Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC)

Program Evaluation Questions

Contents

Introduction

On April 2, 2012, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI) launched the Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC). The purpose of the Program is to support unemployed British Columbians in achieving sustainable employment as quickly as possible through an integrated system of employment services and supports. The integration of programming coordinates services, simplifies access, tailors to individual need, and ensures people receive needed services for which they are eligible.

A Program Evaluation Framework has been developed to outline the approach that would be taken to formally evaluate the Employment Program of British Columbia. This Program Evaluation Questions document is the result of the first step in the Framework's evaluation process (Step 1 - Establish Evaluation Questions) and provides further clarification and focus for the evaluation.

General Approach

In addition to reviewing work undertaken by other jurisdictions, consultations were held with four key stakeholder groups to gather ideas on potential questions and to understand the importance of the various questions.

In developing the questions, the overarching intent was to take a 'grass-roots' approach and really understand what different key stakeholders thought were important questions to help assess how the EPBC is performing and to assist with future program development(details of this process are in the Planned Consultation Input section below).

The information collected from the Planned Consultations went through a subsequent assessment to further organize and consolidate the questions across the groups; to understand how the questions aligned with the purpose of the evaluation; and to ensure that the questions were considered feasible – both from a data collection perspective and a resource utilization perspective.

To augment the consultations with the four groups, a review of other jurisdictions' evaluations was undertaken. Approaches to evaluations, the scope of such evaluations, and questions defined by other jurisdictions acted as a cross-check to validate the EPBC evaluation questions.

The following were key considerations in the process for developing the evaluation questions:

- ensure a consistent approach across the different groups when conducting the consultations;
- encouragement of both personal contribution and group thinking in the consultation process;
- take an open approach to gathering questions before determining feasibility (i.e. not limiting the generation of ideas for evaluation questions because of a perceived lack of data) ; and
- record and take into consideration any general recommendations raised by the groups including suggested recommendations as to how particular aspects of the evaluation could be conducted.

Planned Consultation Input

The consultation process began in December 2013 and was completed by the end of February 2014.

Four separate groups were consulted to gather ideas on potential questions for the formal evaluation of the EPBC and to understand the importance in answering the different questions. The four groups included the External Advisory Panel (5 members); the Expert Advisory Panel on Specialized Populations (11 members); the Employment and Labour Market Services Division's (ELMSD) Directors (11 members); and ELMSD Managers (15 members).

Each group went through the same process independent of the other groups (i.e. each group did not have any visibility to other groups questions).

Each group's consultation was structured to encourage both individual contribution and group thinking.

Following an introductory meeting to explain the process, a template was sent out and the members of each group were asked to provide individual input. In this template members were asked for:

- **"The Core Question":** any question the member felt was important to put forward.
- **"To answer this we would need to know**…": to identify key assumptions and sub-questions (i.e. more detailed questions which in turn help answer the core question).
- **"This is important to answer because**…": to convey in words the importance of including this question in the formal evaluation.
- **"Potential Data Source(s)":** to identify the type of data to collect and analyse in order to properly answer the question, and the best source/method to collect this information.

The individual submissions were consolidated into one document for each group; a topic area was added to help organize the content; and this document became the foundation for that group's in-person session.

Each session was facilitated. Each group systematically worked through their list of questions to make sure all the questions were understood and supported by the members of the group. Changes were made on the spot in a manner that all members would be able to see the changes, and assist with the language used to ensure the intent of questions and sub-questions was clear to all. New questions were added as requested throughout the session. General considerations and recommendations that were raised were noted separately by the facilitation team. At the end of the session there was a reflection on the areas that were most important to the group.

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation is thankful to each of the groups for their time and thoughtful contribution to this process.

