

Project Insights Report

Practitioner Data Initiative: Building Data Capacity



PARTNERS

Blueprint ADE



LOCATIONS

Across Canada



INVESTMENT

\$4,034,458



PUBLISHED

March 2025

Executive Summary

More than ever, data is critical for nonprofits to drive strategic decision-making and program improvement. For community service nonprofits, data helps answer important questions of program impact and client experience, allowing them to stay nimble and deliver responsive, impactful services. But nonprofits often struggle to harness the power of their own data.

Between limited funding opportunities dedicated to data capacity and the lack of trusted technical advice familiar with nonprofits, many nonprofit leaders and their organizations don't know how to get started. This is a lost opportunity—for nonprofits, their funders and the skills ecosystem. Without better data capacity, it will remain a challenge to know how well community-based services, like skills training, are meeting the needs of Canadians.

On behalf of the Future Skills Centre (FSC), Blueprint created the Practitioner Data Initiative (PDI), a pan-Canadian project that responds to data challenges nonprofits face. Through the PDI, community service nonprofits receive a \$100K to \$200K grant from FSC, and partner with Blueprint for 12 to 18 months. During this time, they receive trusted, technology-neutral advice based on Blueprint's deep expertise in program data, technology solutions and nonprofit service delivery. The PDI model has three core elements:

- Development of a capacity building plan
- Implementation guidance and supports
- Opportunities for peer learning and exchange

Each capacity building plan is tailored to the needs of the nonprofit partner. They identify specific actions related to key data capacity levers:

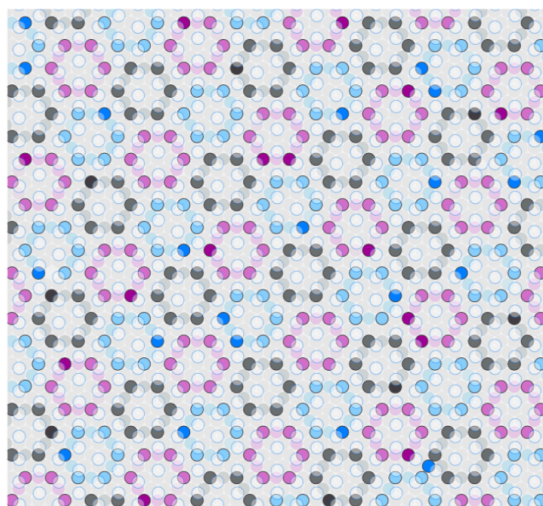
- Developing and hiring talent and skills

- Investing in technology solutions
- Building a data culture in the workplace
- Advancing the value of data internally and externally
- Attracting additional resources/funding for data capacity

In **Phase 1**, kicked off in Spring 2021, Blueprint selected nine partners through an Expression of Interest to pilot PDI and help develop and test the model. Promising results informed Phase 2.

In **Phase 2**, kicked off in Fall 2022, an additional six partners were selected to further refine the PDI model. All PDI partners—outlined below—are committed to advancing their journey towards improved data capacity.

Blueprint is publishing a series of case studies to illuminate how the Practitioner Data Initiative is helping organizations to harness their own data, and in turn, grow their impact for the clients and communities they serve.



Final Report

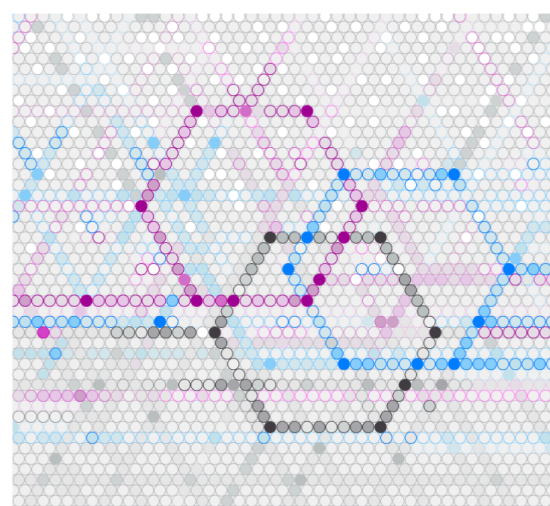
The Practitioner Data Initiative (PDI)

September 2024

Blueprint

This Final Report describes how the PDI model evolved, what we learned over the course of working with our partners, key success factors, and future paths to sustainability and scalability across the sector.

Read the Report ►



Design Report

The Practitioner Data Initiative (PDI)

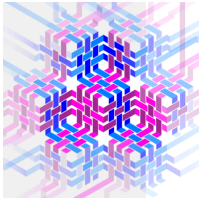
May 2024

Blueprint

This report—a road map to the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio—outlines how Blueprint is working together with grantees to support their scaling journeys.

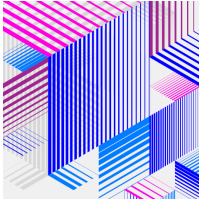
Read the Report ►

► Case Studies



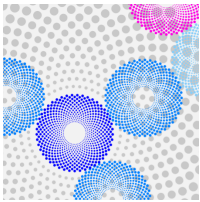
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

Informing program development to support newcomers



Saint John Learning Exchange

Supporting continuous improvements in education and employment services



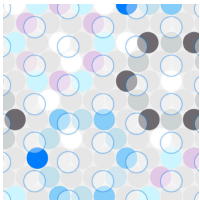
Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia

Enhancing data capacity to expand the longevity of newcomer employment services



The Neighbourhood Group Community Services

Improving delivery of community support services



Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Streamlining data management practices to improve data-driven strategic planning, decision-making and program development



Data Capacity Compass

The Data Capacity Compass is a self-guided toolkit designed to help nonprofits confidently navigate the world of data. Whether you're just starting out or refining an established approach, the Compass offers a clear, step-by-step pathway to make data a powerful asset for your organization.

With tools tailored to nonprofits' needs, the Compass helps you understand your data landscape, develop strategies for effective data collection and management, and communicate your impact.

Toolkit ▶

The toolkit includes accessible templates, guides, and examples that meet you where you are, allowing you to work at your own pace. By making data actionable and integrated into your everyday decisions, the Data Capacity Compass helps your organization drive change with clarity and purpose.

Assessment



Our quick and easy assessment will point you towards the right tools for your organization. In just a few minutes, you can gain valuable insights into your current data capacity and identify the specific resources that will help you make the biggest impact.

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

How to Cite This Report

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