

# Erasing the Barriers



2022 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT  
INSIGHTS REPORT

How young Canadians  
see the path to a meaningful  
job. And why leading  
employers want to help  
them get there.





# About MyStartr

MyStartr is Canada’s only national, employer-led coalition dedicated to helping young people overcome barriers to employment and kickstart their own future. Supported by major employers, governments and community organizations across the country, we create paths to opportunity for people aged 15 to 30 – opening doors to career-launching jobs that help them reimagine their futures while contributing to Canada’s overall economic growth and prosperity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

A message to employers

3

Youth employment facts

5

Introduction to this report

8

Key youth insights

25

What happens now?

27

Let’s get started!

28

The back story

# Erasing the Barriers

A message to Canadian employers, governments and other changemakers in the youth workforce development sector



Across Canada, hundreds of thousands of young people are looking for that first good job that can lead to a meaningful career. At the same time, tens of thousands of companies are searching for new talent to help them achieve their business goals. Growing youth employment should therefore be a simple matter of bringing job seekers and employers together.

But in fact, many young Canadians continue to face significant and discouraging barriers to employment. Some of those barriers are created by the strategies that employers have traditionally used to recruit entry-level employees. Others reflect broader issues of equity and inclusion our society has been grappling with for decades.

At MyStartr, we believe that most of these barriers – in the hiring process and in the workplace – can be reduced, if not totally removed, with the right combination of insight and resolve. The first step is to gain a deeper understanding of the obstacles that block young people's paths to good jobs, and that also prevent employers from filling key roles. So we've reached out to job-seeking youth across the country who face barriers to employment, inviting their input through conversations, focus groups and surveys. The result is *Erasing the Barriers: Youth Employment Insights Report 2022*.

## How do we create change for the better?

In their search for an entry point into the world of work, many young job seekers benefit from extra guidance, coaching, encouragement and, of course, access to opportunity. This is the kind of support that MyStartr provides, collaborating with committed employers and community partners across Canada. I invite you to explore our many successful programs and platforms – with more to come – at [mystartr.ca](https://mystartr.ca).

Young people also identify many systemic barriers that they feel, as the insights in this report make clear, employers can help to improve. MyStartr supports these efforts as well. Because if we all work together to make the path to a first job more welcoming and inclusive, the benefits will accrue to youth, to employers, to communities – to the entire Canadian economy.

I hope you'll join us in erasing the barriers to a better future.

### Angela Simo Brown

Lead Executive, MyStartr

VP, Early Talent Innovation, MaRS Discovery District

# There are too many barriers preventing young people from landing good jobs.

The problem is that simple.

Finding a solution is a bit harder.



## Here are the facts:

### 1 million+ potential young employees

That's how many Canadians aged 15 to 30 are not currently employed or in education or training.

### 400,000+ actively seeking jobs with a future

However, these young people face a whole range of social and systemic barriers in their quest for jobs that can lead to careers.

### 10% overall youth unemployment in Canada

That's double the recent jobless rate for the overall population. And the rate is nearly 5 percentage points higher for BIPOC youth, who face additional barriers to employment.<sup>1</sup>

### 3 major impacts of being unable to land a job<sup>2</sup>

- Reduced likelihood of being hired the longer a young person is unemployed.
- Lower earning potential compared to peers for at least a decade.
- Loss of confidence and a higher risk of mental health challenges.

### 66% of young people find landing a job difficult or very difficult

Yet the same proportion remain hopeful, believing it's possible to remove longstanding barriers – with employers' help.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Policy Options, 2020

*Click footnotes for details*

<sup>3</sup> MyStartr Activate Summit Survey, 2022

## THE POST-COVID PARADOX

As the pandemic recedes, most sectors are experiencing an upsurge in demand for workers. Even with continuing economic uncertainty, there are more opportunities than we've seen in decades. As of mid-2022, Canada had a record 1 million unfilled jobs – nearly double the pre-COVID peak.<sup>1</sup>

But there's a dramatic gap between the number of available jobs and the number of young people being offered chances to compete for them. Even as overall unemployment has hit record lows (about 5% throughout 2022), some 440,000 young people classified as NEET – not in education, employment or training – are actively seeking work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021

[Click footnotes for details](#)



# We can get youth employment in Canada working better for everyone.

Step one is understanding young people's point of view. That's where MyStartr comes in.



