10. They found this 10-year prospect particularly helpful for long-term career planning, such as deciding in what contexts it would be worthwhile to pursue an MBA. They thought this information seemed very good for those who have completed their education and are looking to explore real job options.
- **Participant 2: A Graduate Careers Coordinator**
  - **What they tried to learn:** They searched for information that would be relevant to postgraduate students they work with. They used the search by education interface, entering “above bachelor” for education level. They experimented with terms like “business administration,” “data analysis,” and “health administration” as fields of study to see the resulting career roles.
  - **Intuitiveness/Blockers:** They found the tool simple and intuitive once they realized they should input keywords for majors rather than specific degree names. For instance, searching “health administration” under education yielded no results, but a broader search for “health” generated relevant options.
  - **Usefulness of information found:** They liked the prominent salary range information. However, they felt the skills list lacked context regarding their specific application to the role and how a user might develop or refine those





skills. They were also unsure how to interpret the salary range for a graduate-level student. They noted that a key piece of missing information a student or jobseeker would need would be guidance on where to find more detailed information or what the next steps should be after using the tool.

- **Participant 3: A Career Information Advisor in secondary schools**

- **What they tried to learn:** Their initial goal was to explore career opportunities in British Columbia. They first tried searching with "bachelor" as the education level, selected BC as the province, but left the field of study blank, which returned no results. Their underlying aim was to be able to compare post-secondary education in terms of the future job opportunities that would be available within BC.
- **Intuitiveness/Blockers:** They saw it as a blocker that they could not use the tool as they wanted: to select a degree level and province and then see a list of training/education opportunities in the province that match job opportunities in that province. The tool required a field of study to be entered for results to appear in the education search. They wanted to be able to browse and filter a full list of occupations, or have a way to explore that was not already narrowed down to a specific degree or job title. They claimed the tool was not "user-friendly" because this was not possible, which they saw as being implied by the text "Explore over 30,000 careers".
- **Usefulness of information found:** They appreciated the province-specific growth prospects and salary ranges, and suggested an enhanced display that would allow for a direct, side-by-side comparison of this data across different provinces. They noted that the results reminded them of the NOC (which is a data source for OpportuNext), and of myBlueprint (a paid platform for career and education planning to which schools or school boards can subscribe). They also noted that myBlueprint was already widely in use in secondary schools to support career planning.

Following discussion of the particular tasks each participant had attempted, the discussion continued into broader reflections and thoughts on what additional information or features would be desirable. More details from the discussion are included throughout this report where relevant, particularly in the "Outcomes" section.





## 6.4 Design & Implementation

### **Evaluation Question 1A: How did design and implementation of the platform influence its ability to produce its intended outcomes for users?**

This section uses interview and documentation data sources to discuss key aspects of design and implementation that influence how the tool works now for users. This includes an overview of the 3 major iterations the tool has gone through since 2021, the working/operational structure of the teams behind it, and decisions that have been made related to technical designs. As a result of changes in staffing over time, less documentation was available about early design and implementation of the tool than more recent periods.

#### **Overview of design and implementation history**


As noted by a CBoC staff member during an interview, OpportuNext was initially conceived as a Knowledge Mobilization (KMb) project. The focus was on disseminating insights from new LMI sources to audiences who wouldn't otherwise be aware such information was available. The design and implementation of the OpportuNext platform over time involved an iterative and collaborative development process.

The tool has gone through 3 major iterations. Version 1.0 was launched in April 2021, and internal documentation notes that it “offered users a bilingual interface (French and English) and allowed for searching alternative careers by title at the national level.” The following version was launched in October 2022. Documentation notes that OpportuNext 2.0 increased the number of occupations from 450 NOC to all 500 NOC, added the side-by-side occupation comparison feature, and incorporated bug fixes and interface enhancements.

Version 3.0 is the current iteration of OpportuNext, and was launched in September 2023. Major changes introduced at that point included the ability to access results related to smaller geographical units (province or territories, instead of just national-level results), a number of filters that can be applied to results (e.g. higher pay, in-demand, or lower education occupations), and the introduction of the search by education interface and education similarity scores (see section 3.2 and 3.3).

An external developer (Banfield) was contracted at an early point to design and develop the web interface, including determining key user personas/segments. Banfield continues to manage the web interface. The underlying database that is queried by the web interface, as well as the methods through which the data is processed and analyzed, were designed and continue to be managed by CBoC, which required developing valuable in-house expertise in navigating the complexities of LMI. As project documentation and interviews have reflected,





this expertise has been used to ensure the tool’s database enables relevant results to be produced for typical queries while also addressing unusual data exceptions. As the tool evolved between versions, data structure changes (e.g. the development of the Educational similarity metric) were implemented by CBoC data scientists, while changes to the interface itself (e.g. implementation of filtering functionality) were implemented by Banfield.

## Data and Expertise


A key aspect of the design and implementation approach for OpportuNext consists of decisions that were made about data sources and how they would be leveraged. These decisions have shaped what data is contained within the database, the analytic/data/economic expertise the team must have, and, ultimately, what information is provided to users.

The tool uses 2021 5-digit NOC codes, which resulted in 516 unique NOCs, the most granular information on occupations available from official data sources like StatsCan. The NOC codes are intended to reflect the evolving labour market, job titles, and roles, but they can lag behind labour market trends. For example "data scientists" were first included in 2021, and not accounted for in the previous 2016 NOC. The salary range information shown in the tool is for the occupation (e.g. paramedic) and is province-specific, coming from the census, which uses NOC codes.

The long list of closely related job titles that appear when searching for a job title (e.g., "paramedic," "paramedics," "paramedic worker") is populated from the unique job titles and online job postings included in the Vicinity Jobs dataset. The Vicinity Jobs dataset is a proprietary dataset which is updated on a weekly basis by scraping all public-facing job boards that do not require users to be logged in. This is a resource-intensive process and a number of interviewees noted that this dataset can be prohibitively expensive to use in many contexts. Vicinity Jobs data represents the most granular level of information used for OpportuNext, and in addition to powering the search bar, is used to apply the “in demand” indicator to specific occupations. This was intended to be updated every quarter to give a real-time indicator of job demand.

The OaSIS is used for data about skills associated with specific NOC codes, supplemented by data about skill requirements included in the Vicinity Jobs dataset. A proprietary algorithm is used to weigh skills associated with each occupation in terms of their frequency and complexity, and to then calculate the distance between each occupation in terms of these skills. The output of these calculations is the set of “Similarity Scores” which determine which occupations appear in the results when conducting a search. For the education-based search, the first result is determined by the most common job among Canadians with that qualification, and subsequent occupations are generated through their similarity to this first occupation.





Lastly, CBoC's MOST (Model of Occupation Skills and Technology) database is also used in the OpportuNext tool to provide long-term growth prospect ratings for occupations. Specifically: 5- or 10- year growth prospects ("excellent," "good," "fair," "poor") for occupations come from the MOST model, which is a long-term forecast model. There is a planned change to use the MOST model to show gross turnover or job openings, instead of just employment growth. This is because gross turnover (which includes replacement demand due to retirement, etc.) is more relevant to job seekers and CDPs than just overall employment growth.


As noted above, the economic and data science expertise CBoC applied to develop and manage OpportuNext's underlying database allowed for the refinement of the technology and developing new solutions to challenges inherent to leveraging this type of data. For example, they developed methods to ensure relevant results while mitigating anomalies, such as suppressing occupations requiring highly specific training or credentials (e.g., "judge") that might otherwise appear due to skill similarity, while still generating a varied and lengthy set of results.

This specialized knowledge CBoC has developed in LMI through their work on this and other similar projects is also reflected in their ability to interpret and contextualize the platform's results. They have shown a strong ability to understand the source data, and other existing or potential uses of it. During a demonstration, they were able to effectively explain multiple known peculiarities which could appear in results, and to contextualize them in terms of the attributes of the data sources and economic phenomena being observed.

One example of a potentially counterintuitive result is that extremely common and low-paid occupations, such as retail salespersons, are likely to appear when searching uncommon certifications, even if there is no obvious relation between the two, simply because the overall number of people in that occupation is high.

