You Can Build Your Future in Construction



British Columbia Construction Association | November 2026

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Opportunity, purpose, and possibility in British Columbia's construction industry

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Where do you see your future?

The world is changing quickly. The rising cost of living, the expense of education and training, evolving technologies, and uncertainty across the economy are making career decisions increasingly complicated. For someone beginning their working life, or considering a new direction, choosing where to invest their time, energy, and ambition can feel like a significant challenge. People want more than employment. They want a career that offers financial security, personal satisfaction, and the opportunity to build a rewarding future.

British Columbia's construction industry deserves serious consideration. As one of the province's largest and most important industries, construction provides opportunities to develop valuable skills, earn a good living, and contribute to the communities where we live. It offers a wide range of occupations and career pathways, from skilled trades and technical professions to project management, leadership, and business ownership. Just as importantly, it provides opportunities for people with different interests, abilities, educational backgrounds, and ambitions.

Construction is essential to British Columbia's economy and quality of life. It builds the places where we live, learn, and receive care, along with the infrastructure that connects our communities and supports businesses.

The industry's need for skilled workers is well established, but workforce demand alone should not define the case for choosing a construction career. For people considering their future, the opportunity is more personal: to develop valuable skills, pursue a career that evolves with their interests and ambitions, and contribute to work that makes a lasting difference.

What will you build for yourself?

One of construction's greatest strengths is the variety of pathways available to people entering the industry. Unlike careers that depend on a single educational route, construction offers several ways to develop qualifications, gain experience, and advance professionally.

For those interested in the skilled trades, apprenticeships offer a particularly attractive combination of education and employment. In many trades, approximately 80% of training

takes place in the workplace, where apprentices earn an income while developing practical skills under the guidance of experienced professionals. Technical training complements that experience by providing the theoretical knowledge and specialized instruction necessary to progress toward certification.

This approach allows people to begin building their careers while earning money and gaining meaningful work experience. At a time when families are weighing the cost of post-secondary education and the financial implications of entering the workforce, that is a significant consideration.

University and college education are an asset to many construction careers, and academic qualifications can also provide value to the industry. However, a traditional four-year degree is not the only pathway to a successful career in construction. Apprenticeship training and on the job experience are highly valued in career growth and offer recognized qualifications, financial independence, and long-term career development.

Financial assistance is available to help eligible apprentices manage training expenses, including federal and provincial measures intended to support technical training and encourage completion of Red Seal certification. These investments reflect the broader economic and social value of developing a skilled and capable workforce.

Importantly, completing an apprenticeship or earning an initial qualification is not the end of the learning process. Construction rewards experience, specialization, mentorship, and continued professional development. Mentorship is an important part of the industry's apprenticeship system, where experienced tradespeople share their knowledge, develop the skills of new workers, and help prepare the next generation for successful careers. New skills can lead to additional responsibilities, higher earning potential, supervisory positions, or opportunities to pursue entirely different roles within the industry. The ability to continue to learn and advance throughout a career is one of construction's most enduring strengths.

More than a job. Work you can take pride in.

While earning potential and career advancement are important, they are not the only considerations when choosing a profession. People also want to feel that their work matters, that their contributions are valued, and that they can take pride in what they accomplish.

Construction offers a particularly tangible sense of achievement. The results of the industry's work can be seen in our communities across British Columbia. The work is visible in schools and hospitals, housing, transportation networks, energy facilities, and

essential community infrastructure. These projects become part of the places where people live, work, and raise families, often serving communities for generations.

There is something uniquely satisfying about being able to see the results of your efforts and know that your skills contributed to making them possible. For some, that satisfaction comes from mastering a trade or solving a difficult technical challenge. For others, it comes from leading a successful team, managing a complex project, or helping deliver infrastructure that improves people's lives.

Construction is also fundamentally collaborative. Successful projects depend on people with different skills and experiences working toward a shared objective. They require practical problem-solving, good communication, creativity, adaptability, and the ability to respond to challenges as they arise. These are qualities that people develop through experience and carry with them throughout their careers.

For many people, the combination of meaningful work, professional accomplishment, and financial opportunity makes construction an attractive place to build a future.

Many careers. Many ways to succeed.

Construction is often associated primarily with the skilled trades, and for good reason. Carpenters, electricians, plumbers, welders, equipment operators, and many other tradespeople are fundamental to the industry's success. Their expertise is essential to delivering the projects that British Columbians depend on every day.

But the industry is much broader than any single occupation. Construction also depends on engineers, technologists, estimators, project managers, procurement professionals, environmental specialists, safety advisors, administrators, supervisors, and business leaders. As projects become more technically sophisticated, opportunities are expanding in areas such as digital design, building information modelling, automation, advanced manufacturing, and innovative building systems.

