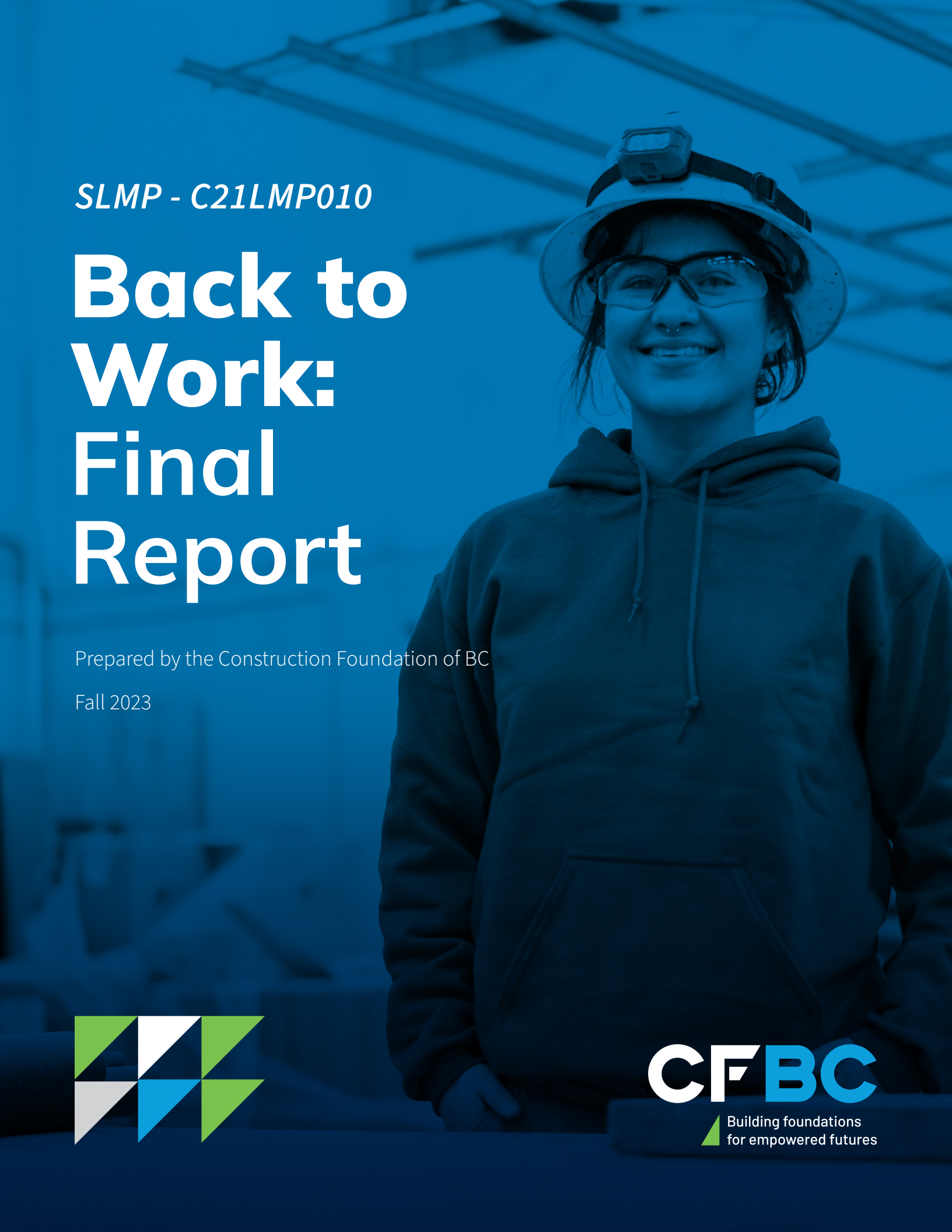


SLMP - C21LMP010

Back to Work: Final Report

Prepared by the Construction Foundation of BC

Fall 2023

CFBC

Building foundations for empowered futures

DISCLAIMER

This report was produced as part of the Sector Labour Market Partnership Program, a partnership between the Province of BC, the Construction Foundation of BC, and the Western Joint Electrical Training Society.

This project was conducted under the guidance of a Governance Committee.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of its author(s) and not the official policy or position of the Government of British Columbia.

This program is funded by the Government of Canada
and the Province of British Columbia.

Executive Summary: Testing Accelerated Pathways into Apprenticeship

Back to Work has been a pilot project supported through the Sector Labour Market Partnership Program. It was developed in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and implemented between March 2021 and June of 2023. The purpose of the Project was to develop and test a framework for skills assessment and work readiness that resulted in an accelerated training pathway to support unemployed or precariously employed individuals obtain and develop a career in the trades.

Over the duration of the project 731 people participated in training. Employment outcomes are known for 443 people. Included in this total are a minimum of 282 apprentices. The training models tested, including Gateways and Apprenticeship Preparation models, resulted in high rates of transition to employment and retention over time. This included up to 97% transition from training to apprenticeship and 93% retention into Level 1 technical training after one year for electrical. Over 82 different employers have participated in the project. A significant portion of the success achieved has resulted from the ability of BC's Building and Metal Trades unions to facilitate guarantees of employment for all training participants.

The project showed that there are alternative entry points that can be created to get more people into an apprenticeship. These are efficient, quick, and effective ways of providing the skills people need to start and stay in the trade. Success has depended on partnerships and collaboration to address the needs of industry (employers) and job seekers. Employment was supported for multiple trades, and training solutions for electrical, ironworking, carpentry, sheet metal, plumbing and roofing were tested.

Ultimately, the project has demonstrated how successfully addressing skills shortages depends on critical third-party intermediaries to provide effective assessment processes, coordinate collaborations between parties with competing priorities, and deliver effective apprenticeship preparation training options. Intermediaries are different than most service providers in that they are flexible. They can quickly adapt to shifts in the labour market and can deliver new solutions as needed. They also can address the gaps in the system – specifically creating access to training and employment for those who otherwise can not, or will not, progress in their career.

Back to Work has shown how third-party intermediaries provide a critical role in navigating systems and problem-solving complex challenges. Third-party intermediaries are well positioned to address gaps between demand and supply sides. Both CFBC and WJETS functioned as organizations that responded to the needs and interests of applicants, as well as ensuring that all assessment and training activities responded to employer needs. This balance allowed for daily innovations and ensured applicants were best prepared for success. These types of organizations may be a missing piece of skills shortage puzzle in BC that can ensure training and employment services are flexible, relevant to all sides, and responsive to evolving opportunity.

