



GREATER VANCOUVER  
BOARD OF TRADE



# SOLVING B.C.'S WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

PREPARING FOR THE JOBS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Problem

The provincial government projects there will be 1,004,000 job openings in B.C. over the next ten years. In a world of rapidly developing technologies, shifting employee expectations and demographics, and steep international competition for talent, B.C. must attract and retain the talent it needs to meet this staggering number of job openings across all sectors.

Vancouver is a top-tier lifestyle city with a dynamic economy. The surrounding natural beauty and cultural vibrancy of our city make this region an incredible place to live. But we know too many businesses and people are falling behind. We are up against significant challenges to ensure we have the right talent mix to meet future labour market needs.

**Businesses Continue to Face Labour Market Challenges.** In September 2022, data from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Business Data Lab<sup>1</sup> revealed that difficulty recruiting (40%) and retaining (34%) talent continued to impact Vancouver businesses across every sector, with a slight uptick when compared with the previous quarter.

- **And certain sectors are worse than others.** In the health and social assistance sector, the number of vacant positions in Canada rose 90.9% (+65,000) in the first quarter of 2022. According to the B.C. restaurant association, the restaurant industry faced a deficit of nearly 35,000 workers.<sup>2</sup> In B.C., 10 to 12% of truck driver positions are currently vacant.<sup>3</sup>

**These Current Labour Market Challenges are Costing Businesses.** Labour market mismatches are posing multifaceted challenges to businesses on staffing, costs, sales, and client experience. According to BDC, 45% of businesses faced higher labour costs, while 44% experienced a decline in sales and 43% had to pay higher operating costs as a result of hiring challenges in 2022.<sup>4</sup>

- In another B.C.-focused report, The Conference Board of Canada estimated that skills deficits have already cost B.C. up to \$4.7 billion in foregone GDP and \$616 million in tax revenues, as a result of many British Columbians not having the right skills to contribute to the economy.<sup>5</sup>

**We Need More Talent.** The B.C. Labour Market Outlook reveals a significant gap in supply, suggesting there are 83,000 job openings that will still need to be filled over the next 10 years after accounting for new immigrants and other newcomers to the labour force. It is clear that the time is now to consider how our province will be meeting these labour market needs in the decade to come.

## The Report

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GBVOT) has compiled this report based on several months of research and ongoing conversations with its over 5,000 members and engagement with government and community partners to put forward a bold and robust plan forward for meeting B.C.'s short, medium and long-term labour market needs.

The recommendations proposed in this report put forward the following vision for the future of Vancouver and B.C.'s workforce, where:

- We have a data-driven plan for meeting short, medium, and long-term labour market needs in each sector and policies and programs that reflect this. Government invests in and makes the best use of all sources of talent, and education and job opportunities are encouraged for underrepresented groups.
- People of all ages and backgrounds have the digital skills they need to remain competitive in the workforce, move forward in their careers without leaving the region, and keep up with new trends in digitization and technology.
- Everyone feels included in the growth economy. Newcomers to Vancouver are able to successfully integrate into the labour force, and Indigenous People, people of colour, gender diverse peoples and people with disabilities feel safe and welcome in all workplaces.

This path ahead will require the ongoing collaboration and creative thinking of industry, non-profits, and government. We are excited to get started.

## The Way Forward

We centre the recommendations in this report around three main themes for solving B.C.'s workforce shortages and skills gaps and planning for the labour market needs of tomorrow. The three themes are as follows:

### Immediate Action

As short-term labour market challenges continue to negatively impact businesses, it is time to make sure we're maximizing labour force participation here in B.C. as soon as possible. By making sure the labour market is equitable and accessible to all, we can see B.C. become a place where the skills and talents of all residents are fully utilized, and everyone feels welcomed and included in the workplace.

To meet today's pressing labour market challenges, this section of the report focuses on accelerating the inclusion of newcomers, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and other groups that have historically been marginalized or barred from fully participating in civic life. While this will help rectify current business challenges, diverse workplaces also lead to more productivity and innovation by making the full use of individuals' strengths and talents.

## Digital First

Few jobs have escaped the reach of digitalization. From agriculture to engineering, digital tools have assumed a core role in the way people work. Computer literacy is a prerequisite for nearly every job in our economy, while platforms and applications tailored to specific industries and job functions are proliferating. We are living through a time of explosive new technologies and programs evolving at a rapid rate. In the next 5-10 years, what digital skills and competencies will be required to succeed in province's workforce?

Unlike the ubiquity of the internet, each sector will have their own specific needs in terms of digital skills and competencies. In the same way tools like WordPress and Canva became synonymous with roles in web development, marketing and communications, future skills training will need to support careers in AI, the metaverse and quantum computing. As we evaluate the future of the labour market in British Columbia, skills training programs and post-secondary education will need to evolve to serve the needs and interests of prospective and current students, recent graduates, and employers across all sectors.

We are calling on B.C. to commit to being a national leader in creating opportunities for British Columbians to receive the digital, new, and emerging skills that their current jobs and sectors require. Having a more skilled workforce with up-to-date skills will make British Columbian businesses more prosperous, efficient, and productive, while making sure British Columbians can remain competitive in the workforce and achieve their career goals.

## Reshaping How We Generate Talent

To keep pace with the province's economic growth and meet future projected job openings, B.C. will need a comprehensive roadmap to ensure British Columbians have information and training opportunities that align with job opportunities in the region. Solving the acute and ongoing labour gap will require innovative, multipronged solutions from all levels of government.

Fortunately, we do have a number of factors on our side. We have a world class post-secondary system, and successful companies looking to fill vacancies with talented British Columbians. Government needs to be a catalyst, guiding British Columbians into skills training and career opportunities that both meet the future workforce needs of the province and help British Columbians reach their full potential.

# INTRODUCTION

## *“What will B.C.’s workforce look like in 50 years?”*

Businesses across sectors from coast to coast are reporting challenges related to attracting and retaining employees with the right mix of skills, education, and experience. These issues are impacting businesses today, as they struggle to meet their labour market needs in the short term. The ways in which we work, and the nature of the relationship between employees and employers, is rapidly evolving in the years following the pandemic, marked by challenges and opportunities related to climate change and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Meanwhile, in the next decade, British Columbia will see nearly one million job openings, arising from the replacement of retiring workers in current industries and the creation of new jobs stemming from economic growth and new technologies. While we aim to create solutions for the problems of today, now is also the time to ask- is the Greater Vancouver region, and beyond, prepared to meet the workforce needs of tomorrow?

We have many questions.

- Are we appropriately educating and training students of today for the jobs of tomorrow?
- How will we cope with the nearly 700,000 British Columbians set to retire by the end of this decade?
- How can B.C. continue to prosper in a more competitive labour market and changing economy?
- Are British Columbians equipped with the digital skills they need to succeed in an increasingly digital workforce?
- How are the affordability challenges in the Lower Mainland impacting businesses’ ability to attract and retain employees, while coping with the rising costs of doing business?

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade was compelled to put together this report with recommendations, as many of our members, and businesses across Canada, are experiencing these challenges. Industry, government, non-profits, and the education sector all have a role to play in helping solve these challenges in B.C. This report puts forward recommendations to government on how to help businesses address labour shortages and skills gaps both now and in the future.

# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF B.C.'S WORKFORCE

Following a period of great uncertainty and amidst ongoing challenges related to the labour market and rising costs, we remain optimistic that the future of B.C.'s workforce is bright. Vancouver has a solid, globally recognized brand. People from all around the world move to Vancouver for its high quality of life, proximity to nature, its climate and diversity. Vancouver's more established industries, like tourism and trades, continue to build momentum while new sectors continue to emerge, like VFX and animation, life sciences and technology. Known as 'Hollywood North', Vancouver is the 3rd largest film and TV production centre in North America with approximately 65+ movies and 55+ TV series filmed here ever year.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Vancouver continues to maintain its deep ties to natural resource industries with approximately 800 mineral exploration companies headquartered in Vancouver and two-thirds of the province's largest forestry companies.<sup>7</sup>

Vancouver's economy is also globally recognized for its commitment to addressing climate change, developing and promoting clean technologies, and advancing the green economy. Over the last 10 years, 15,885 new green and local food jobs were added to the city, an increase of 87% since 2010.<sup>8</sup> Vancouver companies are leaders in ESG as they create unique ways of preserving the beauty and biodiversity of the Lower Mainland and beyond for generations to come.

We have the brand. Now, we need to focus on results. We are known as a top-tier lifestyle city with a dynamic economy; but too many people are falling behind, and affordability challenges are resulting in companies not achieving their full potential.

The recommendations put forward in this report encapsulate the following vision for the Vancouver and British Columbia workforce of the future:

1. To encourage broader labour participation and unlock our full labour potential, B.C. and the Greater Vancouver region is investing in and making the best use of its local sources of talent. Education and job opportunities are encouraged for underrepresented groups.
2. People in Vancouver have the skills they need to remain competitive in the workforce, move forward in their careers without leaving the region, and keep up with new trends in digitization and technology. Newcomers to Vancouver are able to successfully integrate into the labour force and local communities.
3. Vancouver companies are taking action against climate change by adopting new technologies and supporting their workers to retrain and extra skill to be proficient in these new technologies.
4. Vancouver's economy strikes the right balance between tangible, hands-on skills in the trades and the more high-tech, digital economy.
5. Affordability challenges in Vancouver are improved by focusing both on the affordability and supply challenges, such as in housing and childcare.



With this vision in mind, this report provides recommendations in three main categories and an appendix:



1. Immediate Action
2. Digital First
3. Reshaping How We Generate Talent
4. Appendix: Making Vancouver the Best Region to Live and Do Work

## Exploring the Problem

Before exploring some recommendations, this section will provide an introduction to some of the problems, challenges and opportunities we've been hearing over the past year. One question we have frequently encountered is: where have workers gone post-pandemic? As Canada faces a multitude of changes in the workforce and economy, a severe labour squeeze is exerting pressure on businesses. Overall, we have heard challenges stemming from demographic changes, affordability pressures, labour mobility barriers, and skills gaps and mismatches. To solve this widespread labour crunch, we must take a closer look at the state of play and identify gaps that exist in the labour force.

