



## Citizens With Disabilities – Ontario

[www.cwdo.org](http://www.cwdo.org)

**“Together We Are Stronger”**

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February 17, 2014

Kathleen Wynne, Premier  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Email [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Dear Madam Premier,

Citizens with Disabilities – Ontario is committed to the rights of all persons to participate fully in the civil, cultural, economic, political and social life of their communities, including access to employment.

Access to employment and income support has been cited as the primary concern of our 2000 members across Ontario who reside in almost every electoral district in the province. That is why CWDO is a provincial partner with The Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy ([CRWDP](#)), a transdisciplinary initiative on the future of work disability policy in Canada.

We don't need to tell you how important employment of persons with disabilities is to the Ontario economy: your own government funded research into this subject which was published in [Releasing Constraints: Projecting the Economic Impacts of Increased Accessibility in Ontario](#) by the Martin Prosperity Institute.

Recently, a [Global News story](#) brought to light the dilemma that many people with disabilities face: an employer able and willing to accept

them for their abilities and qualifications but a lack of employment supports to begin or continue employment.

The government is already investing in educational opportunities at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels for people with disabilities. How ironic if job opportunities are not available at the end of our educational careers! Or worse, people with disabilities cannot get or keep a job we are qualified to do because the employer cannot afford the employment supports we may require.

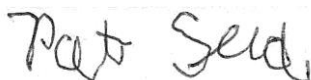
CWDO believes that the creation of a centralized employment accommodation fund would help to alleviate pressure on Ontario business and the Broader Public Sector (BPS) to do the right thing and provide accommodation support for people with disabilities who require them. The government could require businesses and the BPS to pool funds to provide employment supports when needed, and/or the government could offer to match or otherwise top up such a fund depending on the contributions they make. Alternately, the government could choose to create the fund, phasing out its contributions over time as funding from business builds up.

Given that most people with disabilities require accommodation supports of \$500 or less, it is unlikely that a huge amount of money would be required to make the fund viable enough to provide more opportunities for gainful employment for people with disabilities.

Because this issue would be of interest to several of your colleagues, CWDO is requesting that you coordinate an interministerial meeting with representatives from impacted ministries to discuss options for helping people with disabilities gain and retain employment. We have taken the liberty of copying those ministers on this correspondence. CWDO would be pleased to attend such a meeting, if invited to participate, to provide our thoughts on a plan of action to help people with disabilities to start working and stay working.

We look forward to your response and hope that we can work together with you and your colleagues to help people with disabilities prosper through employment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Seed". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Pat Seed, Chair

Copies to:

- The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Economic Development, Trade & Employment
- The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health & Long-Term Care
- The Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister of Community & Social Services
- The Honourable Yasir Naqvi, Minister of Labour
- The Honourable Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance