



Enhancing Displaced Workers' Literacy and Essential Skills

Second Annual Report

JUNE 2021

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Published in 2021 by the Social Research and
Demonstration Corporation

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The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon above the letter 'a'.

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning,
Literacy and Essential Skills Program.

INTRODUCTION

The Enhancing Displaced Workers' Literacy and Essential Skills project is a collaborative project that is managed by Decoda Literacy Solutions (Decoda) and supported by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC). The overall goal of the project is to enhance knowledge and raise awareness of promising Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) interventions for displaced workers in Canada to improve their employability.

Today's labour market places significant emphasis on LES. Unfortunately, large segments of the available workforce do not have the necessary level(s) of LES to ensure labour market resilience in the face of job displacements resulting from economic downturns, sector collapse, or other factors. Data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) indicates that 49 per cent of Canadians aged 16-65 do not have Level 3 literacy while 55 per cent do not have Level 3 math skills. These gaps are particularly evident in specific population groups, such as older workers or workers with lower education (Statistics Canada, 2013). With low LES and digital skills, workers face increasing challenges to re-integrate into the labour market. There is a clear need to support displaced workers to become re-employed in more secure positions and sectors.

As part of this project, SRDC is working with Decoda Literacy Solutions and project partners to evaluate promising LES training interventions for displaced workers in Canada. This report provides a summary of the second-year activities associated with this project. Specifically, it provides an overview of the findings from the Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C. and follow-up interviews with six displaced workers, as well as an update on the research activities for the beta test interventions which will be implemented in the project's final phase.

SURVEY OF DISPLACED WORKERS WITH LOW LES IN B.C.

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the survey were guided by the project's primary research questions, as outlined in the project research framework, including:

1. What are the literacy and essential skills needs of displaced workers as learners and as workers in communities where they reside?
2. What types of training and supports hold potential for assisting displaced workers with low LES who seek re-employment or self-employment?
3. What is the place of digital skills in the labour market, and the skills demands of our economy, particularly for workers who have low essential skills, particularly in the digital domain?

In addition to these guiding research questions, the survey aimed to build upon the findings from the literature review, media scan, interviews and focus groups completed by SRDC in the first stage of the project. Key findings from this research identified, for example, that LES interventions need to consider both contextual factors and intervention-based factors. From the perspective of displaced workers, a key *contextual* factor is the need to ensure that the design of LES interventions is based on a detailed understanding of the specific needs of the displaced workers who are targeted for the intervention. The most important *intervention-based* factor is the need to take a holistic approach to understanding the supports displaced workers need beyond skill improvements, including areas such as social, psychological, and economic supports. The survey, therefore, aimed to capture the perspectives of displaced workers to inform the development of the beta test interventions in the next phase of the project, as well as contribute to the overall research findings for this project on the circumstances and LES needs of displaced workers in Canada.

The objective of the displaced workers survey is thus to better understand the context and needs of displaced workers in B.C. who have low LES skills to help identify the types of interventions that would best address their needs. Specifically, it aims to understand:

- the profiles/characteristics of displaced workers in the targeted communities;
- the needs and interests of displaced workers in terms of their LES skills;

- the types of training displaced workers have taken and are interested in taking, as well as the barriers they face to participate in training; and
- the supports and services previously used by displaced workers, and identification of the types of supports most helpful for obtaining employment.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The survey was developed in a collaborative manner between the Literacy Outreach Coordinators (LOCs) and their community stakeholders, Decoda, SRDC, project survey provider Learning Metrix Inc., and the Canadian National Advisory Committee (CNAC). The literature review and interviews with LOCs provided a starting point for survey development as they provided an understanding of some of the key needs for displaced workers more generally as well as those in the communities of the respective LOCs. A community-based needs assessment was then completed in five communities as part of the focus groups with key stakeholders. The focus groups entailed discussion of key information needs for each community, which further informed the development of survey questions.

Following these five focus groups, an initial rough draft of the survey was developed and circulated to project partners to garner feedback and gain consensus on the key information needs for the communities and the project as a whole. The survey was then revised and adapted for plain language to assist respondents to complete the survey. The remaining six focus groups were subsequently completed, which provided opportunity to further validate the survey questionnaire.

Upon completion of a final draft, SRDC conducted a training session for the LOCs, which involved reviewing the survey in detail to ensure each question was clear and that no further revisions were necessary. Following this training session, a few final revisions were made, and the final survey was prepared by Learning Metrix Inc. for testing on March 2, 2020.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The displaced workers survey aimed to provide a descriptive, qualitative narration of displaced workers with low LES in the targeted B.C. communities. The sampling design took a targeted approach to engage with as many displaced workers as possible in the communities targeted by the project. As such, the survey was not designed to provide a representative sample of displaced workers in B.C. or the targeted communities. The following outlines key aspects of the survey methodology:

- Displaced workers with low LES in 11 communities were the population of interest;
- LOCs were the key points of contact for recruiting and conducting the survey in their communities;
- Working with community partners, former employers/HR, unions, etc., LOCs established a network for identifying displaced workers and supporting them to complete the survey;
- The survey was available to be completed by paper or online to ensure that it was accessible for the needs of all displaced workers; and
- There were no specific completion targets; the goal was to complete as many surveys as possible within the timeframe available.

The survey was piloted in four communities: five surveys were completed in Fort Nelson, six in Fort St. John, 10 in Quesnel, and four in Cranbrook. Overall, the pilot respondents indicated that the survey flowed well and that it took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The pilot led to some minor changes to the survey which were updated in both the print and online versions. Following the pilot, the survey was officially launched on March 10, 2020 with a preliminary end date scheduled for May 15, 2020.

Unfortunately, the March 2020 economic shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the survey data collection. As a result of the pandemic, the survey questionnaire was revised to include COVID-19 as a reason for displacement (please see the final version of the survey in Appendix A). Most importantly, however, survey respondent recruitment and data collection were significantly more challenging due to restrictions to in-person meetings in the targeted communities. The intention was to recruit respondents using in-person approaches, such as job fairs. Likewise, data collection required in-person interviews for completing the survey. These in-person meetings were simply not possible due to the COVID-19-related restrictions.

Despite these challenges, the project partnership decided to continue data collection, keeping in mind that the safety of the survey administrators and the respondents was of utmost priority. LOCs were required to adapt to pandemic safety protocols, shifting to telephone surveying for the most part and conducting in-person interviewing when it was permitted and safe to do so. The closing date for the survey was extended by the project team to October 16, 2020 to maximize response rates.

INTERVIEWS OF DISPLACED WORKERS WITH LOW LES IN B.C.

The interviews were intended to provide a richer, qualitative understanding of some of the key areas of the survey research. Interviews were conducted individually with six displaced workers who had completed the survey and indicated their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. SRDC used survey responses to select interviewees with a diversity of experience in terms of geography, demographic perspectives, industries, and time spent in the industry. SRDC then used the survey responses to adjust the interview protocol.

Interviewees were contacted between November 2020 and January 2021, and were reminded of the survey, the survey topics, and that they agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview. To qualify for the follow-up interview, the displaced workers needed to still be looking for a new job. They could be currently employed, but still actively looking for a new job. This was confirmed with interviewees before scheduling the phone interview. Respondents were also told that they would receive a \$25 gift card as an honorarium.

Interviews were conducted in a structured manner, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to provide further understanding of the topics covered in the survey. The interview protocol was customized for each interviewee, using their survey data to make the interview questions contextually relevant to respondents. The interviews covered a deeper understanding of previous employment history, their current job search experience, interest in training, interest in improving Essential Skills, and experience with employment and support services. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Of the six interviews completed, five interviewees were unemployed and looking for work and one interviewee indicated that they were employed, but that their work had been put on hold due to COVID-19 and were looking for work in the meantime.

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The findings from both the survey of displaced workers and the follow-up interviews are described in the following four sections: (1) a description of displaced workers in the targeted B.C. communities; (2) the LES needs and interests of displaced workers; (3) what training workers have taken and are interested in taking, as well as the barriers they face to participating; and, (4) what support services displaced workers have used and would find helpful.

DESCRIPTION OF DISPLACED WORKERS

Context of displacement in B.C.

As noted in the methodology section above, the findings from this survey are not to be taken as a representative sample of displaced workers in each community, or in B.C. as a whole, but rather provide a qualitative narrative of the context, experiences and perspectives of some of the displaced workers in each of the targeted B.C. communities.

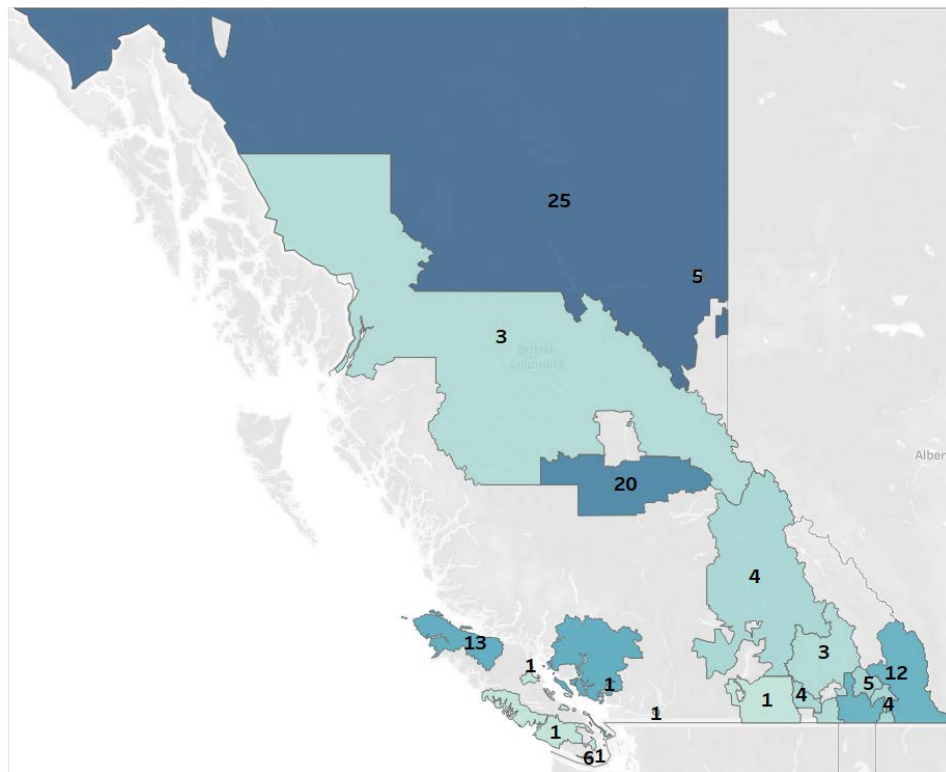
The survey was completed by 110 displaced workers across British Columbia. Surveys were completed in all LOC communities/regions targeted by the project; however, there was a wide range in the number of completions by each LOC (see Table 1).

