



# Polaris Enterprise

Industry-based ASD Adult Education and Employment Initiative

## PROGRAM

FREE bilingual employment readiness and vocational program to prepare autistic adults, aged 21 and older, for general employment as well as for job-specific employment with Loblaw Companies Ltd or a similar industry setting, post-program.

All appropriate COVID-19 prevention measures will be taken.

## DURATION

9-month full-time program beginning August 27, 2020

## LOCATION

Shared time between a Loblaw Distribution Centre, retail environment (Provigo or Maxi) and the Wagar Adult Education Centre

For more information and how to apply, please call 438-390-2884 or email [apereira@giantstepsmontreal.com](mailto:apereira@giantstepsmontreal.com)

A Giant Steps Initiative



In Collaboration with



Réseau pour transformer les soins en autisme  
Transforming Autism Care Consortium



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

## Polaris Enterprise Program Objectives

The Polaris Enterprise intensive adult education and employment program aims to support autistic adults in their learning as future employees by placing them in a context that reflects the demands of employment within the grocery industry.

We advocate an approach that recognizes the uniqueness and particular skills of each participant, thus facilitating their commitment, self-determination and the acquisition of knowledge and (measurable) skills that promote their employability. The approach aims to combine employment and personal achievement with the objective of facilitating integration and retention in employment. Personal development modules are designed in connection with the concepts and real requirements of employment.

The participant, his / her skills, abilities, individualized employment goals and not just their autistic traits is at the heart of the design of this program.



### Personal Development

- Self-knowledge: explore identity, values, interests, skills, abilities and personal needs and goals
- Learn to organize and prioritize daily activities and tasks
- Develop interpersonal relationships and communication skills
- Acquire stress and emotion management strategies
- Identify and explore autistic traits
- Foster self-determination
- Develop good habits that promote a healthy lifestyle
- Money management for independent living

### Professional Development

- Explore values, interests and professional goals
- Learn about the grocery industry (specifically Distribution Centre and retail environments) and Loblaws culture and values
- Soft skills development
- Introduction and preparation for the realities of employment (understanding job roles, communication, relationships, expectations)
- Explore and develop professional industry skills and competencies
- Needs identification in relation to adaptations in the workplace (if necessary)
- Discussion on topic of disclosure of disability
- Job sampling and hands-on experience through work placements
- Prepare and transition from internship to actively seeking employment

### Learning Strategies

- Provide spaces in which the person is accepted without judgment and where they can express themselves and be heard
- Use of a classroom setting to explore key topics of employment (individualized employment goals, industry jargon, job descriptions, retail and distribution centre environments, etc)
- Use of modern training tools such as virtual reality for virtual visits of real work environments, video modelling for soft skills development, creation of a mini-market at the Wagar Adult Education Centre, and Zoom calls with industry professionals
- Network of autistic mentors to present their employment and life experiences
- Hands-on experience in a real retail and distribution centre environment

