

Background:

The Counties of Bruce (lead), Grey, Huron, and the City of Stratford are the Employment Service System Manager (SSM), funded entirely by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), for the Stratford – Bruce Peninsula Economic Region. The SSM is to build and implement a locally responsive employment services system that effectively meets the needs of a diverse range of job seekers and employers in the catchment area. Integrated Employment Services Delivery (IESD), the SSM newly designed system went live on April 1, 2023. This report provides a semi-annual update to council on the performance of the SSM, and updates on future work to be completed.

Information Update:

The SSM's service delivery model provides services through eight Employment Service Providers (ESP). These are third party organizations that have service delivery agreements with the County for delivery of employment services for those eligible in the catchment area. The following outlines our performance in the past two quarters.

Table 1 – Client Intakes

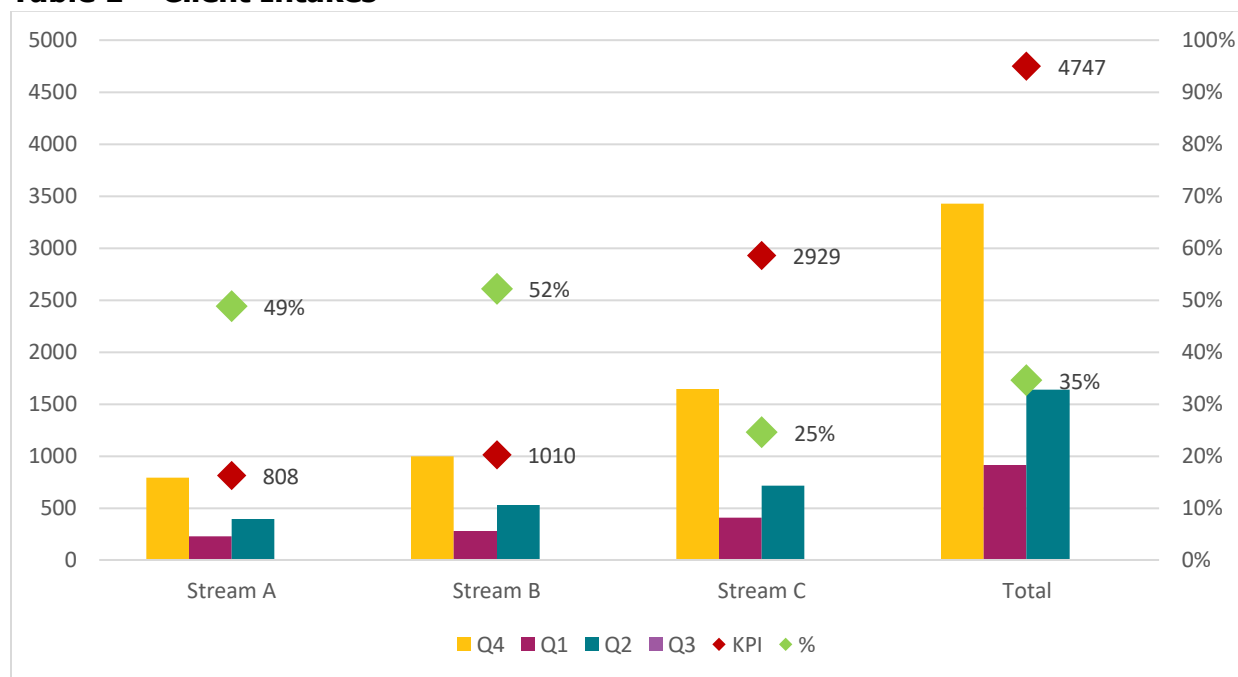


Table 1 outlines the SSM's performance against client intake key performance indicators (KPIs) set by MLITSD. Stream A clients are those at low risk for long-term unemployment, Stream B clients are those at medium risk for long-term unemployment, and Stream C clients are those at high risk for long-term unemployment. Table 1 shows



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That Stream A clients are at 49% of target half-way through the year and Stream B clients are at 52% of target. Stream C clients are at 25% of target and total client intakes are at 35% of target. The SSM continues to work with Social Assistance and community organizations such as newcomer services and probation and parole offices, to establish effective referral pathways for clients most at risk of long-term unemployment.

Table 2 – Client Outcomes

Client's outcomes represent clients who have completed their plan with Employment Ontario and have most often found employment or been referred to another program such as Better Jobs Ontario, Skills Development Funded Programs or formal education settings. Clients in outcomes are monitored for one year to assist in maintaining employment and to gather necessary documentation to meet the criteria for performance-based funding.