These different occupations provide considerable flexibility for people entering the industry. Someone who begins as an apprentice may eventually become a highly specialized tradesperson, move into supervision or project management, or establish a business. A person with an interest in technology may pursue opportunities involving digital construction systems, advanced equipment, or project planning. Others may find their strengths in leadership, environmental management, estimating, training, or business operations.

There is no single definition of professional success in construction. Some people aspire to manage major projects or lead organizations, while others prefer to continue developing

their hands-on technical expertise. All of these paths are essential, and can provide rewarding and respected careers.

Technology will continue to influence how these careers evolve. Artificial intelligence, digital design, robotics, prefabrication, and increasingly sophisticated equipment are changing how projects are planned and delivered. These developments have the potential to improve productivity, enhance safety, reduce waste, and create better project outcomes.

Practical experience, technical knowledge, professional judgment, and the ability to solve problems will remain valuable as new tools and methods are introduced. In many respects, the future of construction will depend on combining established skills with innovation and a commitment to continuous learning.

A career that recognizes the value you bring.

A rewarding career should also support a fulfilling life outside work. Financial independence can provide opportunities to support a family, pursue personal interests, travel, enjoy recreation, or prepare for retirement. Different construction occupations offer different working environments, schedules, and lifestyle considerations, and finding the right fit is an important part of career planning.

Construction workers make a substantial contribution to British Columbia's economy, and the industry offers competitive compensation and opportunities for financial advancement.

According to the BCCA Fall 2026 Construction Stat Pack, the average annual wage of a construction employee in British Columbia was **$84,353**. This is an industry-wide average rather than a starting salary, and individual earnings vary depending on occupation, experience, qualifications, location, and the availability of work. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the potential for construction to provide financially rewarding employment and long-term career opportunities.

For workers entering the industry, earning potential can increase significantly as skills, qualifications, and experience develop. Professional certification, specialization, additional responsibilities, and supervisory or management roles can all contribute to higher earning potential. Depending on the employer and type of employment, compensation may also include benefits, retirement savings programs, and support for additional training.

The opportunity to develop financial independence while gaining qualifications is particularly significant for people concerned about education costs or beginning their

working lives with substantial debt. An apprenticeship allows individuals to earn while they learn, building experience and financial capacity alongside their professional skills.

Construction also offers opportunities for entrepreneurship. British Columbia has **28,020 construction companies**, according to BCCA's Fall 2026 statistics, with approximately 92% employing fewer than 20 people. These businesses are an important part of the industry's structure, providing specialized services, employment opportunities, and the ability to respond to the diverse needs of construction projects across the province.

Looking ahead, business succession may create further opportunities for the next generation of construction professionals. According to an October 2026 report from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 63% of Canadian small business owners plan to exit their businesses within the next decade. While this trend extends across the economy, it highlights the potential for aspiring entrepreneurs to acquire established businesses and build on their success. For those entering construction today, the industry offers not only opportunities for employment and career advancement, but also a potential pathway to business ownership.

Many construction businesses have been established by individuals who began their careers working in a trade or gaining experience on jobsites. Through technical expertise, business knowledge, trusted relationships, and a willingness to take on new responsibilities, they have created opportunities not only for themselves but also for the people they employ.

Financial success is never guaranteed, and construction is subject to changing market conditions like other industries. However, the combination of valued skills, opportunities for advancement, and the potential for business ownership provides multiple pathways toward long-term financial and professional success.

The province is changing. Construction will help build what comes next.

Construction remains one of the foundations of British Columbia's economy. BCCA's Fall 2026 Construction Stat Pack reports a provincial construction labour force of approximately **273,000 people**, including **199,900 trades workers**. The industry contributes **8.9% of provincial GDP** and remains British Columbia's largest employer in the goods-producing sector.

The industry's importance reaches well beyond its direct economic contribution. Nearly every sector of the provincial economy depends on construction to provide and maintain the infrastructure necessary for its operations.

Looking ahead, British Columbia faces significant infrastructure requirements. As communities grow and change, they need new housing, schools, healthcare facilities, transportation systems, water infrastructure, and reliable energy networks. Existing infrastructure must also be maintained, renewed, and adapted to changing environmental conditions, technologies, and public expectations.

Meeting these needs will require a capable and adaptable construction workforce. WorkBC's 2025–2035 Labour Market Outlook projects approximately **87,300 construction industry job openings** over the decade, including opportunities created through economic growth and the replacement of workers leaving the workforce.

Retirements are an important part of this outlook. As experienced professionals move toward the end of their careers, the industry faces the dual responsibility of attracting new workers and ensuring that valuable knowledge and expertise are passed on to the next generation.