We believe that the best-equipped experts on youth employment are young people themselves. They know their own strengths and where they need to grow. They can explain what they're looking for today and their aspirations for the future. They just need a bit of help mapping out goals, tuning up their skills and showing potential employers why they're promising candidates.

At MyStartr, we get to know young job seekers and use our networks to connect them with the right opportunities. And then we provide guidance and coaching to help ensure they bring their best selves to employer interviews.

We also know Canada's leading employers and their goals and challenges. Visionary companies are keen to benefit from young employees' energy and ambition, from their ideas and diverse perspectives, and from their understanding of just how fast the world is changing.

## How to tap into all that potential

Ironically, at a time when most companies work to make customer interactions easier, connecting with them about possible employment has gotten harder – especially for entry-level positions. And if too many Canadian youth continue to feel excluded from the national talent pool, the struggles that young job seekers face today will become employers' challenges tomorrow.

Again, this is where MyStartr plays a vital role. We connect employers in key sectors with young job seekers across Canada who are eager to show what they can do. The youth we support are remarkably diverse. The majority are young women, most are from racialized communities, and a high proportion are newcomers to Canada. But even more important is what they share in common: they're ready to work hard, expand their skills and contribute their ideas and insights. They just need to get past the barriers between them and the future.

We've created this Youth Employment Insights Report to illuminate the barriers that prevent talented young people from connecting with potential employers, and vice versa. Because understanding those barriers is the first step to erasing them.

**14% OF CANADA'S  
TOTAL WORKFORCE  
ARE YOUTH**

And in some key sectors, such as retail, food service and accommodation, young people make up 30% to 40% of Canada's workforce.

Statistics Canada, 2022

[Click for details](#)



# The young people who helped shape this report told us what's on their minds.

They've also shared a lot about themselves. Here are some highlights.



**7,000+** total participants  
(via MyStartr's InterviewME program)

**75%** aged 15 to 23

*Of respondents to our cross-Canada diversity survey:*

- 21%** looking for full-time work
- 50%** seeking part-time jobs
- 28%** open to full-time or part-time employment
- 62%** identify as girl or woman
- 50%** identify as racialized or person of colour
- 9%** identify as Indigenous
- 12%** identify as having a visible or invisible disability
- 41%** immigrated to Canada in the last five years
- 75%** high school graduates
- 50%** at least some post-secondary education



# The insights

What young Canadians told us about the barriers they face in seeking meaningful work.



## INSIGHTS AT A GLANCE



- 1** Young job seekers don't know where to start – and lack support networks.
- 2** Perceiving bias in hiring and workplace practices, youth feel they don't belong.
- 3** Many youth struggle to meet job criteria and navigate the recruiting process.
- 4** Young people have trouble decoding the language and context of job postings.
- 5** Communications with young job seekers can be unclear – or nonexistent.
- 6** Young people are looking for employers on social media platforms, often in vain.
- 7** Young people don't (or can't) take advantage of employment service providers.
- 8** What young job seekers need ahead of anything else is empathy.

# 1

## Young job seekers don't know where to start – and lack support networks.

The young people surveyed for this report are keenly aware of the barriers they face. But many have no experience in looking for work and don't know how to navigate their way through the employment market to potential job opportunities. They haven't grown up with strong personal support networks and don't know where to begin in building them.

Meanwhile, personal and professional networks have never been more crucial for young people seeking work. Networking is the second most effective route to landing a job after employment websites. And the use of networks to fill job vacancies continues to grow, increasing from about 65% to 75% between 2019 and 2022.<sup>1</sup>

### How do we remove this barrier?

Everyone working to advance youth employment in Canada can help young people who feel excluded from social and professional networks develop connections of their own. Progressive employers are finding ways to bring young people together outside the formal recruiting process so they can interact with hiring managers, as well as their peers. And many companies

are creating opportunities for their employees to provide advice and mentorship to aspiring job seekers, opening pathways to entry-level jobs.

### Here's how MyStarttr helps

We connect young people with mentors and employer contacts so they can build their networks and hear firsthand what different organizations are looking for in new employees – and so employers can gain a deeper understanding of how young job seekers see the world. We also bring young people together with their peers to compare notes about employment goals and share tips and advice. And in our two-way mentoring program, MentorU MentorMe, young people and employers meet one on one, candidly exchanging points of view and learning from each other.



