



Raising the Profile of Skilled Trades

A SNAPSHOT OF SKILLED TRADES MARKETING ACROSS B.C.



OVERVIEW

Interest in skilled trades careers is on the rise in B.C.; however, the demand for skilled tradespeople continues to outpace the number of people entering into apprenticeships. With over 100,000 job openings expected in the next decade¹, everyone is asking the same question: “How do we attract more British Columbians to trades careers?”

As the Crown organization responsible for advancing B.C.’s trades training system, SkilledTradesBC is committed to raising the profile of skilled trades and increasing access to meaningful opportunities in the skilled trades. We promote awareness of the value of skilled trades professions to B.C.’s economy and work to remove barriers and stigma, ensuring the trades are recognized for what they are—highly-skilled, well-paying and sustainable careers.

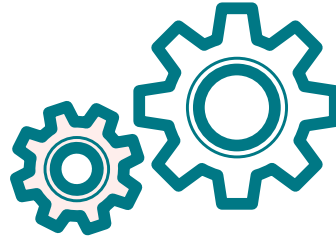
We know that many of our industry, community and training partners are doing the same—and so we surveyed more than 10,000 stakeholders to learn more about how skilled trades is being marketed in B.C. The responses provided insights into the wide range of efforts underway and are indicative of an eagerness toward our common goals. We are excited to share a glimpse of the impactful initiatives and activities that are happening around the province to grow the apprenticeship population and build the sustainable workforce that we need.

¹ British Columbia Labour Market Outlook | 2024 Edition

SKILLED TRADES IN B.C.



Nearly **90**
trades programs in B.C.
(49 of which are Red Seal)



Over
100,000
skilled trades job opportunities
in the next decade

Top trades in demand*

- Construction trades helpers and labourers
- Carpenters
- Cooks
- General building maintenance workers and building superintendents
- Hairstylists and barbers
- Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers
- Heavy equipment operators
- Electricians (except industrial and power system)
- Bakers
- Electronic service technicians (household and business equipment)
- Plumbers
- Welders and related machine operators
- Painters and decorators (except interior decorators)
- Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics
- Heavy-duty equipment mechanics



Over

11,000

Active Sponsors



Over

6,000

Certificates of Qualification issued

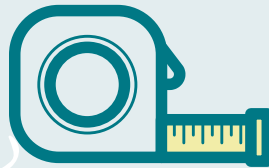
Nearly **50,000** active apprentices, including:



Over

4,000

Indigenous people



Nearly

5,000

Women



Over

11,000

Youth

CANADA AND B.C. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Through the Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy, the federal government is investing in the systems and people that power the skilled trades—providing funding that supports training, career exploration and efforts to increase diversity and participation across the country. It also includes a national advertising campaign underway to attract the next generation of tradespeople. Using a mix of digital platforms—like social media, podcasts, connected TV, and interactive displays in schools and malls—the campaign aims to reach youth early, meeting them in spaces they trust and inspiring them to see trades as a future they can own.

Here in B.C., the provincial government continues to support trades training through a range of programs, services, tax credits, grants and financial assistance. Whether students are just starting to explore their interests or trades professionals are looking to grow their careers, there is support in place at every stage. For students in Grades 5 to 10, the WorkBC *Find Your Fit* Tour offers interactive, hands-on events across the province that introduce youth to in-demand trades careers. For those already working in the trades, the *TradeUpBC* online hub provides opportunities to advance their careers and stay competitive through micro-credentials and short-term training programs.

SKILLEDTRADESBC INITIATIVES

In partnership with government, SkilledTradesBC funds and promotes youth and pre-apprenticeship programs that are key to building the pipeline into apprenticeship for youth and underrepresented groups. We develop and promote a diverse range of apprentice and employer success stories through our website and social media to both raise awareness and reinforce the value of apprenticeship. In addition, we have a field team of Apprenticeship Advisors across the province, who are active ambassadors of skilled trades at schools, information sessions, career fairs and community events. They also support retention by providing direct support to apprentices and employers along the apprenticeship journey toward certification.



COLLECTIVE EFFORTS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

B.C. is home to one of the most progressive and advanced skilled trades apprenticeship systems in Canada. We take pride in offering accessible, world-class training and a wealth of career opportunities across the province.