Key elements of the project are being sustained. These include several of the Apprenticeship Preparation type activities, as well as the network of relationships that support recruitment and assessment of new workers. While consistent funding is the main barrier to scaling of the project activities, the flexibility and adaptability of training undertaken means that opportunities can be rapidly implemented when funding and employment demand are present. Funding includes employer contributions, Union Training funds, and provincial or federal workforce development funds.

Significantly, the model is non-proprietary and can be replicated by any training organization. Significantly, BC's Building Trades and the joint training providers are uniquely positioned for this innovative format because they have training capacity and can guarantee employment. Other training providers or industry groups may struggle to replicate the model.

The project also highlights the need to reexamine where new apprentices are being recruited from. BC's workforce maintains a "Trades Adjacent" population of labourers and helpers who face a unique set of barriers to advancement. Trades Adjacent was a term used to describe individuals with significant labouring experience who have not progressed into an apprenticeship or a skilled trade role (uncertified tradesperson). This group represents as many as 24,000 workers in BC who could be a critical part of resolving skilled trades shortages. Many are unable to transition due to financial constraints, learning challenges or disabilities (diagnosed or undiagnosed), as well as access to training options. The training models tested in this project do provide greater access, but

many applicants in the Trades Adjacent category were unable to afford to leave low paying labouring wages for first year apprentice wages (for example, $28 to $23/hour is a almost a 20% pay cut). Retention and advancement of this group is possible with the right financial supports and individually adapted learning resources in place.

In addition to welcoming a diversity of new entrants to the trades, resolving skills shortages may depend on solutions for advancing and retaining those already working. Advancement considerations are very similar to overall retention considerations. These include factors related to learning challenges and undiagnosed learning disabilities, wellbeing and addictions, and access to sustained support through the most difficult points of an apprenticeship.

Back to Work has highlighted the need to have multiple solutions available to support workforce development – a whole lifecycle approach to training from new entry to upskilling journeypersons as supervisor will increase the resilience of BC's trades workforce. Successful development of this continuum is observed in the project in both the number of individuals trained and their retention in the trade and in industry. Multiple access points throughout the lifecycle of tradespeople will strengthen and futureproof BC's workforce.

Final Report Contents

Summary Project Approach and Success

Back to Work was established as a response to the economic, labour market and social impacts of COVID-19. The project introduced a core set of activities that responded to labour market conditions – both on the supply and demand sides. Balancing employer and applicant needs ensured that new pathways could be developed which provided effective and efficient entry points into apprenticeship.

This was achieved because of collaboration. The project was established as a partnership between the Construction Foundation of BC (CFBC) and the Western Joint Electrical Training Society (WJETS). It included the active support and participation of several of BC's Building Trade Unions, employers, social and employment services, and community support organizations. Funding was provided by Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills' Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) program through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

The pilot successfully engaged over 2229 people in BC and resulted in a minimum of 443 confirmed employment outcomes. The project team provided one-on-one assessment and individual mapping for over 854 people and training for 731. Continuation rates from training to apprenticeship ranged from 50% to 97% and retention rates over time were also high – both in the trade and in the industry generally. A major contributing factor for retention has been the leadership of BC's building and metal trade unions which provided dispatch to employment following training. Success has also followed the project's commitment to training only when employment can be guaranteed.

Overall, the project has demonstrated that when industry and labour organizations have the right supports in place, accessible entry points into apprenticeship can be established. The partnership tested in the Back to Work pilot project can get people working and keep them there.

Back to Work piloted activities in all regions of the province with most training and employment support occurring on Vancouver Island/Coast, Mainland-Southwest, Thompson-Okanagan, and the Cariboo regions.

The project undertook four key activities:

1. Tracking and monitoring labour market demand to identify job opportunities and training requirements.
2. Developing and testing assessment tools and processes that effectively matched individuals to opportunities, with training provided only as needed.
3. Developing and testing adaptive training solutions that led to confirmed employment commitments. These prioritized the shortest pathways between application and job start.[1]
4. Providing dispatch to employment through BC's building and metal trade unions or providing employment matching where other options were more appropriate.

In addition to the four activities, a significant effort was required for trades promotion and general project recruitment. Attracting new entrants became a more significant determining factor in the design and delivery of all project activities when application numbers to specific trades or jobs were low. As such, training solutions tested include trades discovery opportunities. Sometimes these opportunities were all that was required to get started in the trade. For example, 6 hours of trying out the sheet metal trade led to an apprenticeship start.

[1] All group training activities were implemented by a joint training organization (union and employer partnership) or by a partnering union.

The project responded to applicant needs as well as demand side factors such as employment opportunities, job requirements of new workers, solutions to return unemployed tradespeople to industry, and options for on-the-job training. As such, multiple entry and exit points were established with a priority placed on minimizing the timeline between application and employment. The timeline was as short as 3 days and as long as 4 months, with most participants engaged for less than 5 weeks from assessment through training and into a job start.

Section 1 Project Description and the Observed Successes

This section summarizes the project partnerships, principles, and activities. It also details the milestones achieved and the observable impacts.

Throughout 2020 and the COVID-19 Pandemic the construction and other trades dependent industries continued to operate with nearly full employment on jobsites across the province. Back to Work started in 2021 and provided an opportunity to leverage these conditions to support workers displaced from industries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic into sustainable, well paid, careers. In response to the pandemic restrictions, the project prioritized small group and short training solutions. These proved effective in developing the skills people needed to get their start in the construction trades

By several assessment measures, implementation has exceeded the outcomes anticipated at the onset of the project. Perhaps the most significant results of the project have been the following:

1. demonstrating new and accessible entry points to the trades that result in high retention,
2. exploring how intermediaries effectively support industry and job seekers to connect at the right time, and
3. increasing visibility of the role learning challenges and other individualized barriers play in preventing apprenticeship completion.

Project Partnerships & The Role of the Intermediary

The project required multiple partners to succeed. The Construction Foundation of BC (CFBC) and Western Joint Electrical Training Society (WJETS) were the primary organizations responsible for implementation.