<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2022  
[Click footnote for details](#)

**39%**

of young people say they don't know where to begin in looking for a job – or how the employment process even works.<sup>1</sup>

**24%**

of youth feel they have no network of friends or family to provide connections, support and advice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MyStartr Activate Summit Survey, 2022

<sup>2</sup> MyStartr Activate Summit Survey, 2022

*Click footnotes for details*



# 2

## Perceiving bias in hiring and workplace practices, youth feel they don't belong.

**When we asked young people to identify the top barriers to landing a meaningful job, many cited their feeling that a hiring organization was not a place where they belonged. This sense of not belonging is widespread and deep-rooted among the young people we consulted for this report. For many, it's entwined with their experience of systemic discrimination – in the workplace and in society generally.**

Covert or unconscious bias is subtle and can be difficult to prove. But our young respondents shared compelling anecdotal accounts of employers acting in ways that suggest biased attitudes. Examples of such behaviour include: not recognizing credentials acquired abroad; turning down recent immigrants and refugees for lack of Canadian experience; hesitating to hire international students, even when they have valid work visas; and screening out applicants whose English proficiency was judged to be below an undefined standard – or perhaps, in some cases, because their non-Western names were hard to pronounce.

Many Canadian employers have committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in their organizations. But having that commitment permeate the culture and become an everyday reality requires a significant investment in change – led by people with special expertise that is still evolving in much of corporate Canada. Progress has been slow, and as a result young people continue to experience the effects of bias.



# 37%

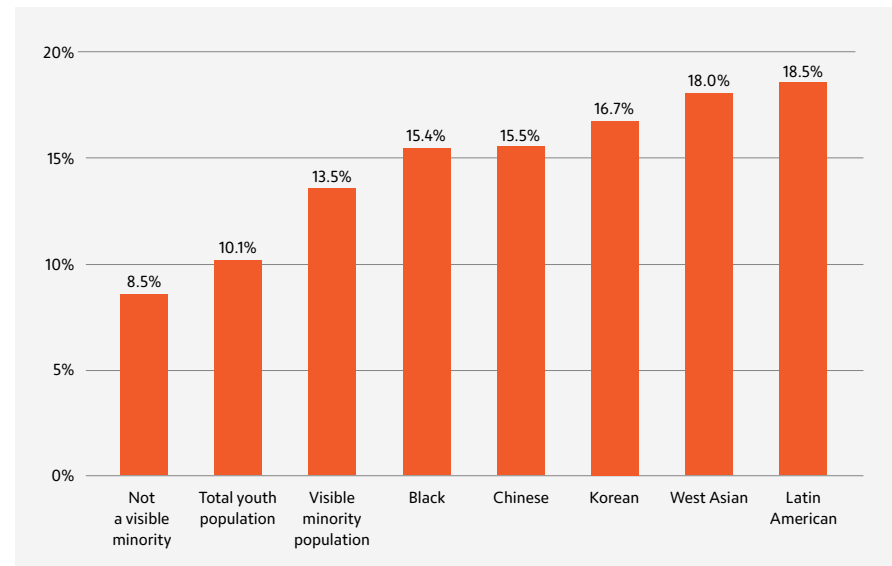
of youth we surveyed said the number one barrier to landing a good job was feeling that an organization was “a place where people like me don’t belong.”

MyStartr Activate Summit Survey, 2022

[Click for details](#)

## Unemployment rates are higher for racialized youth

Percentage of Canadians aged 15 to 24, June 2022  
(adjusted for seasonality)



Statistics Canada, 2022  
[Click for details](#)

### How do we remove this barrier?

Canadian employers should continue working to eliminate bias and discrimination from their youth hiring practices and processes. Recruitment efforts must include all potential candidates, regardless of race or ethnicity, gender identity, sexual preference, neurodiversity, visible or invisible disabilities, or any other characterizing features.

### Here’s how MyStartr helps

Working with employers that foster diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, we share feedback from young job seekers. Our Youth Innovation Council, for instance, advises hiring managers as they prepare for MyStartr recruitment events. We’ve also developed a pilot hiring program in which candidates aren’t initially identified by name – an approach many of our partner employers are eager to try. In addition, we gather input from barriered youth and regularly update our employer coalition and the wider community.

# 3

## Many youth struggle to meet job criteria and navigate the recruiting process.

**One of the most common barriers cited by young job seekers is an inability to meet employers' time requirements – either the total number of hours per week, or how those hours are allocated across shifts. Young people know employers have schedules to maintain. But they're often told that the hours just are what they are, with no opportunity for further discussion.**

Similarly, many young people face transportation challenges. An employer's location may be outside the reach of public transit, or hard to access during the required hours. Of course, some jobs are constrained by simple geography. But here again, young people who want to work can be frustrated by employers' unwillingness to alter work hours – or locations, in a multi-site retail or restaurant business – to make commuting easier.

