

**Backgrounder:** Vancouver Foundation Disability Supports for Employment Investments

Vancouver Foundation's Disability Supports for Employment Fund (DSEF) was established through an endowment of \$20 million by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation in 2003, and another \$5 million contribution in 2006. DSEF funding is available to assist eligible organizations throughout BC who are working to increase employment opportunities and the overall rate of employment for persons with disabilities in their communities. Funding is awarded annually by Vancouver Foundation in May and November.

DSEF considers "employment" to mean the full participation of people with disabilities as employees, and/or those activities which may result in employment for them. They include:

- Full or part-time employment
- Social enterprise
- Entrepreneurial ventures
- Internships
- Volunteer development opportunities
- Self-employment
- Alternate work arrangements (such as the provision of job coaching support)
- Innovative models for work-related assistive devices
- Other initiatives that fit this definition

Applications for funding are considered from organizations working with individuals who have physical and/or mental disabilities and face barriers to employment.

The \$1.07 million in DSEF funding provided in 2013/14 to help create more job opportunities for the adults Community Living BC serves includes:

<b>Simon Fraser Society for Community Living (Coquitlam)</b>	<b>\$46,136 / 1 year</b>
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<b>Youth Employment Initiative</b>
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<b>Contact: Christine Scott, Executive Director, 604 525-9494</b>
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*A three year project with a long range goal to expand community capacity in the Tri-Cities to successfully engage youth who have developmental disabilities in sustainable, paid employment through supports to help them bridge from school to paid employment, and to expand the pool of paid employment opportunities in the Tri-Cities through the active pursuit and education of potential employers.*

<b>Pathways Abilities Society (Kelowna)</b>	<b>\$21,425 / 1 year</b>
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<b>Foundation for Employment Year 3</b>
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<b>Contact: Charisse Daley, Executive Director, 250 763-4837</b>
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*Now in its third year, this project will provide another eight youth with developmental disabilities who are in secondary school, for a total of 24 youth, with supports to secure and maintain part-time employment to build a network of employment contacts through paid work experience, establish employment contacts, and network in the business community. The project is based on the premise that people learn about work through working. Follow up monitoring is conducted after the students leave the secondary school system to determine what impact having employment and developing employment contacts has on their transition into the adult workforce.*

**Victoria Association for Community Living (Victoria) \$182,935 / 3 years**

**InclusionWORKS! Employment Through Family Governance and Self-Direction**

**Contact: Ellen Tarshis, Executive Director, 250 477-7231**

*InclusionWorks! will develop its capacity for employment development and supports under its family governance structure, find and sustain employment for young adults in partnership with the generic employment services used by all British Columbians and document the process and lessons learned for other family-governed groups, users of Individualized Funding, employment service organizations and policymakers. The three-year project will develop community capacity and promote expectations of employment with transitioning youth and their families, develop, implement and evaluate a model, collect lessons learned and create a report and guidebook to be distributed to self advocates and families. For more information on InclusionWorks! visit [www.inclusionworks.ca](http://www.inclusionworks.ca)*

**Steps Forward - Inclusive Post-Secondary (Vancouver) \$15,000 / 1 year**

**Farm Cycles: Employment and Sustainable Farming Communities**

**Contact: Tamara Hurtado, Executive Director, 604 782-1382**

*STEPS Forward will work in collaboration local urban farmers on a pilot project in response to students' request to be more involved in the vibrant farming community in the Okanagan. The Farm Cycles project will support this community to increase its capacity to include young adults with diverse challenges in valued roles and paid employment in the local food movement, which has been identified as a potential sector where people with different abilities can work together to become financially sustainable, meet like minded friends, and lead more ecologically sustainable life styles. The project will focus on supporting alumni and current UBCO students with developmental disabilities. For more information on STEPS Forward, visit [www.steps-forward.org](http://www.steps-forward.org)*

**Delta Community Living Society (Delta) \$114,600 / 3 years**

**Leading Employment & Achieving Possibilities - Youth Mentoring Pilot Project**

**Contact: Anita Sihota, Executive Director, 604 946-9508**

*The Leading Employment and Achieving Possibilities (LEAP) pilot project will support young adults transitioning from school to work. A youth mentoring and support framework will provide formal training for youth with and without developmental disabilities. The youth trained as mentors will then lead structured topics and activities for a group of protégés with developmental disabilities, as well as one-to-one support activities that will help lead the protégés to successful employment. The project will be managed by staff at DCLS Solutions Employment Services, established to respond to the needs of youth and adults who desire meaningful paid employment.*

