Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA)
Symposium Programme

DRAFT- Version: September 10, 2025

Date: Monday, October 6th and Tuesday, October 7th, 2025
Location: Schwartz Reisman Innovation Campus at the University of Toronto and virtually online
Registration Link: https://www.vraie-idea.ca/idea-symposium

Day 1

Masters of Ceremonies
- **Alec Farquhar**, IDEA Strategic Advisor
- **Sinead McCarthy**, Vice President, Development, Programs and Human Resources, Youth Employment Services; IDEA Hub Co-lead for Transitions to Work and Career Development

Time	Session
9:00 – 9:15 AM	**Registration and Continental Breakfast**
9:15 – 9:30 AM	**Welcoming Remarks** **Masters of Ceremony** **Krista Carr**, IDEA Advisory Committee Chair; Chief Executive Officer, Inclusion Canada **Emile Tompa**, IDEA Executive Director; Senior Scientist, Institute for Work & Health **Rebecca Gewurtz**, IDEA Director; Associate Professor, McMaster University
9:30 – 9:45 AM	**Morning Remarks**

Time	Session
	Melissa Fishman, Indigenous Knowledge Holder
9:45 – 10:30 AM	**Opening Keynote** Topic: Inclusive employment practices – Supporting employers on their inclusion journey **Susanne Bruyere**, Academic Director, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Cornell University
10:30 – 11:30 AM	**Panel Session** Implementation of inclusive employment practices as tools to support employer journeys **Moderator: Emile Tompa**, Executive Director, IDEA **Peter Field**, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant **Matt Freeman**, Assistant Clinical Professor, McMaster University **Rebecca Gewurtz**, Director, IDEA **Andy Livingston**, Chief Executive Officer, Dexterity Consulting **Mahadeo Sukhai**, Chief Operating Officer, IDEA-STEM **Dilshan Fernando**, Research Associate, IDEA
11:30 – 11:45 AM	**Break**
11:45 – 12:30 PM	**Lightning Talks** IDEA applied work – Tools and resources from IDEA's Incubator Hubs
12:30 – 1:30 PM	**Lunch**
1:30 – 2:00 PM	**Afternoon Keynote Address**

Time	Session
	Speaker to be confirmed
2:00 – 3:00 PM	**Panel Session** Improving the Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Employees with Disabilities in the Public Service of Canada **Moderator: Tina Namiesniowski**, Senior Associate Deputy Minister, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Deputy Minister Champion for Federal Employees with Disabilities, Government of Canada **Nadine Charron**, Executive Director, Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program, Shared Services Canada **André Baril**, Director General, Accessibility and Disability Inclusion Projects, Employment and Social Development Canada **Angela Wellman**, Chief of Staff/Senior Advisor, Office of Public Service Accessibility, Treasury Board Secretariat **Ashvene Sureshkumar**, Research Associate, IDEA
3:00 – 3:05 PM	**Masters of Ceremonies explain breakout room setup**
3:05 – 3:20 PM	**Break**
3:20 – 3:30 PM	**Transition to Breakout Rooms**
3:30 – 4:30 PM	**IDEA Incubator Hub Workshops (In-person only)**
4:30 – 4:40 PM	**Transition to Main Room**

Time	Session
4:40 – 5:00 PM	**Closing Keynote** **Mayor Mike Bradley,** Sarnia, Ontario
5:00 – 5:15 PM	**Day 1 Closing Reflections/Announcements** **Masters of Ceremonies** **Emile Tompa**, IDEA Executive Director; Senior Scientist, Institute for Work & Health **Rebecca Gewurtz**, IDEA Director; Associate Professor, McMaster University
5:20 – 6:30 PM	**Reception**

Day 2

Masters of Ceremonies

- **Wendy Cukier**, Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University; IDEA Advisory Committee Member
- **Peter Field**, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant

Time	Session
9:00 – 9:15 AM	**Registration and Continental Breakfast**
9:15 – 9:35 AM	**Welcoming Remarks** **Masters of Ceremony** **Karen Harlos,** Professor, Department of Business, University of Winnipeg
9:35 – 10:05 AM	**Opening Keynote Address** **Bilan Arte,** National Representative, Human Rights Department, Canadian Labour Congress; IDEA Advisory Committee Member
10:05 – 11:00 AM	**Panel Session** Transforming Workplace Systems to Build Sustainable Capacity for Inclusion of Diverse Youth **Moderator: Rafael Gomez**; Director, CIRHR, University of Toronto; Initiative Co-lead **Andrew Dixon**, Research Associate, IDEA **Don Gallant**, National Director, Ready Willing and Able (RWA), Inclusion Canada **Jonathan Lai**, Executive Director, Autism Alliance of Canada **Sinead McCarthy**, Vice President, Youth Employment Services (YES)

Time	Session
11:00 – 11:15 AM	**Break**
11:15 AM – 1:00 PM	**Partner Lightning Talks** ***Diversity Institute*** **Wendy Cukier**, Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University ***March of Dimes Canada*** **Charoltte Buttle**, Research and Evaluation Associate, March of Dimes Canada **Erica Johnston**, Research Coordinator, March of Dimes Canada **Gabriella Patro**, Research Assistant, March of Dimes Canada ***LiveWorkPlay*** **Rebecca Coxon**, Team Lead for Employment Ontario and the Interim Volunteer Manager, LiveWorkPlay **Anna Nelson**, Director of Employment Supports, LiveWorkPlay ***Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital*** **Laura Bowman**, Project Manager, Research and Evaluation, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital **Carolyn McDougal**, Manager, Employment Pathways and Ontario/Canada coordinator-Project SEARCH, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital ***Youth Employment Services (YES)*** **Gabriella Evans**, Regional Manager, WorkAbility, Youth Employment Services (YES)

Time	Session
	Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) ***CASE/MentorAbility*** **Joanna Goode**, Executive Director, Canadian Association for Supported Employment **Mary Beshai**, Director - MentorAbility Canada, Canadian Association for Supported Employment
1:00 – 2:00 PM	**Lunch**
2:00 – 3:00 PM	**Table Talks** Brainstorming the Next Generation of Activities
3:00 – 3:15 PM	**Break**
3:15 – 3:45 PM	**Closing Keynote** **Agnes McLachlan,** Manager - Global Well-being, TELUS
3:45 – 4:00 PM	**Symposium Closing Reflections and Remarks** **Masters of Ceremonies** **Emile Tompa**, IDEA Executive Director; Senior Scientist, Institute for Work & Health **Rebecca Gewurtz**, IDEA Director; Associate Professor, McMaster University
4:00– 5:00 PM	**Networking and Speed Mentorship**

Funding Acknowledgment