Then there are the requirements around education and experience. Many young people comment on employers' high expectations, even for entry-level positions requiring minimal skills and typically

providing on-the-job training. They question whether many stated criteria are always realistic or even necessary, or if they may just be fossilized within HR systems that haven't changed in years.

More broadly, young people wonder whether other aspects of the recruitment process – from complicated online applications to daunting rounds of interviews – are likewise carried on simply because things have always been done that way. The unfortunate outcome is that strong potential candidates may abandon the process in frustration or, just as damaging, be inadvertently rejected. They never get to show what they can do, and employers never benefit from their potential.



## Where young job seekers struggle to meet entry-level job requirements:

**37%** are unable to work the stipulated schedule or total hours

**29%** lack means of transport to the employer's location

**29%** don't meet stated education criteria

**24%** lack the required level of experience

*MyStarttr Activate Summit Survey, 2022*

*[Click for details](#)*



### How do we remove these barriers?

Many leading employers are taking a fresh look at longstanding and often unquestioned recruitment processes. Hiring managers and recently onboarded employees can play a role here, offering insights and suggesting improvements. It may be time to rethink job requirements and compliance steps that are in fact discouraging young people from pursuing opportunities for which they're well matched.

### Here's how MyStarttr helps

We provide employers with feedback from candidates and our own team. We also create opportunities for sharing advice and best practices within our employer coalition. And we work with the various players in the youth employment system to unify efforts, streamline processes and align communications as we pursue our common goal: connecting talented young people to promising opportunities.



# 4

## Young people have trouble decoding the language and context of job postings.

**Every employer has a unique way of communicating its value proposition to potential employees. But for young people just entering the workforce, it can be difficult to decipher job titles and descriptions that include a lot of industry jargon or use generalized language to gloss over the nuances of a particular role.**

Young job seekers often can't tell if they're reading a realistic summary of hiring criteria or, as they suspect, something closer to a wish list. Many postings seem to rely heavily on templated content, which can create doubt whether all the requirements are truly relevant for the position in question.

The net effect is that many young people who may in fact be worthy candidates will decide not even to apply – creating a missed opportunity on both sides.

### **How do we remove this barrier?**

For starters, recruitment postings should use clear, jargon-free language to describe available positions – which is already table stakes among leading employers. Job descriptions should be precise and concrete in outlining requirements and highlighting

the specific day-to-day tasks associated with the role. Expectations that are unrealistic or simply unnecessary should obviously be removed. This includes requiring previous work experience for an entry-level position – unless there's a compelling reason for insisting on it (and that reason should be shared in the description).

### **Here's how MyStartr helps**

We work with employers throughout the recruitment process to keep communications simple, straightforward and accessible. In our experience, postings for young job seekers should showcase the top three or four responsibilities of the role, explaining clearly how it fits into the business and contributes to the overall purpose – and that's it. Once a few interesting prospects are identified, interviews can go deeper.



# 5

## Communications with young job seekers can be unclear – or nonexistent.

Getting no response when you apply for a position. Prolonged silence following an interview, while an employer is apparently considering you. Receiving a generic rejection with no feedback or, worse, never hearing back at all. *Ghosting* is the umbrella term for these communications lapses, which erode the confidence and tenacity of young job seekers.

Another pain point is *evergreen postings* for positions that are always open or typically have high turnover. Many young people don't recognize these as constantly advertised opportunities. That disconnect is only compounded when they receive no response to their application – and sometimes don't even get an automatic message acknowledging receipt. They're left in limbo, unsure where they stand regarding a position that remains open, with no information to help them improve or refine their job search. And if they move on and get an offer elsewhere, the employer may realize too late that a good prospect has been lost – not due to lack of interest, but from a simple failure to respond.

### How do we remove this barrier?

Naturally employers can't provide individual responses to every applicant. But with smart use of readily available technology, it's easy to deliver prompt, personalized replies and updates at every stage in the process. How well a company responds to inquiries and explains current hiring strategy speaks volumes about its culture and underlying values.

### Here's how MyStartr helps

We provide feedback mechanisms that employers can use to keep applicants informed – and that our team can leverage in helping young job seekers learn and develop. What's more, by matching well-prepared candidates to available positions, we accelerate employers' time-to-fill rate and compress the entire communications cycle.