**Inclusion BC (New Westminster)**

**Vancouver Foundation - \$265,000 / 3 years  
Community Living BC - \$20,000 for 2013/14**

**Ready, Willing & ABLE**

**Contact: Faith Bodner, Executive Director, 604 777-9100**

*Ready, Willing & ABLE will work to increase the employment rate of British Columbians with a developmental disability. It is aligned with CLBC's Community Action Employment Plan and will focus on building employer capacity and changing public attitudes by: 1. Developing and delivering a professional development series, including a 'tool kit' for employers, in targeted pilot communities. 2. Linking employers to Employment Specialists in our member agencies and establishing employer mentoring networks, both locally and provincially. 3. Changing public attitudes by launching an integrated communications campaign called 'We're Ready, Willing and ABLE,' highlighting local business leaders and focusing on the business case for hiring people with developmental disabilities. For more information on Ready, Willing and Able, visit [www.inclusionbc.org/ready-willing-and-able](http://www.inclusionbc.org/ready-willing-and-able)*

**Communitas Supportive Care Society (Abbotsford)**

**\$66,000 / 3 years**

**Customized self-employment: Micro Social Enterprise for persons with a disability**

**Contact: Karyn Santiago, Chief Executive Director, 604 850-6608**

*The project will create a comprehensive approach to provide dynamic business supports to assist entrepreneurs with disabilities to build up viable businesses until they have established themselves firmly in the community. This approach will support entrepreneurs from beginning to end of the business establishment process, including orientation, assessment of business readiness, research, business planning, start-up and launch, and on-going support as required*

**British Columbia Self Advocacy Foundation (New Westminster)**

**Vancouver Foundation - \$68,000 / 3 years  
Community Living BC - \$30,000 for 2013/14**

**Community Action Employment Plan - Self Advocacy Project**

**Contact: Karla Verschoor, Senior Staff Support, Inclusion BC, 604 777-9100**

*One of the objectives of the Community Action Employment Plan is that self advocates play a leadership role in changing public attitudes by: 1) Leading and delivering a presentation of why employment is important to them to a range of stakeholders, including government, unions, businesses, employers and families 2) Establishing a pool of self advocates in each region to act as consultants/resources to the Plan and related work. Provincial self advocate leaders convened in May 2013 to discuss options for collaborating with partners in the Community Action Employment Plan, and developed a two-phase approach to the work. The first phase is to develop a presentation and toolbox to assist self advocates in promoting employment. The second phase is to begin building community partnership to support the planning of the local events in the three pilot regions and workshop at the Inclusion BC Conference. For more information on this project, visit [www.communitylivingbc.ca](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca)*

**Nanaimo Association for Community Living (Nanaimo)**

**\$50,000 / 1 year**

**COCO's Catering Project**

**Contact: Graham Morry, Executive Director, 250 741-0224**

*COCO Café was started by families as a social enterprise to employ their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities. COCO's catering project will provide additional employment hours and skill building opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. The project would involve renovating the kitchen area to expand it physically to accommodate increased catering order, and provide staff with developmental disabilities with a larger, more effective workspace. Once the space and capacity is expanded, COCO will focus efforts on marketing to increase its customer base. For more information on COCO Café, visit <http://cedaropportunities.coop/>*

**Langley Association for Community Living (Langley)**

**\$20,000 / 1 year**

**Youth Works 2013**

**Contact: Dan Collins, Executive Director, 604 534-8611**

*Youth Works will provide support to twenty secondary school students to increase their attachment to the labor market after school hours, weekends and throughout the summer months. These supports will be offered to youth in grades 10-12, including youth who are transitioning out of high school, and will help them complete a discovery process, in collaboration with school and family partners, to ascertain each individual's employment skills and interests and match them with a suitable employment opportunity. Individuals will be provided with the required on the job support and job coaching to ensure success in their workplace of choice. Students graduating school with job experiences on their resumes will have a greater likelihood of securing employment after graduation.*