The issue of labour and skills shortages is interconnected with many aspects of our economy. For an issue as intricate as this, it is clear that there is no single solution that will address B.C.'s labour challenges. As such, GV BOT is exploring this issue from several angles, looking at what is needed to help B.C. businesses access, train, and retain talent – starting today for tomorrow's work.

### Unpacking “labour shortage” and the “skills shortage” – An intertwined problem facing B.C.

B.C. is facing a multitude of labour challenges resulting from a lack of sufficient, qualified workers to fulfill job demand, in addition to a looming skills shortage stemming from the changing nature of work. While the pandemic has exacerbated a tightening labour market, a range of cyclical factors and structural changes are contributing to the great labour shuffle that B.C. is experiencing.

This report will look at two types of “shortages”:

1. **Labour shortage:** A lack of candidates for a particular job, resulting in unfilled jobs and persistent job vacancies
2. **Skills shortage:** A disconnect between the needs of employers and educational and training programs<sup>9</sup>

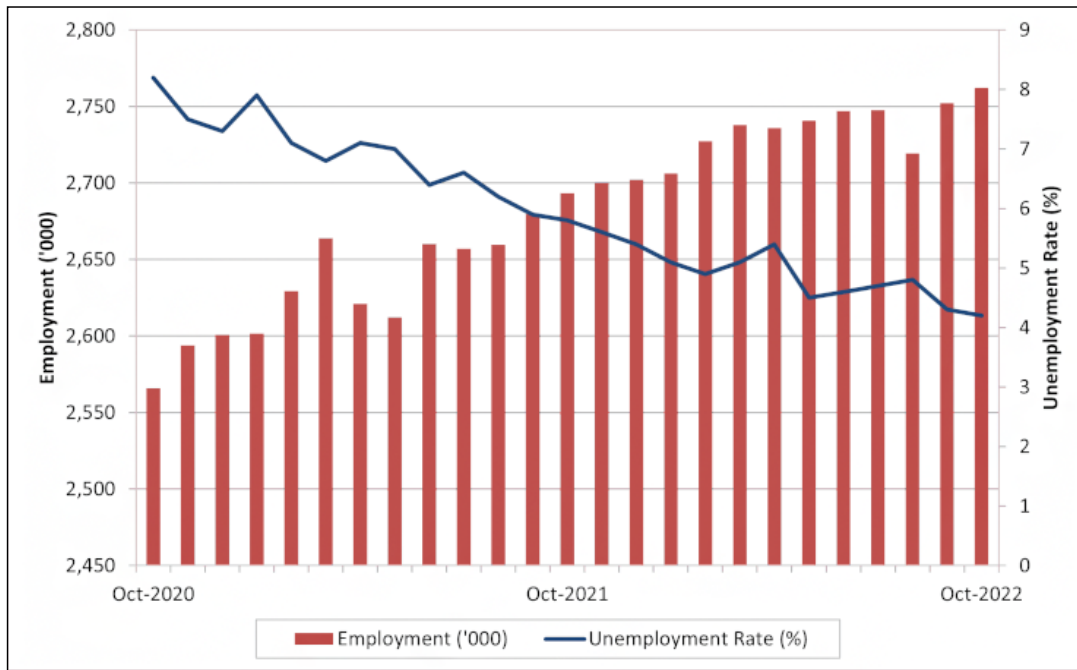
We also talk about the importance of “extra skilling”, or up-skilling. By this, we mean the (informal and formal) educational opportunities for individuals to pursue extra, new, additional skills.

## A Tight Labour Market and Growing Labour Demand

According to Statistics Canada<sup>10</sup>, job vacancies rose to record levels in March 2022, with employers rushing to fill over one million (1,012,900) vacant positions across Canada. At the same time, the unemployment rate remained at a record low 5.1 per cent in May. The labour force participation rate was at a record high among core-aged workers during this time.

Data also seems to suggest that a tight labour market is concerning for businesses across sectors in Metro Vancouver. In September 2022, data from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Business Data Lab<sup>11</sup> revealed that difficulty recruiting (40%) and retaining (34%) talent continued to impact Vancouver businesses across every sector, with a slight uptick when compared with the previous quarter. Adding another layer of complexity to the race for labour is the growing job openings in the long term. Over the next decade, it is estimated that B.C. will see more than one million job openings.

*British Columbia Monthly Employment and Unemployment Rate<sup>12</sup>*



## Sector Specific Challenges

In nearly every sector, an historic labour shortage is hitting businesses in Metro Vancouver. The challenge is particularly pronounced in sectors where business operations were heavily impacted during the pandemic, including the hospitality and travel industry, as well as the healthcare industry. Here is a snapshot of how the labour shortage has impacted some sectors in Greater Vancouver:

## Restaurant and Accommodation

The hospitality sector in B.C. is struggling with a pressing labour shortage. In September 2022, Vancouver food services and accommodation businesses were the most worried about the persistent labour gap, with 61% believing that the shortage of labour would be a critical challenge and 57.2% expecting challenges in recruiting skilled employees<sup>13</sup>. According to the B.C.'s restaurant association, the restaurant industry faced a deficit of nearly 35,000 workers.<sup>14</sup>

## Aviation

The aviation industry faces massive structural shifts due to the pandemic. After the pandemic, airports and related industries struggled to fill jobs in critical roles related to baggage handling and security when travel levels began to return to pre-pandemic levels. In Spring 2022, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's staff shortage caused unprecedented delays and line-ups at airports across Canada, as CATSA attempted to bring employees who had been laid off during the COVID-19 pandemic back to work.

## Construction

As construction work continues at a record pace, recruiting and retaining people is the number one business imperative. A lack of affordable housing remains one of the most significant challenges impacting businesses' ability to recruit and retain employees, yet the housing supply cannot be increased without a sufficient number of available construction workers. The Independent Contractors and Businesses Associations' 2022 Wage and Benefits Survey shows that three-quarters (75%) of all companies say there are simply not enough workers, up from 61% in 2021.<sup>15</sup> In addition, a report by the British Columbia Construction Association reveals that 80% of contractors are concerned about skilled labour shortages.<sup>16</sup>

## Healthcare

After an unimaginably difficult period during the pandemic, the healthcare sector continues to grapple with a severe shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly nurses and family doctors. By estimation, 1 in 5 British Columbians do not have a family physician.<sup>17</sup> Job vacancies in this sector reached a record high of 136,800, compared with the first quarter of 2020, and the number of vacant positions rose 90.9% (+65,000) in the first quarter of 2022.<sup>18</sup> Due to over two years of stress brought on by the pandemic, the industry has been particularly hard hit by worker shortages and employee burnout. Nurses are in especially high demand, but workers in this occupation are seeking better compensation and better working conditions. These shortages in the healthcare sector may also impact businesses' ability to attract staff to British Columbia, as prospective employees are concerned about the ability to access healthcare and find a family physician.

## Veterinary

There are approximately 1,600 working veterinarians in B.C., and about 40% own their own practice, making this a significant contributor to the small and medium-sized business landscape in B.C., yet this sector is not reaching its full potential and many British Columbians are unable to find a vet for their pets. There is not currently a veterinary school in B.C. Instead, the B.C. government provides funding for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatchewan for a limited number of seats reserved for British Columbian students. To meet the veterinary gap in B.C., the provincial government may need to reconsider if this is the most effective model or explore other ways of increasing opportunities for British Columbians to receive veterinary training across Canada and approving the credentials of internationally trained and accredited veterinarians.

## Technology

The B.C. Labour Market Outlook 2021 predicts that over 140,700 jobs in professional, scientific and technical services openings will be available in the next 10 years. However, the B.C. tech industry estimates that the sector will grow two to three times the government's forecast, having 262,290 to 362,071 job openings available over the next decade.<sup>19</sup>

## Skilled Trades

The B.C. Labour Market Outlook projects 85,000 job openings in the skilled trades over the next 10 years. The top 5 trades in terms of projected job openings are: cooks, auto service technicians, construction trades helpers and labourers, hairstylists and barbers and carpenters. The services provided by these and other tradespeople are indispensable to our communities and our economies, and provide excellent earning potential for those engaged in this work.

## The Economic Cost of Labour Shortages and Skills Shortages

Workers play an indispensable role in supporting the day-to-day activities that underpin the operation of our economy. The impacts of these labour challenges are far reaching – resulting in a detrimental impact on not only businesses' ability to maintain and expand sales and production but also the broader economy.

These labour challenges are nothing new – so why are they most acute right now? The simple answer is that contemporary labour challenges are having real and pronounced consequences on businesses and the economy, amidst an already challenging post-pandemic, inflationary economic reality.

Labour market mismatches are posing multifaceted challenges to businesses in staffing, costs, sales, and client experience. According to BDC, 45% of businesses faced higher labour costs, while 44% experienced a decline in sales and 43% had to pay higher operating costs as a result of hiring challenges.<sup>20</sup> Labour shortages also fuel employee burnout and turnover, jeopardizing morale, wellbeing, and business productivity.

Skills gaps incur a considerable cost to the economy if skills vacancies are not addressed. Taking the tech industry as an example, unfilled roles would lead to a GDP loss of \$200 billion to \$300 billion over the decade, and a \$5.2 billion to \$8.4 billion loss in income tax for the province<sup>21</sup>. Unmet skills demand in active listening, critical thinking, reading comprehension, speaking, monitoring, and coordination has shown its economic cost. A recent report by The Conference Board of Canada showed that the unrealized economic value of these six skills of highest costs was a staggering amount of \$25 million.<sup>22</sup> In another report that has a B.C. focus, The Conference Board of Canada estimated that skills deficits have already costed B.C. up to \$4.7 billion in foregone GDP and \$616 million in tax revenues, as a result of many British Columbians not having the right skills to contribute to the economy.<sup>23</sup>

## Context Setting

Factors including the advancement of new technologies, shifting work arrangements, evolving skills needs, growing environmental priorities, changing demographics, the rise of the gig economy, among others – are drastically transforming and reshaping the nature of the future of work and skills.

