



Theme 1 – Advocate for building career development mindsets (knowledge, skills, attitudes) among Canadians broadly as a pathway to empowerment and a better life. (Future state: All Canadians have the capability and the willingness to manage and continuously adapt their own career development.)

Career development professionals have told us that many of the students and clients they work with have career regrets, are experiencing anxiety around career decision-making, and believe in persistent career myths. ([CERIC Survey of Career Services Professionals, 2019](#)). There is a widespread desire within the field to see “Career conscious Canadians,” equipped to proactively shape their careers towards their preferred futures. This means ensuring individuals have self-awareness, understand the labour market and are resilient in the face of ongoing change (aka have requisite career ownership & navigation skills).

Theme 2 – Advocate for engaging with a career development professional to Canadians broadly throughout various ages and stages of life. (Future state: All Canadians are aware of what CDPs do, the value they provide and where/how to access one.)

Recent research shows that the rate of Canadians using career services is lower than other OECD countries. Just 19% of Canadian adults (aged 25–64) and 50% of young Canadians (aged 18–24) report having used career services in the past five years, ([Labour Market Information Council and Future Skills Centre, 2021](#)). At the same time, there is broad agreement in the career development sector that all Canadians would benefit from the opportunity (early and as often as needed) to get guidance and support from a career development professional.

Theme 3 – Advocate for better funding and provision of universally accessible publicly funded career and employment services with government policymakers. (Future state: Canadian governments fund and mandate sustainable, consistent and accessible career and employment services.)

Several recent [publications](#), [reports](#) and [articles](#) have all made the case for an accelerated need for high-quality career and employment services in Canada as a result of the pandemic and dramatic economic & social shifts related to future skills and workforce needs. The current system of publicly funded employment services is considered fragmented, “broken,” and based on a “fail first” model (accessed when people find themselves laid-off, injured or facing a crisis). There is a strong desire across the field for a more co-ordinated and comprehensive approach that provides accessible and inclusive services.

Theme 4 – Advocate for better funding and provision of universally accessible career guidance and education in the K-12 system with government and/or school boards. (Future state: Every school in Canada offers effective and accessible career guidance and education.)

In order to ensure young people are well positioned for post-secondary, the workforce and a lifetime of transitions, they are in need of high-quality career education and guidance throughout [elementary](#) and [high school](#). However, similar to the scenario described with publicly funded career services, we have a fragmented K-12 education system across Canada, characterized by limited career education within curriculum, a lack of teacher and guidance counsellor capacity, and marginalized students in need of supports being the least likely to receive them.

Theme 5 – Advocate to support the career and skills development of working Canadians among employers with a business case. (Future state: Every employer in Canada is committed to and offers programs and supports to employees to achieve their career goals and navigate future disruptions.)

While most Canadians will not have a career advisor, they will have an employer. Research shows that the majority of employers believe they have a role in supporting the career goals of employees, however few are backing it up with action: 73% of Canadian business leaders agree employers have a responsibility to provide career management programs for employees, but only 27% provide these programs ([CERIC / Environics Business Survey, 2022](#)). Certainly, there is a business case to be made, especially in today's labour market, for the value of employers investing in employees' careers.

Theme 6 – Advocate for the right to decent work on the part of peoples in Canada with government policymakers and employers. (Future state: All Canadians have available to them work that uses their talents and that they consider meaningful and rewarding.)

Decent work has been [defined as](#) “productive work... in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.” Decent work is also the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #8](#). Research has shown having purpose in work is linked to greater well-being for individuals and higher engagement for employers. A nascent [national decent work movement](#) is already underway in Canada, in the context of increasing precarity with gig work, as well as opportunities to maximize the potential of the labour force and increases Canada's competitiveness.

Theme 7 – Advocate for career development as a way to strengthen the mental health of Canadians. (Future state: All Canadians and the stakeholders who provide funding and programming understand how career development can positively influence mental health.)

A global mental health movement has emerged in the past decade. The pandemic has brought even greater attention to this at a time when mental health continues to be the leading cause of disability in Canada with very real costs to individual well-being, organizational productivity and society as a whole. Meanwhile, [newer research](#) makes the case that career development is a mental health intervention with both adults and [youth in schools](#). Beyond skills or employment, career development supports people to cope with demands, reduces stress and changes people's lives in ways that improve mental health.