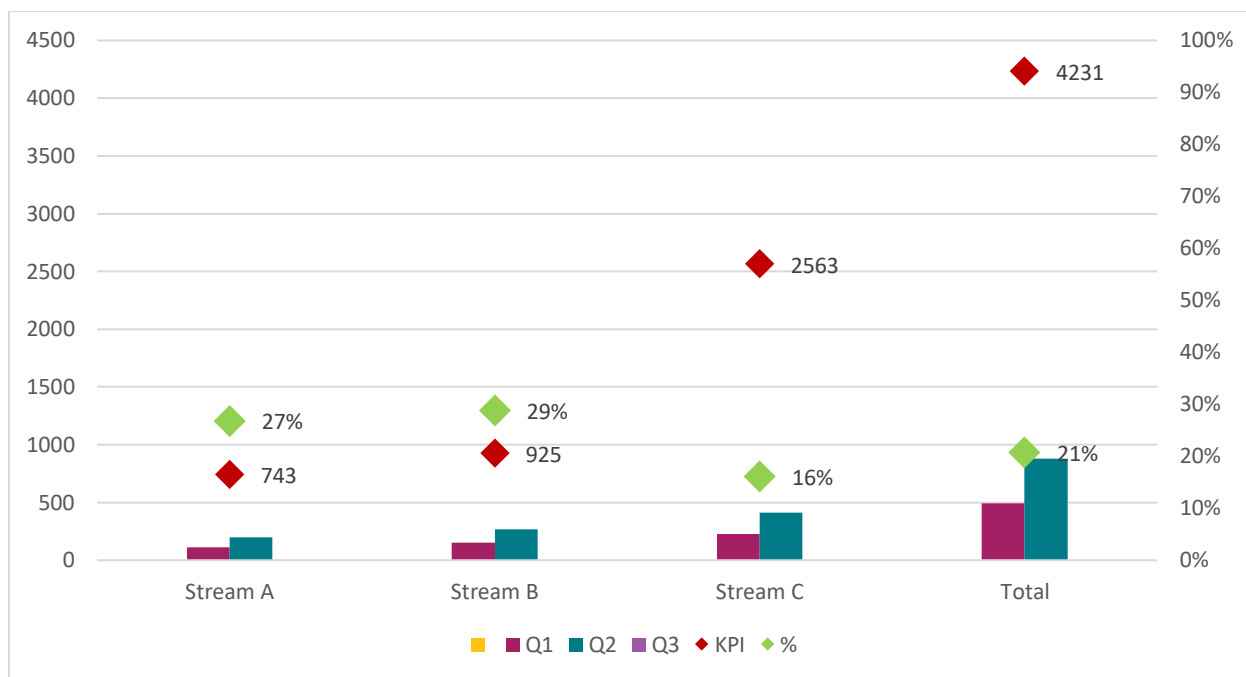


Table 2 shows that Stream A clients are at 27% of the target half-way through the year, Stream B clients are at 29% of the target and Stream C clients are at 16% of the target. Overall, the total meets 21% of the target for the year.

The SSM has implemented a Digital Service Delivery platform to match Stream A clients with available job openings.

