



# StrongerBC

*for everyone*

## FUTURE READY ACTION PLAN







## Table of Contents

Premier and Minister's Message.....	2
Introduction.....	4
StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.....	6
Building From a Strong Foundation.....	8
Training the Trades.....	12
StrongerBC Economic Plan and Future Ready.....	13
Taking on Challenges Now, So We Are Ready for the Future.....	14
Labour Market Outlook and the Challenges Ahead.....	15
Working With Partners on the Path Forward.....	16
The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.....	18
People seeking post-secondary education.....	18
People looking to reskill for in-demand jobs.....	24
People facing barriers.....	32
Indigenous Peoples in B.C.....	37
People new to B.C.....	42
Funding StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.....	44

# Premier and Minister's Message

Building a brighter future with more opportunities, so everyone in B.C. can thrive, is at the heart of every action our government takes.

We've worked together to tackle big challenges, and B.C.'s economy stayed strong and resilient through unprecedented global crises like the pandemic, global inflation, and climate-related fires and floods. Now we're facing another big challenge: our economy is changing and innovating quickly, workplaces are transforming, and we have more job openings than skilled people for work in growing and in-demand fields.

Over the next ten years, B.C. will need to fill more than one million job openings. Eighty per cent of these jobs will require workers to have some kind of post-secondary education and training.

We need to make sure people are ready to seize opportunities and build a good life, and employers are able to find the people who drive our economy forward and deliver the services we all rely on.

That's what StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is all about.

It is an ambitious plan to equip people to succeed in our changing economy and close the skills gap employers are facing. We will do this by breaking down barriers so people get the skills they need to get a great job, and help businesses and organizations across sectors recruit and retain employees to expand and grow.

This Action Plan is focused on five priorities – making post-secondary more affordable, accessible, and relevant, providing the innovation and skills needed to fill the jobs of tomorrow faster, breaking down barriers so everyone can find a job that works for them, addressing Indigenous People's workforce

priorities and making it easier for people new to Canada to find a job in the field they are trained in.

The actions include:

- A new future skills grant to give thousands of people new skills and opportunities through short-term training options. The grant is up to \$3,500 to cover the cost of micro-credential training for in-demand jobs delivered by public post-secondary institutions throughout the province.
- 3,000 more tech-relevant post-secondary spaces to meet the demand for technology workers in our changing economy. This exceeds the commitment government made in 2020 and is on top of the 2,900 new student spaces created over the last six years, for a total of nearly 6,000 new spaces throughout B.C. since 2017.
- Expanded Skills Training for People Facing Multiple Barriers – through this program, more than 3,200 additional people are expected to join B.C.'s workforce over the next 3 years.
- Expanded post-secondary training and labour market opportunities to boost the participation and employment security of Indigenous Peoples across the B.C. economy.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is supported by \$480 million in new funding over three years through Budget 2023, building on significant actions since 2017 to expand access to post-secondary education and skills training.

On top of this, Budget 2023 funds 4,000 new student beds to build more homes for students through \$575 million in Student Housing Capital Funding, doubles student loan maximums through \$151 million in student financial aid, and expands training to optimize the health system through \$150 million in funding for the Health Human Resources Strategy.

Every action supports B.C. employers and workers facing current and future labour force challenges, and provides targeted initiatives to help grow and develop our workforce in key areas like tech, innovation, manufacturing and the care economy.

Future Ready is at the heart of our government's StrongerBC plan to build an inclusive and clean economy that works for everyone. It is supported by the Homes for People action plan, so students and people who work in B.C. can afford to live here too. And it builds on significant actions our government has taken since 2017 to increase access to post-secondary education and skills training, provide critical supports for businesses, and build a strong, skilled workforce for B.C.

Our goal is a B.C. where young people, job seekers, newcomers and workers seeking greater security can boost their skills to match new jobs and high-opportunity careers in growing sectors, and employers are able to find the skilled workers they need to grow, and foster innovation in a changing global economy.

The actions in StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan open up opportunity, so people can build a good life for themselves and thrive, and we can build a brighter future and a StrongerBC, together.



**David Eby**  
Premier

A stylized, handwritten signature of David Eby in black ink.



**Selina Robinson**  
Minister of Post-Secondary  
Education and Future Skills

A stylized, handwritten signature of Selina Robinson in black ink.



# Introduction

British Columbia has a strong economy, a beautiful natural environment, abundant natural resources, and public services that are the envy of the world. Above all, our greatest strength is the people who live here.

Our economy is driven by people, and as it continues to grow, change, and innovate we need to make sure people are ready to seize new opportunities.

Finding people with in-demand skills is a growing challenge impacting economies around the world. We know B.C. needs to fill more than one million job openings between today and 2032, due to economic growth and a generational shift as retiring workers exit the labour force and create more demand for health care and other services. We also know the vast majority of these jobs will require people to have post-secondary education and skills training.

The impacts of a very tight labour market are already being felt across the province, affecting small businesses, key industries and enterprises, and public services. B.C. needs skilled workers to meet current and future demand – especially in key sectors like child care, health care and the range of clean industries that thrive in B.C.

Meeting our skills shortage challenges is not just about the number of people, it's about people having the right skills to succeed, and helping grow our inclusive and clean economy. The actions in StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan are designed to tackle these challenges, so people, employers, and our province are ready for the future.

The plan builds on significant work that was started by this government in 2017 to make post-secondary education and skills training more accessible, affordable and inclusive.

Our government eliminated interest on student loans, launched the B.C. Access Grant that has helped more than 58,000 low- and middle-income students, expanded student housing by nearly 8,000 beds ahead of schedule, and introduced zero cost-textbooks. We restored the integrity of red seal trades with a made-in-B.C. trades certification system, modernized trades training to secure more opportunities for more people, and made Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learning programs for domestic students tuition-free at 18 public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

Complementing this, we introduced the StrongerBC Economic Plan that lays out a long-term plan to grow B.C.'s economy by tackling today's challenges. It is rooted in reconciliation, and creates a path to a cleaner, more inclusive and sustainable B.C.

Our government is also supporting businesses and organizations to foster innovation and integrate technology and artificial intelligence to improve the way we deliver the services people count on.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan invests \$480 million over three years through Budget 2023. In addition to this, government is funding \$575 million in Student Housing Capital Funding toward 4,000 student housing beds, \$151 million in Student Financial Aid towards enhancing student financial aid, and \$150 million for the training pillar of the Health Human Resources Strategy.



With specific actions, StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan:

- Supports B.C. employers facing current and future labour force challenges, providing immediate and long-term solutions to fill the jobs of today and help build the careers of tomorrow.
- Makes post-secondary education even more affordable, accessible, and relevant and increases the number of students with job-ready skills needed for the tech-related and engineering workforce, Early Childhood Education services, caring professions, teachers, and innovative enterprises throughout B.C.
- Provides the skills needed to fill the jobs of tomorrow, so people can more easily reskill for better jobs and opportunities in B.C.'s growing economy. This means more people equipped with high-demand skills to increase productivity and competitiveness, to take advantage of the opportunities in this labour market.
- Breaks down barriers so everyone can find a meaningful job that works for them by providing more access to education and training. These actions will increase economic security and greater participation by people facing barriers and will quickly boost the supply of ready workers.
- Addresses, recognizes and elevates Indigenous Peoples workforce priorities through expanded post-secondary training and labour market opportunities designed to boost the participation and employment security of Indigenous Peoples across the B.C. economy.
- Makes it easier for newcomers to B.C. to find a career in the field they are training in by providing improved access to new employment in B.C. as well as faster assessment of internationally trained professionals to ease demand for trained people in the most critical services and industries.

Taken together, the actions in Future Ready create jobs, train people to work in high-opportunity fields and support businesses to adapt and grow. We're making sure people have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow and creating more opportunities for people to get the education they want – to build a brighter future and a stronger B.C. for everyone who lives here.



# StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan

Every action in StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is designed to take on the challenges of today, build a better future for people and a stronger economy.

Together, we are building a future where people are able to gain the skills and opportunities they need to succeed, and employers are able to find the people they need to sustain and grow their enterprises and provide the services that people rely on.

Because what makes people succeed in our economy, makes our economy succeed for people.



## People seeking post-secondary education

- Increasing Student Financial Aid
- 3,000 more tech-relevant spaces
- Expanded rural and remote teacher spaces
- Doubling veterinary spaces
- More graduate scholarships and internships
- Increasing K-12 career life connections and dual credit programs
- Expanded learning opportunities at work
- Thousands more on-campus spaces for students
- Care economy workforce strategy



## People looking to reskill for in-demand jobs

- New future skills grant
- Rapid Response Training and TradeUpBC
- Transition training for forest sector workers
- New skills for new building products – Mass Timber
- Expanded manufacturing workforce development
- Digital Skills Bootcamps
- Tech Talent Accelerator
- Workplace innovation fund





### People facing barriers

- Tuition waived for former youth in care for all ages
- Expanded skills training for people with multiple barriers
- More early childhood educator training spaces
- Additional work opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities



### Indigenous Peoples

- Review of racism in post-secondary education
- Support Native Education College
- Train, recruit and retain more Indigenous teachers
- Provide ongoing core and capacity funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes
- Expand First Nations skills training and education programming
- Expand support for First Nations language revitalization
- Guardian and Stewardship Training Initiative
- Expand Métis skills training and education programming
- Support establishment of a Métis Post-Secondary and Training Institute
- Métis language revitalization



### People new to B.C.

- Streamlined foreign credential recognition
- Find Your Path Tool (one-stop shop for job seekers)
- Improving the B.C. Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)

# Building From a Strong Foundation

From day one, this government has focused on delivering for people, and making sure they can thrive in a strong economy.

