

# **In Motion and Momentum+ (IM&M+)**

**An evidence-informed program for people  
most distant from the labour market**

**November 2023**

**Blueprint**

## The Problem

### Canada's labour market has both labour shortages and people who want to work but face barriers to entering the workforce

Many Canadians who are unemployed want to work but face complex social, economic and health challenges that make it difficult for them to re-enter the labour market. When these go unmet, individuals can spiral into increasing levels of psychological and financial distress and a paralyzing erosion of hope and confidence. Too often, the result of this cycle is increased dependence and long-term unemployment.

### Canada's public employment service system is not set up to address this problem

Individuals with complex "pre-employability" needs do not typically have access to the supports they need to reconnect to the labour market. Existing services often assume that clients are employment-ready. This contrasts with the evidence that shows this population would benefit from targeted interventions focused on breaking the cycle.

## The Solution

### IM&M+ is a promising program that addresses Canada's gap in pre-employability services

In Motion and Momentum+ (IM&M+) is a career readiness program that supports people to address complex barriers to employment and move towards reaching their full social and economic potential. The program helps individuals build foundational skills and identify and leverage their strengths as a source of motivation, hope and pride.



### Rava's story

Rava cycled in and out of employment in her 20s and now in her early 30s hasn't worked in years.

Over the past 10 years, she was referred to multiple employment programs, none of which seemed to help and left her feeling more hopeless.

At 34, a referral to IM&M+ changed her life.

"I'm doing IM&M+ with John Howard Society and it's been absolutely amazing so far. This group has gotten me motivated and ready to get in motion! I've been scared of going back to work or school for years because of anxiety issues, but just like I do with class I make a commitment, I have to push through and keep going even if it is out of my comfort zone."

Photo: [Disabled And Here](#) , [Justin Katigbak](#)

Participants engage with three modules over 10 weeks:

- **In Motion:** participants explore personal strengths, identify preferred futures, set goals and create an action plan
- **Momentum:** participants plan and implement a group-based community project that addresses a need in the community
- **Momentum+:** participants continue to make progress on their action plans and prepare to transition out of the program

IM&M+ uses a **Leave-When-Ready** approach, where participants can pause or exit the program when they feel they are ready to successfully achieve their next steps.

IM&M+ was developed by the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) and is delivered by community organizations across Canada. CCDF is a non-profit organization that works to strengthen the reach and impact of career/workforce development supports in an ever-changing labour market.

### **IM&M+ is an evidence-based program with promising results**

IM&M+ was created in New Brunswick as a response to the province's goal to reduce client recidivism within its social assistance ecosystem. To inform the design of the program, CCDF conducted an extensive evidence review and international jurisdictional scan. While many of the programs had merit, most "taught" readiness skills conceptually (e.g., providing the definition of self-esteem). Evidence pointed to the need for a participant-centred, strengths-based approach that emphasizes that gaps in readiness skills do not stem from a lack of conceptual understanding but rather a lack of positive life experiences, supportive networks or a belief that one's contributions hold significance. Given this finding, the New Brunswick government asked CCDF to design a new program that was more closely aligned with the evidence on what works, for whom and under what conditions.