Table 1 Survey completions by LOC communities/regions

Community	Number of completed surveys
Sooke	7
Campbell River	2
Port McNeill	6
Squamish/Whistler	8
East and West Kootenays	29
Clearwater	5
Fraser Lake	3
Quesnel	20
Fort Nelson	25
Fort St. John	5
Total	110

Figure 1 below provides a visual representation of the survey completions by postal code.

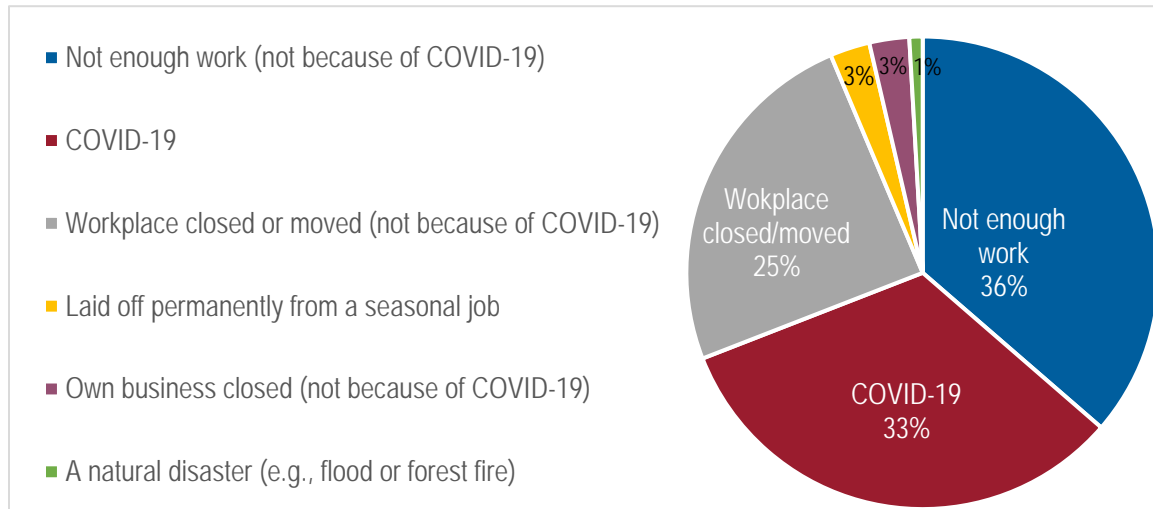
Figure 1 Survey responses by postal code



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

In terms of the reason provided by respondents for why they were displaced from work, most mentioned that there was simply not enough work (unrelated to COVID-19) (36 per cent), that they were displaced due to COVID-19 (33 per cent), or that their workplace had closed or moved for reason not due to COVID-19 (25 per cent) (see Figure 2). Being laid off permanently from a seasonal job (three per cent), a personal business being closed (three per cent) and being laid off due to a natural disaster (one per cent) were only mentioned by a small number of displaced workers.

Figure 2 Reason for displacement

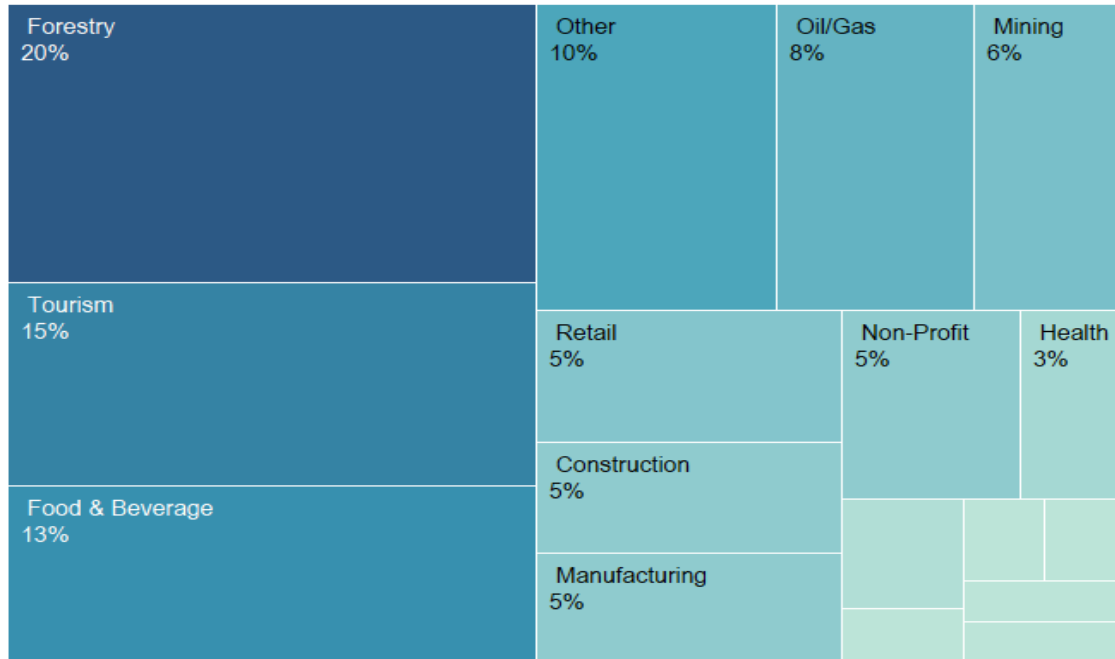


Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

In terms of employment status, respondents were mostly unemployed (75 per cent), but a few were employed (14 per cent) or underemployed (defined as not working enough hours or working below their skills and abilities) (11 per cent). They had been out of work for an average of 7 months, ranging from one month to five years, and thus would generally be considered short-term unemployed rather than long-term. It was not common for respondents to have moved to look for or take a new job (14 per cent).

The most common industry of the respondents' last job was forestry (20 per cent), followed by tourism (15 per cent) and food & beverage industries (13 per cent) (see Figure 3). Interestingly, two thirds of respondents want to work in a different industry from their previous job (65 per cent), whereas a third want to stay in the same industry (35 per cent).

Figure 3 Industry of displacement

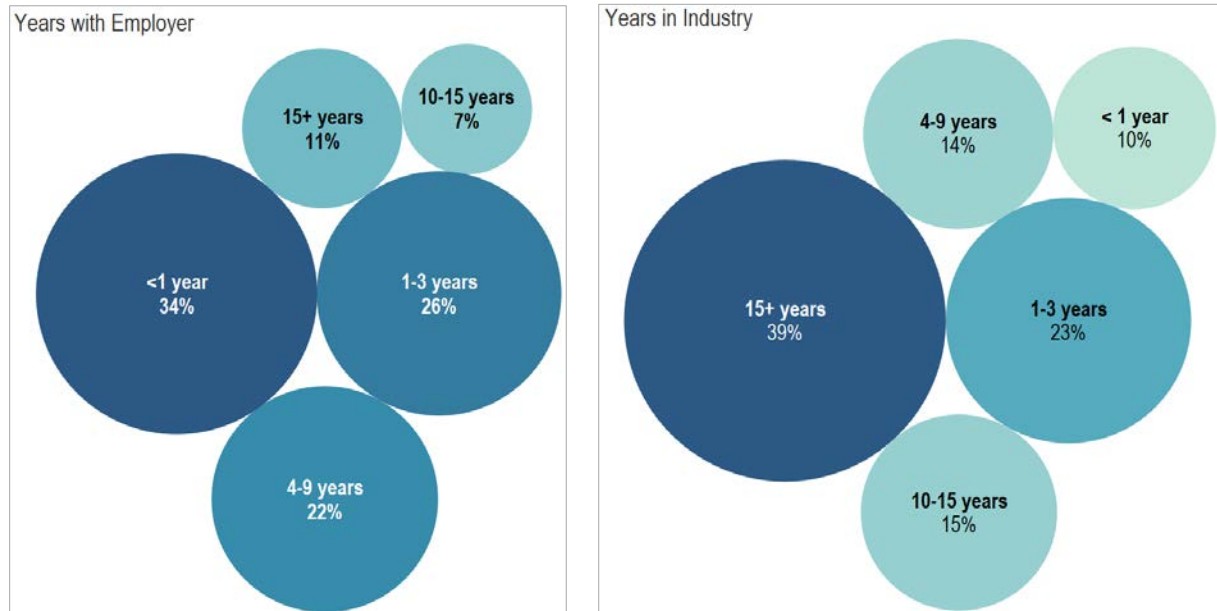


Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Note: The other industries listed (Technology, Agriculture, Government, Fisheries, Trucking, Education) each represented less than three per cent of respondents.

Most workers had either been in the same industry for 15+ years (39 per cent) or were new to the industry for one to three years (23 per cent). When asked how long they had been with their employer before being laid-off, most had been with their employer for less than three years (60 per cent), whereas approximately a fifth had been with their employer for 4-9 years (22 per cent) or 10 year or more (18 per cent). This suggests that most of the workers had experienced recent job turnover.

Figure 4 Number of years spent with previous employer/ number of years spent in the industry



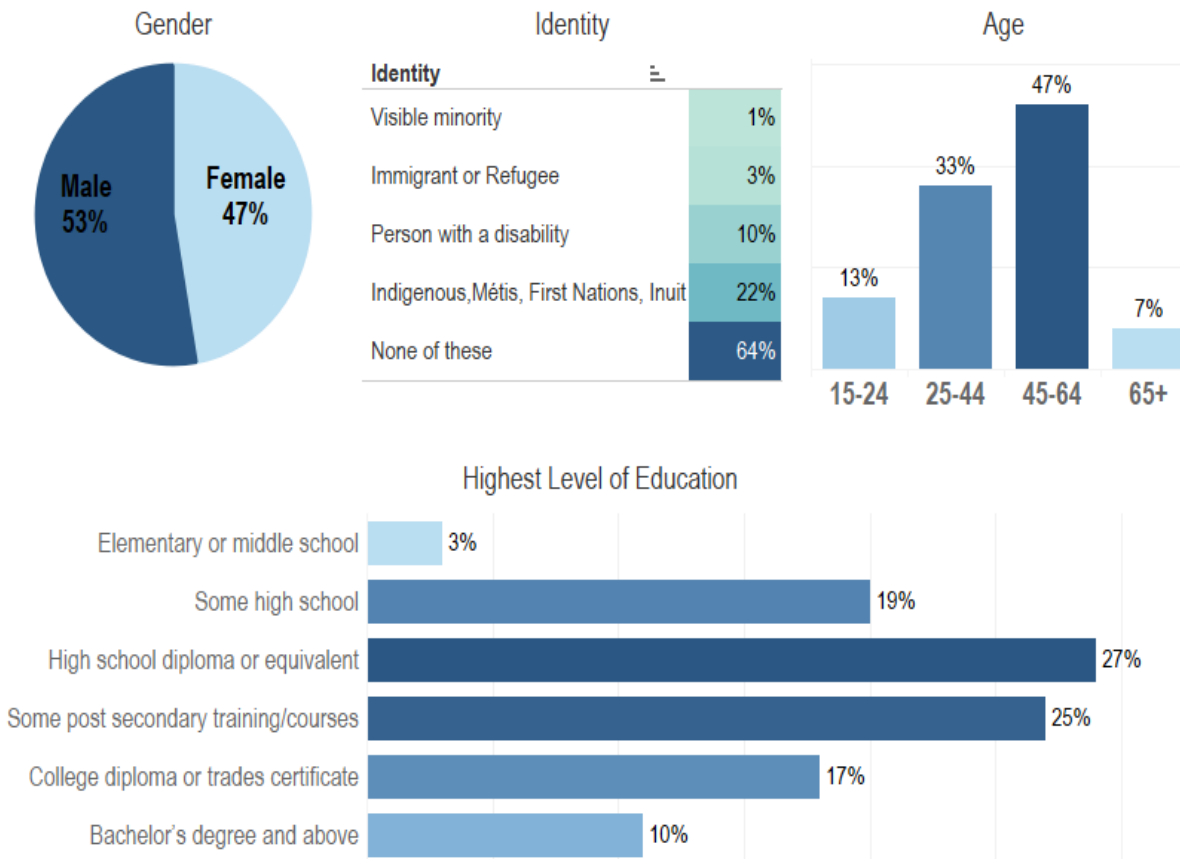
Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Demographic characteristics