We have weathered a lot of storms, the COVID-19 pandemic, global inflation and climate change floods and fires. We've worked together to get through tough times and built the strongest economic recovery in Canada. Today, more people in B.C. are working than when COVID-19 first hit.

The Stronger BC: Future Ready Action Plan builds on work that began in 2017 to make post-secondary education more affordable and accessible, restore the integrity of red seal trades with a made-in-B.C. trades certification system, and expand access to high-speed internet services across B.C.

At the heart of this work is eliminating barriers for more people to get the education they need by expanding affordable child care for families, lowering the costs of post-secondary education, and modernizing trades training to become more accessible and inclusive.

Since 2017, government has:

- Partnered with the federal government to close the digital divide in B.C. by 2027 – meaning every community in B.C., including the most rural and remote, will have access to high-speed internet before the end of this decade.
- Made the largest investment in housing affordability in B.C.'s history – \$7 billion – and introduced effective tools to stem speculation and increase the number of rentals. Now, we are taking further steps to unlock more homes for people, faster with our recently released Homes for People 2023 Action Plan.
- Made strong progress in increasing the participation of women, Indigenous Peoples, and under-represented groups into the trades by developing programs to address issues that may discourage members of these groups from pursuing a career in the skilled trades, such as bullying and harassment.
- Funded 31,800 new licensed child care spaces, the single largest action to create new child care spaces in B.C.'s history – giving parents the ability to rejoin the workforce.







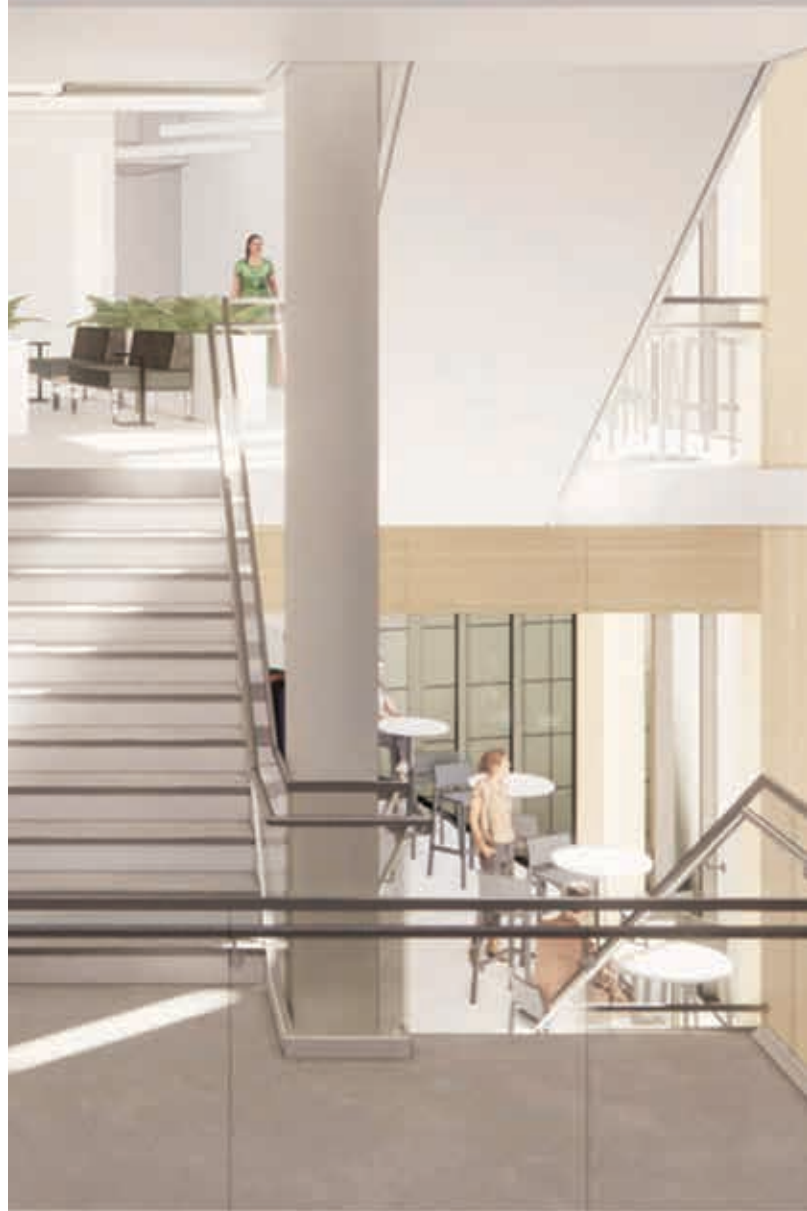


To directly support people going to school, this government has:

- Introduced the new B.C. Access Grant helping more than 58,000 low- and middle-income students to date with up to \$4,000 yearly to pay for tuition, textbooks, lab supplies, and other items needed for their program of study. The grant was launched in 2020, the first new grant program in 15 years.
- Eliminated interest on B.C. government student loans resulting in debt relief for more than 200,000 people – totalling approximately \$40 million since 2019.
- Introduced the Tuition Waiver Program to provide free tuition for former youth in care, up to age 26, at any B.C. public post-secondary institution. More than 1,900 students have benefitted to date, and on Aug. 1, 2023, the program will be extended to former youth in care of all ages, creating opportunities to 50,000 former youth in care in B.C.
- Built thousands of new student housing spaces throughout the province, with approximately 8,000 student housing beds now built or underway and more to come, so more students can get affordable, on-campus housing.
- Made significant investments over the past 6 years to increase access to health education. Nurse practitioner and sonography spaces have more than doubled, practical nursing spaces have increased by almost 50 per cent, and undergraduate nursing and medical program spaces are being expanded throughout the province. The most recent Budget 2023 investment of more than \$150 million over 3 years will support at least 2,800 new spaces and pathways to prepare the next generation of health care professionals.
- Funded short-term skills training aligned with in-demand jobs to support thousands of people impacted by the pandemic and promote B.C.'s economic recovery.
- Introduced 2,900 new spaces in technology programming at institutions around the province. The expansion of tech-relevant student spaces involves a wide range of programs, including data science, cybersecurity, digital animation, life sciences, clean tech and agritech, for example.
- Maintained the Tuition Limit Policy to help make sure tuition and fee increases remain low and predictable by keeping a 2 per cent cap on domestic tuition and mandatory fees annually.

This government has also funded new state-of-the-art training facilities and upgraded buildings across B.C. including:

- A new Westshore collaborative campus in Langford offering programs and training from University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, Camosun College, Justice Institute of B.C. and School District 62.
- New state-of-the-art trades and technology complex at the British Columbia Institute of Technology that will provide training for more than 12,000 students per year in more than 20 trades and technology programs.
- New academic building and student housing at Douglas College's main campus.
- Biomedical engineering building at the University of British Columbia supporting hundreds of new students and scientists to lead B.C.'s biomedical economy.
- National Bio Manufacturing Centre at the British Columbia Institute of Technology to support companies addressing some of the world's most pressing health-care challenges.
- New University of Victoria Computer Science and Engineering building – supporting 500 additional spaces in computer science and six engineering programs, and leading to 125 more graduates per year beginning 2023.
- New Okanagan College Centre for Food, Wine and Tourism focused on addressing the skills shortage in hospitality, food, and tourism sectors.
- New British Columbia Institute of Technology Health Sciences Centre – one of the largest buildings of its kind in Canada is now open, featuring innovative simulation labs equipped with the latest technology to train the next generation of highly trained health specialists.







## Training the Trades

Skilled trades workers are building B.C. – especially with the largest infrastructure investment in our province’s history now underway. Today, however, employers throughout the province face a shortage of skilled workers. With our 10-year labour market outlook predicting more job openings than workers, and a robust economic forecast of continued growth, it’s clear that action needs to be taken immediately to train the skilled trades workforce – not just for today, but for the decade ahead.

Here’s what we’ve accomplished to date:

- **Launching the Skilled Trades Certification system** to support higher paying, more stable work for skilled trades workers, and to help build the foundation for B.C.’s strong economic recovery. Skilled Trades Certification increases prestige for the trades, helping to attract more people and a more diverse workforce to good paying jobs, and making it easier to transition between projects and industries. This certification also ensures a workforce with cutting-edge technical training and on-the-job mentorship experience – the skills needed to adapt to and thrive in B.C.’s growing and changing economy for decades to come.
- **Modernizing trades training and workforce development.** The *Skilled Trades BC Act* (2022) modernized B.C.’s trades training system by expanding the mandate of SkilledTradesBC, the provincial authority on trades training. The expanded mandate reflects our determination to honour and recognize the critical work skilled tradespeople play in our communities and our economy. SkilledTradesBC is also responsible for continuing to promote trades careers to young people and supporting apprentices and employers.
- Our government has also increased the number of **SkilledTradesBC Apprenticeship Advisors** working across all regions to help more apprentices and employers navigate their trades training journey. Government has expanded its support of programs to make training and careers in the skilled trades more accessible, and to encourage more women, Indigenous Peoples, and under-represented groups to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

These initiatives attract and retain more people to a career in the trades and help to ensure that the skilled trades sector is able to meet the needs of the province’s economy.



