



**Future
Skills
Centre**

Centre des
**Compétences
futures**

Project Insights Report

OpportuNext



PARTNERS

Signal49 Research
(formerly The
Conference Board of
Canada)



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Executive Summary

Canada's labour market is undergoing rapid transformation, making it more important than ever for individuals and organizations to access clear, actionable labour market information. However, many existing tools are either overly technical or difficult to access. The [OpportuNext](#) platform, developed by the Conference Board of Canada with support from the Future Skills Centre, addresses this gap by providing a free, bilingual and user-friendly digital tool that helps users explore career options based on skill similarity, salary prospects and job outlook.

Since its launch in 2021, OpportuNext has evolved significantly through three major versions. Its data-rich foundation—leveraging 13 billion data points from sources like the Canadian Labour Force Survey, O*NET, online job postings and [the Conference Board's Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology](#)—has enabled personalized, region-specific insights that are intuitive to navigate. Continuous improvements have focused on refining the user experience, adding education-based and region-based search capabilities, and introducing filtering tools for more targeted exploration.

The tool has gained strong traction, becoming one of the most visited pages on the Conference Board's website. Career development practitioners have emerged as a core user group, with tailored support helping them embed the tool into their daily practice. Applied research partnerships with colleges and sector councils have further demonstrated OpportuNext's utility across a wide range of labour market planning and learner support efforts.

Continued investments in data infrastructure and user engagement are planned for 2025, alongside outreach events that will help shape future iterations of the tool and extend its impact across Canada's workforce development ecosystem.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 The OpportuNext webpage is one of the most visited pages on the Conference Board's website, with high volumes of repeat visits driven by direct and organic searches—demonstrating strong, sustained demand for the tool
- 2 Career development professionals want labour market tools that provide high-quality, regionally relevant information they can trust and use in client-facing workflows.
- 3 To remain useful and responsive in a fast-changing labour market, tools like OpportuNext require sustained funding, regular data updates and a user-centred approach that prioritizes users' evolving needs.

The Issue

Canada's labour market is in the midst of transformation, with rapid changes driven by automation, climate transition and shifting demographics. For Canadians making career decisions—whether transitioning between jobs, choosing postsecondary programs or entering the workforce—accessing clear, relevant and up-to-date labour market information is essential. Yet despite the abundance of data available, a persistent gap remains in access to high-quality, easy-to-use tools that turn those data into insights.

Many existing labour market information platforms are fragmented, technical or behind paywalls, often requiring users to have advanced data literacy or institutional access. This creates barriers for the very groups who need this information most—job seekers, students, career development practitioners and small employers. Career decisions made without a clear picture of market demand, transferable skills and regional opportunities can lead to underemployment, missed opportunities and inefficiencies in the labour market.

OpportuNext, developed by the Conference Board of Canada, addresses these gaps by making robust, skill-based labour market data accessible to all. Leveraging over 13 billion data points from trusted sources—including the Canadian Labour Force Survey, O*NET, online job postings (from Vicinity Jobs) and the Conference Board's Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology—the tool allows users to explore career options based on skill set similarity, earnings potential and employment outlooks.

Since its initial launch in 2021, OpportuNext has prioritized accessibility: it is free to use, it is bilingual, it requires no registration and it offers an intuitive interface. The tool has been particularly helpful for individuals exploring career transitions and for career development practitioners guiding clients in their employment journeys.

By helping individuals and organizations make informed, data-driven career and hiring decisions, OpportuNext contributes to a more adaptive, equitable and prosperous labour market in Canada.



What We Investigated

The OpportuNext project focused on developing, testing and refining a public-facing digital tool that supports evidence-informed career decision-making.

The OpportuNext platform was designed to meet the needs of multiple user groups, including job seekers, job placement organizations, employers, students and policymakers. The tool helps users with career selection and transitions. It also bolsters workforce development and longer-term labour market policymaking. It is regularly updated and incorporates historical and forecast labour market data by region, occupation and skills. This delivers specific, detailed and useful results and enables custom research.

OpportuNext is based on a detailed skill matching algorithm. It is driven by big data and powered by robust sources of occupation and employment data.

- Data for occupation attributes (like skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, tools, training and education) are sourced from the [O*NET](#) and [Vicinity Jobs](#) databases.
- Salary information is sourced from Statistics Canada's [Labour Force Survey](#).
- Employment growth prospects are based on data from [the Model of Occupations, Skills and Technology](#), and from an occupational forecast produced by Employment and Social Development Canada.

The tool was initially launched in April 2021 and has since evolved to provide users with more localized and granular labour market information tailored to their specific needs.

Version 1.0 (launched April 2021) offered users a bilingual interface (French and English) and allowed users to search alternative careers by title at the national level.

Version 2.0 (launched October 2022) included more job categories (from 450 in Version 1.0 to all 500 NOC occupations in Version 2.0), some bug fixes and an enhanced user interface, enabling skills comparison across roles via side-by-side analysis.

Version 3.0 (launched September 2023) presented three key updates. Users can now:

- filter based on their preferences (jobs offering similar or higher pay, jobs most in demand, jobs with similar or lower educational requirements, etc.), allowing them to explore each job and alternative career path more effectively;
- search for alternative careers by educational degree in addition to job title, facilitated by an educational similarity score. This enhancement is aimed at students who are exploring different career options based on their educational choices;
- search by region for more localized and granular labour market information.

What We're Learning

Since its initial release, the OpportuNext webpage has become one of the most visited pages on the Conference Board of Canada's website. Its popularity among users demonstrates the strong demand for practical, skills-based labour market information tools that are both high-quality and accessible.

Brand recognition has grown through sustained knowledge mobilization efforts. The tool has been featured at high-profile, national events for postsecondary and career development leaders and through other knowledge-sharing platforms convened by both the Conference Board and the Future Skills Centre. These interactions have helped strengthen the tool's credibility and gather valuable feedback to refine its design.

One of the key learnings was the need to narrow the target audience. In earlier phases, OpportuNext was broadly promoted to various user groups. However, as insights emerged, the team sharpened its focus on career development practitioners—a group well positioned to use the tool in their day-to-day work with job seekers. This shift allowed for deeper engagement, more tailored improvements and the development of complementary materials, including a bilingual walk-through guide and the issue briefing *Empowering Career Development Practitioners with Labour Market Information* (June 2024).

Web traffic patterns show promising trends. In English, direct and organic search traffic dominate—suggesting that users return to the site regularly and that SEO strategies are effective. Referral traffic from partner organizations continues to grow, as links to OpportuNext are included in outreach and marketing materials. That said, usage in French remains comparatively low. Although direct visits are strong, indicating some repeat engagement, this gap suggests opportunities for additional outreach or platform adjustments to meet the needs of francophone users.

Applied research partnerships have also demonstrated the tool’s versatility. For instance:

- eCampusOntario enhanced its micro-credential portal by integrating OpportuNext data to match job titles with relevant short courses, helping learners make better-informed decisions.
- Mohawk College was able to identify prospective learners for its insurance training program using skill overlap and automation risk analysis to guide outreach.
- The Wood Manufacturing Council used OpportuNext data to explore recruitment opportunities from precarious sectors and promote career transitions into wood manufacturing—an industry facing persistent labour shortages.

A key success has been the tool’s ability to evolve while maintaining its core user-friendly appeal. The interface remains intuitive, but new features and supports have expanded its use cases. Overall, the project reaffirmed that users want labour market information tools that are data rich but not overwhelming, and that well-targeted knowledge mobilization is key to uptake. Future improvements will focus on enhancing French engagement, building partnerships to deepen referral traffic and continuing to evolve the tool based on user feedback.

★ Why It Matters

The OpportuNext project has important implications for both policy and practice in Canada’s career development and labour market systems. The project confirmed that there is a strong demand for accessible, high-quality labour market information tools, particularly among career development practitioners. These professionals are actively seeking reliable, up-to-date data that they can integrate into advising models across different regions and client groups.

One of the clearest signals from this project is that career development practitioners are not only aware of the value of labour market information—they are eager to use it to improve outcomes for the people they support. They want tools that help them feel confident that the guidance they provide is evidence-based, regionally relevant and easy to interpret alongside their clients.



State of Skills: Working Collaboratively to Close Skills-Related LMI Gaps

Labour market information (LMI) is a key pillar of a well-functioning workforce development system, yet considerable gaps remain in the generation, dissemination and uptake of skills-related LMI in Canada.

[Read Thematic Report](#)

The success of OpportuNext shows that a free, easy-to-use platform with clear visuals and practical guidance fills an important gap in the current ecosystem. Other tools exist, but they are often costly or difficult to navigate, or they require significant data literacy—making them less suitable for frontline use. The project reinforces that user-centred design and early-stage testing are essential. Good data are not enough—how those data are packaged and integrated into everyday workflows is just as important.

OpportuNext offers an example of how investments in digital infrastructure—when done with user needs and long-term sustainability in mind—can result in lasting public-value tools. However, the project also highlights that tools like this require ongoing support and maintenance. Labour market data change quickly, and a platform that is out of date risks losing credibility and utility. Ongoing investment in statistical updates, user engagement and technical upkeep is needed to maintain relevance.

This project highlights the value of strategic partnerships and knowledge mobilization. The awareness, use and applications of the OpportuNext tool were expanded through presentations, applied research collaborations and other knowledge mobilization activities. The success of these efforts underscores the importance of building awareness and buy-in through community engagement, not just top-down dissemination.

► **What's Next**

The OpportuNext tool remains in active operation on the Conference Board's website. Regular maintenance ensures its functionality and reliability, and ongoing efforts enhance its utility and profile.

With continued funding from the Future Skills Centre, significant upgrades to the back-end data processing systems were completed in winter and spring 2025. Modernizing the back-end data infrastructure enhances data currency, processing efficiency and reliability.

Acting on user feedback, additional upgrades to both the front end and back end of the site are planned for spring and summer 2025. These enhancements will improve the accuracy and transparency of information particularly aimed at supporting advanced users—such as career development practitioners who regularly engage with labour market information—through features like pop-up explanations of methodology and data sources.

In addition, four engagement events are planned, including one already scheduled for April 2025 that has drawn over 500 registrants. These sessions not only promote the tool but also bring together postsecondary leaders, policymakers and researchers to learn directly from career development practitioners about their needs and experiences.

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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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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