Another example of a peculiarity is that users must navigate a wide range of options (e.g., "paramedic," "paramedics," "paramedic worker") when entering their specific job into the search bar. In some cases, no options may exactly match their actual job title (e.g., "Project Manager" and "Project Coordinator" are both missing, but typing "Project Manager" will result in "Project Manager - Non-technical" and "Visual Effects Project Manager" and more as suggestions, but "Project Coordinator" results in no suggestions). It is unclear whether this challenge could be resolved with current technology, using real LMI. There are no existing datasets that can be leveraged that represent all current and former job titles Canadians have, and instead the tool is limited to either occupations described by NOC codes or titles included in the Vicinity Jobs dataset.

The CBoC project team noted that it may not be intuitive to users why the underlying data produces such results, unless they have existing expertise in LMI or have received additional



context, which could be provided through the web interface itself or through use facilitated by a CDP or other career professional. They similarly noted that the platform's information would be helpfully supplemented by local expert knowledge from CDPs on factors such as what local employers exist and what their hiring processes entail.

## Technical Operations and Maintenance


The initial research / knowledge mobilization orientation of CBoC, and the outsourcing of web development have manifested in a technical development cycle that has yet to fully mature. OpportuNext results could hypothetically be updated on a weekly basis to match the cadence of updates to the Vicinity Jobs data. The CBoC project team noted they had planned for data provided through OpportuNext to be updated on at least a quarterly basis, but had not managed to maintain that update schedule in practice and data continues to be updated irregularly. They furthermore noted that such updates would ideally be operationalized through automated data pipelines, but any updates continued to be implemented manually.

Similarly, the technical aspect of the project has yet to be fully operationalized in terms of feedback loops or regular user testing processes. Some initial user testing was conducted by Banfield during the tool's design phase. There is also evidence that development of v3 of the tool (in 2023, the point at which the education-based search was introduced) involved at least 2 external users testing the site, providing input on desirable features, and noting bugs. Major bugs identified during this phase appear to have been successfully addressed through changes to the web interface and underlying datasets. However there do not appear to be robust processes implemented for ongoing feedback, testing, and technical improvements at this point, which could have enabled a more mature and functional tool to be developed by this point. One interviewee noted that the tool did not appear to be as technically mature as other similar tools, and additional bugs were identified during the evaluation process (e.g. inability to accurately filter occupations by salary).

## Accessibility

Interviews and existing project documentation did not result in information about accessibility considerations made during the design phase, or work done to comply with accessibility standards.

Brief analysis of the site itself reveals multiple manners in which it has been designed to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Key elements of the site are marked with Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA) labels, and an introductory video on the landing page is accompanied by a transcript which includes the described video. There appears to be at least one broken ARIA reference embedded in both the landing page and



search results pages. A more thorough assessment of site accessibility should be considered as part of future development work.

## **Evaluation Question 1B: What key future opportunities exist for platform development or use of related project resources (e.g. technology, datasets, audience, expertise)?**

There are a range of ways in which future development of OpportuNext itself could improve user outcomes and better meet user needs (as discussed under question 3C). The underlying technology, data, audience and research expertise behind OpportuNext could also be leveraged toward additional partnerships or custom research opportunities in future. This section explores key opportunities that have been identified during the evaluation that could inform OpportuNext development or the pursuit of related work.

### **Leveraging Audience and Networks**


OpportuNext's audience, particularly actual users, represent a significant area of untapped opportunity. More information could be captured from and about users to enable iterative improvements and to better understand how Canadians use LMI. As noted in relation to other tools assessed in the Landscape Scan, sign-in functionality and collection of some personal information about users can lead to rich and useful insights, but can also increase barriers to use. Surveys and focus groups, such as those employed during this evaluation, are likely a good future opportunity to continue increasing knowledge about users without increasing barriers to use.

Greater knowledge about how CDPs use the tool, and how they use LMI more generally, is an especially valuable opportunity. CBoC has relevant connections that could be leveraged in this area, through existing partnerships with PSI champions and others in the sector. Multiple interviewees have noted that the degree to which CDPs make use of LMI, or related data and technology, vary widely. Direct engagement with CDPs and the organizations that employ them can foster collaboration and identify future use cases. Through activities that demonstrate how OpportuNext complements other resources and illustrating the broader value of LMI, CBoC has the opportunity to build crucial support while also increasing literacy regarding LMI among CDPs..

### **Vicinity Jobs Data & Educational Opportunity Data**

Interviews with the CBoC project team as well as partner organizations highlighted a number of significant opportunities for enhancing the data model and making more comprehensive use of





the Vicinity Jobs dataset in the longer term. In May 2025 CBoC announced the acquisition of Vicinity Jobs, which could mean this data (and associated expertise) will be available to be leveraged by the tool at reduced cost in future.

Although currently used to indicate employer hiring frequency for specific occupations, interviewees believe this data could be more extensively leveraged. This dataset is more granular and frequently updated than other data sources involved, and could therefore be used more extensively. This could include richer information on job posting trends such as skill requirements, certification requirements, job descriptions, and top employers – information available in other similar tools or referenced in interviews. Notably, Vicinity Jobs data offers a broader view of the labour market than job posting data used for the only other currently-active Canadian tool addressed in the Landscape Scan (the Job Bank Job Transition tool).

The CBoC project team has also acknowledged that the Vicinity Jobs data within OpportuNext is not updated frequently due to a sub-optimal manual process and an underlying database design not optimized for regular maintenance. One interviewee also noted a desire for more frequent updates of this data in particular. Improving the consistency and frequency of Vicinity data updates, through automated data pipelines, represents a key area for development in the medium term to more effectively operationalize the current tool.

Focus group members expressed interest in integrating AI functionality into the OpportuNext query interface. Emerging AI tools such as SkillsEngine or PathPilot are joining the marketplace to offer competing personalized career path insights. However, integrating AI functionality may not be the most strategic pathway for CBoC, given their existing resources and technical sophistication.

## **Custom Research Opportunities**

CBoC staff noted that they had aimed to use the tool as an opportunity to conduct KMB for new LMI sources, and to showcase their analytic capabilities. They reported seeing potential in offering access to related data or analysis on a commercial basis. FSC staff similarly reported that a potential positive outcome from a funder perspective would be a fee-for-service model serving as a component of a future where the tool is financially sustainable.

Interviewees have noted a few challenges with ongoing financial stability for OpportuNext or the type of project it represents: the difficulty of repurposing the technology outside its specific context, the public availability of much of the underlying data, and potential funding challenges due to competing government tools. However, given CBoC's focus as an organization is research, not technology, a significant future opportunity lies in leveraging their expertise and capabilities for custom research using the OpportuNext data.

The underlying model, data, and research expertise behind OpportuNext could be applied to



help employers with talent sourcing, as was done through their partnership with the Wood Manufacturing Council, or to identify potential students who would benefit most from a particular educational program, as was done through the partnership with the Insurance Training program at Mohawk College. OpportuNext itself can serve as an initial proof of concept for this type of custom research using LMI. One interviewee reported having used the data freely accessible through the tool to advocate for resources towards such research in their own context.





## 6.5 Engagement

### Evaluation Question 2A: How has engagement with users and stakeholders influenced the platform’s ability to impact outcomes?

This section of the report explores engagement activities for OpportuNext and their effects. It analyzes relevant website analytics and promotional campaigns to assess depth and range of user engagement. Additionally, it explores top searches and what this activity data can tell us about the demographics of its user base.

#### Website Analytics & Reach

The platform had fairly favorable initial uptake in purely web analytic terms. An initial burst of promotion via social media targeted post-secondary students, and interviewees noted that within a couple years of its initial release there appeared to be meaningful brand recognition for the tool among staff within PSIs, relative to competing tools.

Rounds of promotion coincided with the tool’s release and subsequent updates, and resulted in peaks of user activity (counted in sessions, defined as “a session initiates when a user either views a page or screen and no session is currently active”).

During a Spring 2021 campaign, following the tool’s initial V1 release in April 2021:

- April 2021: 27,223
- May 2021: 42,524
- June 2021: 22,590

During a Fall 2022 - Winter 2023 campaign, following the V2 release in October 2022:


- November 2022: 9,161
- December 2022: 5,672
- January 2023: 6,252
- February 2023: 5,139

Lastly, during a Fall 2023 campaign, following the V3 release in September 2023:

- October 2023: 4,038
- November 2023: 6,856

Other periods when the tool was not actively being promoted tended to see session counts between 1,000 - 2,000 per month. In the absence of ongoing promotion, sessions reached a






low point of 440 in May 2024. CBoC staff note that since then, despite the lack of active promotion, they see signs of organic growth continuing through a core base of loyal users. As evidence for this, they pointed to steady (but slow) upwards growth (1,051 sessions in January 2025, more than double the number in May 2024) over the last year. The high proportion of direct traffic to the site, 49% of the site's traffic between February 2023 and January 2025, has also been interpreted by CBoC as repeat visitors who have bookmarked the page. High rates of direct traffic could also be attributed to the proportion of visitors using mobile devices to access the site. There is some additional evidence to support the interpretation that much traffic is repeat visitors in the survey as well: 23% of respondents indicated they are return users (all of whom were CDPs).

To contextualize the relative significance of this level of traffic, the OpportuNext landing page consistently featured within the top 5 most visited webpages owned by CBoC within the most recent 6 months (i.e. between December 2024 and May 2025). OpportuNext operates as a separate website, distinct from the main Conference Board website. In Jan 2025 the OpportuNext landing page received 3,065 views (i.e. instances in which a page is loaded, which could happen many times during a user "session"). This view count is second only amongst all CBoC-owned pages to the main CBoC website's landing page, which received 27,463 views during the same period. As noted in the above landscape review section, the available evidence suggests that during periods of promotion, the tool did much better than similar tools in the Canadian market. In periods without paid promotion, the level of traffic it receives is similar to the tool hosted on the Canada Job Bank site which is most directly comparable. This comparison must be contextualized, however, by the fact that the Canada Job Bank tool has been released more recently, and that it is hosted within a government site that sees many more visitors than any of the CBoC sites. This all points to a relatively high level of engagement and use of OpportuNext when put into these contexts.

## Depth and Range of Engagement

Documentation has provided evidence of marketing and outreach activities that have included physical and digital posters on campus, promoted search results, email campaigns to existing audiences, social media campaigns, and direct outreach to existing partners/stakeholders in relevant sectors. As noted above, early social media promotion for the tool appears to have been relatively successful at generating page views, without which impact would be impossible. However when considering the tool's impact, and how it has been shaped by engagement activities, it is important to differentiate between deeper and shallower forms of engagement that can be created around a tool.

Shallower engagement could consist of clicking through a social media ad, spending a few seconds looking at the landing page, and never returning. Users who are somewhat engaged will view the site for a longer time and actually conduct a search. Users who are deeply engaged could be expected to return frequently, use a more extensive range of features,



integrate the tool into their workflows, advocate for it within their networks, and provide feedback to inform improvements.

Available web analytics suggest that OpportuNext has had comparable levels of success, to the other tools reviewed, in creating users that are sufficiently engaged to return. About half of the monthly visits for OpportuNext are unique visitors, so remaining visits represent users returning multiple times. This level is similar to that of SkillUp, and My Colorado Journey, and significantly more than that of the Canada Job Bank tools.


Average visit length can also be associated with deep engagement. Average visit length for OpportuNext are 37 seconds, and visit length for SkillUp are nearly identical. Average visit length to the Canada Job Bank tools are twice as long, and average visit lengths for My Colorado Journey are more than 9 times as long. We cannot conclude that users who visit for less time are necessarily getting less value or being impacted less deeply. However, documentation review and interviews suggest that further outreach focused on creating deep engagement with users could be beneficial.

CBoC documents indicate that as promotion for the third version of the tool, which incorporated an education-based search, a number of PSI staff were engaged as “champions” for the tool, promoting its use within on-campus career service centres, and having their organization noted on the site. The evaluation team was not able to interview any champions directly to learn more about activities they have conducted. However, there is some evidence that continued effort in this area would be worthwhile. Multiple interviewees indicated that more extensive promotion of the tool, particularly promotion aimed at creating greater understanding among institutional users, was a key area for future improvement. Survey responses and focus group data, similarly, indicate that many users could benefit from a better understanding of how to use the search function and how skills are incorporated into the tool.

The project team has noted restrictions on collecting any personal data related to the tool’s users through the site itself. This restriction means they cannot pursue a very common feedback and engagement mechanism through which web-based tools build an understanding of users, engage with them, and plan iterative development to better suit their needs. Prior to the introduction of the user survey in May 2025, the CBoC project team was not directly engaging with existing users through other means, but they have indicated they intend to continue operating the survey going forward.

## The User Base

As noted above, the project has been implemented with a restriction on collecting identifiable user data through the site, and the survey introduced in May has not yet produced a statistically significant picture of users. The survey, along with other corroborating pieces of



evidence from other sources, still provides some useful preliminary information about actual users.


CDPs, or people working in similar roles, likely make up a large proportion of the most engaged users of the tool (or those most likely to respond to the survey). 55% of survey respondents, including the 5 returning users, indicated they were “an employment or career services specialist,” “seeking information related to the careers of my clients.” This aligns with the CBoC project team’s current assumptions about who the tool would be most useful for.

There are nearly 5 times as many users accessing the English version of the site as the French version, and the type of job title searches users have conducted vary between the English and French version of the site. Internal documentation notes the top searches conducted on the English site between January 2024 - January 2025 consist of the following:

1. Teacher, Teachers College (Ontario)
2. Other Labourers in Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities (Ontario)
3. Human Resources Generalist (Ontario)
4. Accountant (Alberta)
5. Escorte Services Personnalises (Manitoba)
6. Career Coach (Ontario)
7. Software Developers (Ontario)
8. Data Analyst Informatics and Systems (Ontario)
9. Economist (Ontario)
10. Data Analyst Informatics and Systems (Alberta)

This same document notes the top searches conducted on the French site between January 2024 - January 2025 consist of the following:

1. Professeur, Professeur au programme d'assistance dentaire college communautaire (Manitoba)
2. Superviseur, Superviseur de la construction de routes d'exploitation forestiere (New Brunswick)
3. Technicien, Technicienne en scene de crime police (Canada)
4. Agent/agent de surveillance du stationnement (Canada)
5. Contremaitre/contremaitresse aux services d'hygiene (Canada)
6. Technicien, Technicienne en thermographie infrarouge (Canada)
7. Commis aux passeports (Manitoba)
8. Doula (Canada)
9. Printed circuit board pcb assembly machine operator electronic equipment manufacturing (Canada)
10. Mireur/mireuse de oeufs (Canada)



Most of the job titles in the English list are traditionally white-collar positions and would require a bachelor degree or graduate-level education. The job titles in the French list contain a more varied list of occupations, typically involving more physical labour, and fewer that would require a bachelor degree or above.

## **Evaluation Question 2B: What opportunities exist for platform engagement**

While existing channels for broad engagement (e.g. social media promotion) should continue to be considered and leveraged where appropriate, key opportunities related to engagement are related to institutional users (and potential institutional users) of OpportuNext, particularly CDPs. As discussed further below, the findings of the focus group confirm that CDPs have meaningful feedback to provide on the tool, are interested in skills-related data, and could benefit from more thorough guidance on use of the tool and its underlying data – they are a group worth targeting for further engagement. The CBoC project team has reported coming to understand CDPs, including those operating outside of PSIs (the primary target of previous campaigns), as a key audience.

Relatedly, there is an opportunity to engage more directly with technical staff and have them serve as champions. Such staff could serve as beta testers or signed-in superusers, particularly in institutional settings where they may interact with CDPs or other staff who are less data literate. One interviewee suggested technical staff in their institution could benefit from greater access to the data involved or more advanced features (such as advanced search and downloads). If increased access is offered to a subset of users who do not require a “simple” interface, they could be motivated to offer detailed feedback and to participate in engagement activities that would encourage their less technically inclined peers to access and use the basic tool.

Lastly, CBoC’s relationship with FSC, as a consortium member, represents another key opportunity which could be leveraged more effectively to create engagement around the tool. One interviewee noted that FSC staff demonstrated a lack of deep understanding of the tool's purpose and potential applications. However, as this interviewee observed, FSC funds many organizations and projects in the skills ecosystem that could potentially benefit from using the tool or even incorporating it into their own programming or technology-enabled projects. Increasing outreach around OpportuNext to FSC staff specifically would be a relatively simple activity that could meaningfully increase its impact.





## 6.6 Outcomes

### **Evaluation Question 3A: What outcomes have been achieved by platform users?**

The CBoC project team noted during the process of creating the evaluation framework that questions related to user outcomes would be difficult to answer, given that there were no mechanisms in place to collect PII on users. Identifying beneficiaries and measuring effects on their outcomes is often a challenge for projects focused on information dissemination as a mode of intervention. This evaluation process has not been able to produce strong evidence of what outcomes OpportuNext users experience.

Strong evidence of a causal relationship between OpportuNext use and employment-related outcomes could be generated by identifying a meaningful sample of users and obtaining information related to the jobs they have held over time (since using the tool) in relation to a control group. This is substantially beyond what is possible within the scope of this evaluation, and unlikely to be feasible in the foreseeable future due to the relative cost of such a study, the technical changes it would likely require to the tool, and the timespan through which relevant outcomes would be realized (e.g. occupation changes). This is not particular to OpportuNext; training and workforce interventions are rarely able to implement such robust impact measurement approaches. Relatively strong evidence could also be produced through alternative processes to identify a smaller number of users and conduct a deep analysis and verification of their outcomes (e.g. outcome harvesting). This second option could be possible in future.

To provide some limited evidence related to actual use of OpportuNext at this current point, the following sections of this report make greater use of data collected from actual users through the survey, and of data collected from the CDP focus group on functionalities that they see as valuable in relation to their work.

### **Evaluation Question 3B: How did the platform influence the outcomes experienced by actual users?**

This section of the report synthesizes data from all sources used during this evaluation to document hypothesized mechanisms through which OpportuNext could demonstrate immediate value to a range of possible user types, and contribute to improved outcomes in the medium to long term. Broadly, the assumption that underlies this work is that the primary type of outcomes which are relevant to this intervention would be workers succeeding in securing





desirable employment, and being successfully supported in doing so by accessing and acting on information provided by the tool (including with the support of human intermediaries).

Discussion of this core assumption is followed by a number of related hypotheses about the conditions under which the tool could contribute to positive outcomes. Findings from the focus group and survey, where relevant, are used to assess the validity of these hypotheses and explore where conditions for improving outcomes via OpportuNext have been met.

## **Value proposition and users in Education and Career Development contexts**

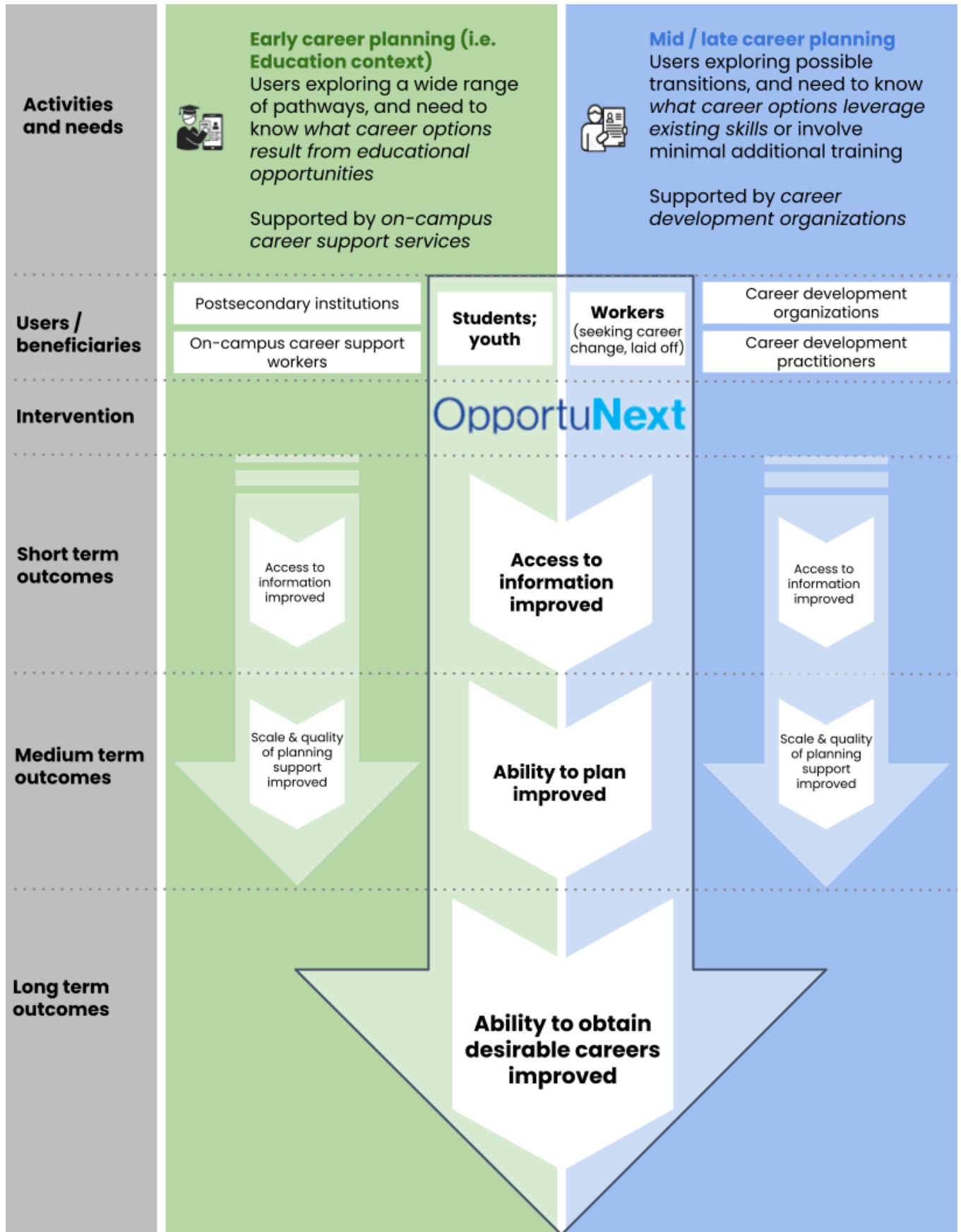
The OpportuNext landing page contains the following brief text:


“OpportuNext can help you identify and research career paths that closely match an existing skillset. In one free and easy search, you get information and insights that can kickstart a successful career transition — for yourself or for others.”

This speaks to the tool’s value proposition and how it could improve outcomes for users over time. Success in the long term would mean a career change, either for the person using the tool or someone else helping them. The pathway to that outcome involves accessing information through the tool, and then using that information for research and planning.

An interim assessment, shared for input by CBoC, aimed to capture this hypothesis in more detail, including through the following diagram:







As the diagram in the previous page displays, OpportuNext is primarily designed around users operating in either an Education or Career Development context. Other possible user types are accounted for on the landing page, and could include employers, employer associations, HR professionals, researchers, or policymakers. These other user types are discussed in more detail below. However, documentation review and interviews suggested that students, on-campus career support workers, workers/jobseekers, and CDPs are indeed the primary groups the CBoC project team has focused on serving and those who are most likely to benefit from using it. The survey responses collected corroborate this: 12/22 respondents identified themselves as “an employment or career services specialist” and 10/22 respondents indicated they were seeking information about their own career (or that of a friend, family member, or colleague) or for general interest.

There are similarities between these Education or Career Development contexts in terms of the activities and supports they involve. Both contexts involve institutions and specific institutional staff members who participate in activities focused on the careers of other people. How OpportuNext could improve outcomes is similar for each set of activities (including support activities). Differences between these contexts reflect the different range of options or decisions individuals or those supporting them are likely to want to consider, and therefore create additional conditions (discussed below) that must be met for outcomes to be improved.

CBoC has produced a report on career planning and OpportuNext, which has guided how this evaluation has approached the framing of use of the tool in an educational context, for early career planning, versus in other career development contexts, for mid/late career planning:

- **Typical user, in early career planning context:**
  - a high school or post-secondary student
  - exploring a wide range of pathways
  - needing to know what career options result from educational opportunities
  - potentially supported by on-campus career support services
- **Typical user, in a mid/late career planning context:**
  - a worker exploring possible career transitions (potentially due to layoffs or immigration)
  - needing to know what career options leverage existing skills or involve minimal additional training
  - potentially supported by career development organizations

## Conditions for improving individual outcomes: short term

OpportuNext could hypothetically contribute to improved outcomes for individual students and workers through pathways that begin with improved access to relevant information about the





labour market in the short term, leading to improved ability to plan pursuit of a desirable and attainable career, and ultimately leading to success obtaining a career that's desirable in the long term. In addition to the tool existing, multiple conditions would need to be met if these outcomes are to be achieved by individuals.