# StrongerBC Economic Plan and Future Ready

In 2022, this government launched a long-term plan – looking 10 to 15 years ahead – to guide us in creating a more sustainable and inclusive province for all British Columbians. The StrongerBC Economic Plan, *a plan for today, a vision for tomorrow* is based on the guiding principle that the well-being of people is the key to growing a strong economy.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan charts specific missions to achieve the big goals of inclusive growth and clean growth. Among these, the plan includes a generational commitment to develop the talent B.C. needs to grow and innovate across our economy. The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is that commitment.

The actions in this plan respond to the challenges expressed in our extensive engagement with employers, labour, First Nations, our skills training and education sector, and people across B.C. alike.

The actions described, detail Future Ready's support for people, so they can join our growing economy including – people seeking post-secondary education or looking to reskill, people facing barriers to training and education, Indigenous Peoples, and newcomers to B.C. Together, these actions put the investment in people and their potential at the heart of the StrongerBC Economic Plan.



# Taking on Challenges Now, So We Are Ready for the Future

People in B.C. and around the world have faced a lot of challenges over the past few years. British Columbians have made it through the storm by working together.

The global pandemic impacted our lives in every way – around the globe and here in B.C. Overnight, people and employers had to change, shift and adapt, and many workplaces were changed forever.

A shift away from traditional workplaces has created challenges and opened-up opportunities. Skills shortages are being felt more acutely in some sectors, while new jobs and careers are opening up to more people in more places.

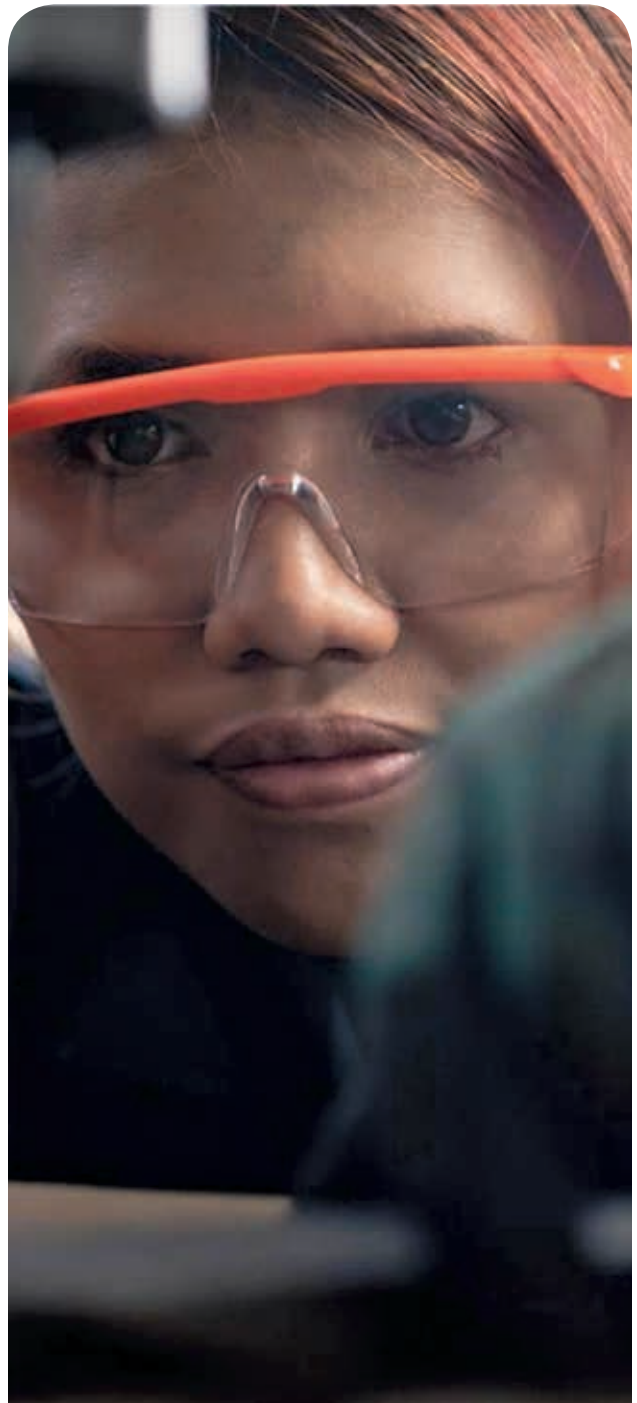
Rapidly changing technology like clean tech and artificial intelligence is helping the economy change, innovate and grow, it is also changing the nature of work and the employment landscape.

People continue to move to B.C. in record numbers – more than 100,000 people moved to B.C. in 2021, and another 150,000 people in 2022, the most in 60 years. For too many though, their training and credentials may not have been recognized to allow them to work in needed jobs.

Some people also face multiple barriers to accessing education and training, including systemic discrimination, prohibitive costs, poor internet connectivity, or a long and difficult process to have their skills and credentials recognized.

And B.C.'s aging population presents additional challenges as people leave the workforce and needs for services – like health care – expand.

Our workforce needs to adapt quickly to keep up to the changing nature of our economy, labour market and population. All these challenges combined make it more urgent that we act now, for a better future.







## Labour Market Outlook and the Challenges Ahead

The B.C. Labour Market Outlook is a 10-year forecast that helps government, post-secondary institutions and employers build the future workforce.

The most recent 2022 Outlook forecasts more than one million job openings over the next decade. Over this period, 636,000 workers will leave the workforce with 474,000 young people replacing them. New residents will fill most of the remaining jobs, however, even with continued immigration, B.C. will still need over 81,500 additional workers over the next decade to meet demand.

Overall employment in B.C. is expected to reach 3.1 million by 2032, up from the 2.7 million jobs in 2022. Employment will grow an average of 1.3 per cent per year over this period. Key growth areas will be in the technology and health care sectors.

These job openings are spread throughout the province and across 500 occupations. The professional, scientific, and technical services industry – the core of B.C.'s tech sector – is one of the fastest growing industries at 2.7 per cent per year, driven by increased use of digital technologies across the economy. The health care and social assistance industry is expected to grow at 1.6 per cent annually, driven by the needs of an aging population.

The labour market challenges facing our province impact people, workplaces, the services we all rely on, and our quality of life. The workforce problem we face over the next decade won't be solved by simply adding more people, we need to make sure people today are prepared with the skills they need to fill positions in the workforce of now and the future.



# Working With Partners on the Path Forward

StrongerBC: Future Ready is the product of extensive public engagement across British Columbia. From employers to labour unions, from educators to First Nations, from rural communities to urban centers, the voices of people across B.C. have been heard and incorporated into this plan.

The plan reflects a shared belief that post-secondary education and skills training are essential to a strong and prosperous future for our province. As well as the understanding that education is a powerful engine for social mobility and must be accessible and affordable for everyone.

Through consultation, we heard that the government is on the right track with its efforts to provide good training models and supports that enable workforce participation. However, we also heard that more needs to be done to address the challenges of labour and skills shortages. More needs to be done to make sure that workers have the skills they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, and to remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing education and training.

The three workforce challenges that were identified in this engagement are:

1. There are more jobs than there are workers. Skills shortages are currently being felt across most sectors of B.C.'s economy, reflecting challenges we see around the world.
2. Workers' skills must align with emerging and expanding economic sectors. In other words, people need not just *more* training, but the *right* training.

3. Workers and employers need tools to adapt to a rapidly changing economy.

The key themes that emerged to address these challenges are:

- Labour force challenges are an immediate and urgent concern for employers and businesses across B.C. We need both immediate and long-term solutions to fill the jobs of today and the careers of tomorrow.
- Supports like affordable housing, child care, and transportation are critical to breaking down barriers to training and workforce participation.
- Cultural awareness and safety are paramount to recruiting and retaining Indigenous, Black, and other racialized workers.
- Newcomers to our province need more support to find work that matches their skills.
- Improving training and education opportunities in rural and remote communities is a pillar for local economic development.
- Access to training needs to be easier and more affordable.

StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan addresses these challenges and helps us build a stronger and better future for everyone in B.C.



# The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan



## People seeking post-secondary education

Learning is a life-long endeavour, and with B.C.'s world-class universities, colleges, and technical training institutes, there are more choices than ever for people seeking post-secondary education and training.

But for too many young people, affordability, costly accommodation, and the challenges of juggling course loads with employment makes staying on the learning path difficult.

