
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023PSFS0041-001093
July 6, 2023

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

B.C. builds new opportunities for careers in skilled trades

PORT COQUITLAM – More people will be able to access new and enhanced resources and programming to support entering the trades and to help complete their apprenticeships through a \$5-million provincial investment.

“This funding is about making sure that B.C. is training and supporting the next generation of apprentices and journey people,” said Andrew Mercier, Minister of State for Workforce Development. “By investing in apprenticeships today, our government is taking action to ensure a strong workforce is trained and ready to build the homes and infrastructure that British Columbians depend on.”

This investment supports six B.C. organizations specializing in attracting people into the skilled trades and supporting them during their pre-apprentice training and apprenticeships:

- Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS)
- BC Centre for Women in the Trades (BCCWITT)
- Canadian Home Builders Association of BC (CHBA BC)
- Construction Foundation of BC (CFBC)
- SkillPlan
- Skills Canada BC

“I found ACCESS, and they've been with me every step of the way,” said Wakenniosta Cooper, apprentice, Electrical Joint Training Committee (EJTC). “They showed me a path that has led me to reliable work and a rewarding career, and I'm proud to have earned recognition in my field. Without ACCESS and the EJTC standing by my side, I wouldn't be on this extraordinary journey.”

The provincial investment will also help remove barriers to enter the trades or complete apprenticeships for women, Indigenous Peoples and other under-represented groups, with new and enhanced programming and resources for equity-serving groups, anti-racism and other inclusivity-based workplace training programs and student bursaries.

“I was at a point in my life where I felt lost and down, struggling with no sense of direction,” said Mathew Sheena, EJTC apprentice. “But then, I crossed paths with ACCESS and joined the entry level trades training program at the EJTC. These programs turned my life around, giving me back control over my future, as well as a solid career and big dreams.”

Building opportunities for people to prepare for a career in the trades supports the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, which is focused on making education and training more accessible, affordable, responsive and relevant to help people prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The action plan is supported by a provincial investment of \$480 million over three years.

Quick Facts:

- There are more than 80 skilled trade occupations, with more than half with Red Seal endorsements.
- In-demand skilled trades occupations in B.C. include cooks, automotive service technicians and electricians.
- There are 83,000 job openings for tradespeople expected over the next 10 years.
- The number of apprentices who complete their training averages just over 6,400 a year.
- 50.6% of people between 15 and 65 in B.C. are women; currently, 10.1% of all apprentices in B.C. are women.
- 13.3% of people between 15 and 65 in B.C. are Indigenous; currently, 8.5% of all apprentices in B.C. are Indigenous, and 1.5% are Indigenous women.

Learn More:

To download British Columbia's most recent Labour Market Outlook, visit:

<https://www.workbc.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/LMO-2022-Report.pdf>

To download SkilledTradesBC's (formerly the Industry Training Authority) most recent statistical report: https://skilledtradesbc.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/SkilledTradesBC%20Quarterly%20Performance%20Report%202022_23_Q3_Final.pdf

For information about StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, visit:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/jobs-and-training>

Two backgrounders follow.

Contact:

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BACKGROUND 1

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Funding recipients: \$5 million to skilled trades

Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (\$1 million):

ACCESS provides education and training services to Indigenous people living in Greater Vancouver. The society will expand and enhance supporting resources for pre-apprentice and apprenticeship training, including their Elder Support Program. They will also increase their Trades Explorer program for middle and high school youth, plus host an employer forum to promote Indigenous apprentices and tradespeople. <https://www.accessfutures.com>

BC Centre for Women in the Trades (\$1 million):

BCCWITT is a non-profit organization that works to support and increase the number of women in construction, maintenance and industrial trades, will expand and enhance its inclusivity-based workplace training, for example anti-racism and anti-bullying, plus contribute to its bursary program for equity serving groups. <https://bccwitt.ca/>

Canadian Home Builders Association of BC (\$1 million):