External Advisory Panel

A consultation session was held with the External Advisory Panel on February 13, 2014 to gather input on potential evaluation questions for the formal evaluation of the Employment Program of British Columbia. The Expert Advisory Panel raised questions covering the following topic areas:

- Client Outcomes
- Program Awareness
- Program Website
- Service Utilization
- Financial Supports
- Service Link to Needs
- Service Delivery
- Service Provider Training
- Community Connections
- Employers
- Contractor / Subcontractor Model

Priorities

The following overarching themes represent EPBC evaluation priorities for the External Advisory Panel. The Panel would like to understand:

- Is the Program working for Clients?
- Is the Program working for the people providing the services?
- Are sufficient supports available to support apprenticeships and post-secondary education: in particular, the policies that support or interfere with Clients seeking these supports; and the funding policies that prevent or enable Clients from gaining training for employment in other catchments or other provinces?

The Panel would also like to see the following guiding principles incorporated into the evaluation:

- Definition of success needs to extend beyond employment status;
- Client change/learning outcomes are considered a success; and
- The evaluator needs to work with Service Providers to identify the learning outcomes and make sure they (learning outcomes) are included in the evaluation.

Additional Considerations

The Panel expressed the following as general considerations and recommendations for the evaluation:

- Consider and factor in major changes to the Program ;
- If data cannot be 'retro-collected' to support the evaluation, it should still be considered for the future;
- Consider segmenting the population to further understand the diversity of the group (e.g. characteristics/attributes);
- Need a variety of strategies and patience to get a good cross-section from employers;
- Need reliable practices to ensure unbiased data;
- Consider the BC Centre for Employment Excellence as a source;
- Consider a matrix of successful outcomes (incremental outcomes);
- Need collaboration between evaluator and Service Providers-evaluator should not be working in isolation;
- Need to incorporate Subcontractors in the evaluation;
- Consider how to protect individuals' anonymity (e.g. staff) so they can participate in surveys; and
- Keep an open option when asking questions to capture 'unexpected' results.

Expert Advisory Panel on Specialized Populations

A consultation session was held with the Expert Advisory Panel on Specialized Populations on February 12, 2014 to gather input on potential evaluation questions for the formal evaluation of the Employment Program of British Columbia. The External Advisory Panel on Specialized Populations raised questions covering the following topic areas:

- Client Outcomes
- Client Categories
- Client Experience
- Accessibility
- Case Management
- Service Utilization
- Assessment
- Service Provider Expertise
- Program Design
- Employers
- Financial Model
- Sustainability
- Contract Management

Priorities

The following overarching themes represent EPBC evaluation priorities for the Expert Advisory Panel on Specialized Populations. The Panel would like to understand:

- The impact of the Program model (including the financial model) on Client experience and outcomes;
- Why outcomes are achieved (in order to understand how to maximize Client outcomes);
- Which specific segments of the Specialized Populations are achieving the best results; and
- The broad lessons learned for the Program and what can be done differently going forward.

Additional Considerations

The Panel expressed the following as general considerations and recommendations for the evaluation:

- Ensure the Client selection for any Client survey is unbiased (e.g. random selection) and not through the Service Provider;
- Ensure Client surveys are written in plain language;
- Involve Clients in the development of Client survey questions (i.e. Client perspective on what is important to them);
- Ensure rural representation in the evaluation;
- Consider all segments of Specialized Populations in each question raised by the EAPSP;
- Consider open questions; and
- Ensure unbiased interpretation of data and recommendations.

ELMSD Directors

A consultation session was held with the ELMSD Directors on February 14th, 2014 to gather input on potential evaluation questions for the formal evaluation of the Employment Program of British Columbia. A subsequent review was held on February 20th to finalize the questions. The ELMSD Directors raised questions covering the following topic areas:

* Client Outcomes
* Labour Market Outcomes
* Client Experience
* Program Awareness
* Specialized Populations
* Program Design
* Value for Money
* Service Provider Expertise
* Community & Employer Partnerships
* Employers
* Catchment Areas

Priorities

The following overarching themes represent EPBC evaluation priorities for the ELMSD Directors. The Directors would like to understand to what extent the Program is:

- Delivering effective services;
- Delivering services that are helping Clients find employment;
- Delivering consistent Client access for all British Columbians; and
- Meeting Labour Market Needs.