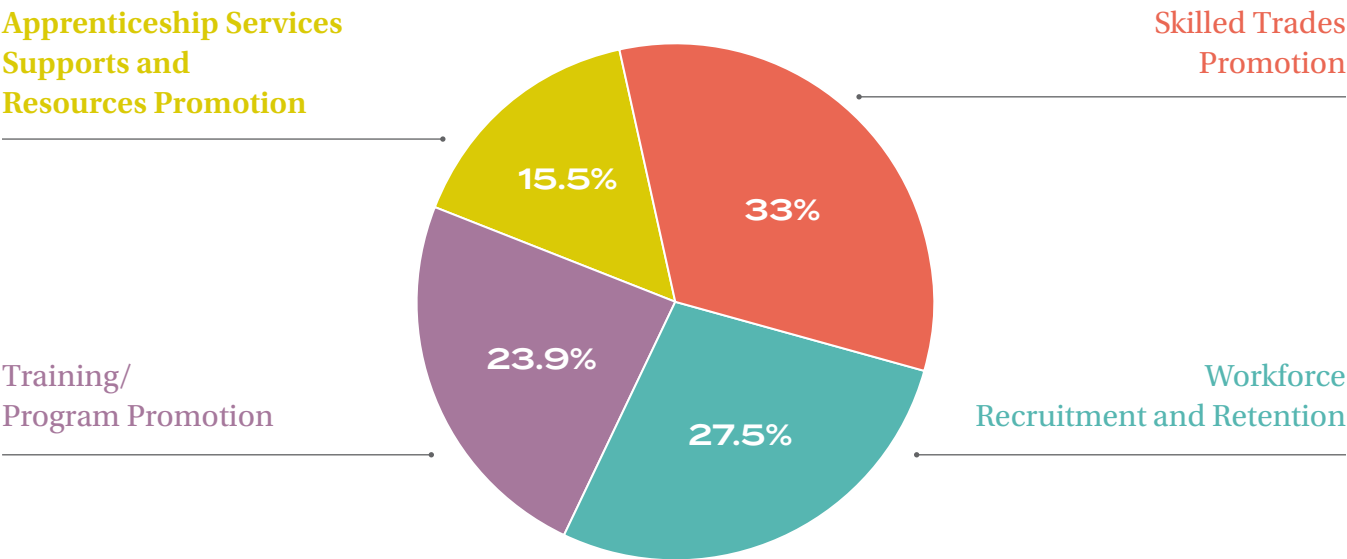
Through a blend of in-person and virtual events, community-building on social media platforms, advertising and leveraging media opportunities, British Columbians are learning more about skilled trades, how to get started in apprenticeships and access the rewarding future skilled trades has to offer. From Trades Training BC’s planned enhancements to their website and the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association’s newly launched charitable foundation, to the comprehensive community engagement and outreach strategies of BC Building Trades and the Mechanical Contractors Association of BC, it is clear that our industry and training partners, along with our stakeholders, are committed to growing the next generation of skilled tradespeople.

We received over 250 responses to our survey. This is a snapshot of the promotional activities from across public and private sectors, small and large organizations, and regions across the province. While not an exhaustive list, the examples capture the broad diversity and collaboration of efforts shaping the skilled trades of tomorrow.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY




























































































Primary Marketing Focus

This chart illustrates the distribution of marketing focuses across all survey participants.



Top Marketing Tactics by Organization Type

This table highlights the most frequently used marketing tactics for each marketing focus. Only the top tactics—those selected by more than 50 per cent of survey participants for each organization type—are included.

LEGEND	MARKETING FOCUS					
	Skilled Trades Promotion					
	Workforce Recruitment and Retention					
	Training/Program Promotion					
	Apprenticeship Services Supports and Resources Promotion					
MARKETING FOCUS	EMPLOYER	INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION	LABOUR	TRAINING PROVIDER	SCHOOL DISTRICT	SERVICE PROVIDER
Advertising	 					
Career Fairs	 		   	  	   	   
Community Events			   	 		  
Direct Mail						
Email Marketing					 	
Industry Magazine			   			
Job Postings	 					
Marketing Campaigns						
PR/Media Relations						
Promotions Through Business Associations						
School Presentations	 	 		  	   	 
Social Media	 	   	   	   	  	   
Trade Shows		  	   			



BUILDERS LIFE

A province-wide multi-media marketing campaign to highlight the rewarding lifestyle of skilled trades careers

The British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) ran their *Builders Life* campaign to promote construction careers as a rewarding career choice. Recognizing the need to address outdated perceptions about the industry, BCCA focused on visually showcasing the balanced lifestyle of trades professionals, featuring diverse people enjoying activities like snowboarding, rock climbing and spending quality time with family and friends. The call to action included a contact form that enabled BCCA to connect with those interested in learning more about how to get started on a skilled trades career. Follow-up communications also provided information on training programs, job fairs and resources to help support their entry into and retention in skilled trades. The campaign received over 10,000 responses from across the province and BCCA continues to engage with them with opportunities to further explore skilled trades training and careers.



