



# THE WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

I have heard from business owners and Comox Valley citizens alike about staffing shortages, whether at the grocery store, reduced hours at your favorite restaurant, or line ups for other services. Labour shortages effect health care, as much as clean tech sector, childcare and customer services alike. Retiring populations that have left vacant positions, and increasing costs of living that make it unaffordable for people who work here to live here, are issues that have accelerated during the last few years. And we know that over 80% the million job openings in the next decade will require post-secondary education.

That is why our government announced our StrongBC Future Ready Action Plan, an investment of \$480 million over the next three years for training for in-demand careers that will prepare people for work in areas where they are needed. If you have a moment watch my speech in the House on how the need to innovate with labour market changes has always been necessary and that these issues affect us all: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fZSofFFIY>

## Get ready for in-demand jobs

Helping you train and reskill



### People who want post-secondary education

3,000 more tech-relevant post-secondary spaces will meet the demand for technology workers



### People who want to reskill

A new grant of up to \$3,500 will cover the costs of tuition for eligible short-term skills training



### People facing barriers

New training programs make sure people facing multiple barriers can get the education they need to succeed



### Indigenous Peoples

Expanding post-secondary training and job opportunities for Indigenous Peoples throughout the province



### People new to BC

Help so newcomers can work in their fields with a faster assessment for internationally-trained professionals

Future Ready is increasing educational opportunities and funding in high-demand areas, implementing a 'care economy workforce strategy' (nurses, doctors, childcare etc.), and creating the tools to take a more inclusive approach to training and hiring young people, people new to BC, indigenous peoples, people transitioning to in-demand areas, and those who face barriers entering the labour force.

As labour shortages are seen in our day to day lives, this newsletter describes how our government is stepping up to the demands of today and tomorrow. You may also wish to pass along this info to anyone in career development, education, construction, those working with immigrants and permanent residents, those working in tech, software or life sciences, or young people at the beginning of their working life.



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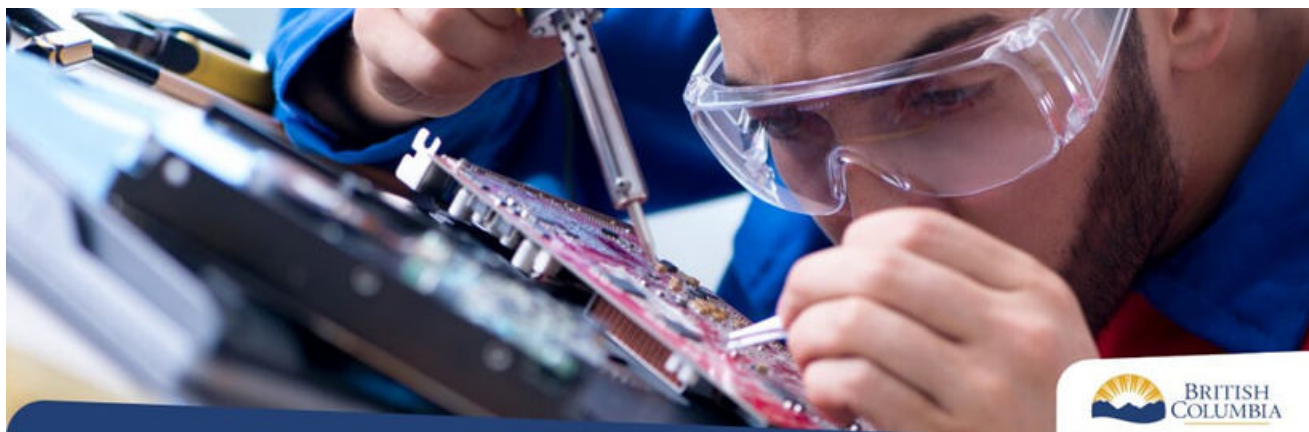
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### [British Columbia rolling out massive training program to address job shortages](#)

If we are to continue to meet all the needs of our British Columbians, we need to build a work force that is relevant and includes everyone. The Future Ready Action Plan will make education and training more accessible, affordable, responsive and relevant. Spaces will include a range of areas including cyber security, software engineering, data science, life sciences, creative tech, clean tech and agritech. Over the next 3 years \$74.7 million will be invested to accelerate talent development through addressing workforce challenges across all sectors. We're helping thousands of people get the skills they need to succeed in the changing economy, while closing the skills gap many employers are facing all to address the needs of our future economy. [To learn more about direct support in specific areas click here.](#)

### [B.C. opening 3,000 more technology-relevant seats to prepare youth for jobs](#)

Tech jobs are high in demand across nearly every sector in British Columbia. Post-secondary education and skills training play an invaluable role in closing the skills gap, supporting economic sustainability and growth in our province. Our government is creating 3,000 new educational seats in tech programs so more people can train for the good jobs of today and tomorrow, while supporting the clean innovative economy of the future.