Several of BC's building and metal trade unions and related employer groups participated including International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) 230, 1003 and 993; Ironworkers Local 97; BC Regional Council of Carpenters; Sheet Metal Workers International Association Local 276; Sheet Metal Workers, Roofers and Production Workers Local 280; and UA Local 324. Additionally, over 78 service providers were engaged in the project as a network of support for applicants. This included social services, employment and training organizations, post-secondary institutions, and First Nations organizations.

Back to Work has been a multi-sector partnership to address both supply and demand side considerations. Supply side considerations responded to the interests, needs, and barriers applicants experienced. Organizations were engaged to promote project activities to a broad audience and collaborate to support applicant success. Where possible, supply side partnerships integrated the project activities into established community services or employment programming. This provided a means of testing collaboration options for long term sustainability.

Demand side partnerships provided up to date knowledge of labour market conditions. This knowledge identified opportunities and limitations that informed training design and where applicants were encouraged to go to access employment opportunities. Demand side mapping was achieved by working with Unions, employers, and major project organizers including BC Infrastructure Benefits. Collaboration for industries benefit focussed on ensuring that any direction provided at the assessment stage was based on the realities of the job available and that any training organized would result in employment.

The role of intermediaries was fundamental to the project's success. Intermediaries in the context of this project were those organizations that worked between applicants and employers to develop solutions to complex problems. Intermediaries are unique in that they have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of both the employer and job seeker, and have the resources to develop adaptive services, training solutions, or to guide either side towards existing resources. The term as it is used here is heavily influenced by the *Pathways to Prosperity*[2] work lead by Robert Schwartz between 2011-2020. This model looks at a collective impact framework which is coordinated by an intermediary or "backbone" organization which is also responsible for creating the necessary connections between organizations and groups to support the structures necessary for progress and social change efforts. The *Pathways* research suggests that, "when collective impact efforts fail, the absence of an effective backbone entity is often the key reason." The role of intermediaries started early in mapping on the pathways that were available and the gaps, access points, and solutions that could be provided. As Symonds, Schwarts & Ferguson described, "a key initial step is to create a 'map' that documents both the pathways challenge, and the work that is already being done by existing organizations. The designated intermediary can then use the map to push for more collaboration and coordination among existing programs, carefully monitor outcomes, and marshal additional resources."[3]

The project depended on third-party intermediaries to provide two distinct roles. One role has been **providing effective assessments of applicants**. This has alternatively been referred to as "supply side" services. The assessment aimed to be as non-biased as possible and prioritizes the interests of the individual, while considering the limitations and realities of the jobs available. This ensures they find the right trade or jobsite, access additional services as needed, and have someone championing them towards success. This role is best performed by individuals or groups with a comprehensive understanding of industry needs and the social emotional, or psycho-social, needs of applicants.

[2] Ferguson, Ronald F. and Sara Lamback. 2014. Creating Pathways to Prosperity: A Blueprint for Action. Cambridge, MA: Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.
[3] Symonds, William C., Robert Schwartz, and Ronald F. Ferguson. 2011. Pathways to prosperity: Meeting the challenge of preparing young Americans for the 21st century. Cambridge, MA: Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

Critically this is also a networking role to support system navigation between services, regulation structures, and whole-person support resources such as mental health and addiction interventions where available. For Back to Work, CFBC performed this role. The other role is **developing training solutions based on employment need**. These must be accessible and relevant to the jobs available. WJETS facilitated this by working with different joint training providers and Unions. The success of the project showed how this role should be undertaken by groups who can also guarantee employment. BC's Building Trades or their Joint training boards are best positioned to do this because they have the capacity to train, facilitate employment, and provide ongoing support to apprentice progression in one place.

Critically, the interactions between WJETS and CFBC as intermediaries meant that multiple groups were able to work in mutually reinforcing ways. Effective collaboration included labour organizations, employers, social services and training organizations, as well as BC's high schools. The impact was observed in both the efficacy of the training solutions created, as well as the duration between application and employment – often as apprentices. Intermediaries in Back to Work helped to mobilize an active response to both emergent opportunities and the roadblocks that prevented good ideas from being implemented effectively. Ultimately, intermediaries facilitated new access points to employment that were not previously available for a group of people previously.

Intermediaries also allowed for issues that were beyond the capacity of most employers to be addressed in multiple ways. On concerns like mental health and intercultural communication, this led to growth and learning on the part of employers who were able to identify practical and consistent actions that they could undertake post program intervention. Sometimes this was referred to as a "perception shift." At the same time, the networking function of CFBC, increased employer awareness of not only the type of resources available around them, but also how and when to access them effectively. Other examples were the ability to make sense of processes and the terminology used to describe different aspects of a specific system. Something as simple as service acronyms or context specific terminology such as "dispatch" create confusion and misunderstanding between groups. This included applicants who are often unaware of how trades careers work, what apprenticeships are, and the expectations of an employer. Intermediaries can push for progressive change without retreating to a siloed service model that often comes when specific actions such as technical training, employment services, or health services are treated as disparate nodes in a system – it's collective problem solving with organizations fluent in everybody's language.

A final consideration to the role of intermediaries can be broadly summarized as system navigation. System navigation is the process of supporting an individual or group to effectively resolve a specific challenge through supported access to services, regulators, funding options, or other resources. System navigation was provided by intermediaries for applicants, apprentices, employers, and training providers. To a smaller extent, CFBC and WJETS also supported service providers to improve their understanding of and access to employers for the purpose of supporting clients to access appropriate and sustainable employment. System navigation requires a broad awareness of the opportunities and services available such as grants, training options, employment services, and health and social services. Not only is knowledge of them critical, navigation requires that there is an ability to guide individuals or organizations through the access process which may include application development, gathering required documentation, and managing ongoing communication and follow up. For individuals in Back to Work this included accessing mental health and addiction services as well as navigating apprenticeship systems. It also included supporting individuals to apply for grant and tuition funding. For employers it included supporting their access to employment services and other sources of new applicants. Within the context of training solutions, both WJETS and CFBC were responsible for actively resolving challenges from initial planning through recruitment, assessment, training, employment (most often through dispatch by a union to an apprenticeship option), and follow up support. The intermediary role was also critical in providing redirection to other employment options for individuals who were not a good fit for that trade. This has been observed to improve retention as individuals were able to access employment options aligned with their interests, skills, and abilities.

Having a diversity of partners in place meant the project team could problem solve when there was competition between the priorities of supply and demand sides. Navigating contradictions and developing new solutions was possible because the needs of both

applicants and employers were represented. Critically, the focus on both flexibility and the balance between employer need and applicant need established the foundation for successful apprenticeship starts – there is no apprenticeship without employment.

Prioritized Pathways & Activities

Back to Work used the partnerships to create multiple training and employment pathways. Four types of activities were utilized in different combinations to develop different permutations. These included Engagement, Assessment, Training, and Employment, as described in further detail below:

Engagement included outreach, promotion, and recruitment activities.

Assessment included interview format and practical assessment options.

Training activities tested multiple formats of practical and technical skill development in a shop and on the job.

Employment included dispatch or job matching, as well as referrals to employers willing to hire.

Pathways were most often developed based on a specific job opportunity or on applicant's interest and needs. Job opportunities determined all training pathways. For example, when there were electrical apprenticeship options identified, training was organized, and recruitment and assessment undertaken. Equally, applicant motivation shaped individualized pathways. For example, an unemployed retail worker could be supported to try for a carpentry apprenticeship without training if they were willing to start as a labourer and had some familiarity with tools.

Examples of the various pathways possible are presented in Graphic 1 on the following page.

Individuals were engaged for varying durations depending on need. Applicants who were determined to be work ready could move from assessment to work in under a week. Where training was required, applicants were engaged most often for 5 weeks or less between assessment, training, and employment. The priority has been to establish the most effective and efficient pathways direct to employment or through training that facilitates sustainable career starts.

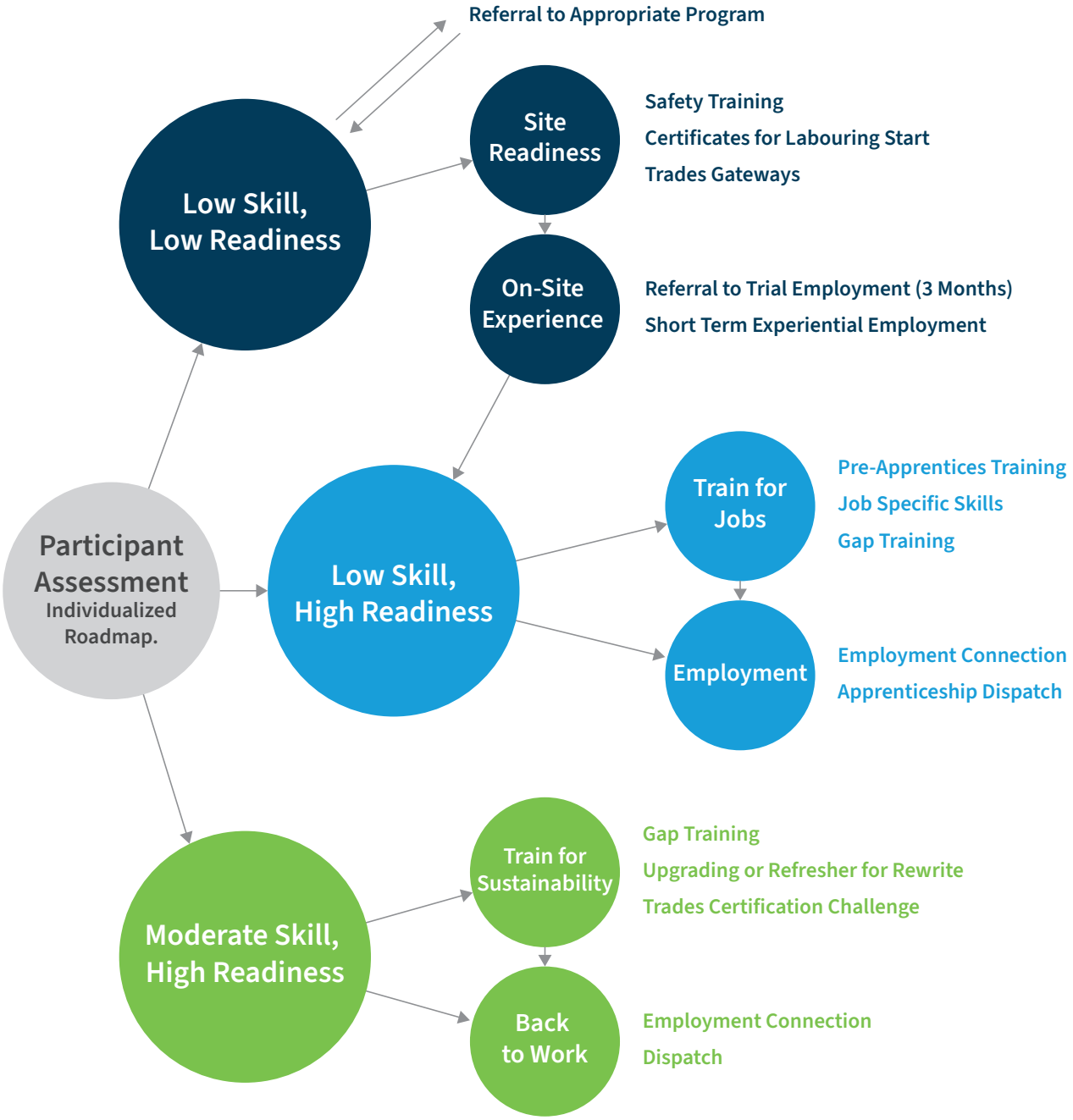
The following activities were identified as essential to the project's success:

- Developing tools and methods of assessing applicants based on demand considerations,
- Coordinating a team of organizations to assess and support individual applicants,
- Developing new ways of engaging individuals who had not previously considered trades careers,
- Establishing collaboration mechanisms to match training to employment,
- Adapting or developing training solutions in response to labour market needs,
- Facilitating employment through networking with employers and unions,
- Prioritizing inter-organizational and service collaboration to meet the needs of applicants on an ongoing basis.

For a further description of activities, see Section 2.

Graphic 1: Program Flow for Participant Experience (Anticipated)

Individuals accessed activities differently depending on their previous experience, interests, and the opportunities available for employment. Rubric tools used to help shape pathway development are presented in the appendices.



Milestone Achievement: Output Table & Descriptions

Back to Work developed output targets based on the four broadly anticipated project activities. This sub-section provides clarification on their definition and the success achieved. As the table below demonstrates, all targets were exceeded overall for activity types and regional participation.[4]

Milestone targets are presented as the number of outputs achieved at each step. The project targets are identified in brackets. Different processes and new activities were established for assessment, training, and job placement as the project proceeded. Some processes were not easily monitored. As such, this table demonstrates verifiable outputs only.

A total of 2229 people are known to have been engaged in the project, and 930 people are confirmed to have participated in assessment, training, and/or employment activities. Not all pathways progress linearly from engagement to assessment, training and then employment; only 72% of applicants followed a linear path. As the table below shows, many skipped training activities and went direct to employment. Some were referred to training directly by an implementation partner without going through the project-specific assessment.

As well, employment outputs include only those attached to the action of a project partner (job matching or dispatch). Independent efforts to secure employment – even where that was with an employer identified by a project representative – are not reported. While a strength of the project has been its flexibility and collaboration, these factors made capturing the full scale of the impact challenging – up to an additional 200+ people are anticipated to be employed because of the project.

[4] Targets for all categories were increased between the project plan and Interim 2 (December 2021).

Table 1: Total Progress on Milestones by Activity and Economic Region

Region	Individuals Engaged	Individuals Assessed	Individuals Trained	Individuals Employed
Vancouver Island/ Coast	1101 (800 target)	647 (300)	391 (50)	249 (55)
Mainland/ Southwest	502 (160)	44 (35)	123 (50)	66 (40)
Thompson-Okanagan	286 (210)	52 (50)	50 (25)	50 (30)
Kootenay	65 (55)	27 (15)	61 (5)	21 (5)
Cariboo	211 (105)	33 (25)	49 (15)	29 (15)
North Coast & Nechako	53 (105)	47 (25)	47 (15)	24 (15)
Northeast[5]	11	4	10	4
Total	**2229 (1500)**	**854 (550)**	**731 (180)**	**443[6] (200)**

[5] No target was set for activities in the Northeast. Outputs are most often residents of this region who participated elsewhere or were supported entirely virtually.
[6] Employment counts exclude new workers who are employed because the project provided training to supervisors who would otherwise not be able to oversee apprentices. Supervisor training will have enabled a minimum of 280 apprentices to be employed: primarily in the Cariboo and Kootenay regions.

Description of Milestones

Individuals Engaged

Engagement activities included in person and virtual or digital recruitment activities. A minimum of 2229 people were engaged through the project. Individuals are counted as engaged if they attended in person or virtual info sessions, workshops, job fairs or were a respondent to a digital campaign (online job board, social media marketing campaign, or website forms). Regional counts are based on the applicant's primary location of residence.

Recruitment for training and employment opportunities was challenging and different stages of the project for different reasons. During the pandemic when unemployment was highest, countermeasures such as the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was observed to affect applicants' motivation to work. Once pandemic restrictions began to ease, demand for low skill and semiskilled workers dramatically outpaced available labour supply. Conditions such as the cost of living in urban centers and the rising wages in other sectors impacted the project team's ability to identify enough applicants relative to openings available. Some trades proved more difficult to promote than others.

Recruitment was most effective where employment opportunities were promoted; whereas "try a trade" promotion yielded low responses. Shoulder tapping and networking with community partners was critical to identifying individuals for trades that were least popular – including roofing. In the Kootenays, Cariboo, and North Coast and Nechako, engagement numbers are underreported as the team relied on various external partners to lead outreach activities. Tracking and reporting challenges were observed most often when organizations were not familiar with training and employment reporting practices. Consistently these were groups that do not receive provincial or federal funding to run programs and include trade specific or industry organizations. As the project evolved, new processes were introduced with orientation provided included things such as defining terminology and introducing new data gathering tools. As well, in some scenarios where it was unclear if FOIPA compliance would be guaranteed, no data was requested or gathered. The challenge of data gathering was not fully anticipated at the outset of the project. It has highlighted the unique role of a third party intermediary in introducing new processes that support common tracking and evaluating collective impacts.

As well, engagement counts exclude all social media post views or clickthrough's (an additional 16,850 project interactions), and all digitally received applications that were not eligible because they were spam or from out of province or country (approximately 3,800 individual points of contact). Not all those who engaged responded to follow up. A small portion of those counted as "engaged" skipped assessment and went straight to training or employment activities.

Individuals Assessed

A minimum of 854 individuals completed an assessment. Individuals were counted as assessed when they completed an interview-style assessment as part of a Back to Work process. Assessment activities were based on a rubric tool developed at the outset of the project.[7] Structured like an interview, the assessment process intentionally built trust with applicants to effectively identify interests, motivation, and readiness for the opportunities available. Assessment was a key tool to identify pathways for job seekers and has been identified as one of the main factors that contributed to long term retention. It was also the primary way of preparing individuals for the realities of the jobsite – many participants interviewed indicated that this process prepared them to know what could happen, how difficult things might be, and was a contributing factor in their commitment to stay in the job they started.

The assessment process was undertaken by CFBC. Assessment was completed by a team of individuals who had a diverse backgrounds. The common thread between all assessors has been experience and training in social services including social work, coaching or counselling, and education. Most individuals have trades experience, but all assessors worked as a team to share expertise and problem solve emergent challenges as presented by individuals. Those with trades experience were best suited to support

[7] Rubrics used are shared in the appendix

system navigation for training and apprenticeship registrations, but those with social work experience were positioned to navigate tough conversations around readiness and good fit for the employment available. All assessors worked closely with partner training providers and employers to ensure that the assessment process was based in realistic expectations and opportunities. Additional interviews for training activities that were completed by a partner organization are not counted Some individuals assessed were contacted only once and were immediately referred to employers, employment programs, or training services as they were seeking something specific that the project could connect them to. Most commonly these were individuals with either a specific interest or previous experience. In many cases, recommendations to change something about their resume or an introduction to an employer was all that was required for employment to occur. This quick and simple approach was effective in cases where individuals had never previously needed to create a resume for employment or where they had taken a job that was most available. In addition to not having the skill of resume writing, individuals expressed that they were not sure how to seek out employers that matched their interests or needs. As it is very common for individuals to get started in trades as labourers, this is a common situation. Low skilled labourers or trade helpers often are judged more by their ability to be immediately useful than by the resume they present. When individuals are looking to advance in their career, there are fewer options to "walk on" a site.

A practical assessment process was also developed as part of the project. This provide a means for both the applicant and the training provider to determine if the trade was a good fit. This process proved to be an efficient way of having individuals self-select out of a trade prior to the job start. Practical assessments were short, trade specific, activities that allowed for individuals to try the basic tool skills required for employment. They were effective tools for assessing two things. The first was an individual's "tool literacy" which included their dexterity, familiarity, and comfort with the tools of the trade. The second was the ability for someone to adapt and learn the project. Each practical assessment included a demonstration of the activity in steps by the instructor. Applicants were then able to demonstrate their skills, but also their attitude around learning. Applicant motivation and willingness to ask questions were prioritized over practical skills. Practical assessments went both ways as applicants were also able to try the trade, meet the instructor, and learn more about the career firsthand. This format created an easy exit point as the assessment required very little commitment or time investment. Individuals who were not a good fit were able to identify this early on based on a hands-on experience. Practical Assessments were tools to support informed decision making – especially for individuals with minimum trades exposure. Practical assessments are detailed in Section 3 of this report.

A non-biased assessment approach was tested as an integrated part of the practical assessment. This had mixed results. The practical assessments did favor individuals with previous experience. Applicants who were less likely to have grown up with exposure to working with their hands at home, in shop classes, or as a job were at a disadvantage both practically, as well as in terms of the norms and expectations related to communication that those who had exposure would have. Even where some form of training could be provided to instructors, the short nature of practical assessments meant there was less time for an individual to learn. While there are many examples of how the process created more access for equity seeking apprentices, it can not be concluded that a completely non-biased assessment process was possible. Instead, adjustments have been made to increase the diversity of the instructors to include lower term apprentices and individuals that are reflective of the applicant group – including Indigenous and female tradespeople. Early testing of this demonstrated that applicants confidence and sense of safety in the space increases which is likely to improve their performance.

Individuals Trained

An individual was counted as trained when they participated in a one of the four stages of training. While some individuals completed multiple stages of training, there were 690 unique individuals who completed training activities that ranged in duration from a few hours to two or more weeks.

Training outputs include all activities which were undertaken through this pilot that increased an individual's ability to start a new job, get back to work, or move from precarious to stable employment. Some training was also tested to increase the number of supervisors available to onboard new apprentices.

Four stages of training were identified in the initial Project Workplan. Stage 1 included all short-term certificate or discovery type activities. Stage 2 was apprenticeship preparation training and include any activity that led directly to an apprenticeship. Stage 3 prioritized gap training to increase retention. Stage 4 prioritized certification completion and increasing the option to supervise and train more apprentices.

Training was undertaken by partner unions or joint training providers (organizations acting as a union-employer collaboration mechanism). Certification, such as SiteReadyBC was purchased from third party organizations where it was not available through a union training partner.

Individuals Employed

Employment outcomes tracked here only include those outcomes directly facilitated by the project team through dispatch by a union or through job placement by CFBC (including union and non-union jobs).

A minimum of 443 people were employed because of the project. The majority of these are working as apprentices. Retention rates over 6 months are high with approximately 84% of people who started a job because of training or employment activities remaining in the trade they started. This increases to 93% for electrical and is around 40% for roofing.

Employment outcomes that are not counted are those achieved independently by a participant. The project impacted applicant capacity by providing resume help, employer introductions, and skills training (approximately 95 people). Unemployed or precariously employed individuals participating in Stage 3 training (retention and return to work) are not included in the employment counts (a total of 105 people). As well, Employment counts exclude new workers who are employed because the project provided training to supervisors who would otherwise not be able to oversee apprentices. Supervisor training will have enabled a minimum of 280 apprentices to be employed: primarily in the Cariboo and Kootenay regions.

Training Milestones

Four stages of training were developed to reflect diverse needs individuals experience throughout their career. This starts from the first exposure to trades careers (Stage 1) through to first job or direct entry apprenticeship (Stage 2) and then beyond (Stage 3 & 4). The project prioritized resources to Stage 1 and Stage 2 training, with Stage 3 and Stage 4 training primarily achieved through industry contributions and leveraging available services or programs.

Over time, the project fully developed a concept of *Apprenticeship Preparation* training that presents an alternative pathway into the trades based on a short-term training experience leading directly to employment. This alternative pathway is industry developed and delivered. It reacts to labour market demand and has been an incredibly effective tool at addressing demand for new trades people.

The table below contains all the individuals participating in each stage with a total count which includes only unique participants. A single individual may appear in different training types. For example, an individual who takes three Gateways and does onsite training will show up only once in the first column and once in the second column.

Note that targets were not set for all training types in all regions as it was anticipated that not all training types would be undertaken for all regions. A breakdown of the stages is summarized here with further analysis and key lessons presented in Section 2.

Table 2: Training Outputs by Stage and Region

	STAGE 1: Gateways & Common Core (incl. Safety)	STAGE 2: Apprenticeship Preparation & Onsite Training	STAGE 3: Gap skills for semiskilled individuals	STAGE 4: Refresher & Upgrade training	Total Unique Individuals in Region
Vancouver Island/ Coast	190	98	56	68	391 (50)
Mainland/ Southwest	23	83	4	13	123 (50)
Thompson-Okanagan	19	4	17	10	50 (25)
Kootenay	43	6	12	-	61 (5)
Cariboo	26	7	16	-	49 (15)
North Coast & Nechako	36	12	-	4	47 (15)
Northeast	8	4	-	-	10
Total	**345 (110)**	**214 (100)**	**105 (40)**	**92 (30)**	**731 (160)**

Training Stages: Definition & Description

Following the project purpose, four separate stages of training were tested. These are defined by both the employer needs and the needs of apprentices and were meant as a way of matching skills training to the labour market conditions present in a specific area. Significantly, later stage training solutions which focused on retention and credential recognition contributed to a greater number of opportunities for new entrants. This is because the project was able to respond to the emergent shortage of skilled supervisors that was associated with pandemic-related phenomenon – including the sudden retirement of a significant portion of the workforce. In some cases, retirements were estimated to be 15% of tradespeople in less than a 6-month period.

The most notable successes of the project may be the creation of new and accessible entry points into apprenticeship for a diversity of people. This includes creating Gateways (Stage 1 training), which provided a low-commitment and low-cost opportunity to try a trade out, as well as the Apprenticeship Preparation (Stage 2) option, which provided a rapid entry into apprenticeship and further on the job training.