HOMEBUILDERS INITIATIVE

A marketing campaign and resource website to raise awareness of the range of residential construction trades careers

The Canadian Homebuilders Association of British Columbia (CHBA BC) launched the *Homebuilders' Initiative* to raise awareness about all the trades involved in building homes. Focusing on youth, CHBA BC conducted focus groups to better understand what young people value and want from their careers. Using these insights, they developed a digital toolkit—a website—conveniently consolidating existing, relevant industry resources, program information and contacts in one place to make it easier for individuals at any stage of their career exploration to see the potential in home-building trades careers. The website was designed to spark interest in and inform the audience, and visits are primarily driven by their robust social media advertisement campaign. Recognizing the critical role of employers in successful apprenticeship and careers, the website also includes a resource that explains the benefits of hiring young apprentices to develop the next generation of trades professionals.

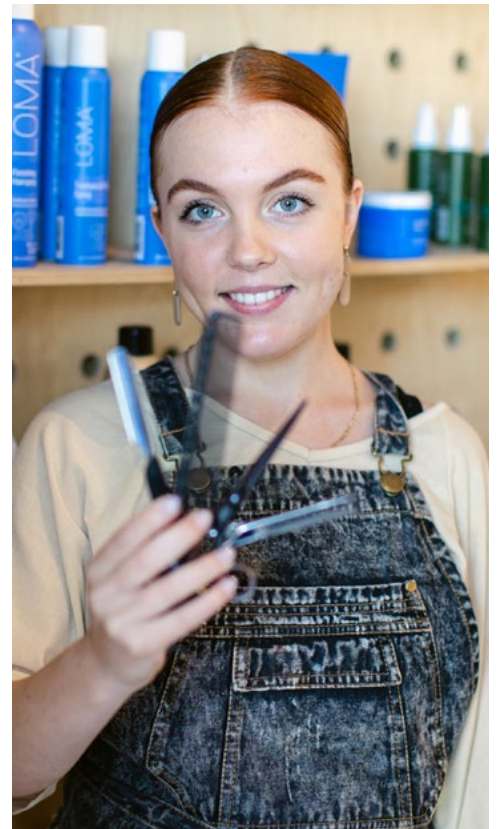




LABOUR DAY AT THE PNE FAIR

An experiential exhibit to demystify skilled trades and connect with new audiences

BC Building Trades (BCBT) hosted an interactive zone at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) in celebration of the 2024 Labour Day weekend to raise awareness and demystify careers in the trades. Through live demonstrations and hands-on activities, United Association Local 170 and seven other union affiliates showcased the breadth of building and finishing trades and career opportunities, and the sense of community amongst tradespeople. By leveraging the PNE's high visibility and reach, BCBT seized the opportunity to engage with families and the broader public—through approximately 10,000 interactions—inspiring people to learn more about the essential and rewarding world of skilled trades.

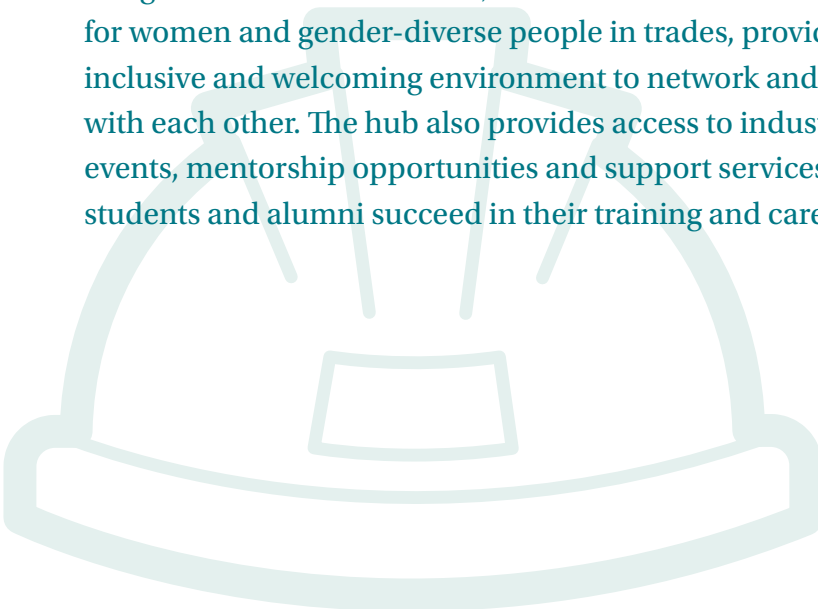


TRAINING
PROVIDER

ConnectHER HUB

A safe and inviting space for under-represented trades students to network and access resources

The ConnectHER Hub opened its doors at the Burnaby campus of British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in 2024. Part of a greater national initiative, this resource hub is reserved for women and gender-diverse people in trades, providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to network and connect with each other. The hub also provides access to industry events, mentorship opportunities and support services to help students and alumni succeed in their training and careers.