### B.C. Labour Market Outlook Data

The B.C. government's Labour Market Outlook paints a clear picture of this issue. The data projects 1,004,000 job openings in British Columbia from 2021 to 2031.<sup>24</sup> This is both an incredible challenge, and an opportunity, to rethink the future of work in B.C. Due to changing demographics and an aging population, 635,000 job openings are for replacement which represents 63% of job openings that will need to be filled to replace workers permanently leaving the labour force.

The remaining 369,000 jobs are for expansion- new jobs created from economic growth and evolving sectors. According to the B.C. Labour Market Outlook, the technology and healthcare sectors will be the key growth industries over the next 10 years.

The B.C. Labour Market Outlook also reveals a significant gap in supply, suggesting there are 83,000 job openings that will still need to be filled over the next 10 years after accounting for new immigrants and other newcomers to the labour force. It is clear that the time is now to consider how our province will be meeting these labour market needs in the decade to come.

As our recommendations will later touch on, we encourage the provincial government to use this data to generate data-informed, evidenced-based policy decisions when it comes to funding, promoting, and expanding skills training programs across the province.

### COVID-19 Pandemic

It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic had a transformative and unprecedented impact on nearly every facet of society and the economy. When the world shut down in March 2020, there were significant changes to the

way we work. There were widespread layoffs and operation disruptions in sectors such as food and accommodation and the travel industry, while other sectors adjusted to remote/flexible work arrangements for the first time. A Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) survey<sup>25</sup> found that 98% of businesses surveyed reported that certain segments of their workforce shifted to remote and/or hybrid work, and that 91% believed that remote and/or hybrid work arrangements would remain the norm after the pandemic ended. The pandemic was a disruptive, scary and turbulent time for Canadians both professionally and personally.

The COVID-19 pandemic also prompted an unprecedented number of Canadians to turn to reskilling and extra skilling opportunities, whether by choice or necessity. In 2021, a survey evaluating the state of the Canadian workforce showed that 57% of professionals would reskill into a new career should opportunities arise.

At the same time, a skills mismatch began to develop following the pandemic's disruptions. Employers anticipated that their workers would require some re-training or extra skilling following the pandemic. According to a BHER survey, 21% of respondents signaled that entry-level workers will require specific types of extra skilling and retraining, and 37% of mid-career workers would as well. As companies become increasingly digital and continue to adopt clean technologies to address climate change, Canadians will need to continue to refresh and expand their skills to remain competitive in the labour market.

## Rising Costs and Inflation

Costs are rising across Canada, and businesses are feeling these inflationary pressures. Statistics Canada data found that more than half (55.2%) of surveyed businesses expect inflation to be a bigger issue when discussing wage increases with employees. This issue was reportedly most prevalent in businesses in accommodation and food services (76.1%); manufacturing (70.9%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (62.3%).

The threat of an impending recession is also impacting businesses and their ability to plan and execute long term human resources strategies. According to the Grant Thornton International Business Report<sup>26</sup>, when asked about specific constraints to business expansion and growth, respondents identified labour and energy costs as the greatest issue. Businesses reported increases in the cost of transportation, energy/utilities, raw materials, equipment, and wages over the past twelve months, all of which make it difficult for businesses to be attractive in an incredibly competitive labour market.

These rising costs impact businesses' ability to increase salary and benefit packages to make themselves more attractive to potential employees. This rings particularly true for small- and medium-sized businesses, which are in the same market for talent (especially in competitive sectors like tech) with large companies.

## The Recommendations

This report outlines recommendations in the following categories and an appendix:



1. Immediate Action
2. Digital First
3. Reshaping How We Generate Talent
4. Appendix: Making Vancouver the Best Region to Live and Do Work

## Immediate Action

With record job vacancy rates impacting businesses today, maximizing labour force participation in the short-term is absolutely critical.

As we address these short-term challenges, we are also faced with an incredible opportunity to reshape the future of B.C.'s workforce. While the labour shortages current and projected are creating significant challenges for businesses, now is also the opportunity to consider how we can create a workforce that is more inclusive and equitable in the long term. We would like to see B.C. become a place where the skills and talents of all residents are utilized, and everyone feels welcome and included in the workplace.

A more accessible and inclusive workforce is one that promotes the inclusion of newcomers, people with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and others historically marginalized or left out. Diverse workplaces lead to more productivity and innovation, while making the full use of individuals' strengths and talents.

As we face daunting labour shortages now and into the future, solving B.C.'s workforce gap will require an all-hands on deck approach, starting as soon as possible. These recommendations highlight how we can urgently address labour market challenges while creating more equitable workplaces and ensure that everyone has the ability to reach their full potential and contribute to the growth of B.C.'s economies and communities.

## Canada's Immigration System as a Tool to Address Labour Challenges

Immigrants have long been the backbone of all facets of the Canadian economy, bolstering the growth needed with their talent, skills and hard work. The role of immigration will continue to be a critical one in filling gaps in the labour market. As we face a multitude of challenges – internally an aging population and a growing economy, and externally a shifting and competitive global labour market, increasing immigration levels and improving immigrants' participation rate will be crucial to easing the dire domestic labour shortages.

Bringing in global talent in high-demand sectors including healthcare, construction, and transportation is key to building a stable and skillful workforce that bolsters the prosperity of our economy. On Nov. 16, 2022, the federal government announced the implementation of the National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2021 for immigration programs under the Express Entry system.<sup>27</sup> We are pleased to see the federal government's measure of updating the NOC system to reflect changes in the economy and the nature of work, and we encourage the government to

continue working with stakeholders to monitor the labour needs in B.C. and introduce measures that help bring international talent to our economy.

We need to continue to make sure that newcomers to Canada are able to have their internationally obtained credentials and work experience recognized here, so that they are quickly able to join the labour force and work in their area of expertise. Bottlenecks and delays related to the recognition of foreign credentials are costly to immigrants, as well as to businesses who desperately need more talent.

Programs that address specific labour shortages in British Columbia, like the Provincial Nomination Programs (PNP), are critical to filling some of the pressing low-skilled and high-skilled vacancies with talent who can immediately participate in the economy. In March 2022, the B.C. government announced

changes to the PNP Skills Immigration stream that prioritize applications made by healthcare workers and early childhood educators (ECEs) and increase the number of nomination intakes in these occupations.<sup>28</sup> This is a positive move to tackle the labour challenges of today and tomorrow. We believe these programs will continue to be a critical tool in responding to the changing labour landscape, and that they should consider labour and experience of all ranges.

To capitalize on Canada's immigration system as a tool for solving B.C.'s labour market challenges, we further encourage the provincial government to:

1. **Work with professional associations/bodies to demand faster recognition of credentials, especially in high-demand occupations.**
  - a. Consider a "credential fast pass" system, that would sign mutual recognition agreements (or significantly shorter timelines) with jurisdictions that have comparable training.
  - b. Consider a co-op model or other ways newcomers can work in their sector while going through the foreign credential recognition process.
2. **Remove registration requirements for out-of-province healthcare workers and work with professional associations to drive faster recognition of foreign credentials, especially in high-demand occupations.**
3. **Work to reduce processing delays in B.C. for employer registration for a Temporary Foreign Worker to be completed within three business days.**



ANTONIO

**35, worked in nursing abroad**

- *Works as a healthcare assistant during credential assessment*
- *Joins workforce as a Registered Nurse in nine months thanks to streamlined foreign credentials assessment*





4. **Continue supporting immigrant settlement services and ensure that newcomers feel welcomed and equipped to enter into and succeed in the labour market.**

Recognizing the labour challenges businesses are facing, the federal government has made several changes to the federal immigration system to help quickly bring newcomers to Canada who have the skills needed to support Canadian businesses. We applaud this responsive action from the federal government, and we further encourage the federal government to:

1. **Continue policies that help skilled immigrants in high-demand sectors to come and stay in Canada and accelerate processing for occupations identified as 'in-demand', targeted to National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes.**
2. **Ensure IRCC processing times fall into the original 6-7 month timeline.**
3. **Expand the Provincial Nominee Program and increase the total number of available nominations.**
4. **Extend or remove the IELTS-General English language test expiration period of 2 years.**
5. **Convene post-secondary institutions and the provinces to discuss international student growth and prioritize growth in areas of economic need.**
6. **In tandem with federal immigration targets, create a parallel housing plan to ensure that Canadians and newcomers have access to affordable housing, particularly in Canadian cities.**
7. **Follow the UK, New Zealand and other jurisdictions to refine work experiences for individuals under the age of 35, including extending the validity period to 3 years and considering lifting caps.**

## International Students in B.C.

International students are invaluable contributors to the Canadian labour market. Nearly half of all international student postsecondary graduates who completed their studies between 2010 and 2016 remained in their province of study for the first year after graduation. At five years after graduation, the retention rate of international students who had tax records in Canada was 73%. Compared with other provinces, the rate was considerably higher in stronger immigrant-receiving provinces like British Columbia.

International students have become an integral and substantive form of immigration for B.C. and also revenue for post-secondary institutions. Between 2009 and 2019, international students studying in Canada more than tripled from 204,005 to 638,280. According to the B.C. government, there are approximately 150,000 international students studying in B.C. in a given year. International students help forge meaningful connections between Canadian post-secondary institutions and other countries and contribute meaningfully to the diversity and culture of communities across Canada.

## Support Indigenous Partnerships

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 92 calls on the corporate sector in Canada to commit to meaningful consultation and build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. As we look for ways to engage with and advance the economic interests of Indigenous communities, efforts in supporting more Indigenous economic participation and closing the employment gap are key to easing the labour shortage.

Many companies in B.C. have seen great value, economic benefits, and the development of dynamic and mutually-beneficial relationships through partnering with Indigenous communities and organizations across the province. Many more businesses in Vancouver are eager to partner with Indigenous communities on projects but may not know where to begin or how to make these connections.