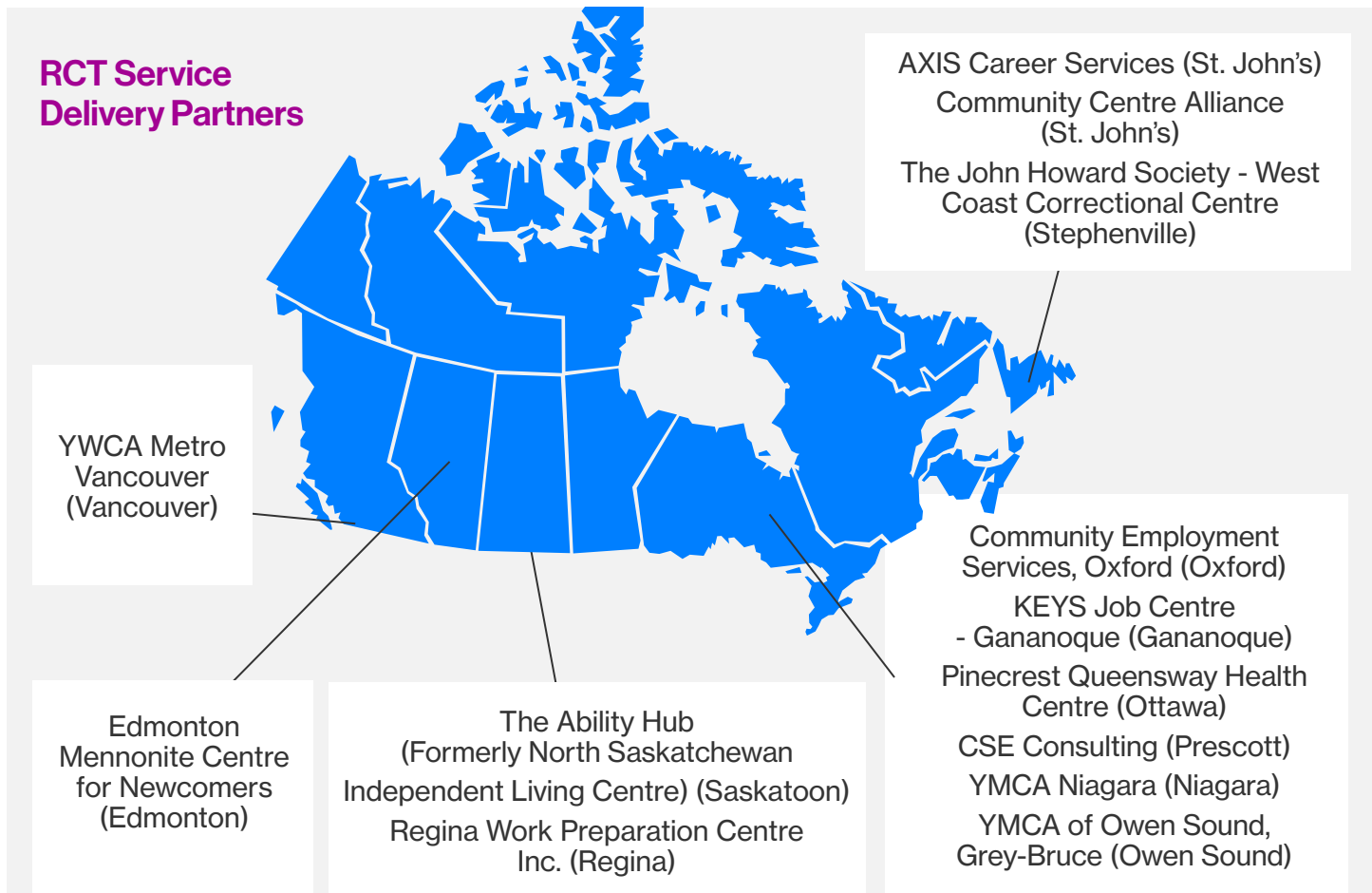
IM&M+ was first delivered in New Brunswick in 2014 and then piloted at three sites in Ontario in 2018. Based on feedback from participants and facilitators, the third module (Momentum+) was added in 2021 to provide more transitional support. IM&M+'s outcomes evaluation was then expanded to multiple locations across Canada and to additional equity-deserving populations, including newcomers, Indigenous peoples and people living with disabilities.

IM&M+ is now being rigorously evaluated as part of the [Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio](#), led by [Blueprint](#) and the [Future Skills Centre](#).

# The Evidence

## Blueprint is currently leading a randomized controlled trial to assess the direct causal effects of IM&M+ for participants

The randomized controlled trial (RCT) involves 13 organizations in five provinces and will compare outcomes of IM&M+ participants to other individuals with similar characteristics who are offered “business-as-usual” employment services. Based on our preliminary analysis of RCT results from February 2022 to March 2023, we are pleased to share that IM&M+ has a positive impact on both pre-employability skills and employment outcomes.



### About Randomized Controlled Trials

RCTs are powerful tools to understand a program’s impact. In an RCT, individuals with similar characteristics are randomly assigned to one of two groups: a program group where individuals receive the new intervention and a comparison group where participants proceed with business-as-usual services. This allows us to compare the outcomes of individuals who participate in the program with the outcomes of similar individuals who do not participate. Comparing the difference between those who participate in the program versus those who do not is the most credible way to assess a program’s causal impact.

## IM&M+ is showing promising results on pre-employability skills and employment

This report brief shares the highlights of our analysis based on 297 individuals (157 in the program group and 140 in the comparison group) who participated in the research study from early 2022-2023.

### Individuals who participated in IM&M+ had:

- **Gains in factors critical to sustainable labour market attachment**

IM&M+ participants had gains in **Employment Hope** (1.34 points higher than individuals in the comparison group), **Emotional Intelligence** (1.68 points higher than individuals in the comparison group) and **Self-Esteem** (1.19 points higher than individuals in the comparison group).

- **Large gains in employment status**

Given the gains in pre-employability skills, it is perhaps not surprising that in this research we have seen significant gains in employment outcomes as well. Three months after exiting the program, 38.5% of IM&M+ participants and 27.1% of comparison group participants reported being employed. In other words, IM&M+ participants are 41.7% more likely than comparison group participants to be employed three months after the program.

### Key impact indicators

#### Pre-employability skills

Employment Hope (a composite scale reflecting indicators like motivation, empowerment and goal orientation)  
*1-10-point scale*

Emotional Intelligence  
*9-45-point scale*

Self-Esteem  
*6-30-point scale*

#### Long-term outcomes

Employment attainment (earning an income from a job or self-employment in the past week)

## The Next Steps

The results in this case study are interim results, based on 60% of our study target sample size. A final report will share results from the full sample including:

- Data linking IM&M+ with participant social assistance exits and education/training completions
- Longer-term results from follow-up surveys and Statistics Canada data linkage
- Scaling feasibility and cost effectiveness

**Overall, IM&M+ is generating evidence that it can support participants to avoid and/or transition out of the trap of long-term unemployment.**