In the short term, OpportuNext could improve an individual's access to relevant information about the labour market, under the following conditions:

- The individual has awareness of the tool
- The individual has an ability to navigate the interface
- The tool provides accurate and updated information
- The individual's personal situation is represented in data, or the user can extrapolate relevant search terms

These conditions could mostly be met by CBoC through the tool itself, combined with effective outreach, rigorous user testing processes, and a systematic approach to data processing.

Survey respondents mostly gave somewhat or very positive responses to questions about ease of use, quality of information, and the personal relevance of information provided. CDPs provided more positive responses to each question than individuals seeking information for themselves. Focus group participants similarly affirmed overall that the tool was easy to use and could envision career planning contexts in which the information provided would be relevant. Where challenges were noted with using the tool by survey respondents and focus group participants, these challenges typically related to not being able to leave fields in the search interface blank or enter in a highly specific job or degree title.


Both focus group participants and survey respondents highlighted some manners in which they felt the tool was too simple and therefore could better represent specific educational or work experience situations. In both cases people with multiple degrees or complex work experience were noted as potentially not receiving information that was relevant enough to their situation.

## Conditions for improving individual outcomes: medium term

For individuals for whom the above conditions to access information in the short term are met, the tool could also improve their ability to plan pursuit of a desirable and attainable career in the medium term. This would require the following additional conditions:

- The individual has an ability to determine a desirable career pathway with information provided or to locate and use supplementary information
- The individual has an ability to translate information provided into a career development plan or to locate and use supplementary information





These conditions could be met through partnerships built around the tool, connecting users to additional resources. This could involve linking to or incorporating these resources into the tool itself. It could also involve promoting use of the tool among professionals who can support individuals in using information provided by OpportuNext as an input for career planning.

Preliminary survey responses provide little evidence that users are confident the tool could improve decisions related to employment or education. The average rating for this question was the lowest of all the 5 point scale questions, 3.4, slightly above neutral. More detailed feedback from focus group participants suggested additional information that would be needed by jobseekers to effectively plan. In particular, they noted a need for guidance on how particular skills gaps could be addressed (potentially through linked training opportunities) and how skills could be applied in particular context (potentially through linked job postings). They also suggested that surfacing NOCs or other aspects of the underlying data could be helpful in contexts where CDPs are using it to support students or jobseekers. These, and other desirable functionalities are discussed in more detail under question 3C, the following section.


## Conditions for improving individual outcomes: long term

For individuals for whom the above conditions to access information and career plan are met in the medium term, the tool could also improve their ability to obtain a career that's desirable in the long term. This would require the following additional conditions:

- Ability to access & effectively leverage relevant education or skills development opportunities
- Ability to access employment opportunities & present candidacy effectively to employers

Meeting these conditions requires a broader set of interventions, producing ecosystem-level change. Lack of data makes it unknowable whether these conditions are met, and it is unlikely this type of data would be collected to investigate outcomes for just the tool itself. Notably, a similar tool, the Canada Job Bank tool, does (optionally) collect Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) for some logged in users, which could make measuring this type of long term outcome feasible. It is not clear how many users actually provide SINs, but users would be much more likely to be willing to share this information with a government-managed site that also enables them to apply to jobs. Future partnerships with CDP organizations would offer a more feasible manner to understand the long term outcomes that are associated with OpportuNext use.

In summary, improvements to the tool itself, and outreach or partnerships directly connected to the tool are a viable means to ensure the conditions for improving short and medium term outcomes among individuals are met more frequently, for a greater overall impact. Increasing



the frequency that all conditions are met for improved longer term outcomes among individuals requires system-level changes.

## Improving outcomes through CDPs in the context of institutional incentives


CDP users of OpportuNext could largely be expected to experience improved outcomes through their clients. Broadly, it is a positive outcome for them as well if their clients are able to obtain desirable careers in the long term. CDPs are similar to individual jobseekers in terms of short term outcomes as well. OpportuNext could improve their access to relevant information about the labour market, under similar basic conditions (awareness, etc.).

A meaningful way in which the outcome pathways for CDP use of OpportuNext differs is the possibility of higher quality or more efficient services being offered at scale. A single CDP could potentially leverage OpportuNext with hundreds of clients each year. Under the condition that the tool is compatible with existing career navigation processes, higher quality or more efficient services could be enabled through systematic use of the tool at an institutional level.

A number of contextual incentives likely affect whether OpportuNext is found compatible with existing processes and thus able to improve career planning at scale. Early career planning is most often supported by staff within high schools and PSIs, as a secondary support to their primary activities enabling students to learn. Known incentives at play in PSI contexts include the need to demonstrate to funders that they are responsive to employer trends, and the need to demonstrate to parents that their programs offer viable career pathways. Interviewees, focus group members, and survey responses have flagged a number of specific situations where OpportuNext was found lacking because a user could not search for programs specific to the school where they work, or felt the occupation data associated with their program was inaccurate.

On the other hand, support with mid/late career planning is often conducted by organizations that provide employment / career services as a primary activity, some of which further specialize in the needs of newcomers or other (typically older) workers with existing skills and experiences. Known incentives in this context that may shape systemic adoption of OpportuNext include demonstrating to funders that they are capable of serving a large quantity of clients, make efficient use of resources, and provide “data-driven” services. Given sufficient awareness, off-campus career service agencies may then be typically more incentivized to scale up use of the tool than PSIs, who may require specific subsets of the data to fit well to (or reflect positively on) their programming.





The focus group participants provided extensive feedback on where they saw opportunities for additional useful information or features to be provided in future. While not all features would be feasible in the short or medium term, meeting some of these desires may make it more likely that these institutional users are likely to embed the tool in their workflows and recommend it to others. Additional desirable functionalities are discussed in more detail under question 3C, the following section.

## Other user types and partnerships

Beyond workers, students, and CDPs, other types of users could exist, such as employers and policymakers. These and more user types are accounted for on the landing page, in promotional materials, and in early design phase documents created by Banfield.

OpportuNext's value proposition for these other types of users is not as clear as it is for individual jobseekers or those supporting them. The CBoC project team has noted that policymakers or researchers are likely to have access to similar raw data that could be more flexibly manipulated to suit their needs. They have also noted that the query interface and results aren't framed in terms of employer or HR professional needs and didn't expect this was actually a significant user group. While the number of survey responses received is small, none have described their situation as employers/HR professionals or policymakers/researchers. While counterintuitive use of the tool's interface could provide information relevant to recruitment efforts or informing policy, this can be delivered more effectively through partnerships involving custom research.

Interviews and existing documentation indicate that structured backend data of OpportuNext has already proven valuable for partnerships. CBoC has used it to create custom research for Mohawk Collage and the Wood Manufacturing council that informed their recruitment efforts, by identifying occupations with skill profiles, salaries, and industry conditions that could likely produce good candidates for recruitment. A more extensive partnership with eCampus Ontario involved enhancing a portal for micro-credentials at Ontario PSIs with OpportuNext's occupational and skills data. This allowed the extremely lengthy list of microcredentials to be transformed into a short set of recommendations, generated through a job title search. Implementing this functionality required substantial additional effort to validate mappings of programs to skills and occupations with each PSI involved, but there is evidence it substantially increased inquiries for microcredentials. An interviewee associated with this project has noted there is potential for this work to be scaled to the national level.

These partnerships are not explored extensively here, as they have been funded and evaluated separately, but the positive outcomes they have produced must certainly be partly attributed to the work done to generate the OpportuNext dataset in the first place. It would have been



possible to conduct this research without having first built OpportuNext, but it would not have been as economical to do so. The OpportuNext site can also serve as an initial proof of concept for such partnerships, helping to explore the possibility of more customized LMI-based research. One interviewee reported using the tool in this manner in their own context, during a process that led to creating more custom research to inform program design. This pathway for replication and commercialization offers the potential of financial sustainability, and of impact beyond the tool's primary user groups.


## **Evaluation Question 3C: What opportunities exist for the platform to improve outcomes for current or future users?**

### **Clarifying functionality and methodology**

As noted in the findings related to question 3B on short term outcomes, there is good evidence that most users find OpportuNext fairly easy to use. However, there are still a number of potential areas where future iterations could increase ease of use, or make other improvements that would help users understand how the platform functions and the methodology behind it. Many of this set of opportunities could be relatively simple to implement through revising or adding text on the site, without changing the underlying database.

