



**Future  
Skills  
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Project Insights Report

# Reimagining Career Services



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## ☰ Executive Summary

Canada's labour market is undergoing profound change driven by automation, demographic shifts, climate pressures, and disruptions accelerated by changing international trade relationships. These forces have highlighted the growing mismatch between what workers and employers need and what the employment and career development system currently provides. Many individuals face complex and intersecting barriers to work; mid-career workers lack proactive support to navigate transitions; SMEs lack tools and capacity for workforce planning; and career development practitioners face fragmented training and resource systems.

In response, Blueprint launched the Re-imagining Career Services (RCS) initiative, funded by the Future Skills Centre, to test a portfolio of innovative service models across the employment ecosystem. Through multi-year pilots, co-design processes, and iterative testing, RCS is generating evidence on new approaches to serving unemployed individuals, mid-career workers, SMEs, and practitioners. Early results show that personalized coaching, dual-client models, employer engagement strategies, and practitioner-focused capacity building can address long-standing system gaps.

By building and testing these models in real-world environments, RCS is helping to reshape how Canada supports career navigation, reskilling, and workforce development. The initiative offers promising approaches for future policy and practice, contributing to a more inclusive, responsive, and future-ready employment system.



## The Issue

Canada's world of work is changing rapidly due to automation, the rise of gig work, climate change, demographic aging, changing trade patterns and the lingering effects of the pandemic. These structural shifts have disrupted career pathways and placed new demands on workers and employers alike. However, Canada's existing employment and career services system has not kept pace with these changes.

Many unemployed individuals face intersecting barriers—poverty, unstable housing, health challenges, and limited childcare—that make it difficult to secure and sustain employment. Traditional services often prioritize quick job placement over long-term stability, which can push people into low-wage or precarious roles and lead to repeated unemployment cycles.

Mid-career workers face a different gap: they must adapt to technological change and shifting industries, yet most services only become available once workers lose their jobs. This leaves millions without proactive, accessible support to navigate career transitions while employed.

Similarly, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up the majority of Canadian businesses, lack structured, affordable support for recruitment, retention, and workforce development. Labour shortages, accelerated turnover, and trade-related pressures have intensified the need for practical, accessible employer-focused workforce solutions.

At the same time, career development practitioners (CDPs) face a fragmented professional landscape characterised by inconsistent training, emerging national standards, and limited recognition. As disruption increases the complexity of client needs, practitioners require stronger tools, professional development pathways, and institutional support.

Collectively, these gaps represent systemic weaknesses that limit Canada's ability to respond effectively to ongoing labour market transformation. RCS was designed to address these shortcomings through innovation, testing, and evidence generation.



## What We Investigated

RCS set out to test new models for career and employment services that respond to the needs of workers, employers, and practitioners in a rapidly changing labour market. Rather than a single intervention, RCS operates as a portfolio of innovation projects co-designed with service partners and piloted in real-world settings.

**In Phase One (January–July 2021)**, Blueprint conducted foundational research involving subject-matter experts in Canada and internationally. Through nine research papers and a summative brief, the team identified system gaps, promising practices, and opportunities to redesign career services for the future of work.

**In Phase Two (2022–2027)**, RCS shifted from research to implementation, launching four service models:

- **Pathways to Opportunity**, supporting unemployed individuals with complex barriers through coaching, wraparound supports, skills development, and financial empowerment.
- **Mid-Career Transitions**, testing dual-client approaches that support both workers navigating transitions and SMEs experiencing workforce challenges.
- **Thriving Workplaces**, piloting recruitment and retention strategies in Nova Scotia Works using a “Magnetic Factors” framework grounded in worker and employer needs.
- **Career Development Professional Centre (CDPC)**, establishing a national, virtual hub to strengthen practitioner skills, professional standards, and community networks.

Across these models, methods include co-design workshops, literature reviews, prototyping, pilot delivery, employer engagement, and rigorous evaluation.

## ► What's Next

RCS will continue pilot testing, evaluation, and model refinement through 2027. Several streams—such as the CDPC and components of Mid-Career Transitions—are already scaling or securing additional partners. As final evaluations are completed, findings will contribute to national dialogue on the future of employment and career services, offering policymakers and practitioners evidence-informed pathways to strengthen Canada's labour market systems.



### **State of Skills: Better Labour Market Transitions for Mid-Career Workers**

Supporting displaced mid-career workers requires a clear understanding of the barriers and difficulties they face, and it should also seek to build on highly valued skills developed through years of work and life experience.

[Read Thematic Report](#)

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

### **How to Cite This Report**

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The Future Skills Centre acknowledges that the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee share a special relationship to the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory,' where our office is located, bound to share and protect the land. As a pan-Canadian initiative, FSC operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, the name given to the North American continent by some Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to work in this territory and commit ourselves to learning about our shared history and doing our part towards reconciliation.

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