## 3,000 more technology-relevant learning opportunities on way for students in BC

## Funding supports tech-skills training for under-represented British Columbians

A more diverse technology sector is the result of a successful start to the Innovator Skills Initiative program, providing tech companies with funding to hire and develop talent, including those from under-represented groups. The province is investing an additional \$5 million to the Innovator Skills Initiative, creating a more inclusive economy. The initial program resulted in 70% of participants being offered jobs after a placement, and 100% of them choosing employment, starting a new business or returning to post-secondary.

## Mitacs internship funding will help connect students, employers

More than 10,000 new internships will be funded for students in priority sectors, such as clean technology, life sciences, emergency management, advanced timber and agritech, to better connect B.C. employers with the talent and skills of the future. The B.C. government has provided Mitacs with \$50 million to support 10,000 paid internships over five years. The provincial investment is for the Mitacs accelerate and elevate programs that connect student researchers and post-doctorates with innovative companies to provide real-world experience in applied research at post-secondary diploma, undergraduate, and graduate levels.

## New strategy positions B.C. as a global hub for life sciences

B.C. is home to one of Canada's fastest growing life sciences sectors and our new strategy will chart the path forward toward an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative economy that works for everyone. Innovative companies will have opportunities to grow and create high-paying jobs while advancing health and pandemic preparedness at home and internationally through a new made-in-B.C. Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy. This new strategy will help address challenges like the current skills shortage and the need for additional wet lab space, purposefully preparing for the future and supporting B.C.'s businesses by improving our competitiveness.



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# BC - a global hub for life sciences

## New student housing under construction at BCIT

Student housing not only houses temporary residents to train for the future, but it also frees up permanent housing for everyone in our very tight housing market. Our government is taking action to address the student housing shortage and we're doing it at an incredibly fast pace, with over 7,766 new beds open or under way. One of these projects is our very own student resident of 217 at NIC that is currently underway. And now BCIT will also have new student housing spaces. Construction is underway on a new 12-storey mass-timber building that will provide 470 students with affordable on-campus housing at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) Burnaby campus.

## Minimum wage increases June 1st

On June 1, 2023, B.C.'s lowest-paid workers will get a pay raise with the general minimum wage increasing from \$15.65 to \$16.75 an hour. The 6.9% increase in minimum wage rates reflects B.C.'s average annual inflation rate in 2022. The adjustment reflects government's commitment to tie annual minimum wage increases to inflation. The same increase will apply to wages for residential caretakers, live-in home-support workers and camp leaders. On Jan. 1, 2024, piece rates for 15 hand-harvested crops will also increase by 6.9%.

## Enhanced training will create safe and inclusive workplaces

Employers will have access to more free online resources helping them build and maintain psychologically safe and healthy workplaces thanks to a \$700,000 provincial grant to the B.C. division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA-BC). This funding will help build mental health into the workplace that will get people the support they need, whether personalized guidance, training on how to accommodate those with mental health issues, or working towards a barrier-free workplace.

## Pay Transparency on Job postings November 1st

People deserve equal pay for equal work. New rules take an important first step to close the pay gap between men, women and non-binary people. Effective immediately, employers can no longer punish employees who disclose their pay to co-workers. Starting in November, employers must include wage or salary ranges on all publicly advertised jobs and soon they will need to share public reports on their gender pay gaps.

## More people facing barriers will have access to skills training

People seeking employment who face multiple financial, educational or social, barriers to entering the workforce have more help on the way. The province is investing \$44.5 million over three years to boost the number of people supported to nearly 7,500 people in communities around the province.



**Job postings must include  
salary and wage ranges  
starting November 1**

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# Labour and Education AROUND THE PROVINCE

## More youth with developmental disabilities get help finding work

Youth with developmental disabilities will get extra help to transition from school to work through a \$2-million provincial grant, which was developed with community partners and people with lived experience. The Impact program is run through the Delta Community Living Society, helps 15-19 year old youth with developmental disability find employment. With the program expansion, as many as 360 more youth could get jobs through the grant.

## Health Care interpreters

The Province, through a Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) project in the Lower Mainland, has provided more than \$380,000 to Options Community Services Society to deliver its Community and Healthcare Interpreter Training Program. Community and health-care interpreters use their bilingual skills to help people with language barriers, who are navigating the health-care system, communicate their needs to care providers and others.

The second cohort for this program starts May 29, 2023. Anyone interested in finding out more about this or other CEP projects can contact their local WorkBC centre.

## New partnerships preparing B.C. students with future-ready skills

Students from kindergarten to Grade 12 in B.C. will have more access to programs that develop skills needed to succeed in technology and other in-demand careers. The Province is partnering with several organizations to develop and implement programs that equip students with skills and get them excited about, emerging sectors such as digital marketing and technology. Learn more about the programs: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023ECC0027-000687>

## New training prepares more people for construction jobs

Male survivors of violence and abuse can access training for job opportunities in the construction industry on the mainland. As many as 24 participants will receive 11 weeks of essential employment and technical skills training, four weeks of on-the-job experience with local employers and one week of follow-up support to prepare them for employment in the construction industry. In addition to the training provided, each participant will receive as many as 10 weekly sessions of one-on-one trauma counseling support.