**77%**

of job candidates say they've been ghosted after an employer interview.<sup>1</sup>

**27%**

of employers report that they do not ghost job seekers (which suggests that nearly three-quarters may have).<sup>1</sup>

**50%+**

of current job vacancies in Canada are posted by employers that are constantly recruiting versus hiring to fill specific positions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2022

*Click footnotes for details*



# 6

## Young people are looking for employers on social media platforms, often in vain.

Young job seekers tell us that alongside their personal networks, they primarily rely on social media to look for opportunities and advice in all areas of their lives – and to search for employment. From virtual portfolios to self-branded profile pages and even mini-resumes on TikTok, these young people are part of a technology-driven social revolution that’s blurring the lines between personal and working lives – which is why employers increasingly recognize they need to get onboard or risk being left behind.

Many employers have intensified their hiring efforts via social media (see graph), but employment websites continue to be the number one recruitment channel. In second place are personal and professional networks – which have become even more relevant post-pandemic, as job seekers take advantage of virtual connections forged while face-to-face meetings weren’t possible.

But most young people would prefer to interact with prospective employers via networks as mobile as they are – communicating instantly through video or simple DMs, with their personal profiles and talking points on dynamic display throughout the conversation. They have the social media savvy to make connections in all other areas of their lives; they expect today’s employers to be on the same channel.





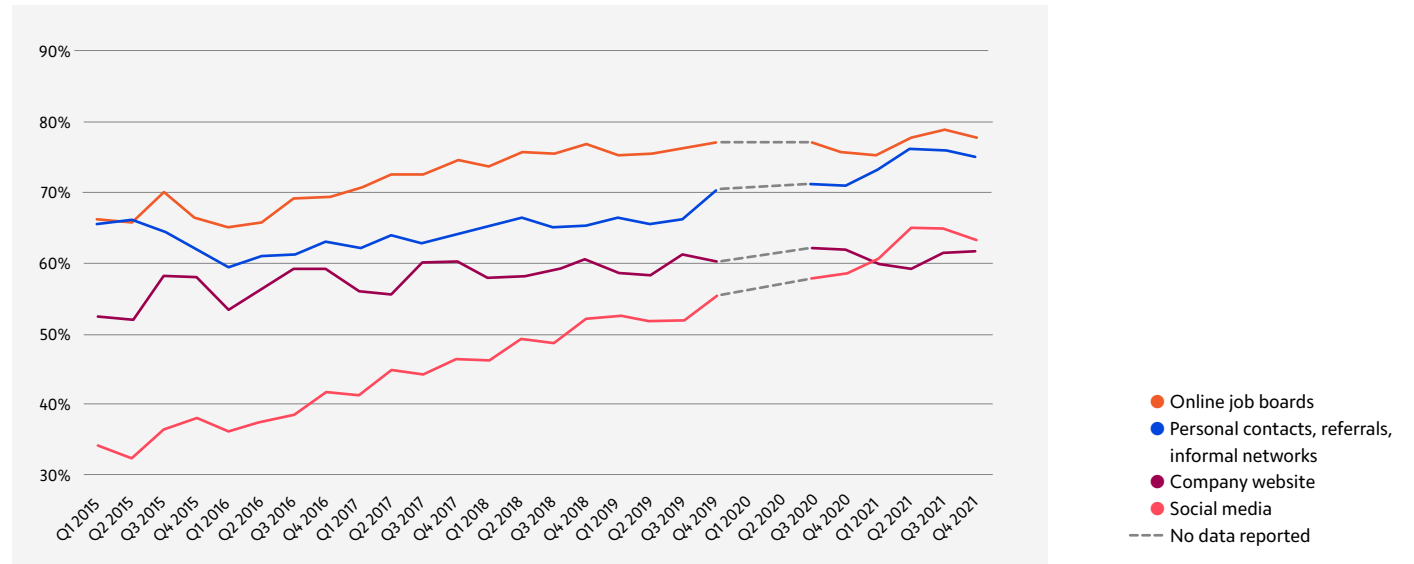
86%

of youth report using social media to search for employment.

MyStartr Youth Innovation Council, 2022

## Preferred recruitment channels of Canadian employers

Percentage of job vacancies filled by different strategies



Statistics Canada, 2022  
[Click for details](#)

### How do we remove this barrier?

Organizations need to engage with young potential candidates as they're doing with consumers, communities and other stakeholders: via channels that are more immediate and in ways that feel more authentic. Young people use social media platforms to sustain ongoing conversations about things that matter to them, free from the rules of traditional, often transactional exchanges. To gauge what these potential future employees have to offer, employers must be ready to meet them where they are.