In terms of demographic characteristics (see Figure 5):

- Approximately half of respondents were male (53 per cent) and half were female (47 per cent);
- Most respondents' first language was English (93 per cent), with only a few French language speakers (3.5 per cent) or other languages (3.5 per cent);
- Nearly one quarter (22 per cent) of respondents identified as Indigenous, Metis, First Nations and Inuit, 10 per cent as persons with disabilities, 3 per cent as an immigrant or refugee, and 1 per cent as a visible minority;
- Most respondents were middle aged (80 per cent), including half of respondents between the age of 45-64 (47 per cent) and a third of respondents between the of age 25-44. Thirteen per cent were between 15-24 and seven per cent were over 65;
- In terms of education, half of respondents had a high school diploma or less (49 per cent), while approximately a quarter had some post-secondary training (25 per cent) or college certificates (17 per cent). Ten per cent had a bachelor's degree or above.

Figure 5 Demographics

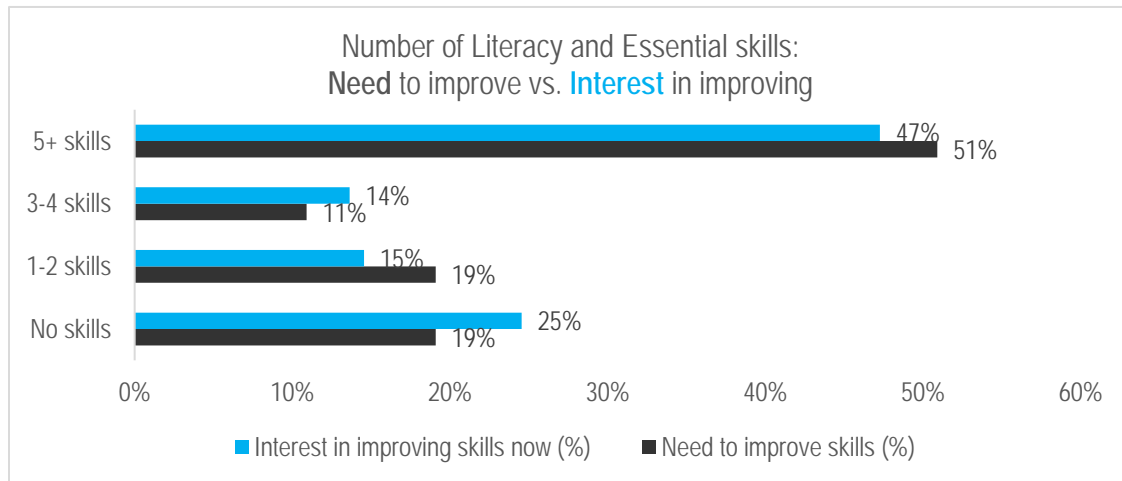


Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

LES NEEDS AND INTERESTS

Displaced workers were asked about their need and willingness to improve their LES in five key areas: technology, math, speaking up, reading, and writing. A large majority of respondents identified that they need to improve at least 1-2 skills (81 per cent), and most were interested in improving at least one to two skills (75 per cent) (see Figure 6). Approximately half stated that they needed (51 per cent) and wanted (47 per cent) to improve five or more skills.

Figure 6 Literacy and Essential Skills – Number of LES skills respondents indicated that they need to improve vs. that they are interested in improving.



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Respondents were more likely to identify the need to improve their skills in writing (29 per cent), speaking up (27 per cent), and technology (25 per cent) compared to math (19 per cent) and reading (16 per cent) (see Figure 7). However, when asked what areas they were specifically *interested* in improving, the most frequent category indicated was technology (26 per cent) (see

Interviewee #1

Interviewee #1 is an example of an older displaced worker with some high school who has been working in the resource sector for a long period of time (15+ years). He is Indigenous and lives in a small town in northeast British Columbia that is dominated by the oil/gas sector and lacks many other work opportunities. His pipeline job was put on hold due to COVID-19, so he is currently looking for work.

This worker recognizes the need to upgrade his computer and communication skills, commenting:

“Computer skills need to get up to date, phone manner and skills up to date. All the kids are coming out of schools knowing this and many jobs need it now.”

He also noted the impact of lack of access to technology in terms of accessing services during COVID-19:

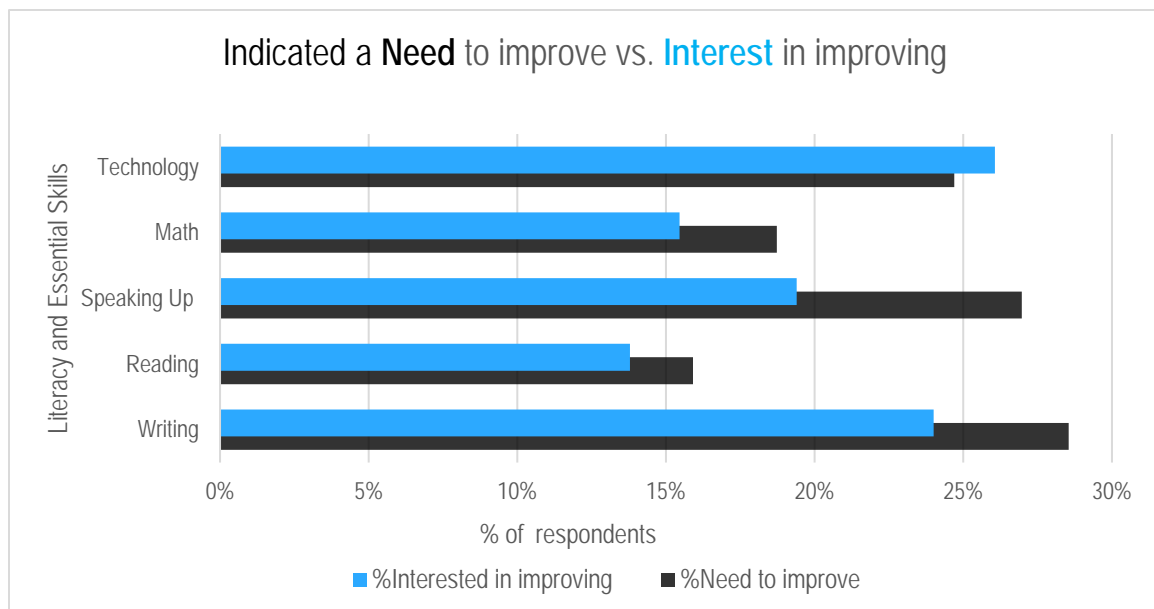
“I think yes, I don’t know if they are still available or available in person. I don’t have a computer.”

In terms of areas of support, he has experienced challenges related to transportation, although some funding is available through his local First Nations. He is aware of his local literacy organization and would like support to update his safety and security certificates.

Source: Follow-up Interviews of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=6.

Interviewee #1 for an interview example) followed by writing (24 per cent). While many respondents acknowledged their need to improve their speaking up skills, fewer were interested in improving those skills. A similar pattern was found for writing skills, math skills, and reading skills (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Literacy and Essential Skills – Average responses of respondent need to improve vs. interest in improving



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Note: Black indicates the percentage of respondents indicating that they need to improve in each of the five literacy and essential skill areas. Blue indicates for those same skills, which ones respondents were interested in improving.

Figure 8 shows responses to all 25 LES items. Across all skills, respondents tended to show the greatest interest in improving workplace associated skills, such as the use of job-related computer software, speaking up about on the job problem-solving and reading workplace instruction manuals.

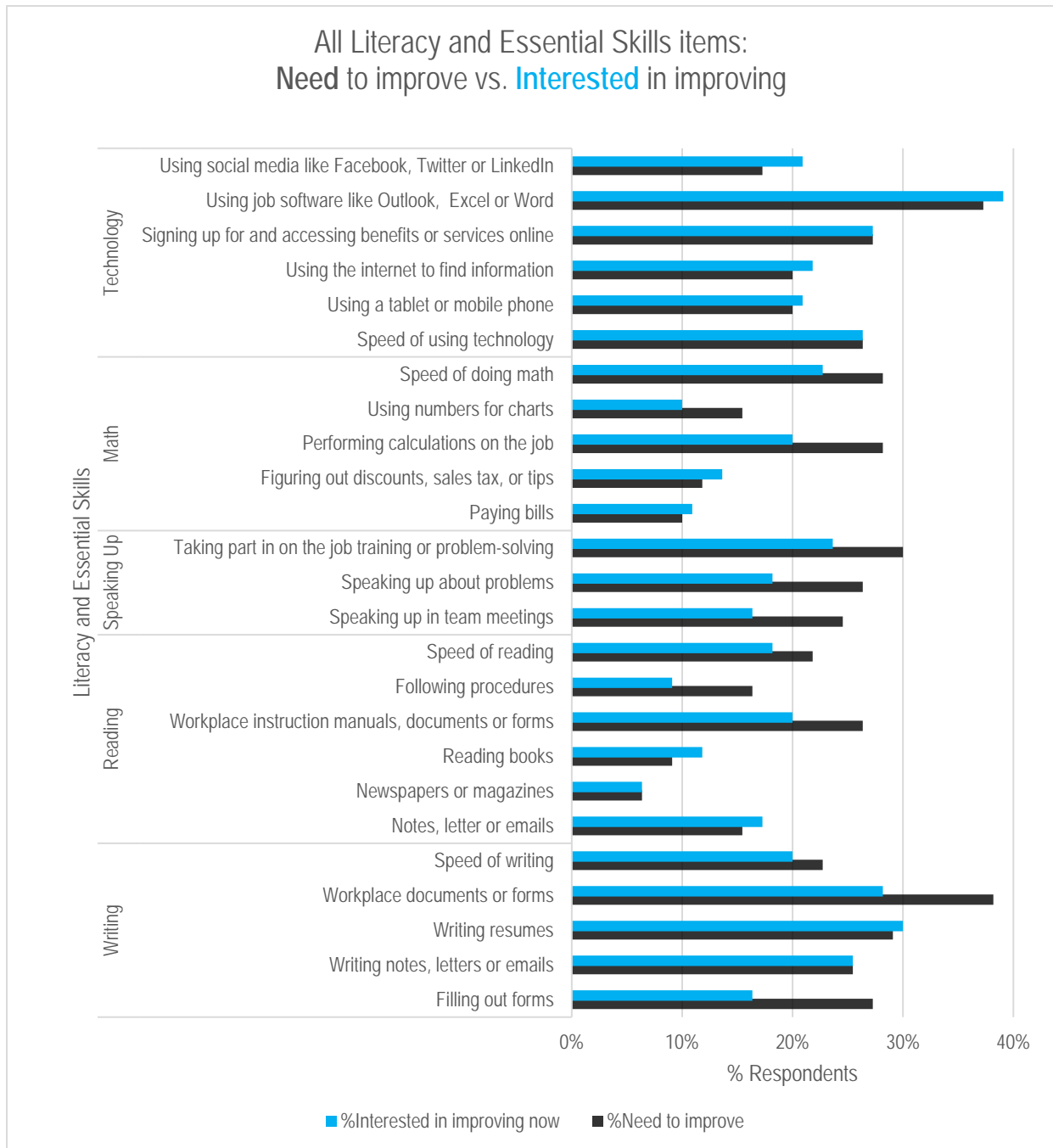
The following are further findings related to each skill area:

- Within technology, respondents were most interested in improving their skills for using job software such as Outlook, Excel, or Word (39 per cent), followed by signing up for and accessing benefits or services online (27 per cent), and the speed of using technology (26 per cent). For the other technology skills, respondents had a similar level of interest in using the

Internet to find information (22 per cent), using a tablet or mobile phone (21 per cent), and using social media (21 per cent).

- Within math, respondents were most interested in improving their skills for the speed of doing math (23 per cent) and performing calculations on the job (20 per cent), followed by figuring out discounts, sales tax, or tips (14 per cent), paying bills (11 per cent), and using numbers for charts (10 per cent).
- Within speaking up, respondents were most interested in improving their skills for taking part in on-the-job training or problem-solving (24 per cent), speaking up about problems (18 per cent), followed by speaking up in team meetings (16 per cent).
- Within reading, respondents were most interested in improving their skills for reading/using workplace instruction manuals, documents or forms (20 per cent), speed of reading (18 per cent), followed by reading notes, letters, or emails (17 per cent), reading books (12 per cent), following procedures (9 per cent), and reading newspapers or magazines (6 per cent).
- Within writing, respondents were most interested in improving their skills for writing resumes (30 per cent), workplace documents or forms (28 per cent), writing notes, letters or emails (25 per cent), followed by speed of writing (20 per cent), and filling out forms (16 per cent).

Figure 8 Literacy and Essential Skills – All item responses of respondent need to improve vs. interested in improving



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Note: Black indicates the percentage of respondents indicating that they need to improve in each of the skills. Blue indicates for those same skills, which ones respondents were interested in improving now.

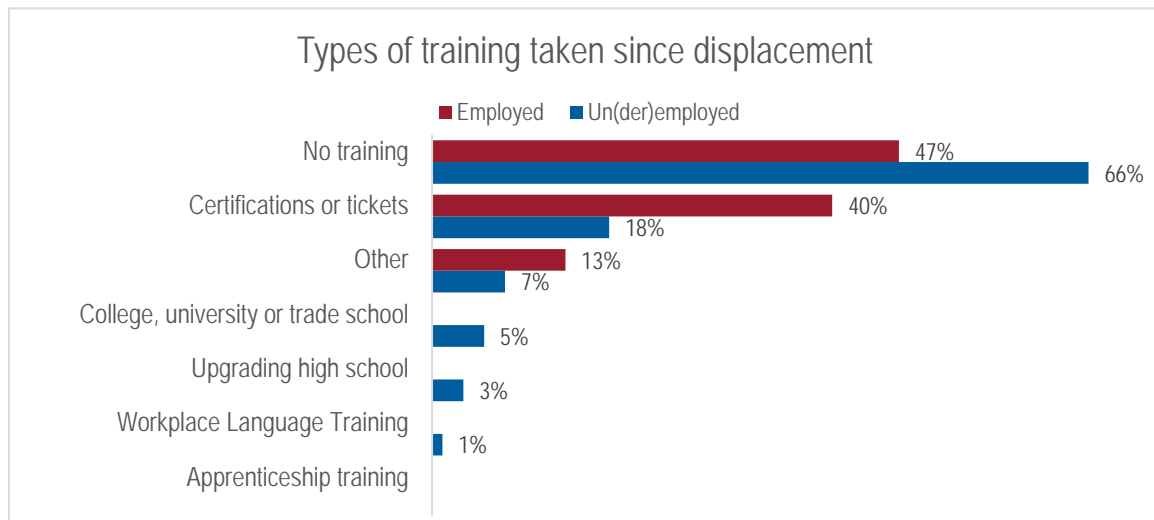
TRAINING

Training taken

Respondents were asked if they had taken any training since their initial displacement (Figure 9). A total of 37 per cent of respondents indicated that they had taken some sort of training. Further, a greater percentage of those who were currently employed reported having taken training (53 per cent) compared to those who were either underemployed or unemployed (34 per cent) (however only 15 respondents were employed, so we caution the interpretation of these results).

Certifications or tickets was the most common type of training for respondents who were employed (40 per cent) and for those who were either underemployed or unemployed (18 per cent). Those who were employed indicated only participating in certificates/ticket training or other non-specified training, whereas those who were either underemployed or unemployed were less likely to have participated in training but indicated a wider range of training types. Neither group indicated that they took apprenticeship training since their job displacement.

Figure 9 Types of training taken since displacement



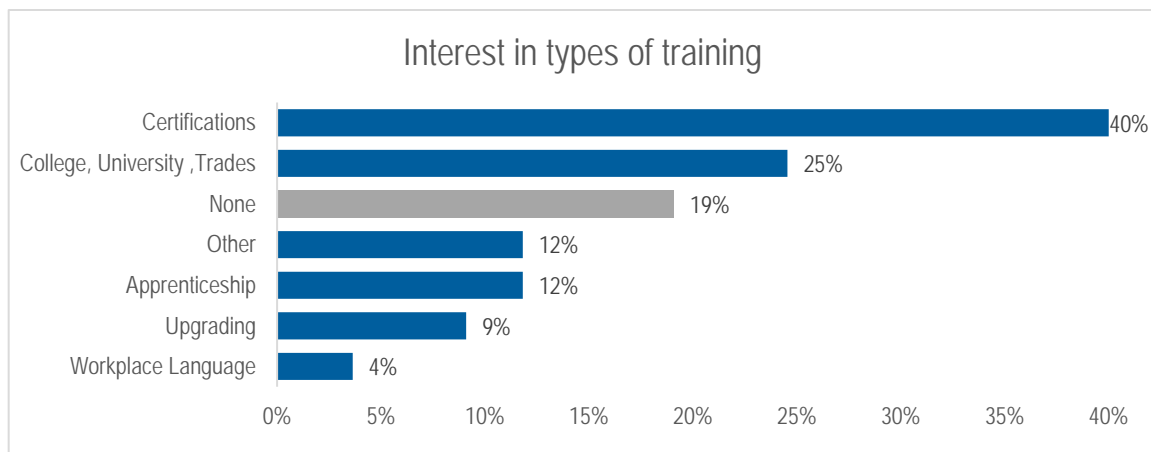
Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Among those (eight) respondents who were employed and took training, the majority (75 per cent) indicated that the training had been helpful (37.5 per cent) or partially helpful (37.5 per cent) for getting a job, and a quarter (25 per cent) indicated that the training was not helpful.

Training interest

Regardless of their employment status, all respondents were asked about their interest in training (Figure 10). Respondents were most interested in obtaining certifications (40 per cent) or pursuing post-secondary college, university or trades (25 per cent). Respondents were less interested in apprenticeship (12 per cent) and upgrading (9 per cent). Nearly a fifth of respondents indicated that they are not at all interested in training (19 per cent), which may reflect the difficulty engaging this population in training, unless it is tailored specifically to their needs.

Figure 10 Interest in training



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Barriers to accessing training

Displaced workers reported that there are a number of barriers that impact their ability to access training. Most respondents indicated that they had faced at least one type of barrier to accessing training (88 per cent), and more than half indicated facing two or more barriers (52 per cent) (see Figure 11). On average, displaced workers reported facing two barriers; however, the number of barriers ranged from no barriers at all to five barriers.

The most common barrier identified by respondents was money (including cost of tuition, books or supplies, or loss of income while training) (65 per cent) (see Interviewee #2 for an example), followed by the availability of training (35 per cent). Other barriers included transportation (17 per cent), health (14 per cent), motivation (13 per cent), other barriers (12 per cent), not enough time (9 per cent) and daycare (6 per cent).

Interviewee #2

Interviewee #2 has worked in a number of different industries in the Kootenays, a region of southeastern British Columbia, but her last job was in the construction industry. She is 65+ years old, has a cognitive disability and has a college diploma or trade certificate. She has tried many ways to find work and has had challenges related to health.

Her primary goal is to find full-time employment regardless of the industry, but she has faced many barriers such as personal health and money:

"My age, small size and weight meant some roles I'm not considered for. Too hard to carry heavy bags. Hard to get on the job training for one situation. Looking after my daughter. Personal health".

"I can get to and take training fine. Biggest obstacle = money. EI (Employment Insurance) finished last week. Need to having money to live on and can't earn while training."

She is interested in training and has tried, but nothing has helped yet:

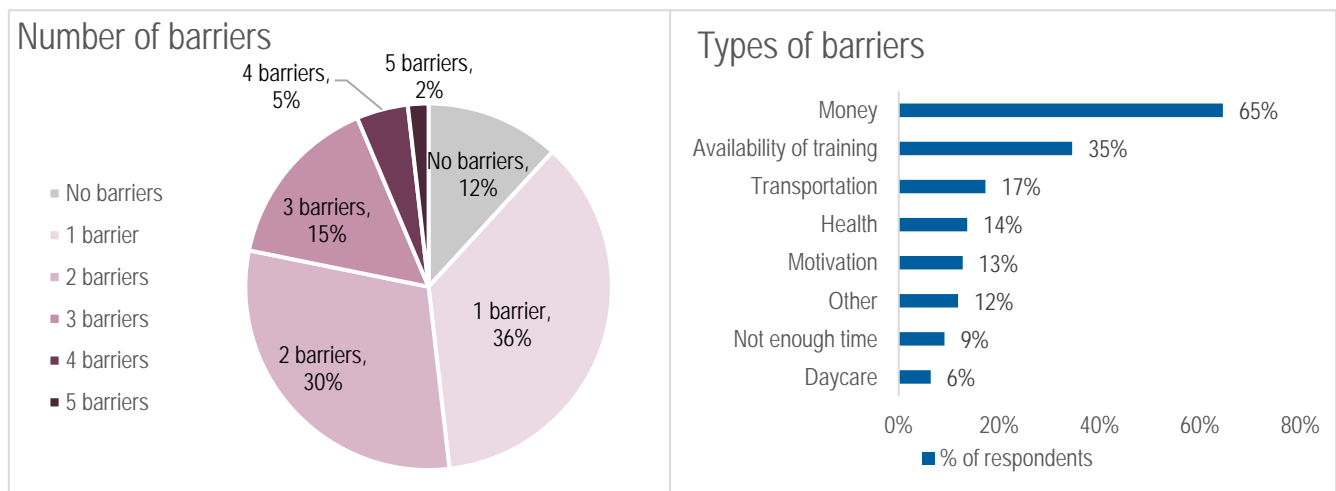
"Took training to do business admin and diploma for those courses/bookkeeping but it's old training now. First aid online training. Responsible adults' course. None have helped."