CHBA BC is the leading advocate of the residential construction industry across the province. CHBA BC is the leading provider of training and education for the residential construction industry, offering BC Housing-approved courses for residential builders and renovation contractors at every career progression. Its members are builders, renovators, designers, professionals, suppliers and others involved with the residential construction industry. This funding will enable CHBA BC to create and execute a range of programs and initiatives throughout British Columbia, with the primary aim of providing supportive training, as well as highlighting and advancing well-paid career opportunities in the skilled trades. <https://chbabc.org>

Construction Foundation of BC (\$500,000):

CFBC is a Canadian charity that is focused on building the next generation of skilled workers, will host more workshops for K-12 students and summer camps for at-risk youth to expose them to opportunities in the construction industry with a focus on climate action and social justice. The foundation will also host workshops for teachers to raise awareness of construction-relevant tools for learning. <http://www.constructionfoundation.ca>

SkillPlan (\$1 million):

SkillPlan is a provider of workforce development services to the construction industry, will expand and enhance supporting resources for pre-apprentice and apprenticeship training, with a focus on increasing opportunities for under-represented groups, including women, Indigenous, Black and people of colour, and new Canadians. <https://skillplan.ca/learn/>

Skills Canada BC (\$500,000):

Skills Canada BC is a non-profit that helps B.C. youth prepare for tomorrow's skilled economy,

through regional, provincial, national and world skills trades and technology competitions, such as carpentry, plumbing, baking and robotics. With this funding, the non-profit will expand and enhance its skills competitions and programs, which creates awareness and markets opportunities in the skilled trades and the technology sector to K-12 youth. <https://skillscanada.bc.ca/>

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BACKGROUND 2

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What people are saying about \$5 million to skilled trades

Mike Farnworth, MLA, Port Coquitlam –

“Port Coquitlam has a growing need for skilled workers in all sectors. I’m proud that this investment supports more diverse communities getting started in the trades and mitigates some of the obstacles that may be preventing people from trying a career path in this field. To get to see that happen right here in the Electrical Joint Training Committee apprenticeship program is great, and I know that these programs will continue to see great outcomes.”

Lynn White, president and CEO, Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS) –

“At ACCESS we support our Indigenous Peoples who live in Metro Vancouver. We serve them by investing fully, by providing wrap-around services and supports that are culturally appropriate and taking the journey with our apprentices all the way from foundation to Red Seal for meaningful and long-term employment. We are investing in our youth to bring us into a future where they can take their place in society with skill and pride and self-determination.”

Karen Dearlove, executive director, BC Centre for Women in the Trades –

“BCCWITT is working to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive skilled trades industry where all feel welcome, healthy, respected and safe. This funding will support our mission to empower diverse tradespeople, to increase their participation in the trades by building respectful, equitable, dignified and safe workplaces.”

Neil Moody, CEO, Canadian Home Builders Association of BC –

“The skilled trades provide a fantastic opportunity to embark on a rewarding and lucrative career in residential construction. The industry is becoming more diverse every year, and the doors are open to everyone of all ages and backgrounds. Many of our 2,300 members started in the trades and have gone on to start their own businesses building homes and communities in all regions of the province.”

F. Abigail Fulton, executive director, Construction Foundation of BC –

“We need to work with B.C.’s youth to help them build a future they can believe in. A career in the skilled trades will bring that sense of accomplishment.”

Kyle Downie, CEO, SkillPlan –

“SkillPlan is honoured to be a part of this investment to enable more people to succeed in their journeys to becoming skilled tradespeople in B.C. Through this funding, SkillPlan’s programs

and services will support more apprentices, including those from traditionally under-represented groups, in overcoming barriers to enter into and succeed in the skilled trades, and to successfully achieve their Red Seal certification.”

Dennis Innes, board president, Skills Canada BC –

“Skill Canada BC is thrilled to partner with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills to create awareness of the skilled workforce needed to support our province’s growth. Seeing first-hand the impact that the Skills Canada BC competitions and in-school programs have had on B.C. youth in choosing a career in skills trades, we are extremely pleased to be receiving this funding. This will enable Skills Canada BC to continue providing these opportunities to youth in B.C., including Indigenous and under-represented youth.”

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