That's why StrongerBC: Future Ready makes a generational commitment to make post-secondary education more affordable, accessible, and relevant – with new tuition support, work-integrated learning opportunities, and more spaces for more students in the most in-demand career tracks – like expanded tech spaces. It also builds on our record investments in student-housing, with a commitment to deliver more spaces in schools throughout B.C.

These new actions mean more people can access post-secondary education, train for future jobs, while helping employers find the skilled people they need for a changing and innovative economy.

### INCREASING STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Global inflation has squeezed every demographic in B.C., including those pursuing post-secondary education. In the face of rising costs, this government is making sure the cost of education does not close doors for people, and instead supports people to pursue their dreams. That's why – as a feature of StrongerBC: Future Ready – this government is boosting the value and accessibility

of student loans while providing more help and options for repayment.

**Beginning August 2023, student loan maximums will double, providing up to \$220 per week and up to \$280 per week for students with children or other dependents.** Current students or people going back to school for new skills and training, will have access to more flexible support and options so that they can continue to study and succeed.

At the same time, this government is making sure repayment terms align with the federal government's Repayment Assistance Plan so that graduates earning less than \$40,000 a year won't have to make any payments on their outstanding loans while they look for the jobs they've trained for. For people earning more than \$40,000, their student loan payments will be 10 per cent of their annual household income, rather than 20 per cent.

For employers who need skilled people, this means more British Columbians will have access to the skills and opportunities they need to be a part of a changing economy and fill the thousands of job openings in in-demand fields.

### EXPANDED TECH-SPACES

B.C. students get it. They understand that the demand for technology-related skills is growing rapidly in our province. Accordingly, we've seen a sharp increase in enrollments in tech-related programs in both public and private post-secondary institutions offering traditional, online, and blended programs. But growing demand also presents



challenges in supplying the right courses at the right time for many would-be students. The 2022 Labour Market Outlook projects 118,000 tech job openings over the next 10 years – 57 per cent higher than 2019 projections.

**That's why StrongerBC: Future Ready makes a significant investment to open 3,000 more tech-relevant post-secondary spaces to meet the demand for technology workers in our changing economy.**

This builds on on-going funding of \$42 million and 2,900 new student spaces created over the last six years, meaning, moving forward, people in B.C. will have access to nearly 6,000 new annual tech spaces at post-secondary institutions throughout B.C.

Boosting the availability of tech-related courses benefits students and employers – increasing the number of skilled graduates to support the rapid up-take of new technology by B.C. employers, and opening pathways to high-opportunity careers for thousands. Through these tech-related courses,

people can receive a range of credentials, from certificates-to-diplomas-to-degrees, giving people the flexibility to find a path that works for them and future employers.

### **BOOSTING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN RURAL AREAS**

Schools in rural and remote areas are facing significant challenges to recruit and retain teachers. It is impacting students' learning and putting pressure on school staff in these communities. It is also making it difficult for rural and remote communities to attract and retain other professionals given the key role schools play in communities.

**That's why Future Ready makes new investments to train and recruit more teachers, with a focus on servicing rural and remote communities.** Ensuring that all students, no matter where they live, have access to qualified teachers contributing to supporting equitable outcomes for students and fostering community stability.

## **PANDEMIC SUPPORTS**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our focus has been on putting people first. The pandemic exposed deep vulnerabilities in our society and reinforced our commitment to making life better for everyone. During the peak of the pandemic, we provided the highest per-capita supports for people and businesses in Canada – more than \$1.5 billion to businesses, people, and communities.

This included direct financial assistance to businesses, support for small business owners to pivot online, and investments in tourism,

manufacturing, and Indigenous tourism. As a result B.C. has emerged from the pandemic with one of the strongest economies in Canada and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan builds upon B.C.'s COVID-19 economic recovery initiatives, like the Launch Online digital marketing skills training program, to reinforce our government's commitment to building a stronger, cleaner and more inclusive economy for all people in British Columbia.

## **DOUBLING VETERINARY MEDICINE SEATS**

Veterinarians play a crucial role in B.C.'s economy, supporting farmers, the agriculture sector, pet owners, and most importantly, animal health and welfare across B.C.

**Through Future Ready, we are doubling, on a permanent basis, the number of subsidized seats for B.C. veterinary medicine students from 20 to 40.** This will lead to a continuous increase in the number of vets to service communities throughout B.C., supporting well-paid jobs, and enhancements to livestock management and food security.

Expanding training through vet seats is one way that B.C. is working to address the need for more vets. The Province also continues to recruit more internationally trained vets by adding the position to the list of priority occupations under the Provincial Nominee Program in 2022.

## **EXPANDED GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS**

For many employers and business leaders in B.C., recruiting and attracting talent is at the top of their priority list. Developing the next wave of talent is essential to B.C.'s overall productivity and competitiveness. Across the economy, our capacity for innovation relies upon a steady supply of specialized graduates with masters and doctoral degrees.

Through StrongerBC: Future Ready, we are preparing our next generation of talent right here in B.C. by **expanding the merit-based graduate scholarships for students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and other disciplines.**

By expanding this program, we are supporting students to become the next generation of researchers, innovators, and leaders, while giving employers and business leaders the ability to find

talent closer to home. This will allow thousands of more students to apply their expertise and help companies innovate to be more competitive on the global stage.

## **EXPANDED K-12 CAREER LIFE CONNECTIONS AND DUAL CREDIT**

Giving B.C. students more opportunities to find and explore in-demand careers that match their interests and pursuits is a core component of the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan.

**The K-12 Career Connections initiative increases supports for career exploration and foundational skill development for students in Grades K-8 and expands career sampler programs, work experience placements, apprenticeships and access to micro-credentials for high school students.** The Dual Credit Program Expansion provides more grants to grow regional programs connected to in-demand jobs, including promoting jobs within trades and construction.

Taken together, these initiatives help more students graduate from high school equipped and ready to transition to post-secondary studies, as well as gain the skills needed to find jobs in in-demand fields.

### **Success Story**

#### **GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS**

*"Thanks to the B.C. Graduate Scholarship, I can experience learning as a passion and not as a job. This allows me to delve deeper into my research, contemplate new ideas and possibilities, and have the confidence to explore industrial hygiene, an unfamiliar field of knowledge."*

Ann Duong, B.C. Graduate Scholarship recipient





## SKILLS AND TRAINING FOR B.C.'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

With our strong economy, record investments in infrastructure, and a new housing strategy to speed the delivery of new homes and increase the supply of middle-income housing, B.C. is in the midst of a once-in-a-generation building phase.

Unfortunately, British Columbia, like other provinces, is facing a constrained labour supply across all economic sectors, particularly in construction. Employers are struggling to fill positions, with job vacancy rates higher in construction than elsewhere in the economy.

Factors impacting the supply of workers in the construction sector include recruitment and retention challenges, increasing retirements, workplace conditions, and a growing skills gap due to the adoption of new technologies and industry standards.

With our 10-year labour market outlook predicting more job openings than workers, hundreds of thousands of people moving to B.C. every year, and

a robust economic forecast of continued growth, it's clear that action needs to be taken immediately to continue to train the skilled trades workforce – not just for today, but for the decades ahead and the continued housing construction boom.

Building on Government's commitment to launch the skilled trades certification system, the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan works to address housing construction challenges. Through programs like the new future skills grant, training opportunities will be available for people to get the skills needed to build the homes our province needs, including construction drawings, constructing new, energy efficient homes, as well AutoCad design and drafting – a key component of the Province's focus on digital permitting to help speed up housing construction.

Sector-by-sector, Future Ready makes it easier, quicker, and less expensive to get the training and skills upgrading to land an in-demand job building thousands of homes throughout our province over the next decade.

## EXPANDED WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Work-integrated learning opportunities provide a great chance for students to gain relevant work experience, while also helping employers close the skills gap and train the next generation of workers.

That's why as part of *Budget 2023* and StrongerBC: Future Ready, **we are expanding work-integrated learning opportunities at British Columbia's smaller public post-secondary institutions, with the majority of institutions located outside the Lower Mainland.** This means more students in every corner of B.C. can access co-op education, internships, clinical placements, service learning, and practicums.

Through these opportunities, students apply classroom learning and gain relevant work experience, while also developing connections with employers. At the same time, employers benefit from a firsthand look at new talent for future recruitment after graduation.

## MORE ON-CAMPUS SPACES FOR STUDENTS

British Columbia's new *Homes for People Action Plan* puts forward a continued commitment towards building on-campus housing. That's because this government believes students' sole focus should be on their studies, not on finding housing that works for them and their budget.

Since 2017, our government has built or begun construction of nearly 8,000 new beds on post-secondary campuses in every region in B.C. This student housing construction boom has created desperately needed accommodation for students at schools with the highest housing demand, while also freeing up much needed space in tight rental markets for others in the broader community.

**And now we are delivering an additional 4,000 student beds at campuses across B.C.** As detailed in *Budget 2023* and *Homes for People*, a \$575 million commitment is helping to build more homes for students in regions including in high-demand areas in the Lower Mainland, southern Vancouver Island and Thompson Okanagan. Many of them are being built using mass timber, a more sustainable made-in-B.C. product and technology.