Additional Considerations

The Directors expressed the following as a general consideration and recommendation for the evaluation:

- For questions on Specialized populations, look at each specific Specialized Population, not just Specialized Populations as a whole.

ELMSD Managers

Consultation sessions were held with the ELMSD Managers on February 13th and 14th, 2014 to gather input on potential evaluation questions for the formal evaluation of the Employment Program of British Columbia. A subsequent review was held on February 20th to finalize the questions. The ELMSD Managers raised questions covering the following topic areas:

* Client Outcomes
* Labour Market Outcomes
* Service Link to Labour Market
* Client Experience
* Accessibility
* Program Awareness
* Specialized Populations
* Service Link to Needs
* Program Design
* Service Offerings
* Financial Supports
* Assessment
* Value for Money
* Service Provider Expertise
* Community Connections
* Community & Employer Partnerships
* Client Participation

Priorities

The following overarching themes represent EPBC evaluation priorities for the ELMSD Managers. The Managers would like to understand to what extent the Program is:

- Delivering Client Outcomes;
- Ensuring Clients receive services bases on Assessed Need on a consistent basis; and
- Ensuring Service Providers have the capacity and expertise to meet varying Client needs on a consistent basis.

Additional Considerations

The Managers expressed the following as general considerations and recommendations for the evaluation:

- Within the section "To answer this we would need to know..." there are questions which may not be essential to the core question and were described as "value added", but may provide further insight to the Topic Area. The example given was in Question 1 – Sub-question "Change in salary/earnings". This may not need to be answered in answering the core question, but it may be useful information in the overall evaluation.
- Consultation with Clients will consider the following:
  - Client-defined questions. Open ended questions to include: what worked well, what didn't, what helped them, possible improvements;
  - That Clients and Service Providers are aware that we will be contacting Clients, and the questions we will be asking them; and
  - That the most efficient and effective methods of contacting Clients that meet FOIPPA requirements will be assessed and used.

Cross-Jurisdiction Review

To augment the consultations with the four groups, a review of other jurisdictions' evaluations was undertaken. Approaches to evaluations, the scope of such evaluations, and questions defined by other jurisdictions acted as a cross-check to validate the EPBC evaluation questions. This review also identified some very detailed questions that could be considered useful for survey development in step three of the evaluation (i.e. Conduct Evaluation).

This review included the following jurisdictions: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and federally managed programs in Canada. Evaluation questions addressed in former employment programs in British Columbia were also considered in this review.

General Approach & Focus

The jurisdictions reviewed used different approaches to undertake Program Evaluation. One approach used was to define the evaluation as a review of services and programming within a set of broad subject areas/themes. In these jurisdictions, it was ultimately left to the evaluator to construct the actual detailed evaluation questions - within each subject area - to be provided to stakeholders, and to facilitate the research design. Sometimes a few over-arching 'big' questions were also provided to the evaluator to help provide intent and a prioritized focus for the evaluation.

In other jurisdictions, the approach involved the same up-front definition of the subject areas/themes, but also included a substantial number of detailed questions within each broad subject areas/themes. These jurisdictions then provided these detailed questions to the evaluator. Such jurisdictions usually had a much more focused set of objectives instead of evaluating the program as a whole at a consistent level of detail.

Another point of difference was whether jurisdictions included topics that could be addressed on an operational basis, in addition to over-arching Program performance. In many jurisdictions, the evaluation was broad in scope and was set-up to identify both opportunities for continuous improvement as well as to identify changes for the next program model or program procurement.

Key Learnings

In summary, the review validated the process taken to develop evaluation questions for EPBC and, in comparison to other jurisdictions, can be described as being comprehensive. A majority of the key questions identified by other jurisdictions had been considered during the EPBC group consultations and had been put forward by at least one of the groups during the consultations.