It is equally important to recognize that construction activity does not follow a continuous upward trajectory. Residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and infrastructure construction respond differently to market conditions, public investment, interest rates, and economic priorities. Some sectors and regions will experience stronger demand than others, and employment opportunities will change over time.

The Fall 2026 Construction Stat Pack reflects some of these pressures, including slower residential activity, fewer construction businesses, and challenges affecting industry confidence. At the same time, increased industrial, commercial, and institutional building permits provide encouraging signs of investment in other areas.

These conditions reinforce the importance of a diversified construction industry, a strong skills base, and predictable long-term infrastructure planning. While individual projects and market conditions will change, British Columbia's continuing need to build, maintain, and modernize essential infrastructure provides an important foundation for future workforce opportunities.

Building a better future for everyone.

Construction does more than respond to economic growth. It also helps shape the kind of communities and economy British Columbians want for the future.

The industry has a central role in improving building energy efficiency, developing modern transportation systems, supporting clean energy projects, adapting infrastructure to changing environmental conditions, and reducing waste.

The methods used to deliver construction projects are evolving. Better planning, digital technology, advanced manufacturing, improved coordination, and more efficient use of materials can contribute to stronger productivity and better outcomes for owners, workers, businesses, and communities. These priorities create opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and the development of new skills.

Progress depends on people who understand both the practical realities of construction and the opportunities created by new approaches. It requires experienced professionals willing to share their knowledge, younger workers prepared to embrace new technologies, and employers committed to investing in training and continuous improvement.

The industry's long-term success also depends on a healthy business environment. Fair procurement practices, reliable payment, effective project planning, and predictable infrastructure investment help companies maintain employment, develop their workforce, and invest in equipment and innovation.

British Columbia's passage of the Construction Prompt Payment Act in November 2025 represented an important step toward improving payment practices and providing greater certainty for construction businesses. Although implementation remains ahead, the legislation reflects recognition of the importance of stronger commercial practices throughout the construction supply chain.

Creating a more productive, resilient, and sustainable construction industry is a shared responsibility. It requires collaboration among employers, workers, industry organizations, educators, project owners, and governments. The benefits extend beyond individual projects to the long-term strength of the provincial economy and the quality of employment opportunities available within it.

An industry where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

A rewarding career depends on more than wages, qualifications, and advancement. People also need workplaces where they feel respected, supported, and able to contribute their abilities.

Construction has made progress in improving workplace culture, but there are still barriers that discourage some people from entering the industry or remaining in it. Women, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, and other historically underrepresented groups have not always enjoyed the same access to opportunities or supportive workplace environments.

Removing these barriers is both a responsibility and an opportunity for the industry. The future construction workforce must reflect the diversity of the communities it serves, and employers increasingly recognize that respectful workplaces, effective mentorship, and

inclusive leadership contribute to better recruitment, retention, and business performance.

Industry initiatives such as the **Builders Code** provide practical tools and guidance to support respectful workplace cultures and prevent bullying, harassment, discrimination, and hazing. These efforts reflect a growing understanding that the quality of the workplace experience is fundamental to attracting and retaining skilled people.

There is still important work ahead. According to the BCCA Fall 2026 Construction Stat Pack, women represent approximately **6.2% of British Columbia's construction trades workforce**, or **12,394 workers**. While participation has increased over time, these figures demonstrate the need to continue expanding access to training, employment, mentorship, and career advancement.

The goal should not simply be to encourage more people to consider construction. It should be to create environments where those who enter the industry have a meaningful opportunity to succeed, develop their abilities, and build lasting careers.

Employers and industry partners who invest in their people are better positioned to retain experience, develop future leaders, and build strong organizations. A workforce that feels valued and supported contributes to better collaboration, safer workplaces, and more successful projects.

The industry's greatest strength has always been its people. Ensuring they have the opportunity to succeed will be essential to its future.

Taking safety seriously.

Construction can be physically demanding work, and its activities involve hazards that require proper training, effective supervision, and constant attention to workplace safety. These risks should be acknowledged openly by anyone considering a construction career.

Protecting workers remains one of the industry's most important responsibilities. Every person should be able to return home safely at the end of the workday, and the expectation of safe working conditions must be fundamental to how projects are planned, managed, and delivered.

Significant progress has been made. In May 2026, WorkSafeBC reported that the construction industry's overall time-loss injury rate had declined by **25% over the previous decade**, while the serious injury rate had fallen by **32%**. These improvements demonstrate the value of sustained attention to safety management, hazard identification, worker training, supervision, and more effective workplace practices.

However, construction continues to present real occupational risks. Falls, incidents involving heavy equipment, overexertion, and other workplace hazards can result in serious injuries. Preventing them requires more than compliance with regulations. It depends on a workplace culture where safety is an everyday responsibility, workers are properly trained and equipped, and concerns can be raised and addressed without hesitation.