She feels that improving her math, technology and communication skills will improve her employability:

"English speaking/modern comprehension/workplace language and computer skills. I sometimes have comprehension issues as my English language learning is older so people don't understand the words I use."

Source: Follow-up Interviews of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=6.

Figure 11 Barriers to accessing training

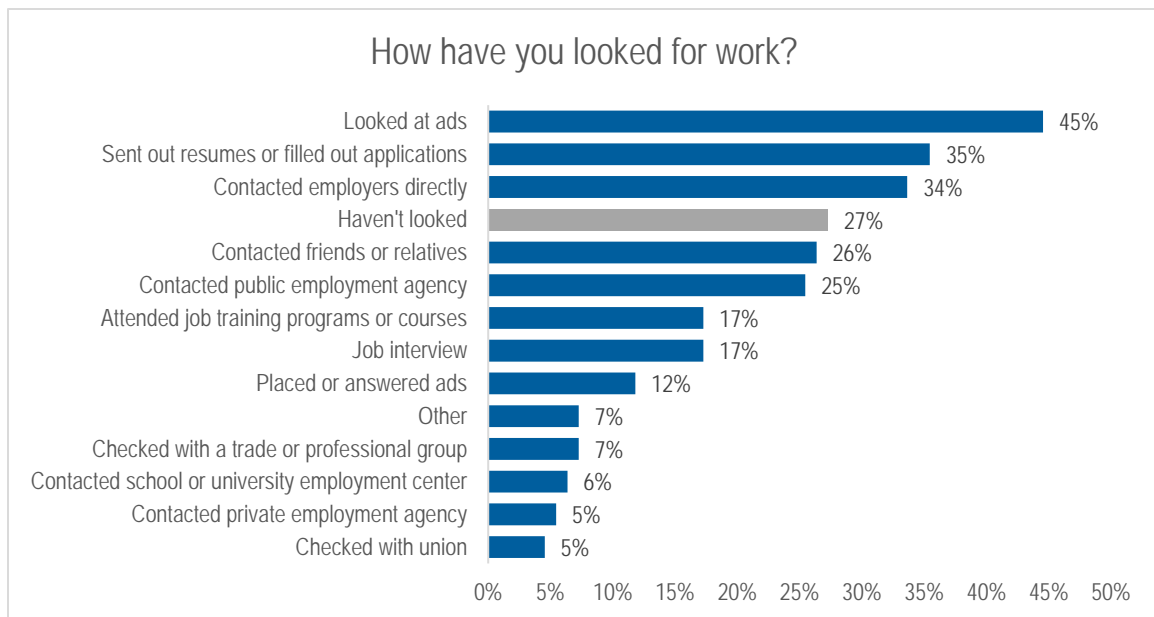


Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Respondents were asked what strategies they have used to look for work in the past few months (Figure 12). Nearly one third of respondents indicated that they had not yet looked for a job (27 per cent). Among those who had looked for work, respondents indicated that they had used, on average, three different types of job search strategies. Among all respondents, the most common strategies were to look at ads (45 per cent), send out resumes (35 per cent) or contact employers directly (34 per cent).

Figure 12 Job search strategies



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Awareness of support services

When asked what employment or support services respondents were aware of in their community, 90 per cent indicated they were aware of at least one type of employment or support service in their community (see Interviewee #3 for an example).

Interviewee #3

Interviewee #3 lives in a small town in the BC interior and was laid off due to COVID-19 from his job doing welding in the manufacturing industry. He is aged 25-44 and has been working in manufacturing for the last 10-15 years. He has a college diploma or trade certificate.

He plans to stay working in manufacturing, but feels that getting his Red Seal certification would help him to access better employment.

"The more certifications and skills the more likely you are to get chosen. The jobsites are hiring the higher skilled workers first, I can potentially get a job now but more certified higher skilled welders are getting the jobs."

He felt he needed help in math and thus contacted WorkBC employment services for support.

"I needed a tutor for maths and WorkBC has found me one for the red seal test" "Better understanding of maths will help pass the red seal test which helps me get more jobs/be more employable."

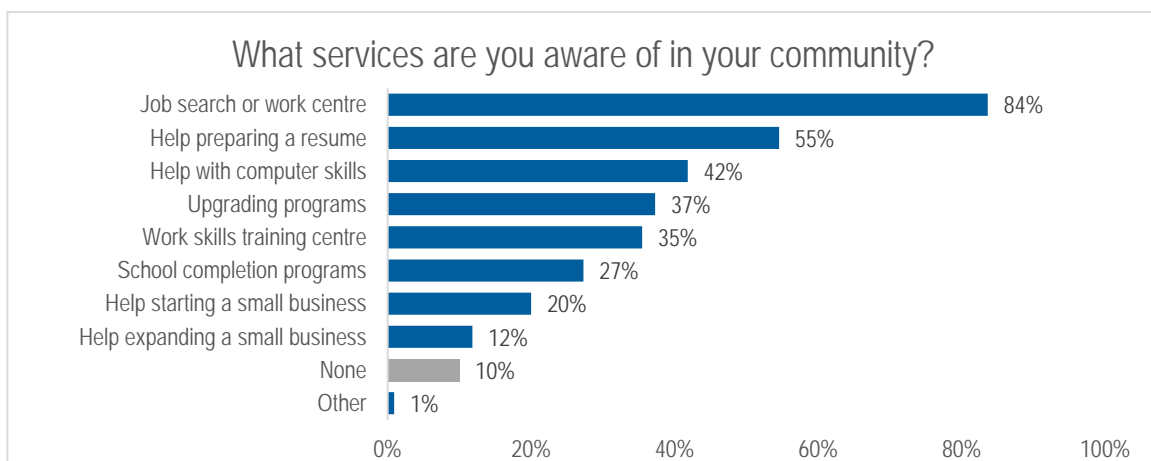
WorkBC then put him in touch with a local literacy organization; previously he was not aware that free literacy programs were available.

"Doing really well as accessible but it could be more widely known about – had no idea could get tutored until WorkBC suggested it and looked into it. It's not widely known there is a literacy program for free."

Source: Follow-up Interviews of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=6.

Figure 13 displays the services that respondents were aware of. The most common was job search or work centre (84 per cent), followed by support preparing a resume (55 per cent) and help with computer skills (42 per cent), upgrading programs (37 per cent), work skills training centre (35 per cent), school completion programs (27 per cent), help starting a small business (20 per cent), and expanding a small business (12 per cent).

Figure 13 Awareness of support services



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Support services used and what would be helpful

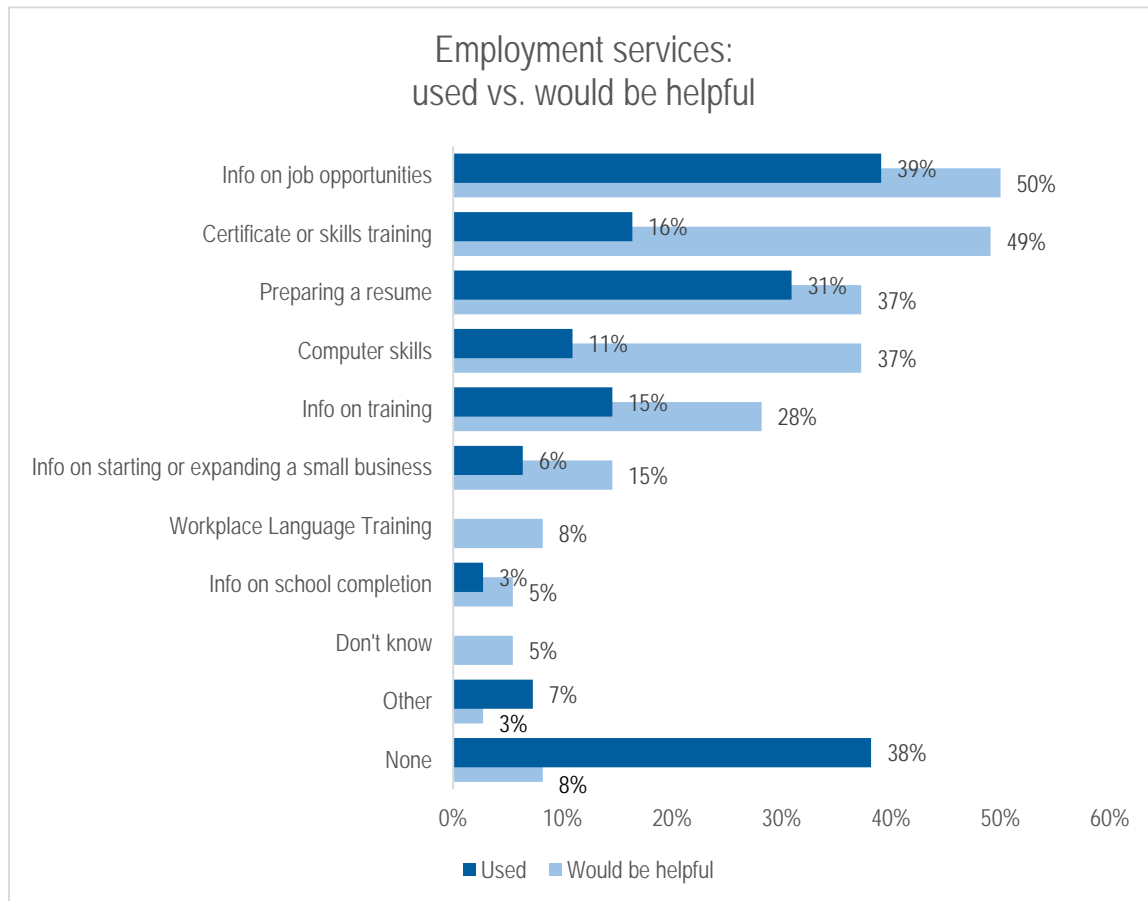
Respondents were asked what employment services they had accessed since being laid-off, as well as what services would be most helpful. Figure 14 identifies the differences between the percentage of respondents who used each service and the percentage who indicated that the services would be helpful.