The approach of defining key subject areas/themes and a small number of priority questions is in line with other jurisdictions. Some subject areas assessed by other jurisdictions have not been included in the EPBC evaluation as they are outside of the scope (e.g. service provider relative performance), or are more operational in nature. Operational questions should be considered by ELMSD Program Management; their removal from scope allows limited resources to focus on questions that are more challenging to ascertain.

Other findings from the cross-jurisdiction review included some different ways of evaluating certain subject areas/themes, procurement of evaluator approaches, and different methods to frame questions.

The Assessment Process

As was described in the Program Evaluation Framework, the potential questions were to be fully considered and assessed against set criteria as part of the process in developing the evaluation questions for the formal evaluation of EPBC. In order to do this all of the input first needed to be organized and consolidated.

Consolidation

All questions were consolidated into one file and organized by the topic area. The "what we need to know" column provided rich understanding of what would help answer the core question and all the information provided was reviewed and considered to help further refine sub-topic areas and develop concise questions reflecting the intent of the 'core question'.

During the assessment process, themes arose which helped to further organize the questions.

Assessment Criteria and Data Mapping

Each 'concise' question was assessed in terms of how it aligned with the stated purpose of the evaluation, the level of importance and the feasibility. Feasibility was gauged both in terms of the anticipated availability of data (readily available, could be created, or not possible within the timeframe of the evaluation) as well as the effort and cost expected to answer the question. There was also consideration about which questions could and should be answered operationally, or with existing reports and data, and did not need to be part of the formal evaluation.

In order to assess whether data is (or could be) available to answer the question in the evaluation timeframe and to estimate resource utilization, an initial high-level mapping was undertaken to identify possible data source(s)/data collection mechanism(s) (such as databases, focus groups or surveys). The final data collection plan will be made in consultation with the evaluator.

Where possible, assessment was part of the conversation with each stakeholder group (particularly noting the importance of the question and the potential source(s) of data).

The Results (Evaluation Questions)

The consultations resulted in 75 core questions being raised across the four consultation groups. Some questions were repeated and some have numerous sub-questions. These were all thoroughly reviewed in the Assessment phase. The evaluation questions were organized into one of seven themes - each with an overarching question. These seven themes are consistent with the program principles defined in the Request for Proposals.

Theme	Overarching Question
Program Participation	*To what extent are British Columbians aware of, and participating in, the Program?*
Client Results	*What results are Clients achieving, and what factors are leading to those results?*
Client Experience	*What is the Client experience and level of satisfaction?*
Services and Supports	*How well do Program services and supports meet the needs of Clients?*
Program Design and Administration	*What are the strengths and opportunities in the design and administration of the Program?*
Service Provider Capacity	*Does the capacity of the Service Provider community meet the outcomes and objectives of the Program?*
Community and Employer Engagement	*How well are communities and employers being engaged?*

Theme 1 - Program Participation

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding how well the Program has been promoted and the degree of awareness that has been created about Program services throughout British Columbia. It is also focussed on participation and, in particular, finding out if there are potential Clients who are either unaware of the Program or not participating for other reasons.

To what extent are British Columbians aware of, and participating in, the Program?

The types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ To what extent are British Columbians aware of Program services?
- ✓ Who is participating in the Program, and what types of services are they receiving?
- ✓ To what extent are potential Clients not participating in the Program? Why?
- ✓ To what extent does the Program have a strong web presence?

Notes and Considerations

- 'British Columbians' refers to the general public (which includes Clients), employers and community organizations who could refer individuals to Program services.
- There is an interest to assess and compare Client participation (and non-participation) for all types of Client populations and to not limit this analysis to Program defined populations (i.e. drill down into segments of Specialized Populations like developmental disability within the disability group).
- 'Web presence' refers to the ease of finding Program information through the internet by way of the main WorkBC website as well as the individual websites of Contractors and Service Providers. Consider the ease of navigation.

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions should include use of existing web analytics and any other easy to obtain data. It will require the creation of new information through surveys.