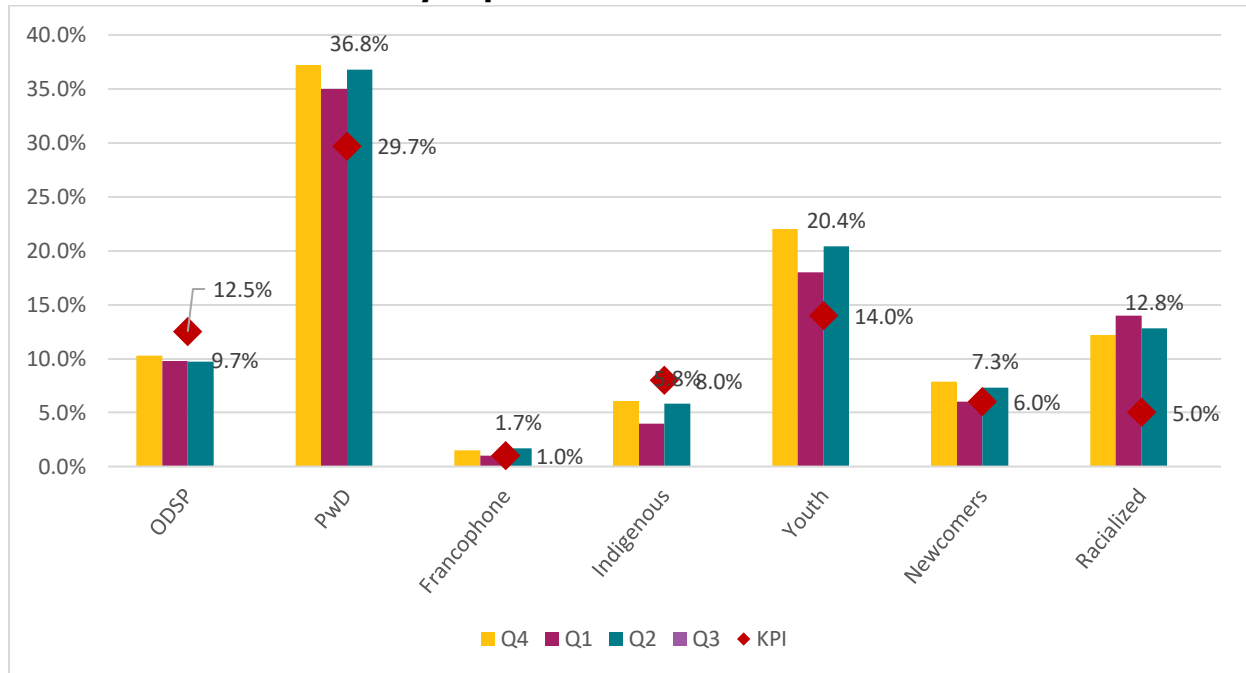
Through an employer activation strategy we are focusing on developing relationships with employers to offer Stream C clients job placements and trials to get them into the



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workforce without participation in a traditional job competition, i.e., identifying employer needs and recommending clients that are a good fit for the role, or a paid placement to trial the role.

Table 3 – Service to Priority Populations



The Ministry outlines priority populations that the SSM and its network of ESPs are to provide service. Table 3 outlines the SSM's results in these KPIs. As the table demonstrates, the SSM is meeting or exceeding targets in all areas aside from clients in receipt of ODSP and Indigenous individuals.

The SSM continues to support the Indigenous service provider to offer service. Overall, the SSM's performance indicates those that need employment services the most are provided with access to needed support.

In addition to the results outlined above, the network has seen a continued trend of clients in receipt of social assistance accessing employment services. One quarter of clients in service are from Ontario Works and 10.9% of clients are from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This demonstrates evidence of the effectiveness of the collaboration between our Ontario Works partners and the SSM.