All in, our province is on track to add 12,000 new post-secondary beds for students.





## CARE ECONOMY WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Public sector and not-for-profit employers across B.C. are struggling to recruit and retain the thousands of workers needed to maintain important education, elder care, mental health, and social services.

The Province has put in place a comprehensive Health Human Resources Strategy to ensure B.C. has a skilled and sustainable health care workforce to meet the needs of our growing, and aging population.

More generally, other components of the care economy also face critical workforce challenges that have a direct and immediate impact on the well-being of our population and our economy. Many care economy jobs require specialized education, skills and experience that take time to acquire.

Employer competition for the same pool of skilled workers is not sustainable. An integrated approach is required to address current and future skills shortages and workforce challenges.

### **The Care Economy Workforce Strategy – a key action within the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan – will deliver this needed integration.**

This strategy will better define B.C.'s care economy service delivery landscape and improve understanding through enhanced labour market information. The strategy will set attainable goals to increase labour supply and innovate service delivery, to make the best use of the current and future care economy workforce. The strategy will also link and coordinate workforce development initiatives across government, providing a clear view of labour market challenges and shortages to better inform decision-making.

## GROWING THE WORKFORCE FOR A CLEANBC

CleanBC is our government's climate action plan that is lowering emissions and supporting a healthier, cleaner economy. It includes actions across sectors to reduce emissions to targets of 40 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030. New and highly skilled jobs are opening as a result – helping industry move to cleaner energy options, requiring all new buildings in the province to be zero carbon, supporting cleaner ways to get around by investing in transit and active transportation, and making heating, ventilation, insulation and other energy efficiency upgrades more affordable for homeowners and businesses.

Many of the skills employers need now are transferable to B.C.'s clean economy future. Foundational skills such as project management,

engineering, construction, and maintenance – are highly transferable and, with some skill adaptation or enhancement, can be used to meet the emerging jobs in the clean economy.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan considers the needs of people seeking a transition from one sector to another or who are looking to reskill to meet labour demands of the future. The Action Plan includes funding to support people including the future skills grant, TradeUpBC, new skills for new products like Mass Timber and supports for workers in industries going through a transition like forest sector workers. Taken together, the Future Ready Action Plan provides the supports people need to succeed in B.C.'s clean economy.



## People looking to reskill for in-demand jobs

B.C.'s economy is growing and changing rapidly. For many people, this type of change has meant the need to acquire new skills or touch up on existing skills to further their careers.

Shifting global markets, new business models, and a clear mandate from traditional industries to be cleaner and more sustainable, means many workers are adapting and reskilling on the fly. This is a challenge, but also an opportunity that Future Ready looks to seize. This plan steps up with new supports for workers seeking to upgrade and increase their skills for more in-demand and high-opportunity careers.

### NEW FUTURE SKILLS GRANT

Over the next ten years, it is predicted that changing industries and workplaces means one-third of workers in B.C. will be asked to learn new skills. That's more than a million people. People with families to support, bills to pay and not a lot of free time to go back to school or take a course.

As our economy changes, skills training and education will happen over the course of an entire career, not just at the beginning.

That's why, as a flagship action of StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, we are bringing forward a new program to achieve two major outcomes:

- Make it easier for people to get the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow.
- Immediately address B.C.'s urgent and growing need to skill more workers, faster.

**The new future skills grant reduces financial barriers by providing British Columbians with access to up to \$3,500 to cover the costs of tuition for eligible short-term skills training. These training opportunities will give people new skills they need to succeed in either existing professions or a new profession.**

Beginning September 2023, the grant is available to British Columbians – making it easy to select from hundreds of eligible training opportunities for the most in-demand jobs as outlined in B.C.'s Labour Market Outlook, or as profiled in the province's ambitious economic, health care, and climate action plans.

For employers, this means some 8,500 newly trained workers over the next three years will be ready and skilled to fill in-demand positions in the labour market.







## Future Skills

**More than 400 training opportunities available including:**

- Cybersecurity Strategy and Risk Management
- AutoCad for Design and Drafting
- Core Skills For Facilities Maintenance
- Social Housing Management
- Hospitality
- Medical Terminology Skills for Office Administration

For a full list of more than 400 training opportunities – visit [educationplannerbc.ca/futureskillsgrant](https://educationplannerbc.ca/futureskillsgrant)

## **RAPID RESPONSE TRAINING AND TRADEUPBC**

To support the future skills grant, we are increasing funding to develop and enhance micro-credential programs and establishing TradeUpBC, a continuing education hub for in-demand jobs. This Rapid Response Training Initiative helps support innovative delivery of post-secondary education with shorter, industry-driven training as well as increasing skills for certified journeypersons to continue learning throughout their careers.

TradeUpBC, beginning in September 2023, provides new reskilling and training opportunities for more trades workers that fall outside of formal apprenticeship training programs, and in a manner that responds quickly to new skills for in-demand and rapidly evolving jobs. New training, developed with input from industries, is relevant to the immediate needs of employers. Short term training will be delivered through approaches that allow employees to continue to work and earn, including online learning, in-person or blended options.

## **MORE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR FOREST SECTOR WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES**

The key to better, more sustainable forest jobs and communities is supporting the transition to a high-value forestry sector – respecting all the inherent values of this foundational resource and maximizing the value of B.C. wood products – including new value-added manufacturing. As our forest sector evolves and innovates, future employment will increasingly be highly skilled, and knowledge based.

Throughout this transition, StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is helping workers and communities impacted by new forest management practices, temporary logging deferrals, timber supply constraints, or market changes, to pivot and reskill for new opportunities and jobs.

## **Success Story**

### **RAPID RESPONSE TRAINING**

*“As a BCIT alumnus in the architectural and building technology diploma and construction management degree, I’m proud that the BCIT School of Construction and the Environment continues to develop new curriculum like the mass timber micro-credential, in collaboration with industry partners, to support professional development for the construction industry. The targeted content and intuitive online learning platform allow me to complete the course at my own pace around my busy schedule, while bringing the course content into my day-to-day role in leading projects for our clients. This program will serve as a strong resource for our team as we continue to deliver value and project excellence for our clients.”*

Darren Sauer, student,  
British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)

**As part of StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, our government is delivering a Forest Worker Transition Support program. This program focuses on new specialized skills training options for impacted workers, employers and communities.**

The program will serve over 1,800 people over the next 3 years in accessing relevant training to enable impacted workers and communities to transition to sustainable, family supporting jobs.

This new training is in addition to the current array of Provincial initiatives to support forest workers and communities in transition, including the three-year \$185 million Forest Worker & Community Support Program initiated in 2021.

The program is expected to launch in October 2023.





## NEW SKILLS FOR NEW PRODUCTS – MASS TIMBER

Mass Timber is at the centre of our province's future construction blueprint. Approximately 320 mass timber buildings are completed or under construction, with about 50 additional buildings in planning stages. This growth has led to more than 22 B.C. companies providing mass timber services, helping to sustain more than 700 jobs.

**Future Ready boosts training for people looking to enter this growing industry.** Training programs will be offered by post-secondary institutions, with the development and delivery of comprehensive mass timber programs, including mass timber design, mass timber development and construction skills, and mass timber digital skills.

## HOMES FOR PEOPLE

*Homes for People* is an action plan to deliver more homes for people, faster. Its focus is on delivering homes that are both attainable and meet the needs of families, seniors, students, and those who drive our economy. The plan prescribes urgent action to speed up the delivery of new homes, increase the supply of middle-income housing, fight cost-inflating speculation and profiteering, and help those who need it most.

Here's what we are doing to make this vision a reality:

- Investing more than \$4 billion over the next three years, with a commitment to invest \$12 billion over the next decade to build thousands of new homes.
- Delivering more middle-income small-scale, multi-unit housing that people can actually afford through zoning changes and proactive partnerships.

- Creating an annual income-tested renter's tax credit of up to \$400 per year for renters.
- Offering forgivable loans for homeowners to build and rent secondary suites to increase affordable rental supply, faster.
- Introducing a flipping tax to discourage short-term speculation.
- Speeding up permitting to reduce costs and approvals time to get homes built faster.
- Providing more homes and support for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Our government's \$7 billion housing investment announced in 2018 and effective tools such as the Speculation and Vacancy Tax have already delivered more than 42,000 homes. Homes for People does even more to make sure everyone in B.C. has a home they can afford that meets their needs, so people can build good lives and thrive.



## EXPANDED MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

According to a recent manufacturing survey, more than two-thirds of manufacturers are experiencing recruiting challenges, with more than half currently reporting current unfilled vacancies and skills shortages.\*

To tackle this shortage, **the Manufacturing Workforce Development component of Future Ready focuses on supporting youth to enter careers in manufacturing through a new “Youth in Manufacturing Initiative” to be delivered by the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium.**

This initiative provides up to 500 youth (ages 16-21) with short-term work placements to develop skills and work experience that positions them for success in post-secondary training and in the workforce.

In addition to providing opportunities for current high school students, the initiative focuses on recent high school graduates considered to be “NEET” youth (youth not in education, employment or training).

The initiative ensures cultural safety for Indigenous Peoples and promotes the inclusion of under-represented groups, including women and members of racialized communities.