In terms of the services that respondents had used, sixty-two per cent indicated that they had used at least one type of service since their previous job, and over a third indicated using two or more services (34 per cent). The most common services used were job oriented: gaining information on job opportunities (39 per cent) and preparing a resume (31 per cent). Other services mentioned included certificate or skills training (16 per cent), information on training in general (15 per cent), computer skills (11 per cent) and information on starting or expanding a small business (6 per cent).

In terms of services that respondents suggested would be helpful, ninety-two per cent indicated at least one type of service and more than half (61 per cent) indicated two or more services would be helpful. The most common services indicated were gaining information on job opportunities (50 per cent) and certificate or skills training (49 per cent). The next most common employment services mentioned were computer skills (37 per cent) and preparing a resume (37 per cent).

Obtaining information on job opportunities was noted as both the most used service and the most helpful. There was a large gap between how many respondents identified the helpfulness of certificate and skills training and how many had used such training (49 per cent versus 16 per cent, respectively). A similar gap was found between how many respondents identified the helpfulness of computer skills and how many had accessed such training (37 per cent versus 11 per cent, respectively). There was also a much larger percentage of respondents who could identify services that would be helpful compared to those who had accessed any services (92 per cent versus 62 per cent, respectively). This suggests that while there is an awareness of employment or support services that could be helpful, there remains a gap in access to such services. It is possible that the barriers identified above, such as cost and availability of training, could explain this gap in use of services.

Figure 14 Employment services used, and what would be helpful

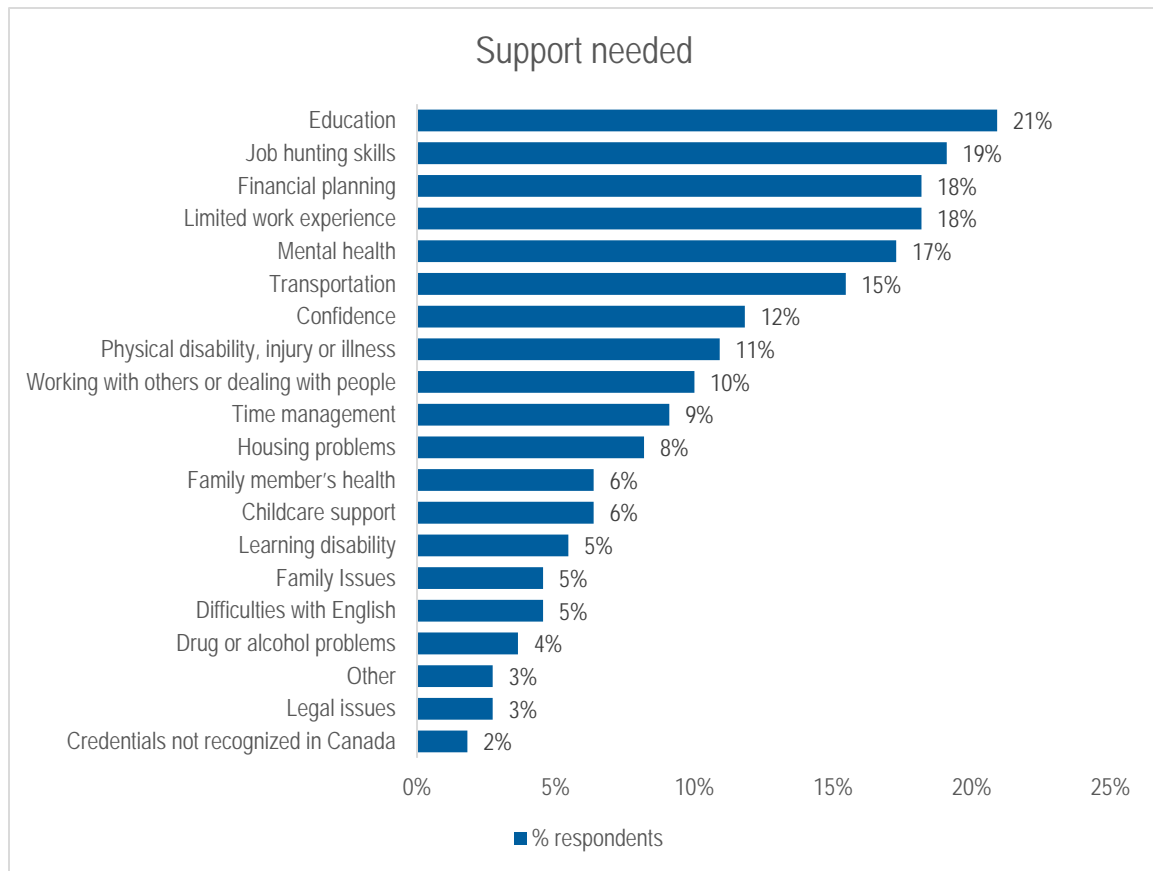


Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

Support needs

Respondents were asked to indicate what they needed support with and were asked to specify the top three supports they needed the most. The displaced workers identified the need for a wide range of supports. Eighty-one per cent of respondents indicated that they needed some kind of support. Figure 15 shows the variety of supports selected when respondents were asked to identify their top three support needs. The findings suggests that while the survey targeted displaced workers with low literacy, the needs of this population extend beyond education, to areas such as job search skills, financial skills, work experience, transportation, and mental health supports.

Figure 15 Support needs of displaced workers



Source: Survey of Displaced Workers in B.C., N=110.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Surveys

- Implementation during COVID-19 was a major barrier to survey implementation.** The shift away from in-person survey delivery due to COVID-19 safety protocols made it very difficult to recruit survey respondents as well as complete data collection. However, the availability of COVID-19 government benefits resulted in an increase in the number of displaced workers using employment services, such as WorkBC Employment Service Centres, which helped recruitment somewhat. Further, as a result of COVID-19, some LOCs saw a shift in the type of displaced workers they were able to engage in data collection. For example, for some LOCs, most survey respondents experienced job loss due to COVID-19-related layoffs.

- **Receptivity to the incentive varied across the province.** At the beginning of the pandemic, the survey completion incentive was helpful in recruiting respondents. For the most part, LOCs reported that the incentive was an important recruitment tool and respondents were thankful for the gift card. However, some LOCs commented that some respondents had mentioned that they were not doing it for the money and some even refused the incentive altogether. It should thus be recognized that, although the incentive was helpful overall, its effect on attracting respondents varied.
- **Some resistance from respondents to speak about difficult subject matter.** Given the very personal subject matter addressed in the survey, some LOCs found that respondents felt vulnerable and were nervous about revealing their joblessness situation. It was important to build trust with respondents, and to ensure they were aware of their confidentiality and ability to withdraw or skip questions if they did not feel comfortable sharing.

Interviews

- As a result of immense challenge to reach the target population, particularly during COVID-19, the participation rate for interviews was quite low, thus limiting the representativeness of the findings. Nonetheless, the interview findings do provide a greater understanding of each individual's particular situation, experiences and perspectives, which are valuable for providing context for the survey results.
- There were some respondents to the survey who initially agreed to complete an interview (on the survey and through an email follow-up), but then later withdrew consent. This further underscores the challenge in recruiting respondents from the project's populations of interest, which highlights the need to consider strategies for increasing interview participation. This could include, for example, attempting to interview respondents immediately following their initial contact by the intervention organization.

CONCLUSIONS FROM SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

Key findings from the surveys and interviews include:

- **Literacy and Essential Skills Needs:** There was a difference between the skills that displaced workers needed to improve compared to the skills they *wanted* to improve. Many respondents acknowledged their need to improve their skills; however, fewer were interested in actually improving those skills. This was the case for all the Essential Skills except for technology. Across all LES skills, respondents also tended to show the greatest interest in improving workplace associated skills such as technology use of job software, speaking up for on the job problem-solving and reading workplace instruction manuals.
- **Digital Skills Needs:** Displaced workers who completed the survey indicated that they were most interested in improving their technology skills and specifically their use of job software. The interviewees explained that this interest primarily stems from their understanding that all jobs now require some form of these skills and people with technology skills are more likely to get hired.
- **Training:** There was a high acknowledgement of the helpfulness of training, as well as input on the types of training that would be useful. However, there was lower actual uptake on actual training and some disinterest in training. This may reflect the difficulty engaging this population in training unless it is tailored specifically to their needs or addresses the barriers they face when accessing training. Those who had been displaced and since re-employed were more likely to have taken training and the most common training taken was for certifications and tickets.
- **Barriers:** Most displaced workers identified multiple barriers to accessing training. The most common barriers to training were (1) money, including cost of tuition, books or supplies, or loss of income while training and (2) availability of training. This suggests that the LES training to be delivered in the beta test phase of the project that offers greater availability of free or affordable training could eliminate the top barriers identified by displaced workers the survey.
- **Supports:** Most displaced workers who responded to the survey identified the need for additional supports. Key supports identified extended beyond education to areas such as job search skills, financial skills, work experience, transportation, and mental health supports. This suggests that beta test programming should consider additional supports that extend beyond the content of literacy and essential skills-based educational training.

RESEARCH UPDATE ON BETA TEST INTERVENTIONS

The following section provides an update on the research activities associated with the project's 11 beta test sites. It includes an update on the (1) draft evaluation framework; (2) preparation interviews with beta test organizations; (3) development of beta test theories of change; (4) development of research instruments; (5) initial data collection for the focus groups and surveys; and, (6) next steps.

DRAFT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation framework provides an overview of the outcomes, indicators, and data collection methods, as well as the individual beta test intervention theories of change, that will be used to guide the research. A draft research framework was developed and presented for comments to program partners and the beta test leads and was revised based on suggestions. This draft framework was considered as a starting point for discussion with stakeholders on how the research would proceed. This draft framework was then further revised during the process of conducting preparation interviews with each beta test lead and supporting each beta test in the development of a theory of change for their intervention (*see discussion on the preparation interviews and theories of change in the following sections*). The draft framework has thus been revised based on the evolving needs and design of the beta test interventions to be delivered in each of the 11 sites. The framework will be finalized in the fall of 2021 once the few remaining beta test organizations have finalized their theories of change.

PREPARATION INTERVIEWS WITH BETA TEST ORGANIZATIONS

Preparation interviews have been conducted with all of the beta test organization leads. The purpose of these interviews was to discuss the proposed evaluation methods, understand the details of each beta test intervention, understand the individual research needs of each intervention and plan for data collection.

The preparation interviews were critical for validating the draft evaluation framework discussed above. However, one challenge related to this process is that some beta test organizations had finished one cohort of learners prior to other organizations having finalized their intervention design. This made it challenging to “finalize” an evaluation framework prior to starting data collection for some of the beta tests. This situation has thus required a flexible approach to the evaluation framework design to ensure there is a level of consistency across the beta test sites,

while allowing flexibility to enable the interventions to best meet the unique needs of their program participants.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVENTION THEORIES OF CHANGE

Each beta test organization was responsible for developing and submitting a draft theory of change for their intervention prior to the preparation interviews (see Appendix C for an example). The interviews provided SRDC an opportunity to meet with each organization lead to discuss their theory of change and suggest any revisions. The beta test organizations then submitted (or will submit) their final theory of change to SRDC to inform its evaluation activities.

