

Committee: **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

Organization/Sector represented: **Employment Sector**

Name: **Nick Steinburg**

Address:

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London, ON N6K 1E2**

Occupation: **Employment Specialist**

Work experience: **My work experience has focused around helping individuals out of difficult circumstances. After working in customer service through university, I gained employment in the constituency office of MPP Khalil Ramal. I found my calling in case work, advocating on constituents' behalf, assisting them in navigating government programs, and providing appropriate referrals to local services. I continued this work in the constituency office of MPP Chris Bentley, while expanding my knowledge of government agencies, ministerial responsibilities, and seeing firsthand the impact that good political representation can have on a community. When Mr. Bentley resigned in 2013, I sought similar professional opportunities for advocacy and client-focused service. I was fortunate to be hired by Leads Employment Services, a local not-for-profit agency assisting individuals with disabilities in finding gainful employment. In my role as an Employment Specialist, my time is spent on two fronts; on one hand I am working with job seekers, helping with skills development and employment readiness, local employment data and trends, as well as the job search process itself. The other part of my work is as a Job Developer, going out into the community, talking to employers face-to-face about the services Leads offers and the clients that I work with.**

Education: **I hold a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Western University, and I am enrolled in the Non-Profit Management Certificate program through Western University's Continuing Education department. I continue to pursue professional development opportunities through my work in the Employment sector, including CPR and First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Certification, and others.**

Skills: **Over the past two and a half years working in employment services, and specifically with persons with disabilities, I have gained a wealth of knowledge about London's employment as well as employer accommodations and accessibility responsibilities. I work with individuals facing barriers including physical, mental health, developmental, intellectual, and learning disabilities, as well as criminal records, long term unemployment, and a host of other situational barriers. As a result, I have a wide breadth of knowledge in the types of barriers commonly faced by Londoners in their search for employment and their day to day lives. Being successful as an Employment Counsellor means understanding local employment trends across a wide range of sectors. I work with individuals seeking employment that runs the gambit from menial labour to work requiring advanced degrees in the science, information technology, and business sectors, to name a few. This has allowed me to gain an overarching appreciation for the challenges and opportunities faced by jobseekers in London, and how these various sectors can benefit from hiring persons with disabilities.**

Interest reason: **My passion is for improving the lives of others by breaking down barriers and helping them help themselves. I would like to contribute my understanding and experience with assisting persons with disabilities in their employment search, in order to make an impact in the lives of fellow Londoners.**

Contributions: **In addition to my professional experience, education, and passion, I bring an energy and enthusiasm to everything I undertake, especially when it comes to public service. There is so much to be done, so many things to be considered, so many consultations and conversations to be had, that without a great deal of energy it would simply not be possible. I am a strong believer in the power of collaboration, and I believe these traits would make me an excellent addition to the Advisory Committee.**

Past contributions: **The majority of my board experience has been on local political organizations. I have been involved in partisan riding associations at the provincial level since 2007, and I am currently a Provincial Riding Association President, as well as Executive Vice President for a Federal Riding Association. I have been always been an**

active participant in board meetings and initiatives, assisting with events, policy development, and outreach. I have also participated in executive board meetings of the Ontario Association of Career Development Practitioners since early 2014, and continue to be active locally in the move towards Professional Accreditation for Career Development Practitioners. Additionally, I recently begun participating in an Advocacy group which connects service agencies supporting individuals accessing social assistance (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program), and take every opportunity to connect with other service providers.

Interpersonal: Being able to work respectfully with others is critical when working with individuals facing barriers. I am regularly working with clients and colleagues with vastly different cultural and experiential backgrounds, abilities, and values. As a candidate of record in the 2014 provincial election, I debated candidates from other political parties and engaged in political discussions with thousands of London residents. One of my personal goals was to keep my campaign positive and not to attack or belittle other candidates. I believe I was successful in this goal, as I was recognized repeatedly by the other candidates, members of their campaign teams, and residents as one who remained positive, respectful, and open to other points of view. I was also an active volunteer in the municipal election, where I worked alongside members of every partisan stripe, from socialists to libertarians. I now count many of those volunteers among my friends (some of whom worked for my electoral rivals in the provincial election!). I am guided by a view which makes seeing through cultural, experiential, and partisan differences quite simple: We all want to see our community prosper, we just have different ideas about how that happens. When we approach discussions with that in mind, it is easy to find common ground and to work together to find the best solutions possible.

Interview interest: **Yes**