Theme 2 - Client Results

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding all levels of Client results - those defined by the Program and more. The intention is to learn who is achieving results and what is attributing to the results (e.g. program participation, Client attributes or situational factors). The questions in this theme are aligned with a key outcome for the Program but go further to identify additional results for Clients and to understand the linkage between results, the Program, and the Client. These questions are aligned with the 'results-focused' principle of the Program.

What results are Clients achieving, and what factors are leading to those results?

The types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ What are the employment results for different Client populations?
- ✓ What evidence is there that the Program is leading to sustainable employment?
- ✓ Who is being placed in a Community Attachment, and to what extent are these placements leading to employment?
- ✓ Are there any other positive results for Clients that aren't currently being measured (i.e. substantial Client change or measurable learning outcomes)?
- ✓ What factors influence successful results?
- ✓ What is the level of investment required to create successful results?

Notes and Considerations

- There is strong interest to ascertain the causal relationship between employment results and Program participation. To a lesser extent but also of interest, is the relationship between the stated employment goal (as documented in the Action Plan) and actual employment obtained by the Client.
- Employment results should consider and classify different levels of employment (e.g. underemployment, sustainable employment).
- As in the assessment of Program participation, there is an interest to look at and compare Client results for all types of Client populations and to not limit this analysis to Program defined populations.
- There is interest to understand regional variation in results.
- Influencing factors should include consideration of Program services and supports, Client attributes and experiences, and any labour market dynamics.
- In more than one consultation session, there was an interest expressed to compare Program results to those of Legacy Programs. While this is a valid way to think about defining success for the EPBC, this approach is not recommended as it is difficult to have a meaningful comparison; and there was also as strong of an interest expressed to focus efforts on looking forward - creating information that will help identify opportunities for Program improvements.

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions should include use of existing ministry/service provider data sources such as Integrated Case Management (ICM) and Contract and Financial Management System (CFMS) and other existing data. It will also require the creation of new information through surveys and, if considered feasible and useful, new ongoing data collection to capture Client change/learning outcomes.

Theme 3 - Client Experience

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding the Client's 'customer service' experience with WorkBC Centres. In particular, this theme focuses on the Client experience and level of satisfaction with WorkBC Centres to determine how successful WorkBC Centres have been in creating accessibility, a welcoming environment and a client-centred experience. These questions are aligned with the 'client-centred' and 'accessible' principles of the Program.

What is the Client experience and level of satisfaction?

These are the types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ How satisfied are Clients with the accessibility of WorkBC Centres?
- ✓ How satisfied are Clients that WorkBC Centres have achieved a welcoming environment?
- ✓ In what ways are WorkBC Centres creating a client-centred experience?
- ✓ Where are there opportunities to improve the Client experience?

Notes and Considerations

- A strong need was expressed to understand if WorkBC Centres are meeting the needs of Specialized Populations, including the Client experience. Generally, throughout the consultations, there was as much need expressed to not limit questions to Specialized Populations but to look more broadly at all Client populations. Therefore, all populations should be assessed and the findings should present meaningful information for each population.
- To gauge 'client-centred', Clients themselves will have the best advice on what that looks and feels like.
- Some additional areas to explore in understanding the Client experience:
  - how Clients feel about the level of Case Manager support
  - whether Clients are having to tell their story more than once
  - are Clients required to take part in activities they do not see as helpful in their pursuit of employment
  - are there administrative processes that negatively impact a client-centred experience

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions will predominantly require the use of surveys. For Specialized Populations, it would be helpful to obtaining different perspectives on Client experience particularly that of stakeholder advocacy groups.

Theme 4 - Services and Supports

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding how well the delivery of services and supports are meeting the needs of different Client populations. This should identify what is working well and where there can be improvements in the delivery of existing services and supports. It should also highlight where there may be gaps in service offerings. These questions are aligned with the 'client-centred', 'results focussed', 'consistent' and 'efficient' principles of the Program.

How well do Program services and supports meet the needs of Clients?