Based on the number of individuals trained and the success noted in terms of retention in the trade and in industry, Back to Work has highlighted the need to have multiple solutions available to support workforce development – a whole lifecycle approach to training from new entry to upskilling journeypersons as supervisor will increase the resilience of BC's trades workforce.

Stage 1: Gateways & Common Core (incl. Safety)

A total of 345 people participated in Stage 1 activities. This is 300% more than anticipated (target 110). Stage 1 activities prioritize work readiness and informed decision making. These are low commitment and cost-effective activities that require minimal coordination. Outcomes include direct employment or further training. Individuals participating ranged from those with no experience to those with previous labouring or helper experience.

The Gateway was created as a workshop format to promote greater interest in the trades through low commitment, hands on, experiential learning opportunities. They were less than 1 day per trade and led by an active tradesperson. Specifically, the Gateways were a tool used to increase the participation of a diversity of people who would otherwise not have experienced trades through shop programs, family activities, or employment experiences. Gateways were also used as practical assessment tool for Stage 2 training, and they were tested as a screening tool.

A total of 215 people (62%) of people in Stage 1 participated in a Gateway and the rest completed only safety training before proceeding to employment. Continuation rates from Stage 1 to Stage 2 were around 50%, with less than 10% continuing directly to employment. Based on their experience, approximately 110 people (32%) chose to pursue other sectors or another training program option following Gateways.

Stage 1 training outputs are three times as high as initial targets because delivery was more cost-effective and simpler than anticipated.

Stage 2: Apprenticeship Preparation and Onsite Training

Stage 2 is defined as short term, direct entry training, where apprenticeship employment is the target. The length, target retention rate, and complexity of Stage 2 training activities are dependent on several factors. The requirements of the jobs available and the motivations of participants most significantly shaped the training options undertaken.

The project team identified the term *Apprenticeship Preparation or simply Apprenticeship Prep* to distinguish the model tested here from "Pre-Apprentice" programs which describe Foundation or Entry Level Trades Training (ELTT) options. Apprenticeship Preparation is defined as short and employment-specific (demand-driven) training that provides the skills needed to get started as a successful first-year apprentice. This model depends on "work first" or direct-entry apprenticeship pathways and assumes applicants will complete Level 1 training instead of a Foundation program. The advantage for new apprentices is that Apprenticeship Prep is less time unemployed for school and a guarantee of employment. Apprenticeship Prep options provided an efficient and effective way creating apprenticeship starts for 214 people – 175 of whom are remained in the trade beyond 6 months (82% retention overall).

Critically, the model has been most successful because applicants are guaranteed employment. This is possible in large part because of the training's connection to Union dispatch. Apprenticeship Preparation represents an alternative pathway into the trades that is shorter than existing pre-apprenticeship training options and, based on project observations, may have higher rates of success as measured by the transition rate from training to employment and the retention rates of apprentices over the first year. By comparison, SkilledTradesBC reports continuation from foundation program to apprenticeship consistently around 50%. This alternative option works because 80% of apprenticeship training happens on the job; training then focuses on the skills needed to get that job.

Apprenticeship Preparation took multiple formats and ranged from one day to three weeks depending on the trade. Not all trades prioritized the same level of retention from training to employment – this commitment was based on the number of applicants and needs of employers. For electrical, training was two weeks, with the goal of 100% retention from training into apprenticeship (97% has been achieved). By contrast, roofing preparation was highly specific and completed within three days – retention was prioritized to anyone committed to working.

Onsite training was used where an employer could provide structured training on the job or when a cohort was not feasible to organize. A total of 18 people participated in this format of training with 12 remaining in the job they started. What worked effectively in these scenarios was that both the employer and new hire had a framework of training to reference. This helped with communication between parties while providing a practical tool for assessing growth – both the self assessment of the apprentice and by the employer.

Hybrid models were also tested. Hybrid models blended Stage 1 activities with apprenticeship preparation training and/or on the job training commitments. A hybrid version of Stage 1/Stage 2 training was used with Ironworking to facilitate informed decision in the first week and more technical preparation training in the second week. This facilitated an opportunity for people to experience the physicality of the trade before deciding to commit to employment. For sheet metal, a Gateway format was used as Stage 2 training because most training would be provided on the job. In the lower mainland, this model will continue to be used by the sheet metal union as a recruitment tool for new women apprentices; it has already increased the number of tradeswomen in the Sheet Metal union by 10%.

Apprenticeship Prep models have proven to be an effective tool because of their short duration, relatively low cost, and high efficiency in preparing people for available jobs. As the training is free for participants and is less than a month participants have less costs incurred because there is no tuition or books paid and they are spending less time in training and more time available for work. From a funder perspective, the Apprenticeship Prep model is less investment because the overhead for tools and training space is less, the overall cost is less than Foundation programs because it is fewer days, and there are fewer materials used during the course of training (often these have been contributed by industry). As well, when retention rates are higher than the cost per participant success amount is better even in situations where per-day training may be more expensive because of instructor or material costs. Attrition was mitigated because the project team was able to redirect applicants who were not a good fit because of the network of partners – for example sheet metal workers being supported into welding jobs and ironworker applicants being supported towards carpentry apprenticeships. It is worth noting that because of their low-cost, the short commitment from applicants, and high employment probability, attrition rates are less problematic than in other trades training options that may take 4+ months.

Stage 3: Gap Skills for Semiskilled Individuals

Stage 3 training included individual and group training on specialized safety equipment as well as in-demand trade skills. Training solutions were short and cost-effective tools to increase the employability of unemployed and precariously employed apprentices – especially in rural parts of BC. Much of this training prioritized solutions to get individuals onto major jobsites or expand their ability to work in a different part of the industry – for example upskilling apprentices working as industrial electricians to work on residential jobs.

Stage 3 solutions were a critical tool for ensuring a return to work for early and midterm apprentices in rural BC. Almost three times as many people participated in this training format than were anticipated. This was largely because the project was able to leverage industry contributions to cover training costs. Gap skills training solutions highlight the role that joint training providers

play in supporting a broad scope of trade and ensuring apprentices remain employable throughout their journey to completion. Note that employment outcomes of Stage 3 participants are not included in overall employment counts as it deviated from the original intention behind the Stag 3 target which was intended as individuals transitioning into a new occupation. However, Back to Work has highlighted the significant need for supportive programming for retention and progression. These solutions are critical to address skills shortages both because it keeps people in the trade and because it opens more opportunities for new apprentices.