### Here's how MyStartr helps

We deliver services shaped by young people's feedback – and backed by a brand and culture that reflect their fluency in social media and their readiness to explore new avenues of engagement. Hiring in this transformed social context isn't just about clicks, shares and follower counts; it's an invitation for young people to both teach and learn as you build mutually rewarding relationships.

# 7

## Young people don't (or can't) take advantage of employment service providers.

**Our research shows that many young people aren't drawn to, or are simply unaware of, youth employment service providers (ESPs). Instead of benefiting from these organizations' guidance, training and support, job seekers turn to their personal networks for information and advice. Even as the pandemic drove up youth unemployment rates, a growing number of young people chose to forgo ESPs as a source of help.**

A further issue is that ESP programming is not available to everyone. For instance, most ESPs lack the resources to help young people who are still in high school, even when they face extreme financial need. Other demographic groups require tailored help outside the scope of most providers. For many young people, exclusion from ESP programs only heightens the stress of lives already burdened by many challenges, including inadequate education, family responsibilities, health issues and homelessness. They run a high risk of slipping into emotional and financial circumstances that are even harder to escape.

### **How do we remove these barriers?**

ESPs need to raise their visibility by reaching out via social media and other channels to explain the kinds of help they offer and share relevant success stories. Employers who benefit from their services can amplify such initiatives, as can the government agencies, community organizations, not-for-profits and corporate donors that fund these invaluable contributors to the youth employment ecosystem.

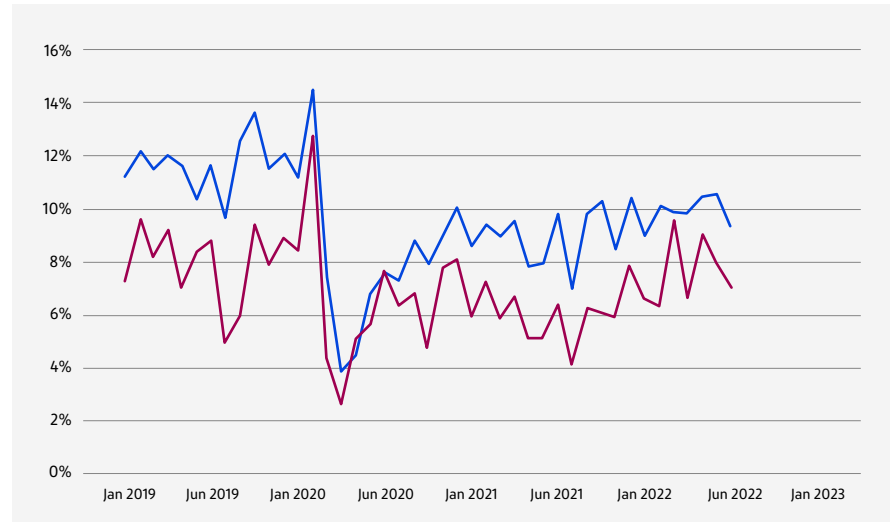


# 5%

of youth cite employment service providers as their number one job-search resource. And only 25% include ESPs in their top three choices.

MyStartr Youth Innovation Council, 2022

## Young part-time job seekers accessing public employment agencies



- All ages (15 and over)
- 15 to 24 years

Statistics Canada, 2022  
[Click for details](#)

### Here's how MyStartr helps

- We offer interview-preparation resources, tailored to specific sectors and employers, that ESPs can use in supporting and motivating young job seekers.
- We encourage our employer partners to provide candid, constructive post-interview feedback that ESPs can leverage as they continue working with applicants.
- By sharing interview opportunities across our employer coalition, we enable young ESP clients in our database to access as many interviews as necessary to land the right job.
- We complement ESP services with interview-prep sessions that help young people see – and show – how their strengths align with an employer's culture and values.
- More generally, we leverage our national reach to bring together ESPs, employers and other youth employment stakeholders in collaborative efforts addressing what is in fact a constellation of difficult, deep-rooted problems.

# 8

## What young job seekers need ahead of anything else is empathy.

The young people MyStarttr supports are looking for that first crucial step toward launching a career. But there's even more at stake than that. They want to discover their hidden strengths. They want to build their skills, along with their confidence. They want to find a place where they feel safe, respected and valued for who they are – where they feel they belong and can be hopeful for the future.