## Recent Indigenous Youth Event - Gathering Our Voices

Gathering Our Voices is an Indigenous-led event for Indigenous youth. Each year, the Gathering Our Voices event is co-hosted by BC Friendship Centres with the support of First Nations throughout the province. The event focuses on providing Indigenous youth with a safe and inclusive environment, free from the impacts of racism, exclusion and poverty, to celebrate Indigenous culture, dream about the future, and engage in career building, training, workshops and tours. Follow them to learn about next year's program.

## New training prepares more people to be community support workers

The Province is providing more than \$440,000 to the Vancouver ecoVillage Society to deliver, together with its partners, the community support worker diploma training project that focuses on training for Indigenous people, immigrants, people with multiple barriers to employment, people with disabilities, youth, survivors of violence and/or abuse, francophones, and youth at risk in the region.

## People will train for more hospitality-sector jobs

More people with disabilities in BC will be able to train for job opportunities in the high-demand hospitality sector. This year, eight participants will each receive 22 weeks of work experience at Easter Seals House in Vancouver through its CompassWorks training program supported by \$210,000 from the province. The program includes skills development and certification training, job-search techniques and follow up support.

## More people in driver's seats

More people will be able to train for jobs as professional truck drivers in northern B.C. through a Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) project funded by the province. This training program will benefit up to 24 people, including Indigenous people, immigrants and young people, and help them secure long-term careers in the region. Participants will receive 15 weeks of employability and skills training, including mandatory entry-level training (MELT); seven weeks of on-the-job work experience with local employers; and two weeks of follow-up support to prepare participants as Class 1 professional truck drivers.

# Trades and Construction



## New skills training opportunities for people

### New training helps mill technicians, tradespeople start businesses

Mill tradespeople and technicians can access specialized entrepreneurship training and coaching to gain the foundational business skills they need to start and grow their own business. Through its community transition rapid-response teams, the Province identified transition supports for mill tradespeople and technicians interested in opening businesses in their community as an unmet need. The new Build Your Own Future program will include training in finance, marketing and sales, operations, project management, health and safety, customer service, leadership, and diversity.

### Big opportunities for people in building trades

During Construction and Skilled Trades Month in April, the Province helped raise awareness about the job opportunities for people in the building trades, with 83,000 new job openings expected over the next decade. Construction and skilled trades jobs are in demand and government is investing in trades education and support for workers in the skilled trades.

### Province unveils new process for skilled trades certification

Following input from industry stakeholders and partners, SkilledTradesBC is accepting applications for more trades to be certified. B.C. businesses, labour organizations, industry associations, Indigenous organizations and communities that work or have an interest in the trades may apply to SkilledTradesBC for their trade to be designated. SkilledTradesBC will evaluate applications based on specific criteria that will align with existing regulatory frameworks and similarities to existing certified trades. SkilledTradesBC will then make recommendations to the Province for trades to be considered for skilled trades certification. Applications are open until June 30, 2023. Trades identified through the new process for skilled trades.

Learn the background [Skilled trades Act](#)



## B.C. officers honoured for valour, commitment to public safety.

Janet Austin, lieutenant governor of B.C., and Farnworth presented awards to officers of all ranks at the 39th annual Police Honours Night at Government House. 154 people in law enforcement were recognized for their bravery and dedication. Police officers throughout the province have shown resilience, adapting to complex and dynamic work environments.

## Premier's statement on National Day of Mourning.

On April 28th we remembered and honour the lives lost by workplace accidents and illnesses, and pay tribute to all workers who didn't make it home safely at the end of the day. It was a very moving ceremony at the Legislature, as fallen workers and their surviving families were honoured by the Speaker's acknowledgment of their place in our history with a tree dedication. Workers from all over the province attended and it was heartwarming to see faces from home, like Michelle Waite, chair of SD71 board of education and CUPE leader.

### Workers Compensation Act

Last year, we passed Bill 5 which outlined better ways to keep workers safe by new asbestos abatement requirements under Workers Compensation Act that: 1) Develops the standards that asbestos safety training and certification programs must comply with; 2) Develops a licensing scheme for abatement contractors; 3) Amended the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation to align with the changes to the Workers Compensation Act, and support the certification and licensing schemes; and 4) Identified who will act as the training and certifying bodies for asbestos abatement workers.

### Modernizing passenger transportation, and improving safety.

We have modernized the Passenger Transportation Act to further strengthen B.C.'s passenger-directed transportation industry in 2022 which help keep the public safe. This Legislation; 1) made permanent the record-check review process through which people can appeal decisions that deemed them ineligible to drive a passenger-directed vehicle; and 2) made permanent the requirement that passenger-directed vehicle drivers operating under a temporary operating permit meet record-check requirements.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Would you like to lend your voice on important topics in BC? There are many topics on which the government of BC would like to hear from you. Take some time to lend your voice - with EngageBC.

## CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Is someone in your life, your workplace, or your church celebrating a Milestone birthday or anniversary? Make sure to put in a request for a letter from your MLA.

### Get in touch

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about any provincial issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you. My office can be reached at 250.703.2410 or [Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca) Our office hours are Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm. If the door is locked, simply knock or call 250.703.2410 to get our attention. Fridays are by appointment only.

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