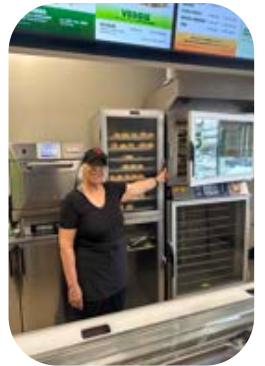


Annual Impact Report

2025-26



Letter from the Chief Executive Officer & Board Chair

For the past several years, we have talked about transformation—imagining what was possible and preparing for the future. In 2026, we did more than talk about it. We lived it.

This year brought new challenges as we transitioned to the Integrated Employment Services model. Like many organizations across the province, we had to learn, adapt, and respond quickly in a changing environment. At times, it was difficult. But we stayed grounded in our purpose, guided by one question: how can we better serve the people who rely on us?

Our clients remained at the centre of everything we did. Their resilience and determination reminded us why this work matters. Because of that shared commitment, we have emerged stronger, more responsive, and better prepared for the future.

This year was one of growth and meaningful progress. We continued to create pathways to employment, support inclusive workplaces, and contribute to stronger communities. We invested in our people, strengthened our systems, and built deeper partnerships. Internally, we enhanced our structure, expanded professional development, and modernized processes, all while fostering a culture rooted in respect, collaboration, and accountability.

We also made important strides in accessibility, inclusion, and equity. From expanding services for Francophone clients to supporting racialized youth, mental health inclusion, and safer workplaces, we remained focused on reducing barriers and creating opportunity for all.

Our role in the community also continued to evolve. Through partnerships with Thriving African Families and the Sudbury Women's Centre, we have expanded our ability to support and mentor non-profit organizations as they build capacity and strengthen their impact. What began as a focus on strengthening Spark has grown into an opportunity to support others in their own development.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, Board, volunteers, funders, and partners. We are deeply grateful for their continued support and belief in our mission.

As we look ahead, we do so with excitement. In 2026, Spark will celebrate its 40th anniversary, a meaningful milestone that invites reflection on how far we have come and where we are going. The future will bring challenges, but also opportunity, and we are ready for both.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to our outgoing Board Chair, Jim Burke, for his exceptional leadership and commitment. His guidance through multiple strategic plans has helped shape the strong foundation we continue to build on today. His impact on Spark will be lasting, and we are grateful for all he has given to this organization.

Together, we are building stronger workplaces, stronger organizations, stronger communities, and brighter futures.


Chantal Makela
CEO


Jim Burke
CHAIR

About Spark

CONNECTING PEOPLE. BUILDING FUTURES.

Rooted in the belief that meaningful work drives personal and community well-being, Spark Employment Services plays a vital role in helping individuals find not just jobs, but opportunities for growth, confidence, and long-term success.



MISSION

To provide quality, accessible services responsive to the needs of job seekers & employers through individualized solutions & mutually beneficial partnerships.



VALUES

Inclusivity, Accountability, Compassion, Respect, and Collaboration.



VISION

A dynamic & sustainable community.

Spark Employment Services is built on the belief that meaningful employment has the power to transform lives, strengthen workplaces, and create thriving communities. Every interaction is guided by respect, collaboration, and a commitment to helping people achieve their full potential.

By taking the time to understand each person's unique strengths, aspirations, and circumstances, Spark provides individualized support that encourages confidence, independence, and long-term success. The organization works alongside clients every step of the way, helping them navigate opportunities, overcome challenges, and move toward their goals.

Strong partnerships are central to Spark's success. By working closely with employers, community organizations, educators, and funding partners, Spark helps create responsive employment solutions that benefit both job seekers and the local workforce while remaining aligned with provincial and federal priorities.

Accessibility, inclusion, and continuous improvement are woven into every aspect of Spark's work. Guided by a "no wrong door" philosophy and a culture of learning, the organization continually adapts its programs and services to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Spark believes that lasting impact begins with people. By investing in individuals, strengthening partnerships, and creating opportunities for success, Spark continues to build a stronger, more connected, and more resilient Greater Sudbury

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Spark Employment Services is located on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Atikameksheng Anishinabek, and that the large area we consider Greater Sudbury also exists within and adjacent to the territorial lands of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Sagamok Anishinabek, who are part of the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850.

We recognize and deeply respect the enduring presence and contributions of Indigenous Peoples to this land, including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. As we work to support individuals on their employment journeys, we remain committed to learning from Indigenous ways of knowing and fostering meaningful, respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.

As a non-profit organization, Spark Employment Services is committed to lead the agency to action & adopt recommendation 92 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to Action by ensuring Indigenous people have access to equitable jobs, training & education opportunities and will continue to ensure our daily work supports other local businesses to do the same. We are grateful to live and work on this land and acknowledge our shared responsibility to advance reconciliation and equity in all that we do.

Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Through a client-centered approach, the Board of Directors of Spark Employment Services leads the agency towards our Vision: A Dynamic & Sustainable Community.

With the expert support of staff and our focus on the following priorities, our clients will succeed.

Key Goal #1

GROWTH & EXPANSION

Expand and individualize programs and services while further developing sustainable, diverse funding

OBJECTIVE

Deepen the impact of current programs through analyses and optimize offerings to increase client reach by **20%** and expand by building team capacity, securing 3-5 funding sources.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Expand program offerings with the development of new workshops and tailored services.
2. Conduct a Market Needs Assessment and Skill Gap Analysis and optimize based on results.
3. Build Team Capacity.
4. Develop and implement flexible program delivery model.
5. Enhance fundraising activities to supplement grant funding.

Key Goal #2

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Empower clients through innovative, evidence-based service delivery to enhance workforce development

OBJECTIVE

Increase client employment success rates by **20%** through data-driven service improvements and personalized career coaching.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Build a sustainable quality improvement system that drives programmatic growth and improvements.
2. Identify and prioritize professional certifications and designations relevant to each role's responsibilities.
3. Increase client competencies needed for the current and emerging workplace.
4. Embrace technology and innovate to maximize processes.
5. Collaborate through research & innovation.
6. Provide solutions to develop leadership skills.

Key Goal #3

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Develop and build partnerships to achieve social and economic advancements

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen strategic partnerships by establishing **five** collaborations with community organizations and employers to enhance client success through wrap-around support services.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

1. Incorporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusive (DEI) practices to reflect our community.
2. Cultivate new partnerships to increase access to wrap around services.
3. Increase client success with the development of a mentorship program.
4. Increase donor engagement and diversify funding.
5. Increase employment readiness.

“

Mike was an amazing teacher, very patient and down to earth. He made learning not so hard and fun! I consider him my mentor now, as I look up to him. He has helped me in so many ways to not only complete the course and get a certificate, as well helping me get a laptop and start my new course, EDGE+, which I'm very happy he'll be teaching a bit of. I think a teacher like Mike who cares should teach more courses, I'd take them!! Mike was an inspiration and I'll never forget his help!

—Tara Birch

The Spark *Philosophy*

At Spark, we believe that *everyone* deserves the opportunity to thrive in a dynamic and sustainable community.

Our work is rooted in the conviction that meaningful employment is a cornerstone of individual and collective well-being, and that every person brings unique strengths, experiences, and aspirations to their journey.

We are committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive, and accessible services that empower individuals and employers alike. Our approach is strength-based and client-centered, grounded in mutual respect, compassion, and accountability. Whether someone walks through our doors seeking their first job, a new career path, or the right candidate for their organization, they are met with dignity, purpose, and a clear commitment to support. Guided by a “no wrong door” philosophy, we ensure every person receives a pathway forward, no matter where they begin.

We operate as a learning organization, continuously adapting to meet the changing needs of our community. Learning is not just a responsibility; it is an ongoing practice that deepens our



impact, strengthens our culture, and ensures we grow alongside the community we serve. Through innovation, collaboration, and evidence-informed practice, we strive to remove barriers, build skills, and foster meaningful connections.

This work is strengthened and sustained by the leadership of Spark’s Board of Directors. They champion our values, ensure accountability, and help create the conditions that allow our team to innovate, collaborate, and serve with integrity. Their commitment to responsible stewardship of resources, relationships, and organizational vision helps Spark remain responsive, resilient, and aligned with the evolving needs of the people we support.



At the heart of Spark is the belief that when people are supported to realize their potential, entire communities grow stronger. This philosophy shapes how we serve, how we partner, how we lead, and with the guidance of our board, it continues to be the foundation of everything we do.

Our Commitment to **DEI**

Creating equitable pathways to employment **for all**.



DIVERSITY

Embracing differences



EQUITY

Ensuring fair access



INCLUSION

Building a sense of belonging



Our approach is rooted in meeting people where they are. This means offering personalized, culturally responsive supports that respect each individual's identity, experiences, and goals. We strive to create a welcoming environment where every client feels seen, heard, and valued.

Equity is at the heart of our service delivery. We understand that equal access does not always result in equal outcomes, and we are intentional in adapting our programs and supports to meet the unique needs of each client. This includes removing practical barriers, advocating for inclusive hiring practices with employers, and ensuring our services are accessible in both design and delivery.

Internally, Spark is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion among our staff and shareholders. We invest in ongoing learning, reflection, and dialogue to strengthen our understanding of equity and to challenge biases that may exist within systems and structures. We believe that this work is continuous and requires both accountability and action.