Some sectors across British Columbia do well at employing and providing opportunities to Indigenous Peoples, while others are still looking to make progress. To assist businesses in developing these meaningful partnerships, we encourage the government to:

1. Consider an Office for Indigenous Employment that brings together post-secondary institutions, the Indigenous Employment Service Agencies, and all other organizations in the sector that could be a one-stop shop for Indigenous individuals seeking employment and employers seeking to hire.
2. Play a convening role by helping to connect businesses with Indigenous communities to promote training and hiring opportunities for Indigenous Peoples across B.C.
3. Provide funding or support for Indigenous communities to create a workforce plan, to map out where their community residents have skills and are employed or where there are opportunities to address unmet skills needs.

### Spotlight on Teck Resources

Teck Resources maintains an Indigenous Peoples Policy that outlines how Teck Resources engages with Indigenous Peoples throughout the course of their business activities.

This broad policy calls on Teck to integrate Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and perspectives into decision making, addressing any adverse impacts on Indigenous rights, cultural heritage, livelihoods, health and wellbeing, and work with Indigenous Peoples to achieve self-determined community goals that provide lasting benefits. By incorporating Indigenous knowledge, respect and principles into many aspects of their work, Teck is hiring and engaging with many Indigenous communities across British Columbia.

*Source: Indigenous Peoples Policy<sup>29</sup>*

## Promote Inclusive Hiring

This great reshuffle of labour is a challenge, but also a significant opportunity to rethink the future of our workforce and to double down on efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within Canadian hiring practices. Many employers have adapted their business models and practices to adjust to a 'new normal' and are exploring remote work options and more flexibility for their workforce. This is an ideal time to consider adopting more equitable and accessible practices to ensure no member of the labour force is left behind. A key solution to the apparent labour shortage could be considering how to hire from untapped labour sources. Now is the opportunity to create a 'new normal' that is more inclusive than ever before.

According to Work BC<sup>30</sup>, there are approximately 334,000 working-age British Columbians who self-identify as having a disability. With some accommodations, many people with disabilities will be able to succeed in a variety of workplaces. Accommodations are often simple and inexpensive, more than employers anticipate: 58% are cost-free, and 37% require a one-time expense of \$500.<sup>31</sup>

The Presidents Group has recently released a business case<sup>32</sup> that outlines how employing people with disabilities is good for business, in addition to becoming a more accessible and inclusive employer with a diverse workforce. According to their research, diverse and inclusive workplaces are two times more likely to meet or exceed financial targets, six times more likely to be innovative and six times more likely to effectively anticipate change (a valuable trait during these unprecedented times).

For employees with disabilities, research showed that staff retention was 72% higher, 86% had average or better attendance and 90% performed equal or better than their coworkers without disabilities.

Becoming a more inclusive employer will not only create a safer space for current employees, but it will help businesses attract previously untapped pools of labour. Becoming an accessible employer is important to job seekers more broadly: 67%<sup>33</sup> of job seekers consider diversity and inclusion when evaluating a job opportunity. Workers are naturally different in terms of how they think, thus building workplaces where neurodivergent workers can thrive is important. Neurodivergent individuals often experience challenges in accessing employment and lack the supports and accommodations that facilitate career progression and access to leadership positions<sup>34</sup>, fostering opportunities for neurodivergent talent could help fill some of the vacancies.

### Occupational Training Program for People with Disabilities

Vancouver businesses in the food and services sector have raised great concerns over a persistent hiring challenge. Empowering people with disabilities with skills training will help create the labour supply needed in the growing hospitality sector. In November 2022, the provincial government announced funding of \$550,000 that supports as many as 30 individuals with disabilities to be trained as food-service assistants.<sup>35</sup> This skills training is an encouraging opportunity to help individuals with disabilities gain the skills they need to succeed in the growing food-service industry. This type of program is encouraging, and we encourage the province to consider how these types of programs could be expanded to include even more British Columbians.

## Addressing Systemic Barriers to Meaningful Employment for People with Sight Loss

In Canada, the unemployment rate for people with sight loss is three times the national rate, due to systemic societal and attitudinal barriers faced by people with sight loss. In particular, Indigenous Peoples experience a higher rate of vision loss and increased systemic barriers to employment, including racial discrimination. In December 2022, the Government of British Columbia awarded the Canadian National Institute for the Blind a \$2.5-million grant to expand its employment program dedicated to blind or partially sighted people.<sup>36</sup> As this grant also supports tailored employment services for youth and Indigenous Peoples with sight loss, we believe programs like this would help them prepare for and access employment, fostering inclusive and accessible job opportunities.

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. **Continue to invest in disability employment services and programs that provide employability and occupational skills and job mentorship for people with disabilities. Explore opportunities for creating government incentives for businesses to hire people with disabilities.**
2. **Create and share resources for businesses to learn about and establish more equitable hiring processes.**
3. **Invest in resources for businesses to learn about the value of diversity and neurodiversity, and deploy skills training and tools needed for neurodiversity in the workplace.**
4. **Provide support for businesses to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.**

## Support Work-Integrated Learning

Work-integrated learning is a broad term that encompasses many unique opportunities for hands-on learning, including:

- Applied research projects
- Apprenticeships
- Co-operative education (co-ops)
- Entrepreneurship
- Field placements
- Internships
- Mandatory professional practicum or clinical placements
- Service learning
- Work experience

## Mitacs Innovation Internship Programs

As a not-for-profit organization, Mitacs promotes skills development for talent through the delivery of a broad spectrum of work-integrated learning experiences and industry partnerships related to innovation. In B.C., Mitacs has a long history of working with governments and industry partners to offer internship programs for post-secondary students. In 2022, the provincial government provided a one-time investment of \$8.6 million for Mitacs to support over 1,700 research internships<sup>38</sup>, and in just over 6 months, Mitacs has surpassed the provincial target. Thanks to these innovation internships, thousands of post-secondary students were able to connect with innovative companies to gain real-world work and research experience in sectors including clean technology, life sciences, and artificial intelligence.

Considering the B.C.'s government's skills development and economic priorities, Mitacs has been working with a wide array of industries to deliver innovation internship projects in priority sectors. Examples of past internships include the partnership with 1QBit, a Vancouver-based quantum computing company, in which Mitacs has connected 55 interns with the company. As an invaluable source of talent, these current and former interns now represent nearly one half of the 1QBit team.<sup>39</sup> Industry partnerships like this would not only advance talent attraction and development, but also link ideas and collaboration between academia, industry, and talented students.

All publicly funded universities and colleges in British Columbia currently offer some or all forms of work-integrated learning for their students.

The benefits to a business of hiring a work-integrated learning student are numerous. The most obvious benefit would be, of course, students can supplement existing staff during peak periods and temporary leaves and meaningfully contribute to the organization through new ideas and a fresh perspective. Hiring a student can also create professional development opportunities for current staff to become leaders and mentors for the student, employers can be marketed to potential future employees and have a pipeline to future talent once the student has graduated.

There are obvious benefits to students who participate in work-integrated learning as well. Through experiential learning opportunities, students can acquire meaningful work experience specific to relevant professions as a compliment to classroom learning. Based on data from the 2018 National Graduates Survey,<sup>37</sup> among the 2015 postsecondary graduates in Canada who did not pursue further education, one-half participated in a form of work-integrated learning during their postsecondary studies. Postsecondary graduates who had participated in work-integrated learning were more likely to have employment related to their studies and were less likely to be overqualified for the job they held three years after graduation. Bachelor's graduates who participated in work-integrated learning had higher employment earnings than those who did not participate in work-integrated learning.

Recognizing the benefits of work-integrated learning to both the students and employers, we recommend the provincial government:

1. Continue to invest in experiential learning opportunities, including co-ops and work-integrated learning programs to help businesses access career-ready talent and to promote inclusive economic growth throughout B.C.
2. Explore ways for increasing work-integrated learning opportunities in other sectors/industries that currently have little uptake in these programs, including through increasing employer awareness of existing programs and opportunities.
3. Address the limited capacity of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate experiential learning opportunities by leveraging existing networks.
4. Focus on quality work-integrated learning opportunities by incentivizing post-secondary institutions to prioritize high-quality, high-impact and longer placements when possible.
5. Work with the business and post-secondary sector to establish the best methods for tracking and evaluating the success of experiential learning opportunities in B.C. One metric that could be tracked is how many students end up finding longer-term employment with the company that hired them as a work-integrated learning student. Find unique ways of telling these stories as a way of promoting work-integrated learning uptake by companies.
6. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, provide resources for employers to provide safe and welcoming environments for all employees, including work-integrated learning students, especially underrepresented populations like Indigenous Peoples, LGBT+ peoples, people with disabilities, etc.



## GVBOT Digital Transformation Workshop

In 2022, the World Trade Centre Vancouver launched a new one-day interactive workshop for leaders looking to pursue digital reinvention to drive business growth and resilience. The workshop is designed for growth-oriented SME business leaders looking to prepare for a digital transformation and participating organizations received customized assessments from Jelly Digital Marketing.

## Digital First

We are living through a time of explosive new technologies and programs evolving at a rapid rate. When the internet was widely adopted, companies and their employees had to learn to use this tool. Later, all employees were expected to know how to type, how to use internet search engines and how to use word processing programs. In the coming years, what digital skills and competencies will be required to succeed in the province's workforce?

Unlike the ubiquity of the internet, each sector will have its own specific needs in terms of digital skills and competencies. Communications professionals will require knowledge of Canva and new design tools, whereas mechanics will need to learn how to fix electric vehicles. As we evaluate the future of the labour market in B.C., skills training programs and post-secondary education will need to evolve to serve the needs and interests of prospective and current students, recent graduates, and employers across all sectors.

We are calling on B.C. to commit to being a national leader in creating opportunities for British Columbians to receive the digital, new and emerging skills that their current jobs and sectors require. Having a more skilled workforce with up-to-date skills will make British Columbian businesses more prosperous, efficient and productive, while making sure British Columbians can remain competitive in the workforce and achieve their career goals. B.C. has a world class public post-secondary education system, and a real opportunity to be a global leader in lifelong learning. This section provides recommendations for how we can better support British Columbians to access the skills training and education they need to achieve their desired career outcomes.