This first big step has always been challenging for many young job seekers, because of who they are, or what they look like, or where they live, or where their families came from. The pandemic only made things worse. Young people became isolated, disconnected from their communities, forced to make what connections they could in virtual spaces that often seemed far removed from the real world they'd left behind.

Now these young people are resuming their quest for employment with an additional two-year gap in resumes that were already lean on experience. What skills they gained in the past are dormant at best and may need to be rebuilt from scratch. Lack of work, and therefore of forward momentum, has

affected their physical and mental health. And a post-pandemic period that once promised recovery and new opportunities is now clouded by economic uncertainty. Hope has been eclipsed by caution and even fear.

These are complex, intertwined challenges affecting not only youth employment but all Canadians' social and economic wellbeing. In this context, we can't immediately help every young person seeking a path to a job make that first big step overnight. But what we can offer them right now is what they need first and foremost:

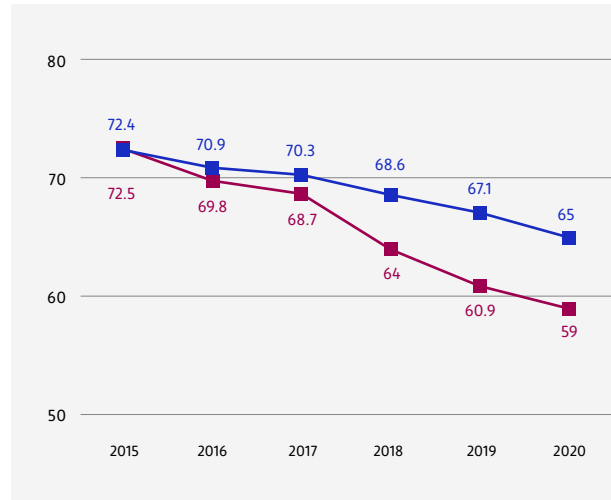
*Empathy.*



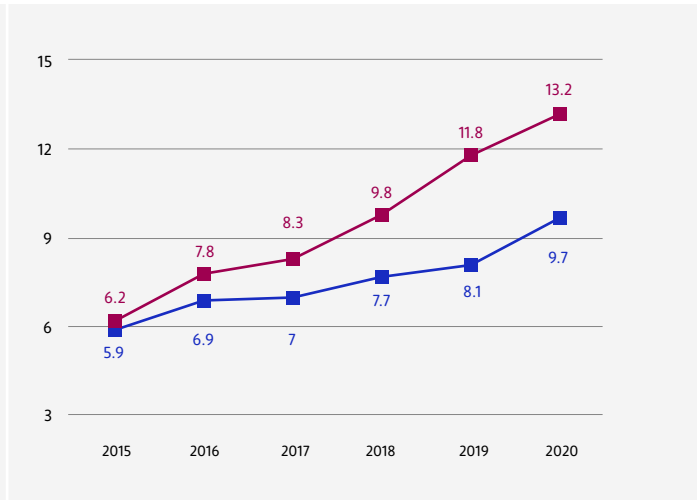


## Young Canadians' perception of their mental health

### Very good or excellent



### Fair or poor



- All ages (12 and up)
- 18 to 34 years

Statistics Canada, 2021  
(Values represent percentages of total population.)

[Click for details](#)

Young job seekers need us to understand what they're up against. To share their frustration. To support their shaky first efforts and not judge their missteps. To appreciate that hesitation, feeling intimidated by a daunting job market, does not equate to laziness or lack of ambition. The reality is far more complex than that.

So are the many factors that need to converge before we have a complete solution. But all of us who care about helping young people fulfill their potential can contribute in our own way. By listening more closely in interviews. By being more flexible in setting requirements and gauging qualifications. By being

more creative in our onboarding, and more sensitive in how we offer guidance as leaders and teachers, as coaches and mentors. And above all, by treating every young person just beginning their journey with the same insight, compassion and respect we hoped to receive at that point in our lives.

*MyStartr helps with all of this, inspired by the many partners who work alongside us.*

# What happens now?

We'd like your insights and help. And we offer ours in return.