Our commitment to DEI extends beyond our organization and into the broader community. We actively seek collaborations that amplify diverse voices and contribute to a more inclusive local workforce. By working alongside community organizations, employers, and clients, we aim to drive meaningful change that benefits the community as a whole.



DEI is not a standalone initiative.
It is embedded in everything we do.

We remain committed to learning, evolving, and taking action to ensure that **everyone** has the opportunity to succeed.

The Spark *Impact*

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.



Spark is proud to partner with SWC through a strategic collaboration formalized in 2025. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to building stronger, more responsive services for the community while investing in long-term organizational sustainability and leadership excellence.



STRONGER LEADERSHIP

Under shared leadership, Spark and SWC benefit from a unified strategic vision while maintaining their distinct identities, mandates, and areas of expertise.



INNOVATION & IMPROVEMENT

Through collaboration, we exchange best practices, explore new approaches, and identify emerging community needs to drive continuous growth.



ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY

Stronger alignment helps reduce barriers and creates more seamless, coordinated, and holistic support for individuals navigating complex challenges.



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Together, Spark and SWC build deeper community connections, respond to local priorities, and contribute to a more integrated and inclusive service system.

THE VILLAGE SQUARE PROGRAM

The Village Square Program creates space for connection, healing, and growth for Black families in Greater Sudbury. Supported by a \$300,000 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, the program is led by Thriving African Families and offers culturally responsive parenting workshops, cooking classes, and trauma-informed healing circles that centre culture and community strengths.

Spark Employment Services plays a key role as the organizational mentor, providing guidance, capacity-building, and strategic support to bring this vision to life. By working alongside Thriving African Families, Spark is helping strengthen community-led solutions that foster long-term wellbeing and meaningful, lasting impact.



SEEING IS BELIEVING TOURS

Spark Employment Services was proud to participate in the United Way Centraide North East Ontario “Seeing is Believing” Tours, giving community leaders and partners a firsthand look at the impact of our client-centered employment and training services.

- ✓ **Showcased our full range of services**, from career counselling and skills training to job development and barrier-reducing supports.
- ✓ **Shared real stories** of transformation and the power of meaningful employment support.
- ✓ **Built awareness** of the challenges job seekers face and the importance of accessible, compassionate services.

These tours foster greater understanding and strengthen the partnerships that help our community thrive.

NATIONAL NETWORKING DAY FOR JOB DEVELOPERS

Job developers, co-op coordinators, and employer engagement professionals from Greater Sudbury gathered at Collège Boréal for a day of learning, with Spark and the Canadian Job Development Network leading the session on employer engagement and workforce development.

- ✓ **Strengthened employer engagement** and built stronger connections between organizations and employers.
- ✓ **Explored practical strategies** and exchanged innovative solutions to local challenges.
- ✓ **Shared insights** that will shape the future of workforce development in Greater Sudbury.

This event fostered stronger connections between organizations and deepened relationships with employers, reinforcing a collective commitment to building a more responsive and inclusive workforce.

2025 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Spark Employment Services was honoured to be nominated for the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce 2025 Business Excellence Awards in the Non-Profit/Charity Excellence category, recognizing its commitment to supporting individuals and strengthening the local workforce. While not selected as the winner, the nomination highlighted the impact of its work and placed Spark among a strong group of community leaders. The organization also congratulates the Junction Creek Stewardship Committee and all award recipients celebrated at the event.



Spark Events

Community-Wide Job Fair

The Community-Wide Job Fair at the Sudbury Community Arena brought together job seekers, employers, and community partners, creating meaningful connections between local talent and employment opportunities.

More than 2,000 job seekers attended, ready with résumés and eager to explore local opportunities—highlighting both the depth of talent in Greater Sudbury and the demand for meaningful employer connections.

Spark Employment Services co-organized the event with community partners, creating a space for direct engagement, career exploration, and progress toward employment. Strong turnout and engagement reflected the value of collaborative, community-driven workforce development.

Employers actively connected with candidates, conducted interviews, and identified potential hires, demonstrating a



shared commitment to strengthening the local workforce.

The Community-Wide Job Fair showcases the power of partnership in advancing employment, inclusion, and opportunity across Greater Sudbury.



2000+
attendees



86
employers

THANK YOU TO THE EVENT SPONSORS



**Sudbury
& Manitoulin**
Workforce Planning
Planification en
main-d'œuvre



THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT PARTNERS



Spark Up Your Summer!

On August 20, 2025, Spark hosted the second annual Spark Up Your Summer, a free outdoor community event held in the parking lot of 435 Notre Dame Avenue (Centre Nolin Center). The event has quickly become a signature summer gathering that brings together job seekers, employers, community organizations, and families for a day focused on connection, opportunity, and fun.



