

Employment supports and best practices for hiring immigrants with disabilities

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About our project

- Seed grant from IDEA
- Partner - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- Interviewing immigrants with disabilities, service providers and employers
- Exploring barriers and facilitators to inclusive employment

Why we are doing this research

- Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada at 39%
- We also have a growing immigrant population.
April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024: 11,870 immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia.*
- Gap in research on the employment experiences

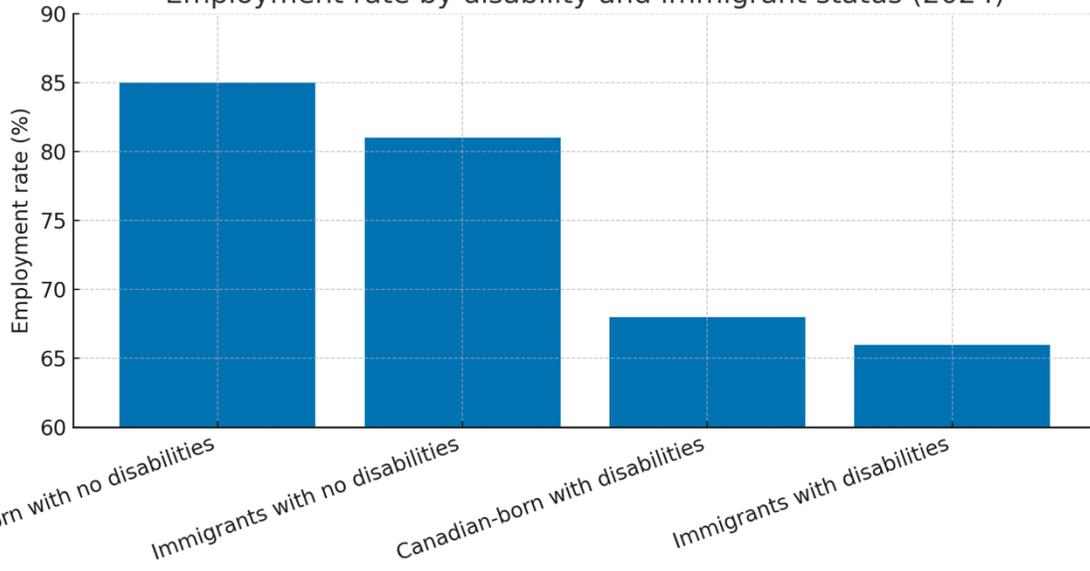
* Nova Scotia Department of Finance Economics and Statistics Division

https://novascotia.ca/finance/statistics/archive_news.asp?id=20027&dg=&df=&dto=0&dti=24