## Focus on Digital Skills and Digitization

In an increasingly digital economy, employers will need employees to be up to date on digital skills to remain competitive. B.C. is home to a number of high technology sectors that require these skills, but digital skills are needed by almost every sector in a plethora of roles.

A Conference Board of Canada report<sup>40</sup> found that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace of digitalization in the workplace, and that basic digital skills are no longer enough. Demand for advanced digital skills- in areas such as data analysis, cybersecurity and Cloud technology- is robust and expected to continue growing.

Canadian companies are at risk of falling behind. A survey quoted by the Conference Board of Canada<sup>41</sup> found that nearly 70% of small- and medium-sized business owners surveyed are having a hard time hiring workers with the digital skills that their companies need in order to grow. The Conference Board also heard from employers that because of the high demand and limited supply, Canadian employers are being forced to look for digital talent outside of the country.

B.C. has an opportunity to become the top province for digital skills in Canada, leveraging its world class post-secondary education system and industries in this space.

We encourage the provincial government to think big on digital skills and:

1. **Create a Digital Skills Index for B.C. that ranks workplace digital skills readiness across all age groups, setting a goal for B.C. to be the top province for digital skills in Canada.**
2. **Commit to releasing a report every three years, with accompanying recommendations on B.C.'s digital skills. The report should include data on young people, mid-career professionals, unions, and how each group is faring on digital skills. This report should also outline jobs most at risk of automation with actionable recommendations to upskill and reskill those affected by automation for different industries.**



**JOE**

**53, marketing manager**

- *Enrols in digital marketing program*
- *Combines experience with new skills to add more value*

3. Offer incentives for mid-career professionals to expand their digital skills and remain competitive in the labour market.
4. Set goals and provide assistance for SMEs to sell online and measure the digital intensity of B.C.'s SMEs.

## Incentives and Supports for Skills Training and Lifelong Learning

Increasing the supply of skilled workers is essential to ensuring B.C.'s future economic growth. For both businesses and individual workers, investing in skills training throughout one's life, including formal training arrangements and more flexible training options like microcredentials, can be an important way of enhancing long term resilience to future economic shifts.

Continuous training opportunities offer a particularly important avenue for workers and individuals out of work to increase their prospect of finding a job and to enhance their competitiveness in the labour market. However, the cost of skills training is a key consideration for many, and it often hinders those who are unemployed, as 20% of unemployed Canadians reported high costs as a reason for not participating in training.<sup>42</sup> It is paramount to ensure that British Columbians of all groups, despite employment status and income levels, have equal access to skills training opportunities. To do so, employers should be equipped with the needed resources to be in a position that can offer training of scale to their employees.

B.C. has an incredible opportunity to be a global leader in lifelong learning and really leverage its world class post-secondary education system to provide ongoing opportunities for British Columbians to learn new skills and broaden their horizons. To solve the complex and long-term labour market challenges, B.C. needs to create new and unique learning opportunities while also ensuring its policies, procedures and funding models are responsive to these ideas.

We call on the provincial government to:

1. Implement creative ways to incentivize businesses (especially small- and medium-sized businesses) to offer skills training programs, including microcredentials, to their employees, as well as support for students to pursue training opportunities.
2. Implement ways to incentivize post-secondary institutions to partner with industry to provide training opportunities for mid-career learners.
3. Aim for B.C. to be a world leader in lifelong learning and flexibility and accessibility to the public post-secondary system throughout one's lifetime. Think creatively about what post-secondary education can mean, and how our post-secondary education system can be accessed from high school to retirement age.
4. Ensure that government policies, procedures and funding models are flexible and adapt to new ways of creating post-secondary programming, especially the Student Aid BC program.
5. Continue to eliminate barriers to accessing post-secondary education for underrepresented students, including Indigenous students, racialized students, students with disabilities and students from rural communities.



## Spotlight on BCMEA

The BC Maritime Employers Association is committed to giving every longshore worker the opportunity to reach their full potential, through ongoing training and development programs and by making safety a top priority in every part of their business.

As an impressive example of private sector investment in skills training, the BCMEA has invested over \$25 million in their state-of-the-art Waterfront Training Centre. At this training centre, prospective longshore workers learn all aspects of waterfront work in a safe and supervised environment. Computer simulators are used for front-end loader and bulldozer training, while the full-sized gantry crane lets people get real-world experience moving containers from 35 meters above the ground.

At their downtown Vancouver office, the BCMEA provides classroom training to the next generation of waterfront workers as part of their commitment to supplying their partners with a reliable, skilled and safe workforce.

## Digital-Minded Government Leadership

The adoption of new technologies leads to efficiencies and conveniences. This can be incredibly beneficial to not only businesses, but to all levels of government as well. A more digital government would enhance internal productivity and, by automating more repetitive tasks, enable public officials to focus on other, more involved projects. Using digital tools for data analysis, like new dashboards, can help public officials make more data-informed decisions and share data with the public. Lastly, and significantly, a more digital government would be one that processes permits and licenses more quickly, which would greatly improve the ease and cost of doing business for B.C. enterprises.

We ask all levels of government to:

1. **Aspire to transform with a digital-minded leadership for all government operations, including permitting and licensing.**

## Support for the Development of Microcredentials

Colleges & Institutes Canada defines a microcredential as: 'a certification of assessed competencies that is additional, alternate, complementary to, or a component of a formal qualification.'<sup>43</sup> These post-secondary programs are short, competency-based courses that are designed to quickly teach new skills or upgrade existing ones in a targeted area, using more flexible instructional strategies (online, evenings, etc.). As a result, these programs are well-suited to both building up a resume or advancing a career and are often more accessible to non-traditional

learners, especially mid-career professionals who would only have to take little or no time off work to pursue a microcredential. Many microcredentials provide post-secondary credit and can be used, or stacked, toward completion of longer post-secondary programs such as certificates or diplomas.

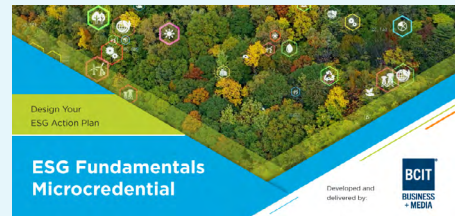
Given the changing nature of the workforce, employers and governments have an interest in enabling workers to extra skill on an ongoing basis. The COVID-19 pandemic has further catalyzed these changes, and many workers have taken advantage of new opportunities to pursue career changes or additional training. There are projected to be an exceptional number of job openings in the next ten years, especially due to retirements. According to the B.C. Jobs Outlook, B.C. is expected to have 1,004,000 job openings between 2021 and 2031, and nearly 80% of these job openings will require some form of post-secondary education or training.<sup>44</sup>

Recognizing the increasing demand for such programs, the B.C. government has already demonstrated significant support for microcredential programs across the province. In February 2021, the B.C. government announced funding for 15 public post-secondary institutions to provide microcredentials for more than 2,000 British Columbians.<sup>45</sup> In September 2021, the government announced funding for an additional 35 microcredential programs to be delivered to 7,500 learners over a three-year period.<sup>46</sup> According to the Micro-Credential Framework released by the government, one of the guiding principles for the development of microcredentials in B.C. is the importance of ensuring that employers and industry sectors are actively engaged in the process of developing and expanding microcredentials that support their workforce needs.<sup>47</sup>

This guiding principle is key to the success of microcredentials. Having an industry voice involved in the development of microcredential programs will help ensure the program is relevant, targeted and recognized by current and future employers in the sector. In 2021, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), with the support of the Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), surveyed 201 Canadian employers about their perception of microcredentials.<sup>48</sup> Overall, the employers who participated in the survey saw the potential for microcredentials to play an important role in lifelong learning. About two-thirds of respondents said they would see a microcredential as highly favourable if it were directly related to the job at hand, competency-based, and or/accredited. Nearly 70% said that they would have a highly favourable view of microcredentials that were competency-based. Lastly, 54% of employers said they were open to working with post-secondary partners to deliver microcredentials.

There is great potential in expanding the availability of these short-term credentials across the province to ensure employees have the skills they need to succeed in the current and future labour force and responding swiftly to the needs of employers for a workforce with up-to-date and relevant skills. Incorporating the industry perspective in the development of these programs will ensure they are comprehensive, relevant, and recognized by employers.

## ESG Fundamentals



### A New Microcredential Opportunity

In January 2022, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, in partnership with the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) School of Business + Media, announced the launch of a new Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Fundamentals Microcredential. The ESG Fundamentals Microcredential will provide 24 hours of training from BCIT instructors and industry experts over a five-week period. This innovative new offering, along with the almost two dozen other microcredentials available at BCIT, is a good example of an industry voice working with a post-secondary institution to deliver a short-term extra skilling opportunity that meets the needs of employees and employers as well as the changing nature of industry.

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. **In collaboration with post-secondary institutions and the private sector, increase the number of microcredential programs offered, with a focus on in-demand occupations and digital skills, to reduce the skills gap and provide more opportunities for British Columbians.**
2. **Implement ways to provide incentives for employers to offer microcredential programs to their employees as well as support for students to pursue them.**

We encourage the federal government to:

1. **Fund flexible curricula including microcredentials in secondary and post-secondary schools.**
2. **Explore the idea of creating a B.C. industry-government-post-secondary working group (similar to the national Business + Higher Education Roundtable) to meet regularly to ensure that secondary and post-secondary programs are relevant and meeting the needs of the labour market.**

## Promote Industry Partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions

As previously noted, technology continues to advance at a rapid pace and fundamentally change the types of jobs employers are seeking to fill. Increasingly more jobs will be available in emerging sectors including AI, robotics, quantum and other high technology, emerging industries.

While there is great opportunity in this transition, there is also great uncertainty. Post-secondary institutions across British Columbia are delivering a high-quality education for British Columbians, students from across Canada and international students. This education equips graduates with a wide variety of transferable skills and soft skills that would be of use in any workplace. Employers value these skills greatly but are also seeking graduates who have the technical skills needed to succeed in their companies starting on day one.