Related opportunities for improvement include:

- **Contextualization of search function.** Multiple focus group members reported struggling with the search function when they were testing the tool. One focus group member commented that they had been unable to conduct relevant searches initially but was able to figure out that search is best conducted by typing a single job title keyword and scrolling through options, rather than typing a full title (or degree name). Two survey respondents expressed similar critiques related to not being able to enter a job title or degree which was an exact match for their own. A third survey respondent, who otherwise provided the most positive overall feedback of all respondents, noted that dropdown options in the search bar were suboptimal. Various solutions could be explored to address the issue that has arisen the most often as a barrier. A simple approach could involve replacing “job title” with “job title or related keyword” in the search bar.
- **Contextualizing education search and “field of study.”** Two focus group participants initially reported being unable to use the search by education interface. Follow up questions revealed this was because they had selected “Secondary high school diploma.” The search will not work unless all fields are filled in, and both participants had assumed they could leave the “field of study” blank). The user must enter “No




post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree,” otherwise the results button will not work. Technical fixes of various complexity could potentially address this issue, or text could be added under the search bar or within it to clarify. Some internal documentation for the tool frames the field of study a user would search as a hypothetical or future education, and other similar tools are framed in this manner. Adjusting text to frame the education search as either a current or *potential future* field of study is an opportunity to reduce confusion and enable the tool to more clearly align with career planning activities as they are conducted in many high schools.

- **Contextualizing how skills structure results.** Focus group participants all agreed that a potential improvement to the tool was a greater focus on skills. One participant spoke negatively of what they perceived as a discrepancy between the prominence of “skills” language on the landing page and what they saw in the results. A follow up question revealed that no participants had understood that the tool’s “similarity scores,” were based on similarity of skill profiles. One participant had initially interpreted the similarity scores as employment rates for each occupation. The other two participants were uncertain how similarity would be calculated but understood the results were meant to be similar occupations and agreed that they were. When the score was explained, participants confirmed it made sense to them but suggested that a pop-up explanation would be useful (particularly for users who didn’t already have the background knowledge of a CDP).
- **Streamlining or reorganizing site structure.** Focus group members expected that the pages branching off from the landing page which are focused on particular user types (e.g. job seekers, students, employers) would deliver different types of information. They had only been shown the two search interfaces on the main landing page when being instructed to spend 5 minutes trying out the site, but two participants reported spending some time comparing user type pages. One participant noted that the employer interface didn’t seem as useful (for employers). Another participant noted they expected to be able to click on the “Explore over 30,000 careers” header on the “For Students” page, expecting that it would offer a different type of career browsing functionality than the main search bar.

## Advanced functionality and support for career planning actions

As noted in the previous section, a key condition for any jobseeker moving along the outcome chain is an ability to interpret the information provided and translate it into a plan. The tool does not clearly guide users toward a next step to pursue one of the occupations listed in the results. Focus group members agreed this was a key weakness in the current iteration of the tool.






There are a number of opportunities for added functionality within the tool to better support users in actually planning pursuit of a desirable career. Some of these opportunities could also be pursued through partnerships that ensure the tool is being used by CDPs who can support jobseekers in additional manners. Some opportunities could involve directing users to external resources.

Related opportunities include:

- **Connecting occupations to information about relevant training opportunities.** One participant noted that it would be useful for students if the tool enabled them to see a direct link between the actual program offerings of PSIs and related occupations. Another participant noted skill gaps should be associated with additional information on how these skills could be acquired – ideally directly linked to the skills required for each occupation, but general links to additional resources would help users in the absence of personal support from a CDP. A survey respondent also noted a desire for links to relevant training. This is a particularly strategic opportunity, given that CBoC has previously connected OpportuNext data successfully to training opportunities in partnership with eCampus Ontario. This is a gap in the functionality of the most directly comparable tool in the Canadian context (the Job Bank tool), but is a key aspect of the business model for an American tool (My Colorado Journey) which has seen much higher uptake relative to the population it targets.
- **Integrating more information on actual job postings and employers.** A focus group participant noted it would be much more useful to have direct links to job postings to be able to reference for information. Another participant noted the actual degree of similarity between the occupations listed in results would likely depend on specific context, such as length of time in an industry, and that if occupations were linked to job postings this assessment would be easier to make. One interviewee similarly noted that an inherent limitation to skills-related data is that there is always additional industry-specific context. This interviewee noted that increased use of job posting data in OpportuNext could provide information on job descriptions and employers hiring that would be valuable to a CDP in supporting career change planning. Additional use of job posting data (from the Vicinity Jobs dataset) could plausibly also address the need focus group participants saw for information on high-demand certifications for specific occupations and typical years of experience required for entry to be addressed.
- **Surfacing classification standards.** One focus group participant noted that displaying NOC codes, other classifications underlying results, or statistical data sources could provide a useful pathway for CDPs or jobseekers to explore additional information. This is similar to comments from an interviewee who described OpportuNext as essentially a simple way to explore data that they might later retrieve in a more complex or comprehensive format from Vicinity Jobs, StatsCan, or other source datasets. This



opportunity aligns with the stated initial goal for OpportuNext to serve as a knowledge mobilization approach for Canadian LMI.

- **Enabling search based on custom skill selection, or resume parsing.** Two survey respondents criticized the simplicity of the tool, and noted its inability to address multiple degrees, enable results through custom skill selection, or extract skills from an uploaded resume. A focus group participant similarly noted that the “skills” emphasis on the landing page meant they had expected to be able to manually select skills and be shown relevant careers. The other participants agreed they wished for this functionality. One participant noted that the immigrant and international student populations they served often had multiple degrees and qualifications or experience that would not transfer easily here. So while their clients were in one sense potentially well-suited to being helped through tools that focused on skills and transferring between different occupations, the simplicity of the tool meant they felt it could not adequately reflect the varied skills, education, and experiences many of their clients had acquired.
- **Enabling direct cross-province comparisons.** One participant wanted the tool to allow users to select a degree and a specific province to see what fields of study and related jobs are available in that province. They were looking for a way to show students training they could access within their province that would enable them to have good job prospects within that same province. They agreed that views which would enable more direct comparison between provinces for specific occupations (particularly in terms of salary and job outlooks) would also be useful.
- **Integrating career interest quizzes to better support students.** Other similar tools often incorporate quizzes to help narrow the range of possible careers to consider. Multiple focus group participants commented that while the tool could be helpful for supporting mid-late career transitions, it would be less helpful than other approaches to early career planning. Exploring interests, values, and personality was seen as a more beneficial approach to helping students or those with little to no job experience than searching specific degrees and viewing associated occupations.
- **Enabling AI-powered search.** Multiple focus group members noted they would like some kind of AI-search integrated, so they could directly ask questions rather than using the existing query interface.



# 7. Recommendations

## Short-term

**CBoC should leverage existing partnerships to continue promotion efforts.** This includes ensuring FSC staff understand the tool's purpose through demonstrations and asking FSC to promote the tool and identify potential projects or partnerships. Continued focus on CDPs is also recommended, as they represent a key user group.

Additionally, **CBoC should develop and embed additional contextual and methodological information within the interface or site, where this can be done with relatively low effort to address the most common barriers to use identified.** This involves clarifying and reframing the search function to address user difficulties, clarifying educational fields and the use of educational search for future education to reduce user confusion, and clarifying the similarity score, possibly with a pop-up explanation.

## Mid-term

CBoC should **design more consistent data processing mechanisms** to address inconsistent Vicinity data ingestion. Implementing automated data pipelines instead of manual processes will reduce effort and ensure more regular updates. The acquisition of Vicinity Jobs could reduce the cost of resources needed for such data engineering efforts.


Furthermore, CBoC should **design processes for collecting user feedback and testing.** The evaluation process highlighted challenges with collecting information that would be useful for continuous improvement. Continued collecting of user survey results long-term is more likely to yield statistically significant data, but regular user testing and input from key user groups on their experiences and outcomes achieved should be pursued as well.

**CBoC should also reassess the design of the educational interface.** This includes considering relative rather than absolute values for the first job displayed and evaluating whether skills similarity to the first occupation listed is a useful form of analysis for intended users, potentially requiring additional context or a redesign of the data model to better align with focus group expectations.

