

**EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA DETAILED ACTION PLAN**  
to the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General Performance Audit of *Access to Benefits for Hard to Reach Populations*.

Report Ref. No.	OAG Recommendation	Management Response	Description of Final Expected Outcome/Result	Expected Final Completion Date	Key Interim Milestones (Description/Dates)	Responsible Organization/ Point of Contact (Name, Position, Tel #)	<i>Indicator of Achievement (For PACP Committee Use Only)</i>
		<p><i>The departmental Management Response (MR) will be included in the OAG’s audit report that is tabled to Parliament and posted on the OAG’s website. The response must clearly indicate, in no more than 200 words, whether the entity agrees or disagrees with the recommendation. If entity agrees, the response should describe specific actions it intends to take and their timing. If entity disagrees, the response should state the reasons.</i></p>	<p><i>The action plan will be provided to the Public Accounts Committee (PACP) within six months of the audit being tabled, or when feasible, prior to the hearing, should the organization be invited to appear before PACP to discuss the findings of an audit. The detailed action plan will be published on the PACP’s website.</i></p>				
<p>Para 31</p>	<p>The Canada Revenue Agency, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Statistics Canada should establish a joint prioritization, planning, monitoring, and reporting process to improve how they measure the take-up of benefits. This should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessing available and specific data holdings on hard-to-reach populations</li> <li>• defining and implementing actions to collect additional data on specific hard-to-reach populations</li> <li>• improving the use of data in measuring benefit take-up and the sources of gaps in benefit take-up</li> </ul>	<p>ESDC agrees with this recommendation</p> <p>To reduce the number of vulnerable individuals not receiving benefits, Service Canada introduced Reaching All Canadians (RAC) in 2020 - a horizontal initiative to make service delivery improvements across its service channels and benefit programs, specifically to increase benefit program uptake, and eliminate program and service delivery barriers.</p> <p>The RAC initiative advances measures in four areas: simplification, direct reach, inclusion, and promotion/awareness of our benefit programs. At the same time, RAC seeks to improve our understanding of the populations and individuals who are not connecting with federal benefits.</p> <p>The Government estimates overall national benefit uptake rates using the Census and other broad socio-economic data to understand the scope of the challenge and the long term trends at play. However, identifying specific individuals not in receipt of benefits will always be a challenge. Data on some hard-to-reach populations, particularly those who do not interact with government, is incomplete and in some cases does not exist.</p> <p>ESDC will therefore continue work with the CRA to identify all available data, including data available through the RAC initiative, to gain more insight into hard-to-reach populations and improve our understanding of potential gaps in benefit uptake.</p>	<p>ESDC, CRA and Statistics Canada have aligned their approaches for the prioritization, planning, and monitoring of the take-up of benefits for hard to reach populations.</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p><b>Q4 2022-2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESDC, CRA and Statistics Canada to formalize inter-departmental governance, including the initiation and development of joint data strategies to address key data issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q4 2022-2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and review the data and methodology currently used to measure benefit take-up among hard-to-reach populations.</li> <li>• Create measurement and data acquisition plans by program for hard-to-reach populations determined to be in-scope.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q1 2023-2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize an assessment of current practices, methodologies and data used in the measurement of the take-up of benefits and identify specific potential improvement to measurements by program.</li> </ul>	<p>ESDC - Catherine Adam</p> <p>Senior Assistant Deputy Minister</p> <p>Strategic and Service Policy Branch</p>	