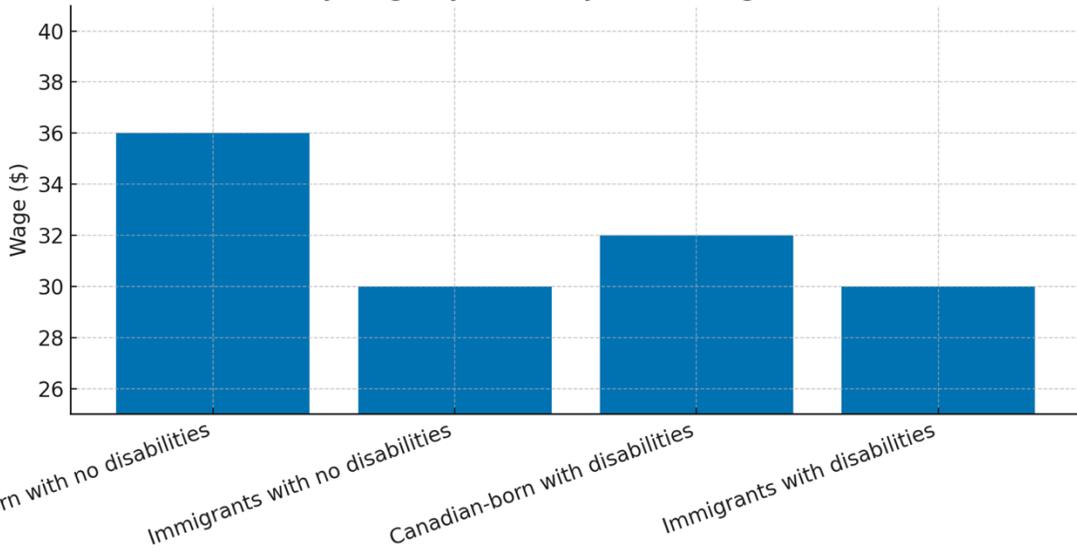
Why employment matters

- Work means income, belonging, purpose and dignity
- A primary route to social & economic integration for newcomers
- Inclusive labour market access key to achieving the Accessible Canada Act's 2040 goal
- Yet newcomers with disabilities might be facing poorer employment outcomes

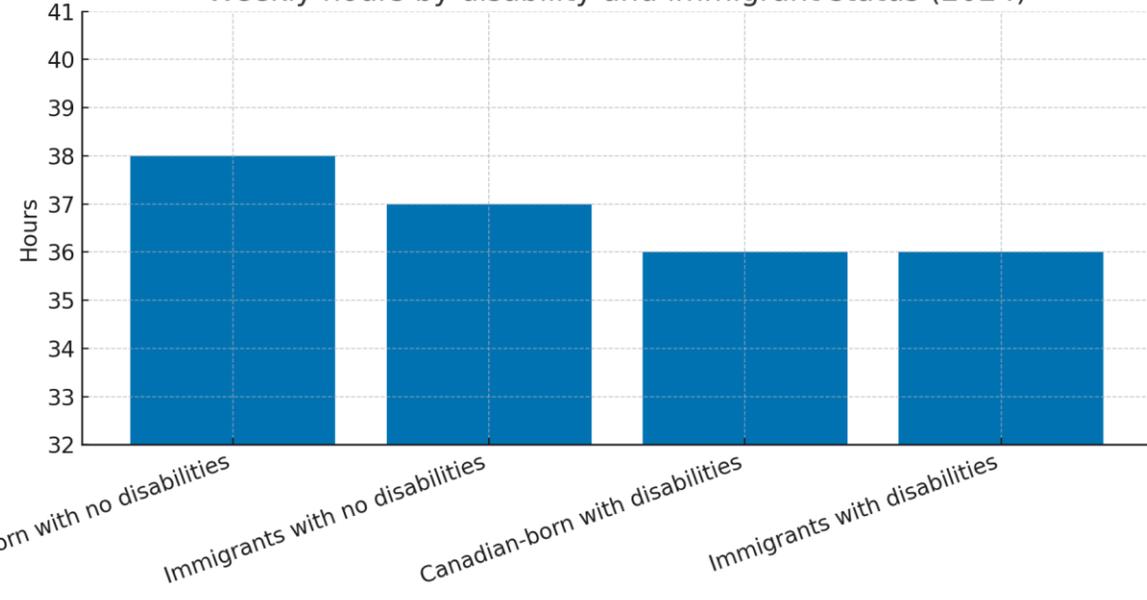
Employment rate by disability and immigrant status (2024)



Median hourly wage by disability and immigrant status (2024)



Weekly hours by disability and immigrant status (2024)



Source: Statistics Canada (2025). *Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual*. URL: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/4c57df9d-a25a-480e-8227-6efa2a7206dd>

What we've heard so far - barriers

- Attitudinal barriers – stigma related to disability
- Fear of disclosing disability
- Unfamiliar with accommodations
- Unaware of qualifying for disability supports
- Limited employer readiness and resources for hiring

Immigrant and disability status

- Navigating various systems: settlement, employment and disability supports
- Managing immigrant and disability identities
- Employer perceptions of double risk

Emerging best practices for agencies

Agencies

- Highlight success stories of hiring immigrants with disabilities
- Build employee confidence in disclosing disability / seeking accommodations
- Utilize wage subsidy grants in combination with long term retention plans