“Spark Up Your Summer is our unique way of blending business with seasonal fun. It’s a creative initiative designed to bring job seekers, community partners, and employers together, making it easier than ever to connect, collaborate and grow.”

- CHANTAL MAKELA, CEO
Spark Employment Services



400+
attendees



20+
participating organizations

A DAY OF OPPORTUNITIES



Over 20 employers and community service providers, offered career opportunities, access to local supports, and the opportunity to build meaningful professional connections.



Hands-on workshops supported every stage of the job search, including sessions focused on self-discovery, career planning, and a Virtual Reality Career Exploration station.



Guests enjoyed food trucks, live DJ entertainment, games, prizes, raffles, and a dunk tank featuring local leaders, all supporting Spark’s free employment services.



Free interview clothing provided by Sudbury Women’s Centre helped job seekers feel confident, prepared, and ready to make a strong first impression.

BRINGING SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the summer, Spark delivered 5 public awareness and outreach campaigns, bringing employment support directly into the community. These drop-in sessions allowed community members to access job search support, career guidance, skill-building opportunities, and learn about Spark’s Help Wanted Club, all while enjoying a welcoming summer atmosphere.



E.D.G.E.+ Annual Conference 2026

The E.D.G.E.+ Annual Conference 2026 created space for deeper conversation around what it truly means to build inclusive workplaces and communities. Over two days, employers, service providers, and community partners came together to examine not only what inclusion looks like, but how it is practiced, challenged, and sustained.



MORE THAN A CONFERENCE—A MOVEMENT



POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS

Ideas were explored, perspectives were shared, and important questions were asked with curiosity, respect, and a shared desire for inclusive change.



ONGOING & RELATIONAL WORK

DEI is not a checklist or a one-time event. It's ongoing, relational, and deeply human, requiring intention, reflection, and a commitment to continuous growth.



DIVERSE VOICES, STRONGER IMPACT

Speakers, panelists, and partners shared honest insights on progress and challenges, reminding us that meaningful change happens together.



FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Participants left with tools, resources, and renewed motivation to take meaningful steps toward creating more accessible and inclusive spaces.

“

“The EDGE+ Conference is really important to our community because it brings so many people together. Not only are individuals coming from different industries and organizations, but they're learning accessibility and diversity skills that they can implement within their office spaces.”

- Jelise Keating
EDGE+ Conference Attendee



150+
attendees



14+
diverse DEI
topics explored



The EDGE+ Program is generously funded in part by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities

Canada



Getting to Better: *How to Lead through Disruption*

Spark Employment Services proudly hosted its second annual leadership event, Getting to Better: How to Lead Through Disruption, bringing together leaders, professionals, caregivers, and community members for a day of learning, reflection, and connection.

In collaboration with Canadian Mental Health Association Sudbury/Manitoulin and Stephen de Groot (Brivia), and with the generous support of our sponsors and community partners, we delivered three impactful sessions designed to equip participants with practical tools, fresh perspectives, and renewed confidence to navigate today's complex and rapidly changing environment.

More than 250 participants attended across all sessions, reflecting a strong and growing appetite in our community for conversations around leadership, resilience, and well-being. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, we were also able to offer the evening session at no cost to parents, caregivers, and educators, removing financial barriers and ensuring broader access to meaningful support and dialogue.

This event was more than a professional development opportunity. It was a direct response to an urgent and evolving need within our community. As individuals and organizations continue to face disruption, uncertainty, and increased pressures, creating spaces for connection, shared learning, and collective growth is more important than ever.

The impact of this event extends well beyond the sessions themselves. The ideas shared, the conversations sparked, and the connections formed will continue to ripple outward, strengthening individuals, supporting families, and enhancing the capacity of our community to adapt and thrive.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, partners, and every participant who contributed to the success of this event. Your support and engagement are helping to build a stronger, more resilient community.



250+

attendees engaged in
meaningful discussions



Thank you to
our Event
Sponsors



Employment Services

Empowering People. Strengthening Workforces. **Building our Community.**

At Spark Employment Services, every journey is different. Whether someone is exploring their first job, changing careers, or seeking the right candidate, we provide personalized support that helps people move forward with confidence and purpose.

This year, Spark supported clients at every stage of their journey while maintaining a strong focus on inclusion and accessibility for those facing barriers to employment. Through ongoing collaboration with local employers and community partners, we continue to connect talent with opportunity and contribute to a stronger, more resilient workforce across Greater Sudbury.



A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH



Personalized coaching that meets people where they are.



Innovative tools to explore options and plan for success.



Practical workshops to build skills and confidence.



Strong partnerships that connect talent with opportunity.

BY THE NUMBERS



675

ES clients served



1,115

self-directed clients served



192

found employment/ career path



85

secured training/ education path

OUR COMMITMENT

We remain dedicated to removing barriers by addressing the real challenges individuals face and creating meaningful pathways to employment that align with their strengths and goals. Through inclusive, client-centered services, we empower individuals to succeed while strengthening the local workforce and contributing to a more resilient and thriving community.