Businesses are well positioned to influence the development of post-secondary curricula, to ensure it captures the skills businesses are looking for from their employees. There could be great value in connecting industry partners and associations with post-secondary institutions as they develop their curricula, especially in areas related to technology and emerging sectors, to ensure graduates receive a well-rounded, relevant, and fulsome education that prepares them well for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. **Work with industry partners and associations to help connect post-secondary institutions with industry partners to develop and update programs to meet the needs of employers. As mentioned in the previous section, this could be achieved through a formal working group featuring representatives from government, industry and the post-secondary sector.**

## Investments in Digital Skills Training for a Digital Economy: the Digital Innovation and Leadership Initiative

As the economy becomes increasingly digital, jobs will increasingly require significant and up-to-date digital skills. As rapidly as technology develops, it is important to ensure that skills training programs are reflective of this incredible rate of change.

In November 2022, the federal government, through Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster, invested \$4 million in a new Digital Innovation and Leadership (DIAL) initiative. Through an official partnership with Simon Fraser University's Beedie School of Business, this initiative aims to train more than 1,100 workers across Canada over the next two years. In collaboration with the private sector, public sector, not-for-profit, and educational partners, the DIAL initiative features two responsive new training programs that will retrain workers with the digital skills needed to help them advance Canadian organizations in the digital economy.

## Ensure Sufficient Labour Supply across the Entire Supply Chain

Another issue that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic was supply chains. While prior to the pandemic, many Canadians did not consider where their goods arrived from or how they landed at their local store or household, supply chains quickly became part of Canadians' vocabulary. The future resiliency of Canada's supply chains and networks depends on the people available to work in many key roles and sectors across the country.

The trucking industry in particular is facing significant labour challenges. Recent data related to truck-to-load ratios shows between a 30%-45% decrease in the availability of trucks, year-to-year, while load volumes have more than tripled at the same time. As a result of these two factors, the number of trucks available per load has declined from about three trucks per load a year ago, to around 0.5-0.7 trucks per load today. In other words, almost one in every two available freight loads does not have a truck driver for transport.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, the transportation sector is "more reliant on older workers compared to the total economy", and the number of workers joining the transportation workforce (immigrants, school graduates and other net new entrants) will be insufficient to offset the loss from retirees.<sup>49</sup> According to the Ontario Trucking Association, the Canadian trucking industry has over 23,000 truck driver job vacancies right now and that shortage is expected to worsen very soon – to 55,000 vacancies by 2024. In B.C., 10 to 12% of truck driver positions are currently vacant.<sup>50</sup> These labour shortages in this critically important sector must be specifically, and urgently, addressed.

In its recent final report, the National Supply Chain Task Force<sup>51</sup> calls on the federal government to address immediate labour needs across the transportation supply chain, noting that the need for labour throughout the transportation supply chain is significant.

To ensure the trades powering our supply chains are well staffed, we recommend the federal government:

1. Establish a Pan-Canadian credential recognition approach for all sectors, including trucking.
2. Build on the momentum of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and labour mobility provisions, alongside provinces and accreditation bodies, to remove any remaining barriers to cross-provincial mutual accreditation.
3. Revise tax policy and incentives to support the acceleration of technology adoption.
4. Urgently adopt the recommendations in the Final Report of the National Supply Chain Task Force related to labour shortages in the transportation sector.

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Subsidize trucking businesses and interested workers for the cost of truck driver training courses.
2. Develop new skills training support for key occupations including truck drivers to support new entrants.

## Reshaping How We Generate Talent

The challenge B.C. faces is clear. Government data projects 1,004,000 job openings in B.C. from 2021-2031, but it is not clear that the province is ready to meet these job opening needs. Businesses are in steep international competition for top talent, while in-demand skills and employee expectations are rapidly evolving. It will require an all-hands on deck approach to address the labour market challenges, and shortages, facing B.C. and the provincial government has a significant role to play in this.

To keep pace with the province's economic growth and meet future projected job openings, B.C. will need an all-encompassing roadmap to ensure British Columbians have the information and training opportunities they need to pursue fruitful careers in this province. Solving the acute labour gap will require innovative and multipronged solutions from all levels of government. We do have a number of things on our side. We have a world class post-secondary system, and successful companies looking to fill spots with talented British Columbians. The government needs to play a strong role in guiding British Columbians into skills training and career opportunities that both meet the future workforce needs of the province and also help British Columbians reach their full potential.

The following recommendations explore ways government can better plan for the future of B.C.'s workforce.

## Use Data to Inform Skills Training Investments and Decisions

In the current context of uncertainty and a rapidly evolving, complex labour market, it is imperative to use all available data to inform policy decisions regarding the future of our labour market. Solutions and assistance for the labour market challenges B.C. businesses are facing are needed, and data must guide any potential policy response.

The Government of British Columbia routinely releases a robust 10-year forecast of the supply and demand for labour in B.C., known as the B.C. Labour Market Outlook. While the data included in these reports is very informative, we believe more can be done to ensure this document is working as an effective tool for B.C.'s businesses and overall economic growth.

To help influence data-informed policy decisions on the future of our province's labour market, we call on the provincial government to:

1. **Intentionally use the B.C. Labour Market Outlook data to inform the design of extra skilling, reskilling, and training policies and programs, and communicate how these data are influencing policy decisions.**
2. **Use data from the B.C. Labour Market Outlook to populate a dashboard that is updated in real time, and can be used by students, teachers and guidance counsellors, and employers in order to see up-to-date data on sector-specific, current and future labour market needs in the province.**
3. **Consult with the business community to ensure the B.C. Labour Market Outlook is well used and well understood by businesses in B.C.**
4. **Identify unique ways of sharing the B.C. labour market data with prospective post-secondary students and British Columbians looking to re-enter the labour market or change careers, so that British Columbians can be aware of which sectors will be hiring in the years to come.**

## Review and Respond to Graduate Experiences

Pursuing a post-secondary education of any kind requires a significant amount of a student's time, money, and resources. Given the provincial funding involved in supporting this system, the province must work to ensure that B.C.'s post-secondary system is living up to students' expectations and preparing them well for their desired career path.

In Ontario, the government collects key performance indicator (KPI) data for publicly-funded colleges to solicit feedback from current college students and recent graduates, as well as employers. For the latter, the province's hired survey consultant conducts thousands of telephone interviews with the employers of graduates who have given permission for their employers to be interviewed. The employer is asked how they feel about the college's preparation of graduates in order to meet the employer's and workplace's needs. This data, and the other KPI data, is made publicly available on the government's website<sup>52</sup>, as well as college websites.

Through the BC Student Outcomes surveys, the B.C. government conducts similar annual surveys<sup>53</sup> of post-secondary graduates to help shape the future of the post-secondary education system in B.C. We encourage the provincial government to build on this work and:

1. **Create a B.C. industry-government-post-secondary education roundtable to focus on the future of the labour market.**
2. **Identify ways for the business community to provide input on the BC Student Outcomes survey questions and be better informed of the results.**
3. **Consider ways of surveying employers to determine how satisfied employers are with the preparedness**

of recent B.C. graduates, as is done in Ontario.

4. **Communicate how the BC Student Outcomes surveys are impacting policy decision making with respect to the future of post-secondary education in the province.**

We also call on the federal government to:

1. **Review and revise the National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes more regularly to better reflect the needs and true state of the labour market.**

## Support the Transition to Clean Jobs

As Canada seeks to advance climate goals and a low-carbon economy, B.C., as a province with an abundance of low-carbon natural resources, will be at the heart of convening a green economy. That means there will be a growing demand for roles that advance a clean economy, and B.C. will need more specialized talent in clean technology to help realize this economic transition. Understanding the skills and accreditation gap will be critical in building a strong and resilient clean economy in B.C.

The potential for high-growth transitions in the clean economy is promising in British Columbia, with over 128,000 clean economy job openings expected by 2030.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, B.C. is home to over 200 clean tech companies, and 70% of these companies are based in Metro Vancouver.<sup>55</sup> Representing 16% of global market share in the hydrogen and fuel cell industries, Greater Vancouver is expected to see a growing demand for a skilled workforce to support the burgeoning green sector. Thus, it will be critical for British Columbia to redirect investment and skills towards the development of greener industries to strengthen the B.C. workforce and economy as more jobs and opportunities shift to the clean sector.

It is worth noting that while technical skills are necessary in sectors including manufacturing and transportation, skills like critical thinking and monitoring are deemed highly important.<sup>56</sup> That said, B.C.'s decarbonized future will count on a broad-based skills profile for a range of clean tech jobs. While there are ample opportunities in the clean sector and that a considerable number of workers would consider moving to a job in the clean economy, factors like job insecurity and uncertainty about the accessibility of retraining may hold them back.<sup>57</sup>

To prepare for a future workforce that is responsive to climate change and addressing its impacts, we recommend the provincial and federal government:

1. **Provide support for businesses and workers transitioning to clean technologies.**

We recommend the provincial government:

1. **Invest in skills training programs for workers to adapt to clean technologies.**
2. **Promote information about the labour market opportunities available in the green economy.**

## Expand High School Partnerships

High school is an exciting time for any young person, as they begin to develop interests, refine talents, and consider possible career paths. These decisions can be overwhelming, however, and it can be a real challenge to decide on a specific academic program that leads to a particular career at such a young age.

There is a great opportunity to broaden a young person's horizons and expose young British Columbians to post-secondary level programs while still in high school. BCIT, for example, offers several dual credit and transitioning programs that involve career exploration and personalized opportunities, within an applied hands-on educational model, that is in alignment with the K-12 BC Graduation Program. BCIT offers these programs in fields including business and media, computing and IT, health science, and trades, technical and apprenticeship.

These ladder, hands-on learning opportunities can be key in helping young students to grasp early the wide spectrum of potential career paths and what a particular job underpins.