The theories of change have three purposes. First, they provide SRDC with a detailed understanding of the outcomes associated with each beta test (including which Essential Skills each beta test would focus on), which will help to refine the evaluation framework. Second, they provide a snapshot of the intervention at the outset of its implementation so that the SRDC team can better understand if and how the intervention has changed as it is being implemented. Finally, the theory of change helps each of the organizations understand the logic of their intervention and how each activity leads to the desired goal of the project. It should be noted that several beta test organizations initially reported that while they found the process of developing their theory of change initially challenging, it was eventually rewarding as it helped them refine and understand their intervention.

DEVELOPMENT OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

As mentioned previously, some beta test organizations had finished their interventions prior to other organizations having finalized their intervention design. Therefore, data collection design activities, including finalizing the research instruments (to some degree at least), had to be completed prior to some of the beta tests finalizing their intervention design. The SRDC team remedied this situation by having a core set of indicators across all the beta test interventions, while also adding individual indicators as necessary. Thus, for interventions where the design is not yet finalized, the SRDC researchers know enough about these programs to inform data collection methods that align across all the beta test interventions but can still add individual indicators as necessary.

There are five data collection methods that were included in the draft evaluation framework:

1. **Implementation data inputted in the displaced workers database** – each organization is required to collect and input basic implementation data into a database that was specifically designed for this project. Implementation data includes, for example, basic participant background information as well as program information such as the number of hours of training, staff to student ratio, etc.
2. **Pre- and post-assessment of Essential Skills** – each beta test organization is also responsible for conducting a pre- and post-assessment of each learners' Essential Skills and inputting this data into the database based on the B.C. Provincial Benchmarking System. Only those Essential Skills associated with the intervention, and those identified in the individual theories of change, were to be assessed.
3. **A post-intervention survey** – each learner is asked to complete a survey at the end of their participation in the intervention. The survey can either be completed online or by paper. The beta test organizations are being encouraged to support each learner while they completed the survey to ensure that they are able to understand each question. The purpose of the survey is to collect individual based responses related to program outcomes as well as areas for program improvement. The survey was designed to be as consistent as possible across all of the 11 beta test interventions, while including additional questions that are relevant to individual interventions as identified in their theories of change.
4. **A post-intervention focus group** – the SRDC will be completing online focus groups for each cohort of learners at the end of the intervention. Similar to the survey, the purpose of the focus groups is to collect data on program outcomes and areas for improvement. The focus groups place greater emphasis on the specific program context and activities of each respective beta test intervention compared to general themes that are consistent across all the interventions.
5. **Interviews with program staff and other stakeholders** – once the beta test interventions are finished, SRDC will conduct interviews with key program staff and community stakeholders. The purpose of these interviews is to better understand the intervention context and what was learned through the delivery of the intervention.

INITIAL DATA COLLECTION FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND SURVEYS

As of June 30, 2021, four beta test organizations have completed at least one training cohort and one beta test organization has completed two cohorts. Surveys have been distributed to these cohorts and four focus groups have been completed. Two of the focus groups were conducted online, where the learners and the focus group facilitator were connected by their individual

devices, while two focus groups were conducted by video conference with the learners all situated together in a classroom.

NEXT STEPS

The following are the next steps for the project. SRDC will submit the final evaluation framework once all beta test organizations have completed their program design and have finalized their theories of change. In close cooperation with beta test organizations, SRDC will also continue to support survey completion and conduct focus groups as learners finish their beta test interventions, as well as complete interviews with program staff and stakeholders once each beta intervention is finished. SRDC will work closely with the beta test organizations to determine which staff and stakeholders would be best positioned to interview.

At the conclusion of data collection, SRDC will analyze the results and share preliminary findings with program partners, CNAC and beta test organizations for their input. This is an important part of the research process as it allows the research team to validate the research findings and ensure that they are grounded in the reality and context of the beta test organizations and their communities. As the final stage of the project, SRDC will then prepare and submit to Decoda the final research and evaluation report and participate in sharing out the results with project stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF WORKERS IN B.C.

Survey of Workers in B.C.



Are you

- 17+ years old?

Were you laid off or did you lose a job in the past 5 years because

- your workplace moved or closed?
 your job or your shift was cut?
 of a natural disaster like a forest fire or flood?
 COVID-19

If yes

Help your local literacy organization and other service providers in your region learn more about the needs of people like you. They are developing new ideas and approaches to help workers who lost their jobs.

We promise

- Your answers will be used only for this research project.
- Your information is protected and secured.
- Your answers will remain confidential.
- Your employers will never have access to your answers.
- You do not have to answer a question if you don't want to.
- You can stop the survey at any time.

Decoda Literacy Solutions Society (www.decoda.ca) is doing this survey as part of a project called *Enhancing Displaced Workers Literacy and Essential Skills*, with your local literacy organization and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (www.srdc.org). Funding for the project comes from the federal government through Employment and Social Development Canada.

Please read each question and all the options carefully.

- If you do not want to answer a question, leave the question blank.
- If you have any questions, please ask one of the project staff.

Survey of Workers in B.C.



A. Is this survey for you?

The Questions in this section make sure this survey is for you.
Please stop if your responds tells us that this survey is not for you.

Question	Response
1. Age	_____years ➡ 17 or younger, please stop the survey.
2. In the last five years, did you	<input type="checkbox"/> Get laid off? <input type="checkbox"/> Lose a job? <input type="checkbox"/> No lay off or job loss ➡ Please stop the survey.
3. After this lay off or job loss, did you return to the same job?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ➡ Please stop the survey.
4. After this lay off or job loss, did you retire?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
4a. Even if you retired, will you still want or need a new job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➡ Please stop the survey.
5. Why did you get laid off or lose this job? Choose one.	<input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19. <input type="checkbox"/> The place you worked closed or moved. (not because of COVID-19) <input type="checkbox"/> There was not enough work for you. (not because of COVID-19) <input type="checkbox"/> You were laid off permanently from a seasonal job. <input type="checkbox"/> A natural disaster like a flood or a forest fire. <input type="checkbox"/> Your own business closed. (not because of COVID-19) <input type="checkbox"/> It was seasonal work. ➡ Please stop the survey. <input type="checkbox"/> None of these reasons. ➡ Please stop the survey.
6. If you were laid-off because of COVID-19, do you expect to return to your job?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know, not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Yes ➡ Please stop the survey.

Survey of Workers in B.C.





C: About your previous job

Question	Response
13. What was your previous job title?	_____
14. Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Trucking <input type="checkbox"/> Mining <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
15. How long did you work for your previous employer?	<input type="checkbox"/> <1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 4-9yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 15+yr.
16. How long did you work in this industry?	<input type="checkbox"/> <1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 4-9yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 10-15yr. <input type="checkbox"/> 15+yr.

Survey of Workers in B.C.



D: Your work transition

Question	Response
17. How long did you go without work after this job?	_____ months
18. After this job, did you move to look for work or to take a new job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> No
19. If yes you moved, what town/city did you move from?	_____
20. Are you working now? Choose one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed or Self Employed Continue to next Section E Page 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Underemployed This means not working enough hours or working below your skills and abilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed  To Section F Page 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed  To Section F Page 7

Survey of Workers in B.C.



E: Your current job

Please only answer these questions if you are working now.

Question	Response
21. What industry are you working in now?	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Mining <input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries <input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Trucking <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
22. What is your current job title?	_____
23. After your previous job, did you take training? Choose all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrading high school <input type="checkbox"/> College, university or trade school <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship training <input type="checkbox"/> Certifications or tickets <small>Examples: First Aid, WHMIS, Chain Saw Safety, H2S Alive</small> <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace Language Training <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
24. If you took training, did the training help you get the job you have now?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No
25. Did you use services that were helpful for getting this job? Choose all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Info on job opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing a resume <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Info on Employment Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Info on starting a small business <input type="checkbox"/> Info to expand a small business <input type="checkbox"/> Info on training <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Survey of Workers in B.C.



F: The job you want

Complete this section **ONLY** if you want a new job.

If you don't want a new job  to Section G Page 11.

Question	Response	
26. What industry do you most want to work in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Mining <input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries <input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Retail <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Beverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Trucking <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
27. What work or job title do you most want?	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
28. In the last few months, how have you looked for work? Choose all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> Haven't looked <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted employers directly <input type="checkbox"/> Job interview <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted public employment agency <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted private employment agency <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted friends or relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted school or university employment center	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent out resumes or filled out applications <input type="checkbox"/> Checked with union <input type="checkbox"/> Checked with a trade or professional group <input type="checkbox"/> Placed or answered ads <input type="checkbox"/> Looked at ads <input type="checkbox"/> Attended job training programs or courses <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Survey of Workers in B.C.



F. The job you want

Question	Response	
<p>29. Since your previous job, did you participate in any training? (skip this question if you answered question #22)</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrading high school <input type="checkbox"/> College, university or trade school <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship training	<input type="checkbox"/> Certifications or tickets Examples: First Aid, WHMIS, Chain Saw Safety, H2S Alive <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace Language Training <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____
<p>30. What training are you interested in?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrading to high school <input type="checkbox"/> College, university or trade school <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship training	<input type="checkbox"/> Certifications or tickets Examples: First Aid, WHMIS, Chain Saw Safety, H2S Alive <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace Language Training <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____
<p>31. What obstacles do you face in taking training?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Money Examples: Cost of tuition, Cost of books or supplies, Income while training <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of training <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Daycare <input type="checkbox"/> Health Examples: Illness, injury, mental health, or addiction	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough time <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ _____ _____

Survey of Workers in B.C.



Question and Response	Question and Response
<p>32. For the job you want, what skills do you need to improve?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<p>33. Which skills are you interested in improving now?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>
<p>a. Writing skills I need to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Filling out forms <input type="checkbox"/> Writing notes, letters or emails <input type="checkbox"/> Writing resumes <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace documents or forms <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of writing 	<p>a. Writing skills I am interested in improving now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Filling out forms <input type="checkbox"/> Writing notes, letters or emails <input type="checkbox"/> Writing resumes <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace documents or forms <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of writing
<p>b. Math skills I need to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paying bills <input type="checkbox"/> Figuring out discounts, sales tax, or tips <input type="checkbox"/> Performing calculations on the job <input type="checkbox"/> Using numbers for charts <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of doing math 	<p>b. Math skills I am interested in improving now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paying bills <input type="checkbox"/> Figuring out discounts, sales tax, or tips <input type="checkbox"/> Performing calculations on the job <input type="checkbox"/> Using numbers for charts <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of doing math
<p>c. Reading skills I need to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Notes, letter or emails <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers or magazines <input type="checkbox"/> Reading books <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace instruction manuals, documents or forms <input type="checkbox"/> Following procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of reading 	<p>c. Reading skills I am interested in improving now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Notes, letters or emails <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers or magazines <input type="checkbox"/> Reading books <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace instruction manuals, documents or forms <input type="checkbox"/> Following procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of reading

Survey of Workers in B.C.