Employment Programs & Services

Help Wanted Club (HWC)

Spark continued to support job seekers this year through the Help Wanted Club, a free, drop-in workshop series designed to provide practical, accessible employment support in a welcoming environment.

Held weekly, the sessions offered hands-on guidance in résumé development, interview preparation, job search strategies, and networking. With support from Employment Coaches, participants gained the tools and confidence needed to take meaningful steps toward employment.

The continued strong participation reflects the ongoing demand for flexible, community-based services that meet people where they are. The Help Wanted Club remains an important part of Spark's approach, providing immediate support while helping individuals build skills, confidence, and connections.



183

Help Wanted Club workshops delivered

Better Jobs Ontario (BJO)

In 2025, Spark continued to support clients through Better Jobs Ontario (BJO), helping individuals access training for in-demand careers through financial and personalized support.

Participants explored career goals, identified training opportunities, and developed plans aligned with local labour market needs. The program helps remove financial barriers by supporting costs such as tuition, books, transportation, and other essential expenses.

Interest in BJO remained strong, particularly among individuals seeking to transition into high-demand sectors like health care, skilled trades, and technology. Participants gained new skills, credentials, and confidence to pursue meaningful employment.

Better Jobs Ontario is a key part of Spark's work, supporting career transitions and helping individuals build a more stable and sustainable future.



46

BJO applications supported

Employment *Programs & Services*

CareerLabsVR

CareerLabs VR offers a creative way to explore careers through immersive, hands-on experience. Using virtual reality technology, clients can step into a variety of occupations and gain a realistic sense of different work environments, job tasks, and career pathways.



EXPLORE CAREERS IN A NEW WAY

Clients can experience a wide range of occupations in immersive virtual environments, gaining insight into real work settings, daily tasks, and career pathways before making decisions about their future.



MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

This interactive approach allows individuals to explore options they may not have previously considered, helping to broaden their understanding of the labour market and make informed decisions about training, education and employment goals.



BUILD CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS

CareerLabsVR encourages curiosity, confidence, and engagement throughout the career exploration process. Whether someone is just beginning their journey or considering a career change, the tool provides valuable insight to guide next steps.



INNOVATIVE, ACCESSIBLE, IMPACTFUL

As part of Spark's commitment to innovation and accessibility, CareerLabsVR enhances traditional employment services by offering a dynamic and practical way for clients to explore opportunities and move forward with confidence.



I came to Spark Employment because I needed assistance, and they truly delivered. I first attended their Spark Up Your Summer event, which was welcoming and made me feel part of the community. From there, Spark helped me with my resume and provided continuous support, which boosted my confidence and helped me secure a successful job.

Moving to a new community isn't easy, but Spark was there for me every step of the way. Their team was supportive, responsive, and always available when I needed help. I'm grateful for everything they've done, and I plan to continue working with them for ongoing support even after employment. They make you feel like you're never alone.

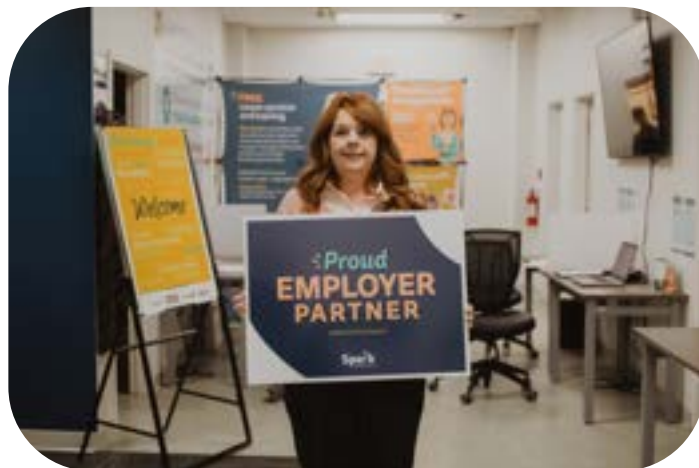
—Veronia Lamar

Employer Services

Supporting Employers. Connecting Talent. Strengthening our Community.

In 2025–2026, Spark Employment Services continued to support local employers in navigating recruitment and building strong, inclusive workplaces. Acting as a trusted partner, Spark works closely with businesses to understand their unique hiring needs and connect them with qualified candidates.

Through a range of no-cost services, employers receive support with job postings, candidate matching, wage subsidies, and inclusive hiring practices. Spark's team remains responsive and flexible, adapting its approach to help employers find the right fit quickly and effectively.



DRIVING WORKFORCE SUCCESS



Tailored recruitment support to find the right fit.