Emerging best practices for employers

Employers

- Integrate inclusive practices for all employees.
- Remove the onus from employees to seek accommodations
- Offer accommodations at all stages of employment process
- Work with agencies to enhance hiring confidence

Study challenges

- Difficulty with recruitment
 - AI
 - Disclosure concerns
- Limited capacity within community agencies
- Limited connection to employers

Study successes

- Recognition that this research is needed
- Essential to work with our partner and organizations to:
 - build relationships
 - engage in direct recruiting
 - support organizations through developing toolkits

Next steps

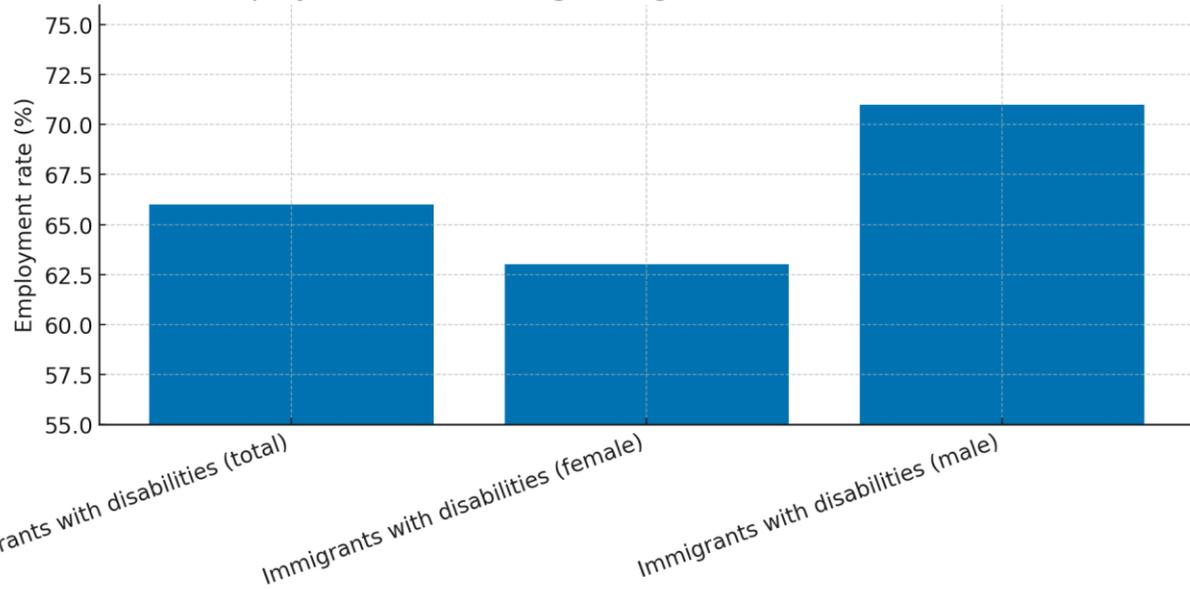
- Nearing completion of interviews
- Interviews will be further analyzed - barriers and facilitators
- We will develop a set of best practices for:
 - employers
 - immigrants with disabilities, and
 - service organizations

THANK YOU!