## Long-term

CBoC should **seek to develop financial sustainability through the tool by pursuing additional partnerships and custom research offerings.** CBoC should explore partnerships that enable educational programs to be linked to specific occupations, building on the existing





eCampus Ontario partnership, as this functionality is not known to exist in other Canadian tools and has a proof of concept in American tools like My Colorado Journey. It should continue leveraging the tool as a proof of concept for its ability to produce high-quality and granular data insights.

Finally, **CBoC should explore additional advanced features that could improve the usefulness of the information provided for career planning.** This should involve consideration of login functionality that would enable better data about users to be collected, potentially providing access to advanced functionality and greater ability to customize skill selection to institutional users. This could also involve enabling custom skill selection to generate results, including information on top employers, including links to specific job postings, including more details about typical job duties, application of skills, or common certification requirements, including NOCs explicitly, and enabling direct comparison of multiple geographies.





## 8. Acknowledgements

The evaluation team extends its sincere gratitude to the numerous individuals and organizations whose contributions were invaluable to the completion of the OpportuNext Evaluation report.

We particularly thank the Economic Research team at the CBoC for their time and support, including organizing documentation sharing and coordinating interviews. We extend special thanks to both their web and IT teams for their support in setting up the survey on the website.

We are also grateful to all interviewees who generously shared their time, candid opinions, and valuable insights with transparency. Similarly, we extend our appreciation to the participants of the focus groups, whose input significantly enriched our understanding.

We acknowledge and appreciate the thoughtful guidance provided by the Research and Evaluation team, and Media Communications at the FSC.

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, we would also like to acknowledge the many territories of Turtle Island (Canada) on which we work and reside. With Intent Strategies staff are primarily located on the traditional territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk), a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among various nations.

The territories on which we work, ceded and unceded, are home to many Indigenous peoples who have lived here for tens of thousands of years and continue to live here. As settlers, immigrants and descendants, and as visitors, we honour and respect the many Indigenous peoples of this land and territory and strive for a more just future together as treaty people.





# 9. Appendix

## 9.1. Evaluation Framework

Topics	Questions
Design & Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did design and implementation of the platform influence its ability to produce its intended outcomes for users?</li><li>• What key future opportunities exist for platform development or use of related project resources (e.g. technology, datasets, audience, expertise)?</li></ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How has engagement with users and stakeholders influenced the platform's ability to impact outcomes?</li><li>• What opportunities exist for platform engagement?</li></ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What outcomes have been achieved by platform users?</li><li>• How did the platform influence the outcomes experienced by actual users?</li><li>• What opportunities exist for the platform to improve outcomes for current or future users?</li></ul>

### Topic: Design & Implementation

Questions	Example Indicators	Data Sources
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did design and implementation of the platform influence its ability to produce its intended outcomes for users?</li> <li>• What key future opportunities exist for platform development or use of related project resources (e.g. technology, datasets, audience, expertise)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment between strategy, design, and implementation process</li> <li>• Perspectives represented in design and implementation processes</li> <li>• Compliance with accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG)</li> <li>• Similar platforms or alternative uses of similar data considered in design and implementation processes</li> <li>• Divergences in design or implementation from similar platforms</li> <li>• Planning to address risks (e.g. data privacy concerns or funding shortages)</li> <li>• Availability and reliability of platform following launch (e.g. without bugs or downtime)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposals</li> <li>• Project documentation</li> <li>• Reporting to funder</li> <li>• Stakeholder tracking documentation</li> <li>• KIs: project teams, stakeholders</li> <li>• Documentation or evaluations of similar platforms</li> </ul>
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**Topic: Engagement**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Example Indicators</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How has engagement with users and stakeholders influenced the platform’s ability to impact outcomes?*</li><li>• What opportunities exist for platform engagement?</li></ul> <p><i>*Note: as OpportuNext can be used without login, actual users cannot easily be directly identified. The evaluation will aim to incorporate information about outcomes that can be collected by survey or through key informant interviews with partnered organizations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number and types of engagements (including tailored for specific user types)</li><li>• Number of users/stakeholders engaged through communications/publicity materials</li><li>• Top sources of web traffic</li><li>• Number of unique active users</li><li>• % of active users completing core tasks (e.g. search for careers by education, view details)</li><li>• Top accessed content or features (e.g. job title or education searches; career detail pages)</li><li>• User satisfaction with platform</li><li>• Platform ease of use</li><li>• Existence of mechanisms for collection and incorporation of user feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Event documentation</li><li>• Communication materials</li><li>• Recorded presentations</li><li>• Kils: project teams, stakeholders, platform users (actual or intended) stakeholders</li><li>• Platform metrics</li><li>• Documentation or evaluations of similar platforms</li></ul>
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## Topic: Outcomes

Questions	Example Indicators	Data Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What outcomes have been achieved by platform users?*</li> <li>● How did the platform influence the outcomes experienced by actual users?*</li> <li>● What opportunities exist for the platform to improve outcomes for current or future users?</li> </ul> <p><i>*Note: as OpportuNext can be used without login, actual users cannot easily be directly identified. The evaluation will aim to incorporate information about outcomes that can be collected by survey or through key informant interviews with partnered organizations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synthesis / sense-making: value proposition by user types</li> <li>● Stories of change</li> <li>● Continuum of user outcomes</li> <li>● Increased availability of relevant workforce information by user type</li> <li>● Improved user knowledge of potential career paths</li> <li>● User employment change</li> <li>● User willingness to pay / monetary valuation of platform</li> <li>● Outcome-producing activities by partners reliant on platform</li> <li>● Scalability or replicability of platform operating model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reporting to funder</li> <li>● KIs: project teams, stakeholders, platform users (actual or intended)</li> <li>● Data directly from users (if available or obtainable)</li> <li>● Documentation or evaluations of similar platforms</li> </ul>





## 9.2. Interview Questions

### Group 1: Leadership / decision-makers

Topics	Interview Questions
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is your role?</li><li>• How does labour market information relate to your organization's work?</li></ul>
Design & Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What were the goals for this tool when the project began? Did they shift? How?</li><li>• What were major considerations that informed design/implementation processes?</li></ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What kinds of outreach and partnership activities have been conducted for the platform? Who has been engaged and how?</li><li>• What audiences or partners should be engaged around this work?</li></ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are partners of FSC / CBoC leveraging OpportuNext? What activities and outcomes can be tied to these partnerships?</li><li>• Has the tool helped achieve organizational / strategic objectives? How?</li><li>• Has OpportuNext met expectations? Why or why not?</li><li>• What opportunities do you see for OpportuNext or similar platforms to produce meaningful impacts?</li></ul>

### Group 2: Design/implementation/project team

Topics	Interview Questions
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What was your role in the development of OpportuNext?</li><li>• What is your role in the ongoing maintenance of OpportuNext?</li><li>• How long have you been a part of the team responsible for OpportuNext?</li><li>• How would you describe OpportuNext to someone who hadn't heard of it before?</li></ul>
Design & Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What were the goals for this tool when the project began? Did they shift? How?</li></ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were major considerations that informed design/implementation processes?</li> <li>• Did existing tools or platforms inform the work? How and to what extent?</li> <li>• What existing standards were considered relevant?</li> <li>• What risks were identified for this project? How were they addressed?</li> <li>• What challenges arose during design &amp; implementation processes? How were they addressed?</li> <li>• What technical issues have needed to be addressed following launch?</li> </ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of outreach and partnership activities have been conducted? Who has been engaged and how?</li> <li>• How has the platform been promoted or publicized? Have any effects of this been observed?</li> <li>• What has been learned about who is using the platform, how, and why?</li> <li>• How has information about users and their experiences informed subsequent platform development?</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has OpportuNext changed what kind of workforce information is available? How?</li> <li>• Has OpportuNext improved knowledge related to career pathways, employment or education? How? For who?</li> <li>• Have you encountered stories of people whose employment-related outcomes have changed in ways that are connected to Opportunext?</li> <li>• How are partners leveraging OpportuNext? What activities and outcomes can be tied to these partnerships?</li> <li>• What aspects of OpportuNext would be useful to expand on or replicate in other contexts?</li> </ul>

**Group 3: Users (partner organizations)**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your role?</li> <li>• How does labour market information relate to your role?</li> </ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and when did you hear about OpportuNext?</li> <li>• Why did you decide to use OpportuNext?</li> </ul>



Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has OpportuNext changed what kind of workforce information is available? How?</li> <li>• What type of information on careers and the labour market is most useful to you? Why? How do you use this information?</li> <li>• Are there other labour market tools or data sources you use in combination with OpportuNext? How does it complement your suite of tools?</li> <li>• Do you find OpportuNext easy to navigate and use? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Are there aspects of OpportuNext that would be useful to expand on or replicate in other contexts?</li> <li>• Would you be willing to pay to use OpportuNext? What do you think would be a fair monthly fee?</li> </ul>
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### 9.3. Focus Group Questions

Topics	Interview Questions
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your role?</li> <li>• What sorts of jobseekers do you work with, and in what capacity?</li> <li>• What type of information on careers and the labour market is most useful to you? Why?</li> <li>• Does the type of information your clients need differ from your needs? How?</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How important would specific types of information from OpportuNext be in informing your decisions related to employment or education?</li> <li>• What additional information or features would be most useful?</li> <li>• Are there aspects of OpportuNext that would be useful to expand on or replicate in other contexts?</li> <li>• Do you find OpportuNext easy to navigate and use? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What could make OpportuNext more useful to you or your clients?</li> <li>• Would you be willing to pay to use OpportuNext? What do you think would be a fair monthly fee?</li> </ul>



## 9.4. Documents Consulted

Topic (folder name, for internal-facing CBoC documents)	Document title	Document date
1.Overview documents	OpportuNext: A Career Mapping Tool	Dec 2024
1.Overview documents	Economic Research Overview - Philosophy, Research and Tools	May 2024
1.Overview documents	Economic Research - FSC Research Projects	November 2021
1.Overview documents	Empowering Career Development Practitioners	June 2024
1.Overview documents	Future Skills Council Report	November 2020
1.Overview documents	OpportuNext - Summary Description	March 2024
1.Overview documents	OpportuNext Walkthrough Guide	Not defined
1.Overview documents	Update for FSC MOST	June 2022
2.Plans	OppNext Future	January 2024
2.Plans > OpNext III	Action Log OpportuNext	September 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	Consolidated plan OpportuNext	February 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	OpportuNext Phase III Vision	June 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	OpportuNext v3 - Discussion Note with Inputs	May 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	OpportuNext v3 - Discussion Note	May 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	OpportuNext 3 - Flow Chart	June 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III	OpportuNext Phase 3 requirements gathering	June 2022
2.Plans > OpNext III > Phase III Testing - Feb 2023	Comparison of two roles	February 2023
2.Plans > OpNext III > Phase III Testing - Feb 2023	ED1	February 2023



2.Plans > OpNext III > Phase III Testing - Feb 2023	Music Education	February 2023
2.Plans > OpNext III > Phase III Testing - Feb 2023	OpportuNext v3 review	February 2023
2.Plans > OpNext III > Phase III Testing - Feb 2023	OpportuNext V3 Testing	February 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach	Attendee email for version 3	August 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach	CBoC - OpportuNext Phase 3 Campaign	July 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach	CBoC mini pitch OpportuNext broader outreach	September 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	Future Skills - Must-invite List	May 2021
3.Marketing and Outreach	Marketing plan with comments	July 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	MOST description - notes for CEROS page	May 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	OpportuNext - Gov outreach email	November 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach	OpportuNext walkthrough with comments	August 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	OpportuNext - GR Outreach	July 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach	OpportuNext - Phase 2 marketing	July 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	OpportuNext Outreach Plan	February 2022
3.Marketing and Outreach	Stakeholder List - OpportuNext	October 2023





3.Marketing and Outreach	Updated OpportuNext List	November 2023
3.Marketing and Outreach > 2024	Champions page web copy	2024
3.Marketing and Outreach > 2024	OpportuNext Impact Plan	March 2024
3.Marketing and Outreach > 2024	OpportuNext Champions Participants	2024
3.Marketing and Outreach > 2024	OpportuNext Champions Program - Terms of Reference	June 2024
4.Partnered projects > eCampus Ontario	eCampus Workplan and Methodology Report	August 2023
4.Partnered projects > eCampus Ontario	eCampus Evaluation Report	January 2024
4.Partnered projects > eCampus Ontario	eCampus Ontario - Microcredentials Getting People into Programs and into Jobs	May 2024
4.Partnered projects > eCampus Ontario	Project Insight Report eCO	April 2024
4.Partnered projects > HWTC	HWTC Methodology Report	August 2023
4.Partnered projects > HWTC	HWTC Evaluation Report	January 2024
4.Partnered projects > HWTC	HWTC Employing Labour Market Information	March 2024
4.Partnered projects > HWTC	Project Insight Report HWTC	March 2024
4.Partnered projects > WMC	Evaluation Report for Skills Matching and Opportunities in the Wood Manufacturing Sector	January 2024
4.Partnered projects > WMC	Project Insight Report WMC	March 2024
4.Partnered projects > WMC	Wood Manufacturing Council (WMC) Evaluation Plan	August 2023





5.Metrics and Evaluation	FSC research summary Jan 2024	January 2024
5.Metrics and Evaluation	FSC research summary Jun 2024	June 2024
5.Metrics and Evaluation	OpportuNext - Evaluation FSC v3	April 2024
5.Metrics and Evaluation	OpportuNext 2024 June	June 2024
5.Metrics and Evaluation	OpportuNext 2024 May	May 2024
5.Metrics and Evaluation	OpportuNext Jan 2025 (and Older)	January 2025
5.Metrics and Evaluation	OpportuNext Launch to May 2023	March 2024
External website for similar tools	Job Bank - School to Work Transition Tool ( <a href="https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/school-work-transition">https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/school-work-transition</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	Job Bank - Job Transition Tool ( <a href="https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/job-transition">https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/job-transition</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	Skill Up ( <a href="http://www.skill-up.ca">www.skill-up.ca</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	MySkills MyFuture ( <a href="https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org">https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	My Colorado Journey ( <a href="http://www.mycoloradojourney.com">www.mycoloradojourney.com</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	Website to analyze web metrics - Similar Web ( <a href="https://www.similarweb.com/">https://www.similarweb.com/</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	Website for web page analytics of GC web tools ( <a href="https://performance.alpha.canada.ca/">https://performance.alpha.canada.ca/</a> )	Not applicable
External website for similar tools	Vicinity Jobs ( <a href="https://vicinityjobs.net/">https://vicinityjobs.net/</a> )	Not applicable
External website for	O*NET Online	Not applicable





similar tools	( <a href="https://www.onetonline.org/">https://www.onetonline.org/</a> )	
OpportuNext website	Public guide document for OpportuNext ( <a href="https://www.opportunext.ca/assets/OpportuNext_Guide_EN.pdf">https://www.opportunext.ca/assets/OpportuNext_Guide_EN.pdf</a> )	Not defined

## 9.5. Survey Questions

### List in English

1. What best describes your situation?
  - I am seeking information related to my own career (or the career of a friend / family member / colleague)
  - I am seeking information related to my own career, as part of a course, advising session, or training program
  - I am an employment /career services specialist, and am seeking information related to the careers of my clients
  - I am an employer / HR professional, and am seeking information related to careers of prospective employees
  - I am a researcher / policymaker seeking labour market information
  - Other (please fill in additional information)
2. How likely are you to recommend OpportuNext to a colleague, classmate, or family member?
  - 0 – Not likely at all
  - 10 – Extremely likely
3. How would you describe your experience navigating the platform?
  - 5 - Very easy to use
  - 4 - Somewhat easy to use
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 2 - Somewhat difficult to use
  - 1 - Difficult to use
  - Comments
4. How would you describe the quality of information you received while using the platform?
  - 5 - Very high quality
  - 4 - Somewhat high-quality
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 2 - Somewhat low-quality
  - 1 - Very low-quality





- Comments
5. How would you describe the relevance to your situation of information you received while using the platform?
- 5 - Very relevant
  - 4 - Somewhat relevant
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 2 - Somewhat irrelevant
  - 1 - Very irrelevant
  - Comments
6. How likely would you say that the information provided will improve decisions related to employment or education?
- 5 - Very likely
  - 4 - Somewhat likely
  - 3 - Neutral
  - 2 - Somewhat unlikely
  - 1 - Very unlikely
  - Comments
7. Is this your first time using the site?
- Yes
  - No