Support beyond recruitment to ensure long-term success.



Financial & hiring incentives to help reduce barriers.



Building strong partnerships that strengthen our local economy.

BY THE NUMBERS



60
client
placements



54
employer
partnerships

BUILDING BETTER WORKPLACES

Together, these efforts reflect Spark's commitment to being more than a recruitment resource. By building long-term partnerships with employers, Spark helps create sustainable employment outcomes that benefit both businesses and job seekers. This collaborative approach strengthens the local labour market and supports economic growth across the community.



Employer Programs & Services

Job Development

Creating meaningful employment opportunities starts with understanding both people and businesses, and in 2025–2026, Spark did just that, connecting job seekers and employers through a responsive, relationship-driven approach to Job Development.

- ✓ Support job seekers with resume and interview preparation, workplace readiness, and confidence building.
- ✓ Partner with employers to understand their unique hiring needs.
- ✓ Identify and connect the right talent to the right opportunities.
- ✓ Collaborate with local businesses across different sectors to enhance opportunities for clients, including those facing barriers to employment.

Job Development is about creating connections that lead to real opportunities. Spark remains proud to play a key role in bringing job seekers and employers together to build a stronger, more inclusive workforce.



Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG)

This year, the Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) continued to support employers in strengthening their teams through targeted training and upskilling. Through the program, Spark Employment Services helped local businesses access funding to invest in employee development, reducing financial barriers to skills training. Spark supported employers throughout the process, including guidance on eligibility, applications, and required documentation.

COJG-funded training this year supported a wide range of workforce needs, including technical upskilling, certification upgrades, workplace safety training, and leadership development. Employers across sectors used the funding to respond to changing industry demands and ensure their teams remained skilled, capable, and competitive.

For many organizations, the grant enabled training initiatives that may otherwise have been delayed, while employees benefited from opportunities to build practical, career-enhancing skills.

In early 2026, the former Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) officially transitioned to the Ontario Job Grant (OJG). While Spark previously supported employers through the COJG application and administration process, we are no longer involved in the delivery or administration of this program. The Ontario Job Grant (OJG) is now administered directly by the Government of Ontario and continues to provide funding to support employer-led training for both new and existing employees.

Employer Programs & Services

Open Hire Events

Open Hire Events continued to create direct connections between employers and job seekers in 2025–2026, providing opportunities for immediate interviews, recruitment, and hiring. Hosted in partnership with local employers, these events help streamline the hiring process by bringing qualified candidates and hiring managers together in one accessible location.

Throughout the year, Spark supported employers in organizing targeted hiring events across a variety of sectors. Job seekers had the opportunity to meet employers face-to-face, learn about available positions, and in some cases secure interviews or job offers on the spot.

By reducing barriers to recruitment and creating meaningful opportunities for connection, Open Hire Events remain an effective tool for addressing workforce needs while helping individuals take the next step toward employment. Through these events, Spark continues to strengthen relationships between employers, job seekers, and the broader community.



Impact Story

My name is Garth Walters, and this is my story. A success story. There's still more to go within my story.

To be successful, you have to take a chance and do different things. I started the program in May with Ms. Kim and everybody, I did the workshops and I did the work that had to be done. It looked like it was going to be productive.

I had a counselor who took a chance, had faith, pushed me forward and had my back. I then started a position at Kelly Lake Building Supplies in August. I had some obstacles, but I got over them.

With the help of Chi, I was actually able to achieve a lot of success, which turned out for me to be a blessing. Right now, I'm on the way I'm able to provide for myself. I'm standing on my own.

I was receiving assistance from Ontario Works which I no longer need, and now my success story is only going to be getting better. I'm thankful that I was here and able to have the people at Spark be behind me, push me and have faith in me.





Before connecting with Spark Employment, one of our biggest challenges was finding reliable employees. Our work is physically demanding, and recruiting was very difficult. Through Spark's programs, things have gone much more smoothly, both financially and in terms of company morale.

The team at Spark is fantastic to work with. They're outgoing, cooperative, and really tailor their approach to our needs. They don't waste time sending candidates who aren't a good fit, and the communication is always two-way and effective. Overall, it's been a great experience, and I truly enjoy working with them.

— Wayne Maurice



Get SET (Skills, Education & Training)

The Ontario Get SET program supports adults in developing and applying essential skills to achieve their personal and professional goals.



151
clients served



97%
satisfaction rate



PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Learners are supported in a welcoming, inclusive environment. Staff work closely with each participant to create personalized learning plans that reflect their goals, strengths, and pace, ensuring that progress feels both achievable and relevant.



ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Get SET helps learners build and apply essential skills, including communication, numeracy, interpersonal, and digital skills, laying a strong foundation for success in work, education, and daily life.