\*Source: EMC Plant 2022 Senior Manufacturing Management Survey.

## DIGITAL SKILLS BOOTCAMP

Thousands more B.C. businesses and workers will have the opportunity to sharpen their online skills with an **extension of the popular Digital Skills Bootcamp program**. The first offerings were introduced in support of COVID-19 impacted businesses, the *Digital Skills Bootcamp*, provided instruction and mentoring by business leaders in digital marketing and online commerce. Digital and online marketing skills have already been provided to more than 10,000 people.

New digital skills offerings like customer relationship management, logistics and supply management and digital recruitment will continue to expand opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses, wherever they are located. In addition to direct support to small and medium-sized business, the digital bootcamps support workers looking to make career change or to increase their skills in our digital economy. The programs are tailored to support participants from rural communities and persons facing barriers to employment or otherwise under-represented entrepreneurs.

## CANADIAN TECH TALENT ACCELERATOR PROGRAM (CTTA):

The CTTA has been a valuable resource for unemployed or underemployed young people (ages 17-30), and people from under-represented communities looking to start a career in the tech industry.

Delivered by NPower Canada in collaboration with Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster, Microsoft Canada, and Blueprint, the CTTA has offered two free 15-week online programs – junior IT and junior data analyst programs – covering IT and data analytics fundamentals, including networking, security, data collection, data cleaning, and visualization.

Designed to help participants gain the skills they need to secure jobs in the tech industry, the CTTA has a very high success rate, with over 70 per cent of graduates finding employment within six months of completing the program.

**Through StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, these programs will become available for more participants in the coming months, helping thousands of people get their start in tech.**

## WORKPLACE INNOVATION FUND

A key component of Future Ready centres around supporting innovation and finding practical solutions to the current skilled labour gap. To work towards these solutions, **we are introducing a new program – the StrongerBC Workplace Innovation Fund – to support businesses in implementing innovative new strategies to tackle the current labour market challenge and better prepare for a changing economy.**

The \$30 million fund is expected to be launched in Fall 2023 with more details on how industry sectors and their business partners will be able to use these funds to innovate.







## People facing barriers

Making post-secondary education and skills training more affordable and accessible is critical to tackling the current skills shortage. But just as important, is breaking down barriers that are keeping people out of the workforce.

What is a barrier? For some it's trauma, experienced at childhood or a life altering event. For others, it is systemic racism pushing them away from opportunities in workplaces.

Barriers can also be a lack of key supports related to child care, housing or even access to high-speed internet.

StrongerBC: Future Ready steps up our efforts to break down these barriers by building on our work to create a labour market that works for everyone.

We will achieve this through the following actions:

### **FORMER YOUTH IN CARE TUITION WAIVED FOR ALL AGES**

Access to education for everyone is a foundational belief of our government. When people don't have the opportunity to get the skills or education they need to succeed, their pathway towards a good career or job is blocked before it even starts.

That's why in 2017, as one of the first actions taken by this government, we granted free tuition for former youth in care between the ages of 19 and 26. To date, 1,900 people have benefited from this important step to break down a significant barrier to education.

Now, through Future Ready, **we are expanding the program by waiving the age requirement – meaning all former youth in care, at any age, can access tuition-free education and skills training.** Effective August 1, 2023, the Provincial

Tuition Waiver Program ensures free education for former youth in care at any of B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions, Native Education College and 10 approved union trades training institutes. The program includes courses leading to a certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree, non-credit courses, apprenticeship programs and continuing education courses. Through the program, all former youth in care are also eligible to receive \$3,500 to help offset the costs of books, supplies and computers.

The program expansion also delivers on commitments in the Declaration Act Action Plan, and the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol signed by the First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations Education Steering

### **Success Story TUITION WAIVER**

*"It took a village to get me this far, and it will continue to take a village to get others here beside me. The provincial Tuition Waiver Program offers to those who have been in care the possibility to make strong strides towards the life they want to live, even if they, like me, once thought that life was unattainable. I truly can't say what a gift that is. On a personal level it is life changing, both for me and for any lineage after me. On a community level, the Tuition Waiver Program sounds to me like a love letter, from the university to potential students. It says 'You have been through something impossibly hard, but you are welcome here, no explanation needed.' It is an example of unconditional love, institutionalized."*

Mallory Woods, student,  
Vancouver Island University (VIU)

Committee to improve education outcomes of all current and former First Nations children and youth in care. One of the key objectives of expanding the Tuition Waiver Program is to increase participation of Indigenous former children and youth in care in the program.

### **EXPANDED SKILLS TRAINING FOR PEOPLE FACING MULTIPLE BARRIERS**

Right now in economies around the world there are more jobs than there are people to fill them. But without access to training and supports the most vulnerable British Columbians will continue to find it difficult to find a job that works for them and their skills.

Currently, the Skills Training for Employment (STE) program offers wraparound supports to get more vulnerable people relevant skills to gain employment.

The program serves people with multiple barriers including mental health challenges, housing instability, addictions, lack of social networks, limited literacy skills, lack of Canadian work experience – including new immigrants and people with low incomes. Over the last two years, nearly 80 per cent of participants achieved employment or were connected to further education upon exit from the program.

**Future Ready builds on this success and expands this program, with additional funding for more than 3,200 people who face multiple barriers to employment to gain the skills needed to pursue further education and skills training.**

### **Success Story**

#### **SKILLS TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS**

*"My name is Tim Cyr, and I successfully gained my Hoist certification through the Embers Learn and Earn program. At the time that I signed up for the course I had not worked in over 3 years and was living in transitional housing. I was excited to learn that I had the opportunity to receive training that I could not afford. I enjoyed the course and learned a lot. I was hired on right after my exam with a starting wage that was more than I have ever made before. I have now been working for over 3 months and things are improving. I soon will be able to afford my own place and plan to buy a vehicle. I am very grateful for this opportunity. This program really helped me change my life."*

Tim Cyr, graduate,  
Embers Learn and Earn program

Support includes employment assistance, counselling, mentoring, job placements, disability support, Indigenous cultural supports, child care, housing and other tailored individual supports.

Through this program, more than 3,000 additional people are expected to join B.C.'s workforce over the coming years.





## CAREERS IN CARING: ENSURING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

The care economy encompasses the spectrum of human services from child care to elder care – from health care to education. It's a large, growing, and valuable sector in our economy – and as noted in the 2022 Labour Market Outlook – the single largest block of future job openings to be filled in the decade ahead.

But as everyone knows – we face critical pressures now in meeting the demand for skilled worker in the care economy – notably in the delivery of child care and health services in our province.

### **IMPACT OF B.C.'S CHILD CARE PLAN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)**

Access to affordable child care is a crucial component in supporting people to gain or maintain employment or pursue training. People can work and study confident in the knowledge their children are in care and early learning environments. Since launching the ChildCareBC plan in 2018, the B.C. government has invested over \$3.9 billion in building affordable, accessible,

quality, inclusive child care as a core service that families can depend on. Improved access to child care leads to increased employment – particularly for women – better productivity, and economic security for families.

These investments have significantly enhanced access to licensed child care. Since the beginning of ChildCareBC, the number of child care spaces participating in provincial programs has risen from 111,000 spaces in 2017-18 to 138,800 – an increase of over 27,000 licensed spaces. Additionally, the number of early childhood education (ECE) student spaces at public post-secondary institutions has more than doubled since 2018. These investments help families access quality child care and early education and supports family and community stability as well as the economic growth of British Columbia.

### **Making child care more affordable**

On December 1, 2022, fee reductions for families of children kindergarten-age and under increased up to an additional \$550 per month, per child at

licensed child care facilities. This is in addition to the up to \$350 per month, per child savings introduced in 2018, for a total savings of up to \$900 per child, per month. As well, effective September 1, 2023, child care fee reductions will expand to include half-day preschools and before- and after-school care programs, reducing the average daily fee for these types of care to approximately \$20 per day.

In addition, the Affordability Child Care Benefit (ACCB) provides eligible families with up to \$1,250 per child. The ACCB and Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative can be combined to make child care even more affordable for families with annual incomes up to \$111,000.

This income-tested program helps eligible families with the cost of child care by providing financial assistance and making child care more affordable. It is an essential part of this government's efforts to support families and help them succeed.

### **Supporting Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)**

Our government is taking action to support early childhood education, including providing a \$4 per hour wage enhancement to ECEs, granting more than \$24 million in bursaries to 6,500 ECE students, and creating over 1,500 additional student spaces since 2018. We are committed to developing and implementing a wage grid to better support ECEs. These initiatives will help attract and retain qualified ECE professionals and expand child care as a core service for families.

## **HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**

Future Ready works alongside B.C.'s Health Human Resources Strategy to ensure that health services are accessible to everybody in B.C., now and into the future.

The strategy prescribes 70 specific actions under four cornerstones: retain, redesign, recruit and

train. By coordinating human resource action on this foundation – including making sure internationally trained workers can practice in their field, training more health care workers in B.C., and encouraging more young people to pursue new careers in health – B.C. will have the health care workforce we need to ensure quality care for everyone.