Question	Response
<p>For the job you want, do you need to improve your skills?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<p>Are you interested in improving your skills now?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>
<p>d. Speaking up skills I need to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking up in team meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking up about problems <input type="checkbox"/> Taking part in on the job training or problem-solving 	<p>d. Speaking up skills I am interested in improving now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking up in team meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking up about problems <input type="checkbox"/> Taking part in on the job training or problem-solving
<p>e. Using computers and technology skills I need to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of using technology <input type="checkbox"/> Using a tablet or mobile phone <input type="checkbox"/> Using the internet to find information <input type="checkbox"/> Signing up for and accessing benefits or services online <input type="checkbox"/> Using job software like Outlook, Excel or Word <input type="checkbox"/> Using social media like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn <p><input type="checkbox"/> f. Other: Please specify</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>e. Using computers and technology skills I am interested in improving now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speed of using technology <input type="checkbox"/> Using a tablet or mobile phone <input type="checkbox"/> Using the internet to find information <input type="checkbox"/> Signing up for and accessing benefits or services online <input type="checkbox"/> Using job software like Outlook, Excel or Word <input type="checkbox"/> Using social media like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn <p><input type="checkbox"/> f. Other: Please specify</p> <p>_____</p>

Survey of Workers in B.C.



G: About Employment Services and Support

Question	Response	
<p>34. Which employment and support services are you aware of in your community?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Job search or work centre <input type="checkbox"/> Help preparing a resume <input type="checkbox"/> Help with computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Work skills training centre <input type="checkbox"/> Help starting a small business	<input type="checkbox"/> Help expanding a small business <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrading programs <input type="checkbox"/> School completion programs <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<p>35. Since your previous job, did you use employment or support services?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Info on job opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing a resume <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate or skills training <input type="checkbox"/> Info on starting a small business	<input type="checkbox"/> Info on expanding a small business <input type="checkbox"/> Info on training <input type="checkbox"/> Info on school completion <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<p>36. Which organizations helped you or did you use?</p> <p>Please write your answer.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None
<p>37. What employment services would be most helpful to you?</p> <p>Choose all that apply.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Info on job opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing a resume <input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace Language Training <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate or skills training <input type="checkbox"/> Info on starting a small business	<input type="checkbox"/> Info on expanding a small business <input type="checkbox"/> Info on training <input type="checkbox"/> Info on school completion <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Survey of Workers in B.C.



G: About Employment Services and Support

Question	Response																						
<p>38. Do you need support with ...?</p> <p>Choose all that apply</p> <p>Read your choices again.</p> <p><u>Circle</u> the three you need the most.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with English</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol problems</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Job hunting skills</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Legal issues</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Family issues</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Limited work experience</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Credentials not recognized in Canada</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Childcare support</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Mental health</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Financial planning</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability, injury or illness</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Working with others or dealing with people</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Housing problems</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Time management</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Confidence</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Family member's health</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Education</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with English	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug or alcohol problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Job hunting skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Family issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited work experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Credentials not recognized in Canada	<input type="checkbox"/> Childcare support	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability, injury or illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Working with others or dealing with people	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Time management	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Family member's health		<input type="checkbox"/> Education	
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Just one more question.

Can we contact you for an interview?

We are looking for a few people in your region who want to share their story. Your story will make our research report better and will help us find out what works – or doesn't work – for workers like you. We will keep your personal information private.

If we can contact you, please leave your contact information,

Name: _____

How can we contact you? Your phone or email _____

Thank you for completing the survey!

APPENDIX B: DISPLACED WORKER INTERVIEW CONSENT AND PROTOCOL

Decoda Interview – Displaced Workers

Interviewee: #X

#	Name	Location	Local Literacy Org	Survey ID	Date of Survey
X					

A. Introduction

Hi! Am I speaking with [interviewee name]?

My name is [interviewer name] and I am calling in regards to a survey that you recently completed with our project partners at [organization] and Decoda Literacy Solutions. I work for SRDC, the organization responsible for doing research for this project.

The survey asked about your employment history and future career aspirations in order to develop new ideas and approaches to help workers who lost their jobs. Do you remember the survey?

[if no, probe using survey questions and further project description.]

Some of the questions in the survey were:

- About your previous job: what industry did you work in? How long did you work in this industry?
- Since your previous job, did you participate in any training?
- For the job you want, which skills are you interested in improving now?

[if still no, thank and end call]

The reason I am calling, is that at the end of the survey you had agreed to complete a follow-up interview. Are you still be interested in doing this interview? It will take no more than 30 minutes to complete and you will receive a \$25 gift card for completing the interview.

To qualify for the interview, you must be still looking for a new job. Are you still in the process of searching for a new job?

[Clarify if necessary:]

- Yes, you can be currently employed, but still actively looking for a new job
- No, if you are employed and satisfied with this job (i.e. not looking for a new job) then this interview is not for you, thank you for your time.]

[if no, thank and end call]

[if yes...]

Would you have time to complete the interview now, or should we schedule a time for later this week? It will take no more than 60 minutes.

[If not available now, please schedule the follow up. Then start the protocol from Section B at the next call]

Background and Consent

Thank you for agreeing to participate.

We've prepared a series of questions to help guide our discussion today that are essentially follow-up questions to the survey that you already completed. We'll be taking notes of our conversation, but we would also like to record the interview so that we don't miss anything. The recording will only be used to complete our notes. All recordings will be deleted one year after the end of the project and only members of the project team will have access to the raw notes. Do you mind if we record the interview?

Further, similarly to the survey you completed, for this interview, we promise that:

- Your answers will be used only for this research project.
- Your information is protected and secured.
- Your answers will remain confidential.
- Your employers will never have access to your answers.
- You do not have to answer a question if you don't want to.
- You can stop the survey at any time.

Do you have any questions before we begin? (YES/NO)

Can I begin recording our conversation now? (YES/NO)

B. Deeper understanding of previous employment history

To begin, we would first like to get a better understanding of your story in terms of your previous work experience.

1. From the survey you filled out, we understand that your last job was in the [Q14: **Industry**] industry and you worked as a [Q13: **job title**]. You stated that you had worked for this employer for approximately [Q15: **year range**], and in the industry for [Q16: **year range**].

- a. Does this all sound right to you? *[if not, clarify]*
- b. Can you please expand on the details of your employment history? Have you always worked in the same industry? If not, what other industries have you worked in?

Did you primarily work in one type of position throughout your career or did you work in a number of different positions or levels?

[Key data points: Do not need a lot of detail on employment history, primarily industries they've worked in and what type of career trajectory, i.e. same job or was there a career progression]

C. What type of work they are currently looking for and why they are interested in this type of work

2. You confirmed earlier *[on this call, or previously on the first call]* that you are currently looking for a new job. Is that correct? *[If for some reason this has changed, then they no longer qualify for the survey, and you can thank them for their time, but end the call]*

From the survey you filled out we understand that you are interested in working in the **[Q26: Industry]** industry as a **[Q27: Job Title, if known]**. Is that correct?

- a. Why are you interested in pursuing this career **[if known, or: a career in this industry]**? Have you ever considered alternative careers?
- b. You mentioned in the survey that you have used a variety of methods to look for a job including: **[Q28: methods]**. Which of these have you found most helpful? Why have these been helpful to you?
- c. What challenges have you experienced in terms of getting a new job?
[Probe examples: available opportunities; disabilities; family; work hours; transportation]
- d. Do you feel that you have the right skills for the job you want? What type of skills do you need in order to get the job you want?
- e. What role has COVID-19 played in terms of your ability to find a job?
[probe: if they say there are just a lack of jobs, probe on other types of challenges, such as difficulties meeting people in person, lock down, etc.] [if already discussed, don't need to ask this question]

D. Type of training they are interested in pursuing

- a. *[skip if answered 'no' to Q29]* You mentioned in the survey that since your previous job you participated in the following training: **[Q29: Training]**. Why did you take this training? Did you find it helpful in terms of obtaining a job?
- b. *[skip if answered 'none' to Q30]* You also mentioned that you are interested in taking the following training **[Q30: Training]**. Why are you interested in taking this type of training? How do you think it will help you obtain the job you want?
- c. *[skip if answered 'none' to Q31]* Finally, you listed obstacle(s) that you have faced related to taking training such as **[Q31: Obstacles]**. Can you provide more details on these obstacles? What is the impact of these obstacles?

- d. Overall, what supports do you need to be successful in taking training and why?
- e. What is the ideal format for training?

E. ES skills most interested in improving and why

- a. In the survey you mentioned that you are interested in improving your skills related to areas such as writing, reading, math, speaking up and using technology.

[For example, Q:33, if they indicated interest in improving skills].

- i. Which of these types of skills are most important for you in terms of obtaining a new job?

[If helpful, probe using examples from the Essential Skills in the survey:

For example, in the survey you were asked about

Writing skills such as:

- Filling out forms; Writing notes, letters or emails; Speed of writing

Math skills such as:

- Paying bills; Figuring out discounts or tips; Speed of doing math

Reading things such as:

- notes, or emails; workplace instruction manuals; speed of reading

Speaking up skills such as:

- Speaking up in meetings; speaking up about problems

Using technology such as:

- Using a mobile phone, or the internet; using excel/word; Speed of using technology]

- ii. How would improving these skills help you to find and succeed in a new job?

F. Employment and support services that are useful

- a. In the survey you mentioned that employment and support services would be useful to you, such as **[Q37: provide examples from survey]**

- i. Which services would be most useful to you and why?

[Probe: provide examples of services from the survey.

For example: Info on job opportunities; Preparing a resume; Computer skills; Workplace Language Training; Certificate or skills training; Info on starting a small business; info on training; info on school completion]

- ii. Do you face any challenges in terms of accessing these services?
- iii. How could these support services be improved in your community?

- iv. Has COVID-19 been a problem for you in terms of accessing these services?
If so, which services, and why has this been a problem?

G. I have one last question for you, what is the single most important factor that would help you to find a new job and succeed in that job? Can you please expand on that a little?

H. That is all the questions that I had for you, is there anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any final comments?

Thank you for your participation.

As a thank you for your time we will provide you with a \$25 gift card. Would you prefer online shopping or a card to take in store? If in store, where do you like to shop? [*Or start going through the list*] Which would you prefer? [*confirm choice*]

Now, may I please confirm your mailing address where we can send the card? [*confirm address*] Great. We will get a gift card mailed to your address, the card will take up to 14 days to process and post.

OR if you'd prefer an e-card, the options are [*provide list or check giftcards.ca for further options*]. Which e-card would you prefer? [*confirm choice*]. Now, may I please confirm your email address where we can send the card? [*confirm address*]

Great. We will get a gift card emailed to you shortly. If you do not receive the card within X days, please feel free to email me at [email]

Thank you again for your time.

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE THEORY OF CHANGE