FUTURE OF WORK

An annual event that brings together industry leaders, stakeholders and students, highlighting the role of technology within industrial construction trades

Pitt Meadows Plumbing & Mechanical Systems (PMP)—in partnership with industry sponsors—hosts an annual conference-style event, *Future of Work*, to address key challenges and opportunities, explore emerging technologies and discuss strategies to build a resilient workforce for the future of construction. Through keynote speakers, panel discussions and networking opportunities, attendees gain insights into the evolving nature and complexity of modern skilled trades careers. In addition, PMP works closely with local school districts by hosting educational showcases and site visits throughout the year to introduce educators, students and parents to the vast technology-driven opportunities in the skilled trades.



LABOUR

ONE MINUTE WITH

Storytelling campaign to challenge stereotypes and drive engagement

United Association Piping Industry College of British Columbia (UAPICBC) is debunking stereotypes about people and careers in skilled trades through their *One Minute With* series. Promoted primarily through social media—the storytelling campaign features tradespeople of diverse backgrounds and genders, sharing first-hand experiences about their apprenticeship journeys and career paths and offering words of encouragement to not only explore the trades but to continue the apprenticeship path and achieve certification. By sharing authentic, relatable stories about real people, UAPICBC is actively calling attention to the reality that skilled trades careers are for everyone.





YOUTH CARPENTRY SHOWCASE

A community event to celebrate students' success and showcase bright futures in skilled trades

Surrey's Guildford Park and Frank Hurt secondary schools host year-end celebration events for their Youth Train in Trades Carpentry program, inviting parents, community members and local employers to wrap up the students' trades training experience in a positive and memorable way. Students get to show off the results of their hard work— mini homes and sheds that they build for community members as part of the program, while completing their Level 1 technical training at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The sense of accomplishment, pride and confidence built through this unique program serves to fuel students in continuing their apprenticeships to certification.



INDIGENOUS SUCCESS STORIES

A person-centred approach to promoting the value of skilled trades training and careers for Indigenous empowerment

Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services (ACCESS) is a vocal champion for apprenticeships and trades careers—promoting the success stories of program participants and the far-reaching benefits of skilled trades training for their families and communities through owned and earned media. From training programs to graduations, ACCESS' marketing approach prioritizes people and their personal journeys, recognizing the power of representation in recruitment and retention in skilled trades amongst Indigenous people. Another example of this is their involvement with the British Columbia Aboriginal Training Employment Alliance Members' inaugural Indigenous Apprenticeship Forum in 2024, an event that celebrated Indigenous peoples and communities' participation and achievements in skilled trades.





EMPLOYER

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Holistic approach to building and retaining a diverse workforce

Craftsman Collision, recognizing the value of a diverse workforce in future-proofing their business, takes an end-to-end approach to building the talent pipeline that they need. It starts with ensuring early exposure to encourage more youth, women and under-represented groups to see themselves in skilled trades and consider it as a viable career choice. They work closely with high schools and colleges to support initiatives such as *Pedal Car Challenge* and *Jill of All Trades*, creating fun and safe environments for students to learn about automotive trades and gain first-hand experience working with tools. On the other end, Craftsman Collision is equally invested in their retention efforts—providing extra resources and support to their apprentices, including tuition and mentorship programs to keep them on track to certification.



EMPLOYER

TEA CREEK

An Indigenous led, culturally safe, land-based trades training initiative to support Indigenous apprenticeships and grow the community's skilled workforce

Tea Creek took on a unique role as an Indigenous-led employer and training provider in the Gitxzan Territory to address existing barriers and increase Indigenous participation in Red Seal trades. They provide access to trades training and work experience within the community and provide extensive, culturally relevant wrap-around supports to help their apprentices work toward certification. These apprentices helped build the buildings that house the community's food sovereignty program and serve the region. Apprentices and tradespeople are proud to be an integral part of the local economy and this pride—and their collective success story—goes a long way to encourage others in their families and community to pursue careers in skilled trades.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It's clear that across B.C., employers, industry associations, training providers and passionate tradespeople are united in elevating skilled trades careers to attract the people that we need to build a strong, diverse workforce. Our collective marketing efforts play a significant role in this shared mission. Through dynamic events, comprehensive marketing campaigns and strategic partnerships, there is a commitment to understanding and reaching target audiences to raise awareness and promote the value of skilled trades apprenticeships and careers. While this overview highlights just a few initiatives, we know that there is important work being done by countless other organizations. We hope these examples inspire you and spark your own efforts in shaping the future of skilled trades in your communities.



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