PATHWAYS FORWARD

Whether individuals are working toward employment, post-secondary education, apprenticeship, secondary school completion, or greater independence, Get SET provides the tools and support needed to move forward.

THE SPARK LEARNING JOURNEY



Goal Setting

Identify skills gap and, goals and create a plan for success.



Skills Building

Develop essential skills through personalized learning and support.



Confidence

Build knowledge, strengthen confidence, and celebrate progress.



Next Step

Take clear steps toward employment, education, or new opportunities.

EDGE+ *(Empowering Diversity: Training for All Abilities)*

Empowering people and organizations to build more accessible and inclusive communities.

In 2025–2026, the EDGE.+ Program continued to create opportunities for learning, dialogue, and growth around equity, diversity, and inclusion in workplaces and communities across Greater Sudbury.



Building Skills. Building Confidence.

EDGE+ combines employment readiness training, mentorship, and a 12-week paid work placement to help participants gain practical skills, build confidence, and overcome employment barriers.



Creating Opportunities. Strengthening Workplaces.

Participants gain hands-on experience and personalized support, while employers receive resources, accessibility training, and guidance on inclusive hiring practices.



Working Together for Lasting Change.

By connecting job seekers, employers, and community partners, EDGE+ creates mutually beneficial opportunities and drives meaningful, lasting impact.



42

clients successfully completed the program



27
successfully completed a placement



20
secured employment/entered training after graduation

These outcomes reflect the dedication of participants, employers, and community partners working together to build a more inclusive and accessible workforce.



EDGE+ is about creating mutually beneficial opportunities, helping individuals with disabilities thrive in meaningful roles while helping businesses build more inclusive and dynamic workplaces.

Naviguer vers l'emploi

Proudly serving the community in both official languages.

In August 2025, Spark Employment Services expanded its offerings to better serve the region's francophone community through Naviguer vers l'emploi, a program designed to provide personalized, French-language employment support.

Tailored for and by Ontario's francophones, the program offers one-on-one guidance, helping individuals navigate their employment journey with confidence and clarity. Participants benefit from customized job search support, including resume development, interview preparation, and networking strategies, all delivered in French.

Naviguer vers l'emploi also connects job seekers with employers actively seeking bilingual talent, while offering access to specialized services such as training opportunities and prior learning recognition. Rooted in community and cultural understanding, the program ensures that francophone clients feel supported, represented, and empowered.

The initiative reflects Spark's ongoing commitment to inclusive, accessible services that meet the diverse needs of the community and strengthen connections between talent and opportunity across Ontario.



Personalized Support in French

Meet one-on-one with our dedicated Francophone Employment Navigator who provides guidance tailored to your goals, needs, and pace.



Job Search Support

Receive personalized assistance with résumé writing, interview preparation, networking strategies, and more, all delivered in French.



Connections to Bilingual Employers

Access a network of employers actively seeking bilingual and francophone talent across Greater Sudbury.



Access to Specialized Services

Take advantage of training opportunities and other specialized resources designed to support your career goals.



Rooted in the Francophone Community

A program created for and by Ontario's francophone community, offering a welcoming, inclusive, and culturally relevant environment.

Marketing & Community Awareness

CONNECTING PEOPLE. CREATING OPPORTUNITY.

Throughout 2025–2026, Spark Employment Services strengthened its presence across Greater Sudbury through strategic marketing, community outreach, and public awareness initiatives. Every campaign, event, and communication was designed to ensure individuals and employers knew where to turn for trusted employment support.

Spark expanded its digital presence through engaging social media content, email campaigns, and targeted advertising that promoted employment programs, workshops, hiring events, and client success stories, connecting more people with services and opportunities throughout the community.

A major milestone this year was the complete redesign of Spark's website. Built with accessibility, user experience, and clarity at its core, the new site makes it easier for job seekers and employers to navigate services, register for programs, and access resources through a modern, mobile-friendly platform.

Marketing also supported major initiatives including the Community-Wide Job Fair, Spark Up Your Summer, E.D.G.E.+ Annual Conference, Getting to Better, and numerous Open Hire Events. Additional outreach included Spark Up Your Summer community booths, participation in National AccessAbility Week with ILSM, job and community service fairs, a regional poster campaign, and on-site Employment Information & Intake Sessions that improved access to services.

Internally, Spark enhanced its office environment with mural-style wall art, creating a more welcoming and inspiring space for clients and visitors.

Beyond promoting programs, Spark continued to build a trusted, recognizable brand that reflects its commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and community impact. Through thoughtful storytelling and innovative outreach, Spark continues to strengthen connections between people, employers, and opportunity.



15000+
website
visitors



580000+
social
impressions



Digital Marketing

Reaching more people through social media, email campaigns, website updates, and targeted advertising.