Each cornerstone supports key actions.

To retain health care workers, the plan increases staffing levels, providing opportunities for career advancement and professional development, improving working conditions, and supporting mental health and well-being programs.

To redesign the health care system, the plan strengthens partnerships between health care providers, implementing new care models focused on prevention and early intervention, and addressing the specific health care needs of underserved communities.

To recruit new health care workers, the plan increases the number of health care training programs and student spaces in the province, developing targeted recruitment and retention strategies, promoting British Columbia as an attractive place to live and work, and remove financial barriers and streamline pathways for international health care workers to come to British Columbia.

And, to train the next generation of health care workers, the plan increases funding for health care training programs, development of new programs that focus on emerging health care needs and technologies, support for health care students through financial assistance and mentorship programs, and improved collaboration between health care training programs and providers to ensure hands-on experience.

## **MORE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SPACES TO HELP PARENTS AND BUSINESSES**

When parents can't find affordable and quality child care, everyone suffers – children, parents, and our economy as a whole. Workplace participation surveys indicate that more than 60,000 parents and caregivers in B.C. work part-time because they are caring for children. 90 per cent of those parents and caregivers are women.

Our government is working to change this by building a future where child care is a core service so more parents have the option of continuing on their career path while raising their children.

A large part of building high-quality child care is ensuring we have a skilled and dedicated workforce to keep child care operators in business, and to support the expansion of the child care system in B.C. That means creating more educational opportunities for people looking to build careers in child care. **Through Future Ready, we continue to expand spaces for Early Childhood Education programs by creating 1,390 new training spaces over the next three years.** This is in addition to the 940 students currently enrolled annually at B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions.

By building a solid foundation of early childhood education students, we are helping more small and medium-sized businesses find the people they need to succeed, and helping reduce the stress for families looking for high-quality, affordable child care.

## **Success Story**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR SEATS**

*"I could take the online program through UBC and live where I wanted to live outside the city in the Okanagan. I am doing my practicum right now, and love that the goal of the job is to make sure kids are happy and laughing. It's a positive work environment."*

John Harrison, ECE student,  
University of British Columbia (UBC)

## **ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**Youth with developmental disabilities receive extra support to transition from school to work thanks to a \$2-million provincial grant to the IMPACT program run by the Delta Community Living Society.** The grant allows the program to expand to 10 communities across British Columbia, helping up to 360 more youth find employment over the next three years. The program provides work options where youth with developmental disabilities are valued and can grow.

The Impact program and its work to support youth with developmental disabilities are further bolstered by the Re-imagining Community Inclusion Workplan, a 10-year vision developed with community partners and people with lived experience. The plan creates a more inclusive and barrier-free economy, ensuring access to meaningful employment and helping people with developmental disabilities thrive fully and equally.

With this grant and other supports in place, our government is working towards a future where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of their abilities.





## Indigenous Peoples in B.C.

British Columbia's passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) confirmed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for achieving true, lasting, and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of us all.

The impacts of colonization and colonial systems and practices continue to affect Indigenous Peoples, resulting in a disparity of outcomes across many areas, including education, training, and workforce participation. Systemic barriers that Indigenous Peoples face when pursuing education or work must be addressed to advance reconciliation and ensure B.C.'s economy works for everyone.

**The plan puts forward nearly \$100 million to support several initiatives that shifts post-secondary education and training programs from government-led to Indigenous-led and with ongoing funding to expand post-secondary training and labour market opportunities.**

In the StrongerBC Economic Plan, the Province committed to advance our shared commitments to reconciliation by working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit to co-create an inclusive and clean economy – one in which Indigenous Peoples see their fair share of economic benefits. This starts with addressing barriers in education and training and recognizing the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and self-government.

To advance reconciliation, this work must be done in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, and through a distinctions-based approach that may require the Province's relationship and engagement with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People to include different approaches or actions and result in different outcomes.

The Province works closely with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association to advance First Nations post-secondary education and training, such as:

- Providing initial core and capacity funding to **First Nations-mandated institutes across B.C.**, which play a vital role in increasing access to post-secondary education and training, while at the same time safeguarding culturally relevant education.
- Providing funding to develop and deliver First Nations Fluency Degrees, including the **nsyilxcn Language Fluency Degree** offered by the En'owkin Centre in Penticton, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and UBC Okanagan. Five more First Nations and First Nations-mandated institutes are working on degree programs for their respective languages.
- The **First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol** commits the Province and First Nations to work together to engage in dialogue and joint action on specific issues and initiatives, seeking to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of First Nations children and youth in care, and former youth in care through legislative, policy and practice reform.

The Province also works closely with Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) to offer access to culturally appropriate post-secondary education and training for Métis learners, for example:

- Contributing to **Métis Nation British Columbia's Skills Training, Employment & Post-Secondary (STEPS) program**, which provides Métis citizens with vital skills training and employment readiness programs; and
- Funding to support MNBC's exploration of a post-secondary institution model that meets the needs of Métis learners and Chartered Communities.

B.C.'s 25 public post-secondary institutions are also working to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, with support from the Province. For example, the University of Victoria's Indigenous Law Program is the only one in Canada enabling students to study Indigenous and non-Indigenous laws in the joint degree program.

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan supports reconciliation and contributes to the implementation of the Declaration Act by contributing to address systemic barriers and

supporting the capacity of Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in the workforce and meet their own priorities, honouring self-government, and self-determination.

The Declaration Act enshrines into law the human rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. Together, the StrongerBC Economic Plan and StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan support implementation of the Declaration Act and advancing lasting and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

By helping to implement eight of the actions in the Declaration Act Action Plan, the Declaration Act Workforce Initiatives are a key part of that work.

These initiatives take a distinctions-based approach which acknowledges and affirms the specific rights, interests, priorities and circumstances of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit – each having unique cultures, histories, rights, and laws.

Developed in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, these initiatives are aimed at moving from government-led to Indigenous-led post-secondary education and training programs by providing ongoing, stable and predictable funding to expand post-secondary training and labour market opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.



## INTERNET CONNECTIVITY: FAST TRACKING ONLINE ACCESS FOR EVERYONE

Access to high-speed internet is essential for anyone participating in today's economy. In 2017, only 60 per cent of homes in rural and remote areas and 12 per cent of homes on First Nation reserves had access to high-speed internet. As of March 2023, that number had increased to 74 per cent of rural homes and 76 per cent of homes on reserves. That's why our government is aggressively accelerating the timeline to connect every home in every community in B.C. to high-speed internet by 2027.

To achieve this goal, the province signed a joint funding agreement with Canada in March 2022 that commits up to \$830 million to expand connectivity to every home. Working with local, regional and First Nations governments, and directly with internet service providers, the new provincial Connecting Communities B.C. program is reviewing projects for funding to reach the remaining underserved homes.

Expanding connectivity brings benefits across the province. These include:

- Improved access to education and health care: High-speed internet allows people everywhere to access online courses, telehealth services, and other educational and health care resources.
- Increased economic opportunities: High-speed internet allows people to work remotely, start businesses, and connect with customers and suppliers around the world.
- Improved quality of life: High-speed internet allows people in rural and remote areas to stay connected with friends and family, access entertainment and information, and participate in online communities.

## REVIEW OF RACISM IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Subsequent to the *In Plain Sight* report, and as called for by the First Nations Leadership Council, the Province will engage Indigenous partners to conduct an external review of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in the provincial public post-secondary education system, and create a strategy to address findings.

## SUPPORT NATIVE EDUCATION COLLEGE

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan funding supports Native Education College in continuing to deliver adult higher education to urban Indigenous learners, allowing culturally safe access to post-secondary programs and supports.

## TRAIN, RECRUIT AND RETAIN MORE INDIGENOUS TEACHERS

The StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan provides new support for Indigenous teacher training, recruitment, and retention initiatives. These are tailored to better serve Indigenous learners, and are of benefit to all K-12 students. The initiatives will be developed with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, Métis Nation British Columbia, and other partners. These initiatives target inequities that have resulted in an under-representation of Indigenous teachers in the K-12 system, help build a workforce that is more representative of B.C.'s population, and promote an understanding and awareness of Indigenous histories, cultures, and knowledges.



## **Actions that honour self-determination, and build capacity to address First Nations workforce priorities**

### **PROVIDE ONGOING CORE AND CAPACITY FUNDING FOR FIRST NATIONS-MANDATED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTES**

First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes deliver a broad spectrum of courses and programs that support First Nations people, communities, languages, and cultures. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes are governed by and accountable to First Nations. The lack of stable funding has hampered the ability of First Nations-mandated institutes to grow and to meet the needs of their nations.

The programs offered by these institutes include post-secondary, adult basic education, First Nations' languages and skills training in culturally safe environments that meet the needs of First Nations learners and First Nation communities.

### **EXPAND FIRST NATIONS SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMING**

B.C. is providing funding for First Nations to design and deliver community-based skills training and education programs to upgrade skills, obtain credentials, secure good jobs, and support local economies. Reliable funding will enhance the program in ways that honour self-determination and community priorities.