The industry's understanding of workplace health has also expanded beyond physical hazards. Mental health, psychological safety, chronic pain, and substance-use challenges are increasingly recognized as matters requiring prevention, education, practical support, and open communication.

The Vancouver Island Construction Association's (VICA) Tailgate Toolkit initiative provides information and resources to help employers and workers recognize these challenges, reduce stigma, and connect people with appropriate services. Alongside efforts to improve workplace conduct through the Builders Code, these programs contribute to a more comprehensive approach to worker health and well-being.

The progress made in construction safety is encouraging, but improvement must remain continuous. Employers, workers, supervisors, educators, and industry organizations all have a role in strengthening safety practices and ensuring that people have the knowledge and support required to work safely.

For prospective workers and their families, the commitment to maintaining and improving safe, respectful workplaces should be an important consideration when evaluating career opportunities and employers.

Your first step starts here.

One of the advantages of construction is that there is no single pathway into the industry. People enter through high school programs, foundation training, apprenticeships, technical institutions, colleges, universities, and entry-level employment. Career changers also bring valuable experience from other industries, often finding opportunities to apply existing skills while learning new ones.

Introducing young people to construction careers early is an important part of helping them make informed decisions about their future. The Vancouver Regional Construction Association's (VRCA) Bring Trades to Schools (BTS) initiative is one example of this approach, connecting students with industry professionals through hands-on workshops, demonstrations, and practical exposure to different trades. By giving students the opportunity to experience construction firsthand, programs like BTS help them discover interests and abilities they may not have considered and see the possibilities of a career in the industry.

The best starting point is to consider your personal interests and strengths. Someone who enjoys hands-on work and practical problem-solving may find satisfaction in a skilled trade, while others may be drawn to technology, design, planning, leadership, business operations, environmental management, or safety. Each offers a professional career pathway within the construction sector, with opportunities to develop expertise, advance, and build a rewarding career.

Understanding the training and qualifications associated with different occupations is an important next step. Speaking with people already working in construction, exploring educational programs, and researching employers can provide valuable insight into working conditions, expectations, and opportunities for advancement.

A range of programs and resources is available to help people navigate these choices. **Builders Life TalentCentral**, developed by BCCA, connects job seekers with construction employers across British Columbia. The platform is free for job seekers and provides access to employment opportunities and resources that support career exploration.

The Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP) helps people explore construction trades careers, prepare for employment, and connect with employers, including those offering apprenticeship opportunities. **Building Builders** provides mentorship opportunities that connect new and emerging construction workers with experienced industry professionals who can share knowledge and offer career guidance.

Educational institutions, employers, labour organizations, and public employment services also provide information about occupational requirements, training options, apprenticeships, and potential financial supports.

Entering construction does not require having an entire career mapped out from the beginning. Many professionals discover new interests and opportunities as they gain experience. An initial position may provide the foundation for an apprenticeship, certification, specialization, management role, or future business venture.

What matters is taking the opportunity to explore the industry, understand its possibilities, and begin developing the skills and relationships that can support a rewarding career.

Your future career is here.

British Columbia has important work ahead. According to BCCA's Fall 2026 Construction Stat Pack, approximately **$172 billion in current construction projects** was identified across the province, together with a further **$93 billion in proposed projects**. While not every proposed project will proceed and economic conditions will continue to influence

investment decisions, these figures demonstrate the substantial scale of construction activity and potential future development.

There are also important challenges facing the industry. Slower activity in some sectors, uncertainty surrounding investment, and the need for predictable infrastructure planning all affect businesses and employment opportunities. These realities make workforce development, transferable skills, and continued investment in training even more important.

Over the longer term, British Columbia will continue to need housing, transportation systems, schools, healthcare facilities, energy infrastructure, and the renewal of existing public and private assets. These investments will require people with practical experience, technical expertise, leadership abilities, and the capacity to adapt as construction methods and technologies evolve.

For those considering their future, construction offers more than the prospect of employment. It offers an opportunity to develop a profession, build financial independence, contribute to important projects, and take pride in work that has a lasting impact on communities.

There is no single kind of construction career and no single definition of success. The industry provides opportunities for people with different talents, backgrounds, and ambitions, whether their interests lie in skilled trades, technology, project delivery, leadership, or entrepreneurship.

Ultimately, the value of a construction career is measured not only by the buildings and infrastructure created, but also by the opportunities it provides for the people who contribute to that work. As British Columbia continues to change and grow, the need for capable, skilled, and motivated construction professionals will remain an important part of the province's future.

Construction offers the chance to develop valuable skills, earn a good living, take pride in meaningful work, and build a future that reflects your own ambitions.

You can build your future in construction.

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