**Together, we're removing the barriers that hold young people back – so everyone wins.**



**MyStartr collaborates with employers to better understand the challenges you face in hiring and developing young talent – so we can work together to address them. Here are some of the top priorities we've identified with our employer coalition partners:**

- A knowledge-sharing resource for gaining further insights into young job seekers' experience and perspectives.
- Data and analytics on youth employment in Canada – to guide employers in evolving their hiring practices and to help service providers improve their processes and support.
- Development of evidence-based best practices for hiring youth, with a particular focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- An action plan for engaging employers, service providers, governments and other stakeholders in leveraging these insights to shape policy and drive system-level change.

**MyStartr is ideally positioned to help reshape youth employment in Canada.**

- We're national. No other youth employment initiative has our cross-country scope and reach, supported by a network of locally focused partners.
- Our unique coalition brings together forward-looking employers who understand the importance of helping talented young people overcome barriers to employment.
- We're connected to young job seekers, and we've earned their trust. They share their insights because they see we're committed to transforming lives by creating opportunity.

# Let's get started!



Here's how employers and MyStartr supporters can help erase the barriers between young people and good jobs:

Join forces with like-minded companies in our employer coalition.

Partner with us on youth employment programs and hiring events.

Help fund MyStartr as we build on and accelerate our success.

Mentor young people and get to know how they see the world.

Build on our insights through your own conversations and research.

**And if you're a young job seeker, come and find your path to a better future!**



TO SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND LEARN HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF THE MYSTARTR COMMUNITY, CONNECT WITH US TODAY:

 [hello@mystartr.ca](mailto:hello@mystartr.ca)

 [MyStartr.ca](https://mystartr.ca)



## The back story

### Report methodology

**To create this report, we talked to a lot of young people. And many employers, too. Through surveys and conversations, in person and online.**

The young people whose insights we've sought can be hard to reach. Many feel they've been misrepresented, overshadowed or made invisible in mainstream employment programming, and it's hard to disagree. These young job seekers deserve to be heard and valued. When it comes to analyzing what's wrong with youth employment in Canada – and what employers could be doing differently to tap into a rich, undeveloped talent pool – we believe the most authoritative experts are the young people who live this experience every day. Without their perspectives, and the time and effort they put into sharing their stories, we could never have produced this report.

To connect with young Canadians and get their points of view, we use an approach called community-based participatory action: researchers, stakeholders and MyStarttr team members engage as equal partners, with everyone contributing their expertise, collaborating on key decisions and sharing ownership of the results. Over the past two years, we've sought input from young people and observed their employment journeys through a wide range of channels, activities and events.

## The back story

### Insight sources

InterviewME employment-readiness program  
**7,000+ registrants**

Employer hiring activities  
**223 participants**

Facilitated digital interviews  
**4,750 participants**

MyStartr Design Jams and Design Labs  
(with young people, employers, service providers)  
**130+ participants**

National youth surveys  
(on employment barriers, MyStartr program experience)  
**300+ participants**

**Plus:** ongoing collaborations with MyStartr coalition partners, other employers and youth employment service providers across Canada.

### Youth surveys

MyStartr Youth Innovation Council Survey:  
February–March 2022, via youth peer connections and social media – 73 responses.

MyStartr Activate Summit Survey: June 2022, conducted in person at youth employment and hiring event in Toronto – 64 responses

MyStartr Youth Innovation Council Survey:  
February–April 2021, via youth peer connections

We're happy to share the details behind all the data presented in this report, including from third-party sources such as Statistics Canada.

## The back story

### Sustaining MyStartr

MyStartr's hiring program is funded by Employment and Social Development Canada through its Youth Employment and Skills Strategy. We also receive significant funding from Indigenous Services Canada. And we receive generous support from The Co-operators as part of the company's Pathways to Employability (P2E) Initiative aimed at connecting youth to meaningful employment and opportunities.

Our services are delivered directly by the MyStartr team and through partnerships with community organizations across Canada, notably Société de Développement Social, Regina Work Prep Centre and the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

As we continue to develop new services to facilitate youth employment and employers' talent development, we welcome direct investments from our MyStartr employer coalition partners. For these leading companies, MyStartr delivers value as a custom-tailored, cost-effective way to recruit engaged, talented and well-prepared prospective employees across Canada.

### Powered by MaRS

The MyStartr initiative and its employer coalition are managed by MaRS Partner Solutions, which helps drive innovation among corporate, public-sector, community and philanthropic organizations that have a shared commitment to creating positive social, economic and environmental impact – sustainably and at scale.

MyStartr and its various platforms are part of a broader national talent strategy spearheaded by the MaRS Discovery District, North America's largest urban innovation hub, which brings together innovators to grow the economy and help create a better future through solving real problems for real people.