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					<p><b>Q3 2023-2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement revised methodologies for measuring benefit take-up by program, including measures to improve processes and establish a plan for continuous and consistent reporting of the take-up of benefits.</li> </ul>		
<p>Para 45</p>	<p>To better understand the effectiveness of outreach approaches, the Canada Revenue Agency and Employment and Social Development Canada should develop and implement consistent results-based performance measures for targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations.</p>	<p>ESDC agrees with this recommendation</p> <p>Reaching All Canadians includes specific initiatives aimed at improving our understanding of the populations and individuals who are not connecting with federal benefits. This information helps us to further reduce the barriers faced by these hard-to-reach clients through a coordinated, evidence-based approach.</p> <p>Building on this, ESDC will work with the CRA to develop and implement consistent results-based performance measures to better understand the effectiveness of outreach approaches.</p>	<p>ESDC has an improved capacity for measuring the effectiveness of outreach approaches.</p> <p>Improved consistency among ESDC and CRA outreach performance measures where program roles intersect.</p>	<p><b>TBD</b></p>	<p><b>Q4 2022-2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an ESDC working group (CSB, SSPB, BISB, ISSD, LB) to review and refine Reaching All Canadians (RAC) key performance indicators (KPIs) and develop a pilot project for RAC activities to measure program effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q1 2023-2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize KPIs</li> <li>Establish monitoring and reporting processes for new/revised KPIs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q2 2023-2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the KPI pilot for select Outreach and Reaching All Canadians activities.</li> <li>Collect and analyze data.</li> </ul>	<p>ESDC – Christine McDowell</p> <p>Assistant Deputy Minister</p> <p>Citizen Service Branch (CSB)</p>	

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					<p><b>Q2 2024-2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish benchmarks.</li> <li>Develop a status report on pilot implementation</li> <li>With CRA, develop and implement a plan to produce standard KPIs</li> </ul> <p><b>Q1 2024-2025 onwards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate KPIs into ESDC Outreach and RAC activities.</li> <li>Monitor revised KPIs for first full year.</li> <li>Share experiences and revised KPIs with CRA colleagues and further integrate/coordinate performance measures over time.</li> </ul>		
<p>Para 59</p>	<p>To improve the integration and effectiveness of targeted outreach, the Canada Revenue Agency and Employment and Social Development Canada should collaborate to establish a seamless client service experience to address the needs of those requiring a high level of support to access benefits.</p>	<p>ESDC agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Over the past two years, ESDC has been employing various service interventions at the program level to increase benefit take-up. In 2020, Reaching All Canadians was introduced as a horizontal approach, across benefit programs, to support Canadians most at-risk of not receiving benefits.</p> <p>Benefit programs involving more than one federal department or agency are particularly challenging for at risk clients to navigate. ESDC will therefore continue to work with the CRA and other departments to ensure a simple and seamless service experience, particularly for those clients who require a high level of support to access benefits.</p>	<p>ESDC and CRA will have implemented concrete approaches for ensuring a seamless client service experience for hard to reach clients accessing the benefits within the scope of the audit.</p>	<p><b>TBD</b></p>	<p><b>Q3 2022-2023 onwards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the ESDC/ISC/CRA Inter-departmental CCB Uptake Working Group to identify and collaborate on pilot projects to increase benefit uptake while taking the OAG’s findings and recommendations into consideration when evaluating new initiatives or approaches.</li> <li>Establish an ESDC-CRA-ISC Outreach working group to discuss increased collaboration/coordination on outreach activities, and analyze the service flow for various common</li> </ul>	<p>ESDC – Christine McDowell</p> <p>Assistant Deputy Minister</p> <p>Citizen Service Branch (CSB)</p> <p>Catherine Adam</p> <p>Senior Assistant Deputy Minister</p>	

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					<p>client groups to determine gaps and propose solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing ESDC-CRA senior management bilateral meetings will include increasing outreach collaboration and developing a seamless client service experience for those requiring a high level of support as regular agenda items.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q2 2023-2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ESDC-CRA-ISC Outreach working group will, based on input from the ESDC/ISC/CRA Inter-departmental CCB Uptake Working Group, and in consideration of the OAG recommendations, prepare a final report for senior management covering opportunities to improve collaboration, address service gaps for those requiring a high level of service, and implement options for ensuring a seamless service experience for hard to reach clients.</li> <li>ESDC and CRA senior management to determine recommendations to be implemented by their programs.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic and Service Policy Branch</p>	

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					<p><b>Q3 2023-24 Onwards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved working group recommendations are implemented in relevant ESDC and CRA programs.</li> </ul>		