### Spotlight on BCIT High School Partnerships

#### BCIT High School Partnerships

Allowing high school students to explore a wide range of career options at a young age helps unleash career potential and spark interest in diverse career pathways. Developed jointly with the school district, BCIT's Exploration in Aviation Careers is an example of its high school programs, offering students both classroom learning and a work placement course in aviation. Upon completing the one-semester program, interested students may apply for BCIT aviation program and be considered in having an enhanced application. Similar to this partnership, the Highline School District in Tukwila, Washington established the Raisbeck Aviation High School, educating nearly 400 students on STEM-related topics such as aviation, aerospace, and engineering.<sup>58</sup> In addition to aviation, BCIT offers High School Partnerships in fields such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), pre-health, and Technology Education and Literacy in Schools (TEALS).

#### BCIT Dual Credit High School Microcredentials

Building on its pilot microcredentials, BCIT is currently working with multiple school districts in the Metro Vancouver region to explore the creation of high school microcredentials in technical and technology subject areas such as cybersecurity, cloud computing, electric cars, and health sciences. By exposing high school students to short, flexible, and competency-based learning experiences, this proposed partnership program is conducive to the creation of a skilled B.C. workforce.



We recommend the provincial government:



**MIYAWATA**

**17, high school student**

- Takes aerospace laddering program
- Gets a head start with credits towards a career in aviation



1. Support high school laddering programs that benefit younger populations, in areas of particular importance to the B.C. economy. For example, we would recommend expanding/ piloting high school programs in areas focused on coding, cybersecurity, nursing, and mass timber.
2. Explore opportunities to accelerate apprenticeships and provide trades training to high school students. This may include exploring new ideas like creating high schools focused on one particular job area (like the Maritime High School or Aviation High School in the State of Washington).
3. Provide resources for high school career counsellors to showcase the full breadth of jobs available to British Columbians, including promoting the value of jobs in trades, tourism, etc.
4. Invest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education early, especially for underrepresented groups in STEAM (Indigenous students and students of colour, LGBT+ students, women and rural students). A focus on STEAM should be supported in both formal school curriculum, as well as in informal places of learning like science museums and planetariums.
5. Provide multi-year funding to not-for-profit organizations that offer skills development programs as it allows long-term planning and strategic support for complex and elaborate industry initiatives.

## Assessment on Literacy and Numeracy

The province's workforce of the future will rely on the numeracy and literacy skills of its employees. Data shows that increasing the literacy skills in the workforce by an average of 1% would over time lead to a 3% increase in GDP or \$54 billion per year, every year, and a 5% increase in productivity.<sup>59</sup>

After the unprecedented disruption of the COVID-19, B.C. must ensure its students are not falling behind. While many children remained in classrooms during the pandemic, COVID-19 was an incredibly challenging period for British Columbians of all ages, including children. Children worried about elder family members while being unable to participate in their learning, social and physical activities in the same way they had prior to the pandemic. In January 2022, UNICEF shared data on the impact of the pandemic on children's learning. They found that globally, disruption to education has meant millions of children have significantly missed out on the academic learning they would have acquired otherwise, with younger and more marginalized children facing the greatest loss. Evidence also showed that COVID-19 caused high rates of anxiety and depression among children and young people, with some studies finding that girls, adolescents and those living in rural areas are most likely to experience these problems.

Recognizing the importance of literacy and numeracy to the future of B.C.'s workforce, we recommend the provincial government:

1. **Conduct an assessment and action plan as needed to ensure British Columbian students are not falling behind nationally and globally in numeracy and literacy.**
2. **Provide long term, stable funding for community literacy programs to provide more and flexible options for learners, working learners and parents.**

## Accelerate Government Program Approvals

While many current post-secondary programs being offered successfully prepare graduates for jobs across sectors and communities in British Columbia, with the rise of new and emerging sectors, new programs need to be developed and offered. With the rapid pace of technological advancement, there is a need to develop these programs quickly to respond to labour market needs in a timely manner.

To help support post-secondary institutions to develop programs that respond to current labour market needs, we call on the provincial government to:

1. **Identify ways of expediting government post-secondary program approvals, especially in areas related to emerging sectors.**

## Appendix: Making Vancouver the Best Region to Live and Do Work

Vancouver is undoubtedly a beautiful place to live and work. Employers have to do little to sell Vancouver as a destination to prospective employees, when its beauty, proximity to nature and diversity sell the city. However, affordability challenges are increasingly making it difficult for workers, especially younger workers, to make Vancouver their home long-term. If Vancouver is to remain a competitive destination for global talent, and a place where people can live and raise families, broader economic and community issues like housing affordability and transit accessibility will need to be addressed.

This appendix provides some overarching thoughts on broader community issues facing the Greater Vancouver region and having knock-on effects on local businesses' ability to attract and retain employees to this region. While less focused than the aforementioned recommendations, we believe policy action in these areas will also help alleviate future labour shortage challenges.

One major example of a community challenge impacting employers and employees is the lack of diverse and affordable housing across British Columbia, and notably in the Greater Vancouver region, as it is having a profound impact on employers and employees. Not only are skyrocketing housing costs problematic for individuals and families in the Greater Vancouver region, but it is also a significant challenge for businesses working to attract and retain employees. In a recent survey of our members<sup>60</sup>, a strong majority of survey respondents (83%) indicated the cost of housing in the Greater Vancouver region has a large impact (40%) or some impact (43%) on their ability to recruit or retain employees. Respondents were supportive of a variety of policy changes to increase the supply of housing, including municipal zoning changes to allow various kinds of multi-family units to be built in areas currently zoned for single-family detached homes and provincial intervention if cities reject affordable housing projects.

Coupled with remote work options, the high cost of housing has led many British Columbians to relocate to relatively lower-cost suburbs. A connected transit network between urban, suburban, and rural areas is critical to fostering an efficient labour market and easing the cost of commuting. In TransLink's 10 Year Priorities document, they plan to increase geographic coverage, including new services to 40 new areas connecting to treaty and reserve lands, disadvantaged communities, emerging transit-oriented areas, employment areas and parks and natural areas. TransLink's long-term strategy, Transport 2050, establishes an ambitious vision that, by 2050, sees people and goods spending 20% less time stuck in congestion, and that nobody in the region needs to spend more than 45% of their household income on transport and housing combined. We know that businesses in Metro Vancouver want more investments in transit.<sup>61</sup> In a survey the GVBOT conducted in May of 2022, 62% of businesses surveyed believe Greater Vancouver needs more investments in transit.<sup>62</sup>

The availability and affordability of childcare options is another challenge for families, worsened by the pandemic. Childcare is an important and necessary part of our communities that provides learning and socialization opportunities for young children while enabling parents to engage in the labour force. Childcare availability is particularly important in supporting women's participation in the workforce.

According to the 2018 childcare strategy from the B.C. government<sup>63</sup>, Vancouver is one of the most expensive cities for childcare in Canada, with a median fee of \$1,250 per month for infant and toddler care. Childcare for one or more children can be the equivalent of another mortgage payment or higher than rent for family sized homes,

especially in a city like Vancouver with exorbitant housing costs. The lack of affordable childcare options is a burden on families, and in many circumstances, one parent is forced to leave the labour force entirely to provide care for their children.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic was an incredibly challenging time for Canadians, having significant impacts on employee's expectations from their employers and their overall mental health. A BHER survey found that 87% of respondents indicated COVID-19 had affected their employees' health and psychological well-being. The stress level for workers, especially for healthcare workers due to COVID, is particularly high. Understaffing has undermined the mental health of many B.C. healthcare workers as they face persistent stress, turnover, and burnout, with three-quarters experiencing burnout and one-third having the intention of quitting.<sup>64</sup> Fortunately, our understanding of mental health is changing and improving. Companies are increasingly exploring ways to promote and support wellbeing and mental health for their employees and recognizing the importance of employee mental health.

We propose the following recommendations to improving the quality of life in the Greater Vancouver region for employees:

### *Improve Housing Affordability:*

1. Accelerate market and non-market housing development, including setting measurable and realistic housing targets.
2. Consider game-changing mass up-zoning across the region and province.
3. Significantly reduce permit wait times and other red tape stifling and adding costs to new housing construction.
4. Encourage transit-oriented developments near existing and future transit services.
5. Consider a Centre of Excellence for construction training and innovation, together with industry marketing construction as a highly respectable and desirable field of work.

### *Improve Childcare Availability and Affordability:*

To further improve the availability, inclusivity and affordability of childcare in British Columbia, we encourage the provincial government to:

1. Continue investing in childcare at public and private facilities and creating more \$10-a-day options for families across the province.
2. Incentivize and support more individuals to pursue Early Childhood Education training programs across British Columbia and provide support for more ECEs to become infant-toddler and special needs certified.
3. Ensure that any public investment into the construction of buildings, such as schools, hospitals, libraries, etc., includes a childcare area.
4. Help support the development of culturally safe, inclusive childcare spaces and childcare hours that are shift-work friendly.

We further encourage the City of Vancouver to:

1. Explore tax-based incentives to encourage businesses to develop childcare amenities.
2. Explore existing infrastructure as an option for childcare, rather than investing in new developments which are costly and take time.

### *Invest in Public Transit Systems:*

We encourage the federal government to:

1. Establish the Permanent Transit Fund while considering priorities regarding climate change resilience, Indigenous relations, housing supply and talent mobility.
2. Through the Permanent Transit Fund, provide funding for regional transportation plans like those developed by TransLink, rather than funding individual and one-off projects.

We encourage all levels of government to:

1. Invest in public transit projects that will connect the labour force to sites of high employment levels. For example, the extension of the Millennium Line to UBC will provide SkyTrain access from the suburbs to UBC, the third largest employment centre in B.C.

### *Invest in Mental Health Supports:*

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Continue to invest in and expand access to mental health supports for businesses of all sectors.
2. Offer resources for businesses to deploy health and wellness activities in the workplace.