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Table 4 – Program Outcomes

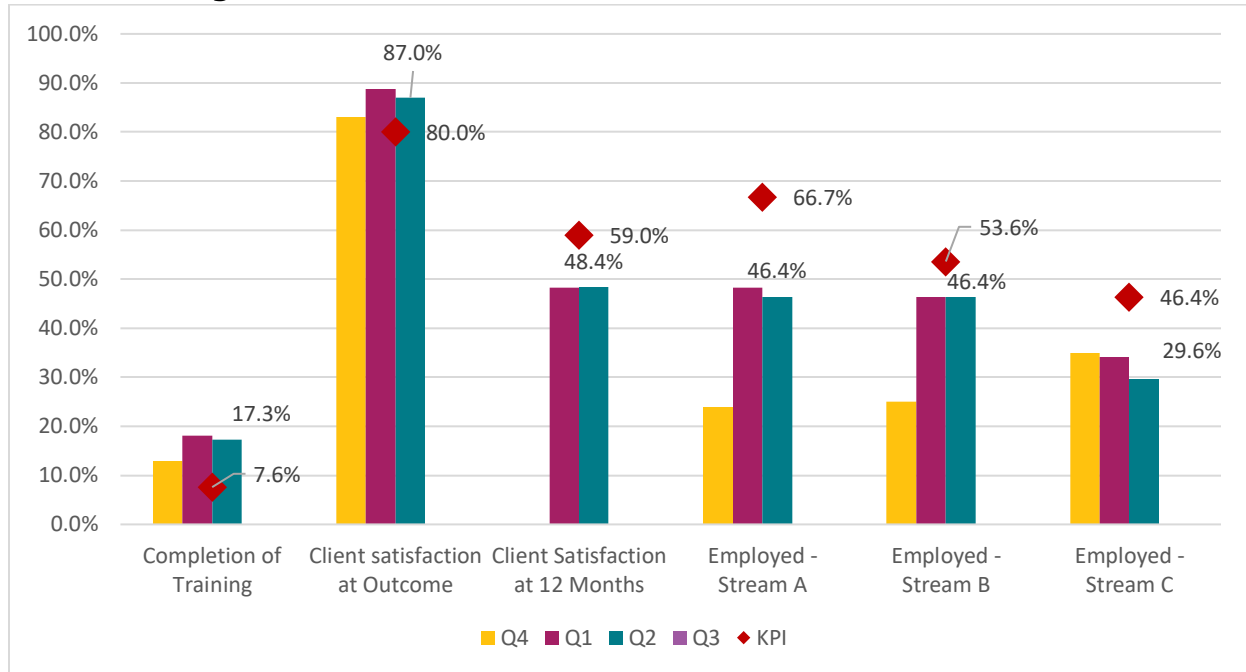


Table 4 outlines the SSM's achievement of outcomes against MLITSD KPIs. As the table shows, the SSM is exceeding the targets for completion of training and client satisfaction with services at outcome. However, the SSM is slightly below the target for satisfaction at the 12-month point (12 months after the client has been moved to outcomes). The SSM is also under target for employment outcomes in all three streams. However, outcomes for Stream A and Stream B clients are significantly higher than the Q4 numbers from the previous year.

Program Successes:

1. The service providers in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula SSM have assisted 2000 clients in finding employment with 1764 clients finding employment at 20 hours per week or more.
2. Clients who are referred from social assistance have a low returned referral rate of 13%. This demonstrates an effective partnership and referral practice for clients between social assistance and Employment Ontario providers in the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula area. In addition, 25% of clients who have been referred to Employment Ontario by social assistance have found employment, with 22% finding a job working 20+ hours per week.
3. Start-up of the Digital Service Delivery platform in partnership with FutureFit AI with close to 200 job ready clients registered on the platform. The program uses AI technology to match job seekers to job postings based on previous



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experience, education and transferable skills. The SSM is registering employers through presentations hosted by Huron, Bruce and Perth County Economic Development departments, referrals from service providers, and onboarding at job fairs, information events, and one on one meetings with local employers.

4. The Employer Activation strategy involves training service providers on how to establish effective relationships with employers for the purpose of understanding employer hiring needs and creating opportunities for clients to find work outside of the traditional application process. This includes providing placements for clients and matching clients to employer requests. To date, 50% of job placements have resulted in clients being hired and maintaining their employment.
5. The In Motion and Momentum Plus program is intended to meet the needs of clients most at risk of long-term unemployment. Clients are typically referred to the program by Social Assistance caseworkers or Employment Ontario caseworkers. Of the 47 clients enrolled in the program, 37 clients have enrolled in Employment Ontario services. Thirteen clients have completed their work with Employment Ontario and seven clients have employment with an average of 25 hours per week.

Continuous Improvement:

The SSM continues to monitor performance and tailor conversations with each service provider. These conversations focus on key themes to support the success of the network.

The SSM has undertaken strategic initiatives to build network capacity to produce high quality employment services.

1. **Local Labour Market Information:** The SSM provides labour market statistics based on Connect2Jobs data. This data set can guide service providers to identify opportunities for employment or placements at a village or town level.
2. **Employer Activation:** All service providers have completed training on developing relationships with local employers. These relationships provide opportunities for identifying employer needs and providing clients with the necessary qualifications for placements or direct to hire. Clients who are typically locked out of the job market can become gainfully employed without participating in traditional job competitions.
3. **Digital Services Delivery:** The SSM is working in conjunction with FutureFit AI to create a digital platform where employers can identify clients with the desired skill set and reach out directly to discuss employment opportunities. The platform





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helps Stream A job seekers identify a desired career path as well as local opportunities to obtain skills that employers value. Future plans include rolling out the platform to local employers to streamline local hiring and improve employment opportunities for clients.

4. **Employment Preparation:** Several cohorts have completed the In Motion and Momentum Plus program, designed to help clients address intrinsic barriers such as motivation, reliability and dependability. To date a subset of clients that have completed the program have successfully found employment and client evaluations demonstrate client's personal growth and improvements in confidence. Managers from Social Assistance partners and Employment Service providers have been trained to utilize assessment tools to identify client readiness for change, motivation, reliability and dependability and develop an individualized service plan to consider each client's specialized needs. Future plans include providing staff level training.
5. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Clients continue to be served using evidence-based approaches to employment service including cognitive motivational models, and trauma informed approaches.
6. **Performance:** Data collection and reporting continue to frame discussions around results. Service provider objectives and targets continue to be modified based on performance outcomes.

2025-2027 Funding Update

On January 6, 2025, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development provided an amending agreement which extends the existing contract with the Stratford-Bruce Peninsula SSM until March 31, 2027.