These are the types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ How well are self-serve services working for Clients?
- ✓ Are case management services meeting the needs of Clients?
- ✓ Are Financial Supports effectively enabling Program participation?
- ✓ Are Service Providers providing a consistent level of service across the province?
- ✓ To what extent are Community & Employer Partnerships being used effectively to support clients to gain work experience and achieve employment?
- ✓ Are there any gaps in service and support offerings? If so, what are they?

Notes and Considerations

- Look at each Client population for determining how well services and supports are meeting their needs.
- 'Case management services', for the purpose of this evaluation, include case managed services.
- Where Clients are not completing case management, look to understand why this is happening.
- There is an interest to understand the extent to which Clients are being accurately assessed with respect to employment readiness, especially Specialized Populations.
- For gauging how well services are meeting needs, consider the timeliness of service delivery in supporting progress toward the employment goal; and the relationship of actual service delivery to the assessed needs (as documented in the Action Plan).
- For Financial Supports assessment, include a review of policies to identify:
  - which, if any, policies hinder Clients in accessing Financial Supports to participate in Skills Training or Apprenticeship
  - if there are any policy barriers that prevent an investment in Clients' training that would enable them to gain employment in other catchments or provinces
- For gauging consistency, consider how services are defined and delivered by different Service Providers.
- In terms of gaps in service offerings, consider the perspective of Client, Service Provider and employers.

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions should include use of ICM and CFMS data and will require surveys, focus groups and/or interviews to learn from Service Providers, advocacy groups, community organizations, and employers.

Theme 5 - Program Design and Administration

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding how well different Program components are supporting the intent of the Program and where there may be unintended consequences. This includes looking at catchment areas and physical locations of WorkBC Centres; the structure of the contract, financial model, and governance; as well as administrative and continuous improvement practices. These questions are aligned with the 'client-centred', 'accessible', 'accountable', 'efficient', and 'sustainable' principles of the Program.

What are the strengths and opportunities in the design and administration of the Program?

These are the types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ How well are Program design elements supporting the intent of the Program?
- ✓ Do the defined catchment areas and Storefront locations serve Clients as well as they could?
- ✓ Where are there opportunities to create administrative efficiencies for Contractors and Service Providers?
- ✓ How well are continuous improvement practices working? Are there opportunities to strengthen these?

Notes and Considerations

- For Program design elements, consider the structure of the contract, financial model, and governance structure.
- Do the Program design elements create the right environment and incentives for Contractors, Service Providers and Clients? Are they creating unintended behaviours?
- Consider flexibility in the Program design / financial model to handle changes in Client volumes?
- For assessing continuous improvement, look at governance practices and any practices on the ground.

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions should include use of ICM and CFMS data and other existing data sources and will require surveys, focus groups and/or interviews to learn from Clients (and possibly the general public), Service Providers, Contractors, community organizations, and Ministry staff.

Theme 6 - Service Provider Capacity

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding the level of specialized expertise that exists to serve Clients in each community. This considers the amount of staff training that is taking place, the relationship between Contractors and Subcontractors, the funding model and future sustainability of the service provider community. These questions are aligned with the 'sustainable' and 'flexible' principles of the Program.

Does the capacity of the Service Provider community meet the outcomes and objectives of the Program?

These are the types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ Is the level of specialized expertise and networking appropriate to the needs of the community?
- ✓ Is the caseload of Case Managers appropriate for ensuring quality Client service?
- ✓ How well are Service Providers able to manage changes in Client volume?
- ✓ Can Service Providers maintain the capacity needed to provide the required level of service for Specialized Populations?

Notes and Considerations

- Do Service Providers and their staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and training for serving Clients, and in particular Specialized Populations?
- What are the qualifications of Service Providers who are performing Needs Assessments?
- To what extent are Service Providers able to provide a consistent and high-level quality service?
- To gauge the ability to maintain capacity consider the funding model, flow-through, Contractor relationships with Subcontractors (are the working arrangements between Contractors and Sub-contractors allowing sufficient work and funding for all parties?).

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions should include use of ICM data and will require surveys, focus groups and/or interviews to learn from Service Providers, Contractors, advocacy groups and community organizations.