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# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Immediate Action

### Canada's Immigration System as a Tool to Address Labour Challenges

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Work with professional associations/bodies to demand faster recognition of credentials, especially in high-demand occupations.
  - a. Consider a "credential fast pass" system, that would sign mutual recognition agreements (or significantly shorter timelines) with jurisdictions that have comparable training.
  - b. Consider a co-op model or other ways newcomers can work in their sector while going through the foreign credential recognition process.
2. Remove registration requirements for out-of-province healthcare workers and work with professional associations to drive faster recognition of foreign credentials, especially in high-demand occupations.
3. Work to reduce processing delays in B.C. for employer registration for a Temporary Foreign Worker to be completed within three business days.
4. Continue supporting immigrant settlement services and ensure that newcomers feel welcomed and equipped to enter into and succeed in the labour market.

We further encourage the federal government to:

1. Continue policies that help skilled immigrants in high-demand sectors to come and stay in Canada and accelerating processing for occupations identified as 'in-demand', targeted to National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes.
2. Ensure IRCC processing times fall into the original 6-7 month timeline.
3. Expand the Provincial Nominee Program and increase the total number of available nominations.
4. Extend or remove the IELTS-General English language test expiration period of 2 years.
5. Convene post-secondary institutions and the provinces to discuss international student growth and prioritize growth in areas of economic need.
6. In tandem with federal immigration targets, create a parallel housing plan to ensure that Canadians and newcomers have access to affordable housing, particularly in Canadian cities.
7. Follow the UK, New Zealand and other jurisdictions to refine work experiences for individuals under the age of 35, including extending the validity period to 3 years and considering lifting caps.



## Support Indigenous Partnerships

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Consider an Office for Indigenous Employment that brings together post-secondary institutions, the Indigenous Employment Service Agencies, and all other organizations in the sector that could be a one-stop shop for Indigenous individuals seeking employment and employers seeking to hire.
2. Play a convening role by helping to connect businesses with Indigenous communities to promote training and hiring opportunities for Indigenous Peoples across B.C.
3. Provide funding or support for Indigenous communities to create a workforce plan, to map out where their community residents have skills and are employed or where there are opportunities to address unmet skills needs.

## Promote Inclusive Hiring

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Continue to invest in disability employment services and programs that provide employability and occupational skills and job mentorship for people with disabilities. Explore opportunities for creating government incentives for businesses to hire people with disabilities.
2. Create and share resources for businesses to learn about and establish more equitable hiring processes.
3. Invest in resources for businesses to learn about the value of diversity and neurodiversity, and deploy skills training and tools needed for neurodiversity in the workplace.
4. Provide support for businesses to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.

## Support Work-Integrated Learning

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Continue to invest in experiential learning opportunities, including co-ops and work-integrated learning programs to help businesses access career-ready talent and to promote inclusive economic growth throughout B.C.
2. Explore ways for increasing work-integrated learning opportunities in other sectors/industries that currently have little uptake in these programs, including through increasing employer awareness of existing programs and opportunities.
3. Address the limited capacity of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to facilitate experiential learning opportunities by leveraging existing networks.
4. Focus on quality work-integrated learning opportunities by incentivizing post-secondary institutions to prioritize high-quality, high-impact and longer placements when possible.
5. Work with the business and post-secondary sector to establish the best methods for tracking and evaluating the success of experiential learning opportunities in B.C. One metric that could be tracked is how many students end up finding longer term employment with the company that hired them as a work-integrated

learning student. Find unique ways of telling these stories as a way of promoting work-integrated learning uptake by companies.

6. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, provide resources for employers to provide safe and welcoming environments for all employees, including work-integrated learning students, especially underrepresented populations like Indigenous Peoples, LGBT+ peoples, people with disabilities, etc.

## Digital First

### Focus on Digital Skills and Digitization

We encourage the provincial government to think big on digital skills through:

1. Create a Digital Skills Index for B.C. that ranks workplace digital skills readiness across all age groups, setting a goal for B.C. to be the top province for digital skills in Canada.
2. Commit to releasing a report every three years, with accompanying recommendations on B.C.'s digital skills. The report should include data on young people, mid-career professionals, unions, and how each group is faring on digital skills. In this report, outline jobs most at risk of automation with actionable recommendations to upskill and reskill those affected by automation for different industries.
3. Offer incentives for mid-career professionals to expand their digital skills and remain competitive in the labour market.
4. Set goals and provide assistance for SMEs to sell online and measure the digital intensity of British Columbia's SMEs.

### Incentives and Supports for Skills Training and Lifelong Learning

We ask the provincial government to:

1. Implement creative ways to incentivize businesses (especially small- and medium-sized businesses) to offer skills training programs, including microcredentials, to their employees, as well as support for students to pursue training opportunities.
2. Implement ways to incentivize post-secondary institutions to partner with industry to provide training opportunities for mid-career learners.
3. Aim for B.C. to be a world leader in lifelong learning and flexibility and accessibility to the public post-secondary system throughout one's lifetime. Think creatively about what post-secondary education can mean, and how our post-secondary education system can be accessed from high school to retirement age.
4. Ensure that government policies, procedures and funding models are flexible and adapt to new ways of

creating post-secondary programming, especially the Student Aid BC program.

5. Continue to eliminate barriers to accessing post-secondary education for underrepresented students, including Indigenous students, racialized students, students with disabilities and students from rural communities.

## Digital-Minded Government Leadership

We ask all levels of government to:

1. Aspire to transform with a digital-minded leadership for all government operations, including permitting and licensing.

## Support for the Development of Microcredentials

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. In collaboration with post-secondary institutions and the private sector, increase the number of microcredential programs offered, with a focus on in-demand occupations and digital skills, to reduce the skills gap and provide more opportunities for British Columbians.
2. Implement ways to provide incentives for employers to offer microcredential programs to their employees as well as support for students to pursue them.

We encourage the federal government to:

1. Fund flexible curricula including microcredentials in secondary and post-secondary schools.
2. Explore the idea of creating a B.C. industry-government-post-secondary working group (similar to the national Business + Higher Education Roundtable) to meet regularly to ensure that secondary and post-secondary programs are relevant and meeting the needs of the labour market.

## Promote Industry Partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Work with industry partners and associations to help connect post-secondary institutions with industry partners to develop and update programs to meet the needs of employers. As mentioned in the previous section, this could be achieved through a formal working group featuring representatives from government, industry and the post-secondary sector.

## Ensure Sufficient Labour Supply across the Entire Supply Chain

To ensure the trades powering our supply chains are well staffed, we recommend the federal government:

1. Establish a Pan-Canadian credential recognition approach for all sectors, including trucking.
2. Build on the momentum of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and labour mobility provisions, alongside provinces and accreditation bodies, to remove any remaining barriers to cross-provincial mutual accreditation.
3. Revise tax policy and incentives to support the acceleration of technology adoption.
4. Urgently adopt the recommendations in the Final Report of the National Supply Chain Task Force related to labour shortages in the transportation sector.

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Subsidize trucking businesses and interested workers for the cost of truck driver training courses.
2. Develop new skills training support for key occupations including truck drivers to support new entrants.

## Reshaping How We Generate Talent

### Use Data to Inform Skills Training Investments and Decisions

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Intentionally use the B.C. Labour Market Outlook data to inform the design of extra skilling, reskilling, and training policies and programs, and communicate how these data are influencing policy decisions.
2. Use data from the B.C. Labour Market Outlook to populate a dashboard that is updated in real time, and can be used by students, teachers and guidance counsellors, and employers in order to see up-to-date data on sector-specific, current and future labour market needs in the province.
3. Consult with the business community to ensure the B.C. Labour Market Outlook is well used and well understood by businesses in B.C.
4. Identify unique ways of sharing the B.C. labour market data with prospective post-secondary students and British Columbians looking to re-enter the labour market or change careers, so that British Columbians can be aware of which sectors will be hiring in the years to come.

## Review and Respond to Graduate Experiences

We encourage the provincial government to:

1. Create a B.C. industry-government-post-secondary education roundtable to focus on the future of the labour market.
2. Identify ways for the business community to provide input on the BC Student Outcomes survey questions and be better informed of the results.
3. Consider ways of surveying employers to determine how satisfied employers are with the preparedness of recent B.C. graduates, as is done in Ontario.
4. Communicate how the BC Student Outcomes surveys are impacting policy decision making with respect to the future of post-secondary education in the province.

We also call on the federal government to:

1. Review and revise the National Occupation Classification (NOC) codes more regularly to better reflect the needs and true state of the labour market.

## Support the Transition to Clean Jobs

We recommend the provincial and federal government:

1. Provide support for businesses and workers transitioning to clean technologies.

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Invest in skills training programs for workers to adapt to clean technologies.
2. Promote information about the labour market opportunities available in the green economy.

## Expand High School Partnerships

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Support high school laddering programs that benefit younger populations, in areas of particular importance to the B.C. economy. For example, we would recommend expanding/piloting high school programs in areas focused in coding, cybersecurity, nursing, and mass timber.
2. Explore opportunities to accelerate apprenticeships and provide trades training to high school students. This may include exploring new ideas like creating high schools focused on one particular job area (like the Maritime High School or Aviation High School in the State of Washington).
3. Provide resources for high school career counsellors to showcase the full breadth of jobs available to British Columbians, including promoting the value of jobs in trades, tourism, etc.

4. Invest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education early, especially for underrepresented groups in STEAM (Indigenous students and students of color, LGBT+ students, women and rural students). A focus on STEAM should be supported in both formal school curriculum, as well as in informal places of learning like science museums and planetariums.
5. Provide multi-year funding to not-for-profit organizations that offer skills development programs as it allows long-term planning and strategic support for complex and elaborate industry initiatives.

## Assessment on Literacy and Numeracy

We recommend the provincial government:

1. Conduct an assessment and action plan as needed to ensure British Columbian students are not falling behind nationally and globally as it pertains to numeracy and literacy.
2. Provide long term, stable funding for community literacy programs to provide more and flexible options for learners, working learners and parents.

## Accelerate Government Program Approvals

We call on the provincial government to:

1. Identify ways of expediting government post-secondary program approvals, especially in areas related to emerging sectors.