### **EXPAND SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION**

All 34 B.C. First Nation languages are critically endangered – a consequence of colonialism and the legacy of residential schools. Future Ready Declaration Act Workforce Initiatives provides new funding to support Indigenous Language Fluency degrees – post-secondary programs developed and delivered by First Nations and post-secondary institutions aligning with a provincial framework developed by First Nations Education Steering Committee, Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, First Nations and public post-secondary institutes. These degree programs create fluent language speakers, preserving culture and opening doors to new career pathways. This initiative is administered by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association.

### **GUARDIAN AND STEWARDSHIP TRAINING INITIATIVE**

'Guardians' is a term used to describe First Nations-led initiatives to perform a spectrum of stewardship and cultural functions and activities on their land base. This work reflects the responsibilities, laws, and traditions of First Nations arising from their connection to and stewardship of their territories. The Future Ready Guardians and Stewardship Training initiative will be co-developed with First Nations and will provide First Nations with access to funding for training and education so Guardians are able to expand capacity, programming, and services to meet their self-determined stewardship priorities, and to partner with B.C. in co-management of lands and resources where agreed.

## Actions that honour self-determination, and build capacity to address Métis workforce priorities

### EXPAND MÉTIS SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The Future Ready Declaration Act Workforce Initiatives provides funding for education and skills training programming led by and developed with Métis Nation British Columbia in partnership with Métis Chartered Communities. The community-based programming initiatives honour self-determination and Métis priorities.

### SUPPORT ESTABLISHMENT OF A MÉTIS POST-SECONDARY AND TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Province will contribute to Métis Nation British Columbia's plan to develop their skills

training and education programming into a Métis education and training institute that will provide culturally relevant education opportunities to Métis citizens and others across the 36 Métis Chartered Communities in B.C.

### MÉTIS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Michif is the national Métis language, developed in the Red River Valley in the early 1800s. Today, Michif has only about 1,000 fluent speakers. The Future Ready Declaration Act Workforce Initiatives provides support to Métis Nation British Columbia for revitalization of the Michif language.

## TALENT FOR TOMORROW: LIFE SCIENCES AND BIOMANUFACTURING

B.C.'s new Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy aims to establish British Columbia as a global hub for life sciences and biomanufacturing, and as a leading centre for commercial-scale biopharmaceutical and medical manufacturing.

B.C. life sciences and biomanufacturing companies told us that finding the right talent is their most significant barrier to growth. One reason for this challenge is that, until recently, specialized, practical training in biomanufacturing was not available in Canada.

A key action of the strategy is the establishment of the **National Biomanufacturing Training Centre** (NBTC) in British Columbia. The NBTC will support companies addressing some of the world's most

pressing health care challenges and train hundreds – eventually thousands – of highly skilled employees to meet the needs of our growing life sciences and biomanufacturing businesses.

The Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy complements Future Ready by investing in talent development to meet the industry's needs for workers with specialized skills, expanding B.C.'s laboratory infrastructure, building our clinical trials capacity, and ensuring that British Columbia is future ready to develop and attract biomanufacturing anchor companies. This is creating thousands of new jobs, diversifying our economy and growing a robust domestic supply chain – all while advancing health and pandemic preparedness here at home and internationally.



## People new to B.C.

More than 100,000 people moved to B.C. in 2021, and another 150,000 people in 2022. That's the most in 60 years.

However, today, too many newcomers are being held back from applying their skills to important professional and skilled jobs in our economy. We need to make it easier for our fellow Canadians and future Canadians alike to succeed in their career pathways in their new home.

Already our government has eliminated tuition fees on Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs, opening the door for tens of thousands of people to upgrade their education and skills every year.

And now the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan streamline recognition of foreign credentials, support in-demand skilled workers to join the B.C. workforce more quickly, and support newcomers and immigrants in continuing to work in the fields in which they are trained and ready to serve.

### **STREAMLINED FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION**

To get more internationally trained professionals certified faster, we need to do a better job of assessing and recognizing qualifications more efficiently. In B.C., assessing and recognizing qualifications is the responsibility of approximately 50 different regulatory authorities, many with different processes and timelines.

**That's why our government is committed to improving these processes and bringing forward legislation that establishes more unified standards for foreign credential recognition.** This legislation will help facilitate quicker entry of newcomers into their desired fields of work and remove unnecessary barriers, helping employers find internationally trained workers faster.

The Minister of State for Workforce Development is engaging with regulatory bodies, immigrant-serving organizations and other partners about the details within the legislation with the goal of bringing it forward in the Fall of 2023.





## **NEW STRONGERBC FIND YOUR PATH INITIATIVES**

Helping people connect to education and training opportunities for high-demand occupations is key to closing the skills gap and growing an inclusive and sustainable economy that works for everyone, including newcomers.

We need to make it easier for people new to B.C. to get the information they need to find a job that works for them, and their existing skill set and training.

**Beginning in Fall 2023, people looking for a new job or new career will benefit from a new Find your Path online-tool that helps people discover in-demand jobs and the education and training they need to land those jobs.**

Customized plans will map the steps and programs to help people achieve their job goals – all in one place. Think of it as a one-stop shop for someone entering B.C.'s labour market. The tool maps out someone's education and career journey, bringing together resources like WorkBC.ca and EducationplannerBC.ca.

Future Ready also continues to expand in-community infrastructure and supports for learners in Indigenous and remote communities through Contact North B.C. – a pilot project that creates local access centres providing technology and locally employed community support staff to assist students in completing online or hybrid education programs and courses while remaining in their communities.

## **ENHANCING THE B.C. PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM (PNP)**

The B.C. Provincial Nominee Program (B.C. PNP) allows the Province to select and nominate foreign workers, international students and entrepreneurs for permanent residency to help meet B.C.'s labour market needs, support government priorities and help grow B.C.'s economy. The program helps to attract skilled international workers throughout the province, supporting thousands of employers each year in addressing labour shortages.

Last year, we urged the Federal Government to increase the number of people the PNP can nominate each year so that the program can do even more to support B.C.'s need for skilled workers. Moving forward, we are pleased to see the program will be expanded from nominating 7,000 people in 2022 to 8,000 in 2023, 9,000 in 2024, and 10,000 in 2025.

**As part of the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, our government has already made changes to the program to prioritize in-demand skills like health care workers, early childhood educators, and animal health professionals under the B.C. PNP Skills Immigration Stream.**

The program is also working to attract more skilled newcomers to communities outside of Metro Vancouver, with a goal of 30 per cent of nominees residing outside Metro Vancouver by 2025/26.

Overall, improvements to the PNP program are crucial for making sure those who are working in high-demand jobs in B.C. stay in B.C.

# Funding StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan

In Budget 2023, the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan has a three-year budget allocation of \$480 million.

Action	Three-Year Budget Allocation (\$ millions)	Funding Source
<b>PEOPLE SEEKING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION</b>		
Increasing student financial aid	151	Budget 2023
3,000 more tech-relevant spaces	74.7	Future Ready
Expanded rural and remote teacher spaces	3.7	Future Ready
Doubling veterinarian spaces	21.8	Future Ready
More graduate scholarships and internships	15.0	Future Ready
Increasing K-12 career life connections and dual credit programs	6.2	Future Ready
Expanded learning opportunities at work	4.5	Future Ready
Thousands more on-campus spaces for students	575	Budget 2023 – Homes for People
Care economy workforce strategy	2.9	Future Ready
<b>PEOPLE LOOKING TO RESKILL FOR IN-DEMAND JOBS</b>		
New future skills grant	39	Future Ready
Rapid Response Training and TradeUpBC	13.8	Future Ready
Transition training for forest sector workers	30.3	Future Ready
New skills for new building products – Mass Timber	3.3	Future Ready
Expanded manufacturing workforce development	3.0	Future Ready
Digital Skills Bootcamps + Tech Talent Accelerator	8.1	Future Ready
Workplace innovation fund	30.4	Future Ready

PEOPLE FACING BARRIERS		
Tuition waived for former youth in care for all ages	19.2	Future Ready
Expanded skill training for people with multiple barriers	44.5	Future Ready
More early childhood educator training spaces	12.1	Future Ready
Additional work opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities	2-million-dollar one-time grant	Labour Market Development Agreement funding
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES		
Actions to support Indigenous Peoples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of racism in post-secondary education</li> <li>• Support Native Education College</li> <li>• Train, recruit and retain more Indigenous teachers</li> <li>• Provide ongoing core and capacity funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes</li> <li>• Expand First Nations skills training and education programming</li> <li>• Expand support for First Nations language revitalization</li> <li>• Expand Métis Skills training and education programming</li> <li>• Support establishment of a Métis Post-Secondary and Training Institute</li> <li>• Métis language revitalization</li> </ul>	92.1	Future Ready
Expanded Guardian and Stewardship Training Initiative	8.9	Future Ready
PEOPLE NEW TO B.C.		
Streamlined foreign credential recognition		Ongoing base funding
Find Your Path Tool	43.5	Future Ready
Improving the B.C. provincial nominee program (PNP)		Ongoing base funding
<b>Future Ready Funded Total</b>	<b>480</b>	

\*Note – 3.2M provided to support Future Ready implementation initiatives not included in above table





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