Event Promotion

Promoting workshops, Open Hire events, and program initiatives to drive participation and engagement.



Community Outreach

Building partnerships, attending community event, and connecting directly with job seekers and employers.



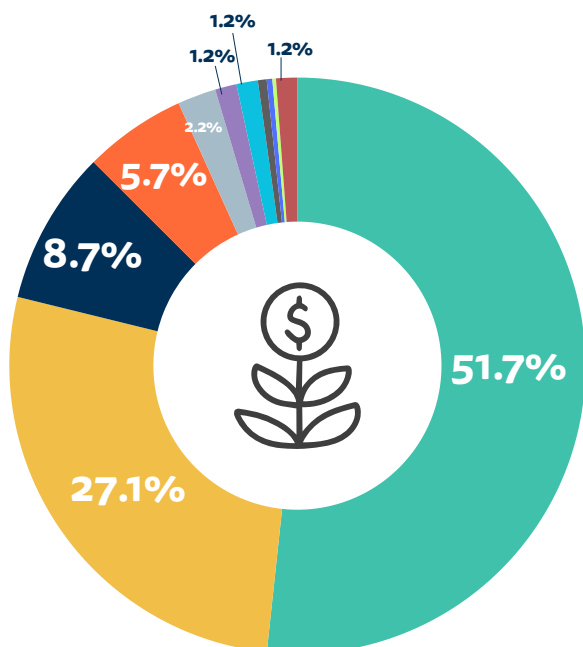
Brand Awareness

Investing in a consistent, inclusive brand that builds trust and reflect our commitment to community impact.

Financial Statement

Total Revenue 2025-2026

\$2,483,764



Revenue Sources

Integrated Employment Services (SSM ¹)	\$1,284,002
EDGE+ (ESDC ²)	\$674,151
Get SET (MLITSD ³)	\$214,894
Naviguer vers l'emploi (SSM ¹)	\$142,648
Administrative Fee	\$53,636
United Way Centraide North East Ontario	\$30,000
Ontario Trillium Foundation	\$29,848
Canada Ontario Job Grant	\$12,167
Interest Income	\$7,808
Getting to Better	\$5,070
Other Revenue	\$29,540

TOTAL REVENUE \$2,483,764

1. Boréal - Service System Manager
2. Employment and Social Development Canada
3. Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Total Expenses 2025-2026

\$2,363,051

Salaries & Employee Benefits	69.3%	\$1,636,758. ²³
Occupancy & Facilities	8.3%	\$196,189. ³⁶
Professional Services	6.3%	\$148,694. ²⁶
Marketing & Outreach	4.3%	\$101,901. ⁵⁵
Technology & Communications	4.1%	\$97,681. ⁵⁰
Travel, Meals & Professional Development	3.0%	\$71,904. ⁵⁴
Insurance & Financial Costs	1.7%	\$41,314. ¹⁷
Client & Program Supports	1.2%	\$28,877. ¹⁰
Office Operations	1.1%	\$27,161. ¹¹
Taxes	<1%	\$6,743. ²²
Capital Assets & Amortization	<1%	\$5,825. ⁷³



Surplus for the year:

\$120,713

Reinvested to strengthen programs and services for our community.

Looking Forward

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism, purpose, and a deep appreciation for the journey that has brought us here. The past year challenged us to embrace change, strengthen our partnerships, and continue evolving to meet the needs of our community. Those experiences have reinforced our belief that meaningful progress comes through collaboration, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to the people we serve.

In the year ahead, Spark Employment Services will continue building on that momentum by expanding opportunities for job seekers, strengthening relationships with employers, and delivering responsive, inclusive services that reflect the changing world of work. We will continue investing in innovative tools, community partnerships, and client-centered programs that remove barriers, foster confidence, and create pathways to meaningful employment.

As workforce needs evolve, so too will our approach. We remain committed to listening, learning, and adapting so we can continue delivering services that are accessible, relevant, and impactful. Whether supporting individuals as they begin a new career journey or helping employers build strong, inclusive teams, our focus will remain on creating lasting opportunities that benefit the entire community.

The coming year also marks a significant milestone as Spark Employment Services celebrates 40 years of serving Greater Sudbury. For four decades, Spark has empowered individuals, supported employers, and strengthened communities through innovation, compassion, and collaboration. This anniversary is an opportunity to honour the clients, staff, volunteers, partners, funders, and community leaders whose dedication has shaped our organization and made our impact possible.

While we are proud of what has been accomplished over the past 40 years, we are even more excited about what lies ahead. As we begin our fifth decade, Spark remains committed to creating opportunities, embracing innovation, and building a future where every individual has the support, resources, and confidence to achieve their employment goals. Together, we will continue empowering people, strengthening employers, and building a more resilient and inclusive community.



Canada 



Ontario 

 Boréal

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