Theme 7 - Community and Employer Engagement

This theme covers questions that are aimed at understanding community connections. It focuses on the relationships between WorkBC Centres and community organizations (that may either refer Clients to the Program or help support Clients in their pursuit of employment) and the relationship between WorkBC Centres and employers. These questions are aligned with the ‘client-centred’, ‘results focussed’ and ‘efficient’ principles of the Program.

How well are communities and employers being engaged?

These are the types of questions to be answered:

- ✓ Does each community have a good referral network?
- ✓ To what extent are Service Providers engaging employers?
- ✓ What are Service Providers doing to understand and address future labour market demand?

Notes and Considerations

- Consider the number and type of Clients being referred to EPBC from community organizations.
- Consider the number and type of Clients being referred to community organizations from EPBC.
- Consider the efforts Service Providers are making to understand current and future employer needs.

Potential Data Sources

Information to answer these questions will require surveys, focus groups and/or interviews to learn from Service Providers and employers.

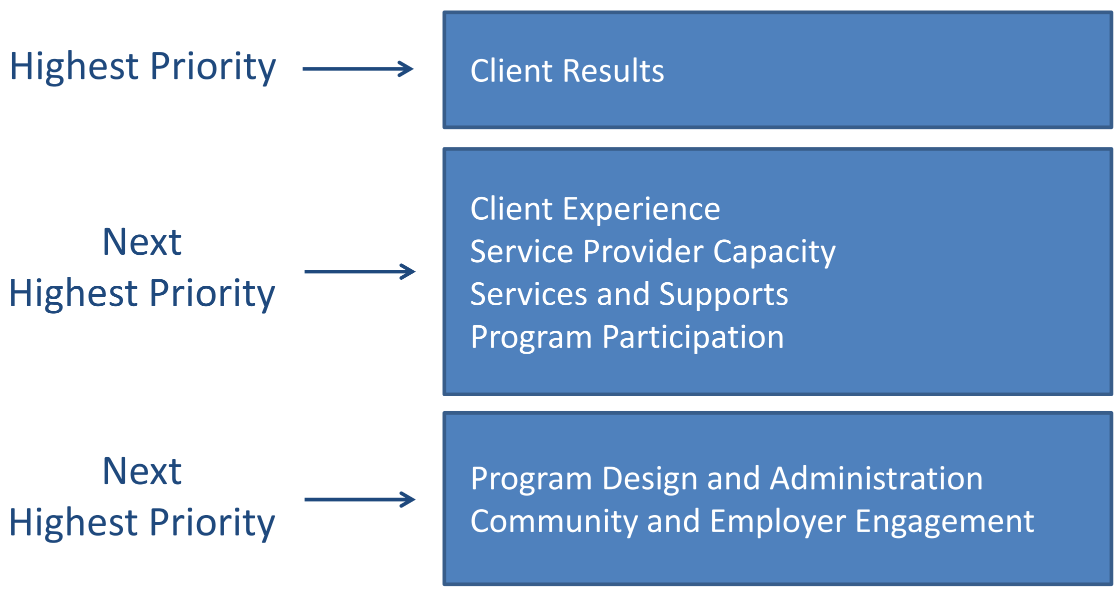
Summary

To help guide the focus of the evaluation, below is a reflection on overall priorities and a summary of general considerations. This is followed by a quick reference table of the evaluation questions.

Overall Priorities

Every question raised is important. With a limited amount of resources there will need to be decisions on where to focus evaluation efforts and resources. The themes noted by the four consulted groups as being most important and having the highest priority are where there is expected to be an emphasis of evaluation efforts and the resources allocated to answering the questions.

The following is based on an overall assessment of the consultation input: in particular, the level of importance and how much emphasis was placed by each group on different types of evaluation questions.



General Considerations

Throughout the consultation, a number of considerations were raised that are broader than any one evaluation question but are meant to help guide the evaluation process. These are organized here by topic.