**British Columbia Self Advocacy Foundation with ESATTA Co-op (New Westminster)**

**\$5,200 / 1 year**

**Breaking Down Barriers**

**Contact: Karla Verschoor, Senior Staff Support, Inclusion BC, 604 777-9100**

*ESATTA was contracted by the BC Self Advocacy Foundation (BCSAF) in 2011/12 to present their No More Barriers campaign to communities throughout BC to share their campaign video and website, and host World Cafe style dialogues to find out the types of barriers experienced by self advocates in BC. All feedback was reviewed by self advocates and 5 common barriers were selected by self advocates to become the guidelines for their work. The key barriers were: supported decision making (SDM), youth & self advocacy, health, housing and employment. ESATTA decided they would develop a workshop on: SDM, Health and Employment, and have contacted School districts and agencies throughout BC with the offer to present this workshop. For more information on the No More Barriers campaign, visit [www.bcsaf.org/](http://www.bcsaf.org/)*

**West Coast Family Support Institute (New Westminster)**

**Vancouver Foundation - \$30,000 / 3 years  
Community Living BC - \$50,000 / 2 years**

***familyWORKS* - helping families to see the possibilities in employment**

**Contact: Angela Clancy, Executive Director, 604 540-8374 ext. 524**

*familyWORKS' will work with families to feature/show what is possible in terms of employment. The project works through family barriers to shift attitudes. FSI's family oriented experience/efforts will bring a more holistic approach to families in supporting them to develop a vision and action plan when it comes to employment for their loved ones. For more information on familyWORKS, visit <http://familyworksbc.com/>*

**BC Centre for Employment Excellence (Vancouver)**

**\$35,000 /1 year**

**The Face-to-Face Project: Bringing Youth with Disabilities and Employers Together**

**Contact: Susanna Gurr, Managing Director, 604 658-2141**

*The Face-to-Face Project was born out of the need to find creative solutions that improve labour market integration for youth with disabilities. Youth (age 18 to 25) with disabilities will be recruited from employment organizations in BC to be referred to employers who will engage them in mock interviews and networking scenarios. In addition to providing the youth with information about their businesses, employers will have the opportunity to speak with them about their career aspirations. The employers will then refer the youth to a second employer, whose hiring staff will meet with the youth in an informational interview. The project will wrap up with a half-day dialogue forum for project participants and an evaluation that captures implementation lessons and effective practices.*

**Salt Spring Island Community Services (Salt Spring Island)**

**\$75,000 / 3 years**

**New Beginnings**

**Contact: Rob Grant, Executive Director, 250 537-9971**

*New Beginnings is a vocational development program for adults with employment barriers, which requires expansion to meet the local needs. The program provides individual and group-based training and support, work experience placements, and supported work search. The target group is marginalized and vulnerable people including those with disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, social isolation, poverty, and limited life skills. To take advantage of the increase in the local food movement, the project will develop a farm/garden skills component to the program designed specifically for the participants with the highest needs.*

**Independent Living Vernon Society (Vernon)**

**\$29,800 / 1 year**

**EmployAbility**

**Contact: Laura Hockman, Executive Director, 250 545-9292**

*ILV is partnered with Neil Squire Society to deliver the EmployAbility program, which is provided 3 days/ week for 12 weeks at a time, 4 times per year. Participants do distance learning on the computer about employment topics, through a virtual classroom (e.g. Moodle). In the afternoon, participants have group activities which focus on health and wellness topics: smart shop tours, agency visits, or discuss topics such as communication skills or managing your disability. Based on the significant need for one-on-one support for participants and increased focus on self esteem, the project will support an increase of staff support to 5 days/week. This increased time will provide time to offer a 14 week 'The Gift of Self Esteem' program and additional one-on-one sessions with participants.*

**Mount Currie Band (Mount Currie)**

**\$45,000 / 3 years**

**L.E.A.P. (Lil'wat Empowerment & Accessibility Program) Vocational**

**Contact: Rachel Andrew-Nelson, Director of Community Health Services, 604 894-6656**

*A three-year project that has a special needs vocational counsellor perform one-on-one vocational and needs assessments, training in basic computer literacy, resume building, interview skills, and small business planning, job-shadowing opportunities, and the development of a job fair where local and surrounding area businesses could present employment opportunities.*

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**For further information contact:**

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