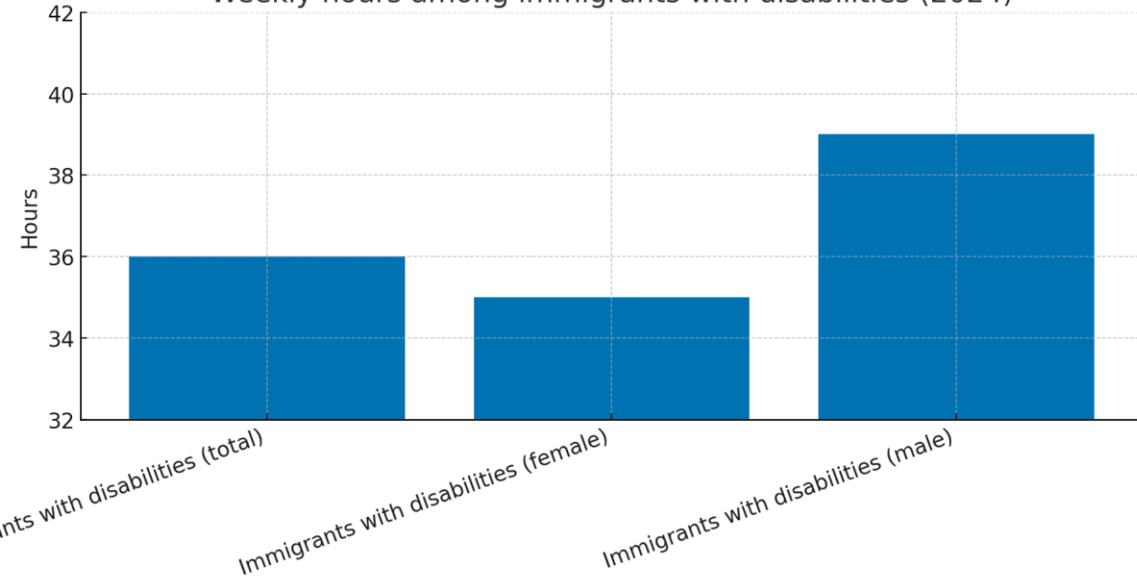
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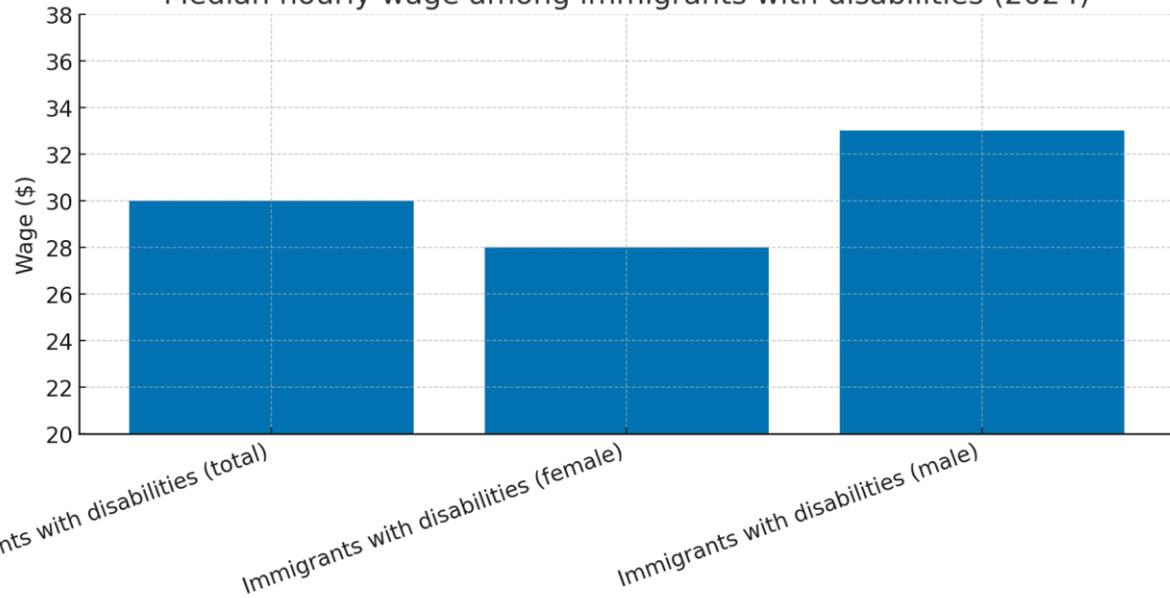
Employment rate among immigrants with disabilities (2024)



Weekly hours among immigrants with disabilities (2024)



Median hourly wage among immigrants with disabilities (2024)



Source: Statistics Canada (2025). *Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual*. URL:

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