- Client surveys:
  - Consider open-ended questions to capture ‘unexpected’ results (e.g. what worked well, what didn’t, what helped them, possible improvements)
  - Ensure the Client selection is unbiased (e.g. random selection) and not through the Service Provider
  - Written in plain language
  - Involve Clients in the development of Client survey questions
  - Use the most efficient and effective methods of contacting Clients that meet FOIPPA requirements
  - Ensure that Clients and Service Providers are aware that Clients will be contacted, and the questions that they will be asked
- Other data collection:
  - Need a variety of strategies and patience to get a good cross-section from employers
  - Need to incorporate Subcontractors in the evaluation
  - Consider how to protect individuals’ anonymity (e.g. staff) so they can participate in surveys
  - Need reliable practices to ensure unbiased data
  - If data cannot be ‘retro-collected’ to support the evaluation, it should still be considered for the future
  - There needs to be efficiency with organizing questions by data collection mechanism
- Evaluation approach:
  - The evaluation results need to be meaningful and actionable
  - Interpretation of data and recommendations needs to be unbiased
  - Need collaboration between evaluator and Service Providers
  - Major changes to the Program which have already occurred need to be factored in
  - Ensure rural representation
  - Consider a matrix of successful outcomes (incremental outcomes)
  - Where feasible, consider and show results by population segments to further understand the diversity of the group (e.g. characteristics/attributes)

Quick Reference – Evaluation Questions

Theme	Overarching Question	Potential Evaluation Questions (Sample Only)
Program Participation	*To what extent are British Columbians aware of, and participating in, the Program?*	✓ To what extent are British Columbians aware of Program services? ✓ Who is participating in the Program, and what type of services are they receiving? ✓ To what extent are potential Clients not participating in the Program? Why? ✓ To what extent does the Program have a strong web presence?
Client Results	*What results are Clients achieving, and what factors are leading to those results?*	✓ What are the employment results for different Client populations? ✓ What evidence is there that the Program is leading to sustainable employment? ✓ Who is being placed in a Community Attachment, and to what extent are these placements leading to employment? ✓ Are there any other positive results for Clients that aren't currently being measured (i.e. substantial Client change or measurable learning outcomes)? ✓ What factors influence successful results? ✓ What is the level of investment required to create successful results?
Client Experience	*What is the Client experience and level of satisfaction?*	✓ How satisfied are Clients with the accessibility of WorkBC Centres? ✓ How satisfied are Clients that WorkBC Centres have achieved a welcoming environment? ✓ In what ways are WorkBC Centres creating a client-centred experience? ✓ Where are there opportunities to improve the Client experience?
Services and Supports	*How well do Program services and supports meet the needs of Clients?*	✓ How well are self-serve services working for Clients? ✓ Are case management services meeting the needs of Clients? ✓ Are Financial Supports effectively enabling Program participation? ✓ Are Service Providers providing a consistent level of service across the province? ✓ To what extent are Community & Employer Partnerships being used effectively to support Clients to gain work experience and achieve employment? ✓ Are there any gaps in service and support offerings? If so, what are they?
Program Design and Administration	*What are the strengths and opportunities in the design and administration of the Program?*	✓ How well are Program design elements supporting the intent of the Program? ✓ Do the defined catchment areas and Storefront locations serve Clients as well as they could? ✓ Where are there opportunities to create administrative efficiencies for Contractors and Service Providers? ✓ How well are continuous improvement practices working? Are there opportunities to strengthen these?
Service Provider Capacity	*Does the capacity of the Service Provider community meet the outcomes and objectives of the Program?*	✓ Is the level of specialized expertise and networking appropriate to the needs of the community? ✓ Is the caseload of Case Managers appropriate for ensuring quality Client service? ✓ How well are Service Providers able to manage changes in Client volume? ✓ Can Service Providers maintain the capacity needed to provide the required level of service for Specialized Populations?
Community and Employer Engagement	*How well are communities and employers being engaged?*	✓ Does each community have a good referral network? ✓ To what extent are Service Providers engaging employers? ✓ What are Service Providers doing to understand and address future labour market demand?