This model of training was proposed to support communities dependent on major projects to dictate job opportunities. The goal for this format of training was retention in the trade through specialized skills that increased their employability – specifically getting people back to work following pandemic related slowdowns. Consideration was also given to individuals waiting for LNG Canada and Site C employment that were less employable on industrial jobsites because they were early term apprentices. This was a practical tool for increasing the employability of equity deserving apprentices.

Stage 4: Refresher and Upgrading Training

Stage 4 training was identified as a critical tool for increasing the number of apprentices on site by having more certified journeypersons available to supervise and train. Participants included newcomers with transferable trades skills who were supported to complete practical and trades knowledge upgrading, as well as individuals completing code upgrading or Field Safety Representative training (electrical specific). Participants in Stage 4 Training do not appear in employment counts, however it is estimated that their training enabled 182 new apprentices to be employed during the duration of Back to Work.

The relevance of this training increased significantly through the duration of the project in response to two major events. First, mandatory certification was implemented which impacted the sheet metal, electrical and plumbing partners. The second was acute skills shortages which reduced the availability of skilled tradespeople to perform the job requirements while training at the same time. High levels of shortages, especially those caused by retirement, is a trend that is anticipated to restrict options for new apprentices to join the trades or receive sufficient onsite training. Over time, this will exacerbate anticipated shortages of skilled workers.

The Impact for BC

Five impact areas were developed for the pilot based on consultation with the Governance Committee, employers, partner unions, and other project supporters. This section summarizes observations and outcomes related to these impact areas.

Impact Area	Status	How it was observed to be achieved
One: People transition from sectors with high unemployment into trades jobs.	Achieved	85% of applicants during peak COVID-19 related unemployment (2021 to mid 2022) were from non-construction sectors or had no previous experience. Emergent impact: the project transitioned approximately 94 low skilled construction labourers into apprentices. In the context of this project, the term Trades Adjacent is used to distinguish this group which represents an underexplored solution for addressing skills shortages.
Two: People achieved sustainable trades careers.	Target Exceeded	The project exceeded all targets set for assessment, training, and employment. Transition from training to employment was as high as 97% for electrical, which required 3 weeks of training, or as low as 50% for sheet metal, which required 6 hours of training and acted as a trade's discovery opportunity for most participants.[8] Retention rates of new workers over 6+ months were also high.
Three: Industry develops training solutions to meet skills shortages.	Target Exceeded	Employer demand for new sheet metal workers, ironworkers, roofers, and electricians within Union locals was met or exceeded at various points since 2021 because of the project. Employer feedback indicated that workers demonstrated higher than typical levels of motivation. They also noted that participants are safe and skilled for the jobs required of them. Those trained through the project are seen as competitive with those coming from foundation programs. Participant feedback indicated that all respondents felt either somewhat prepared or very prepared for the job they achieved – including that they felt prepared to be safe on site.
Four: Futureproof BC's workforce.	Achieved	The project provided options for a diverse group of individuals facing financial and other barriers to the trades by preparing them for known jobs in an efficient and effective way: they had the right skills to do the jobs available. Over 16% of individuals participating in training were women, 11% identified as Indigenous, and 8% were Newcomers. Over 50% of applicants were youth.
Five: Demonstrate scalability and sustainability.	Partially Achieved	The project demonstrated different processes, tools, and models of training that will be sustained and can be further integrated into existing provincial infrastructure, particularly Union training. These activities can be scaled up if partners accessed currently available project specific grants or applied to training funding from established Provincial or Federal programs.

Impact Area 1: People Transition from Sectors with High Unemployment into Trades Jobs

Overall, the project achieved this impact area as unemployed youth with no experience and unemployed individuals from sectors impacted by COVID-19 restrictions made up 85% of the applicants to the project during peak restrictions and early recovery (from project launch until March of 2022).

The definition of "high-unemployment sectors" was those that were significantly impacted by measures established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and included hospitality and tourism, retail, and entertainment and recreation. The project anticipated demand for workers to come from established major projects such as Site C and LNG Canada, as well as infrastructure projects that are often used by provincial and federal governments as a tool for economic stimulus. For the most part this has been the case and demand from newly announced hospital, multi-family housing, and school projects has increased employment demand and economic opportunity.

[8] Transition rates from training to apprenticeship registration for Foundation programs are 47% according to SkilledTradesBC Quarterly reporting.

The project team was cautious about poaching from other sectors. The project was not intended to be a tool for the construction industry to steal skilled workers away from other sectors. The project prioritized recruitment of precariously employed workers including youth, low-skill workers, and individuals employed in jobs paying below living wage definitions. The project advisory had the express goal of ensuring that individuals in need of consistent employment had the opportunity to access it. In terms of this impact area, the project was most significant for unemployed youth who were working in lower than median wage employment prior to the pandemic. By all measures available the project achieved the balance between attracting new workers and not poaching people from skilled jobs in other sectors.

Over the course of the project the profile of applicants changed. In 2021 there was a high rate of applications from individuals who were unemployed in retail or hospitality and tourism. These two sectors counted for slightly over half of all individuals assessed, while 18% of applicants could be classified as unemployed youth who had no previous experience. Throughout the first half of the project, it was observed through applicant feedback that the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) had an impact on people's motivation to pursue employment.

In 2022, or midway through the project, provincial unemployment rates dropped dramatically, and most sectors were struggling to attract workers. These labour market conditions had several unexpected impacts on the project. The most significant impact was on recruitment as every industry competed for a shrinking pool of new entrants. However, the project also saw impacts as wages rose in other sectors such as retail and food services and the competitive advantage that construct had in terms of higher-than-median starting wages disappeared.

As COVID-19 related measures eased, employment increased across all sectors, the number of applicants from retail or tourism and hospitality reduced to around 26% and the portion from the construction sector increased to 33% from mid 2022 to the projects end. Significantly, the last 18 months saw an increased interest from individuals in construction jobs who were seeking higher wages or apprenticeship employment instead of labouring jobs. This phenomenon is likely due to inflation and wage issues and introduces a significant area for further exploration.

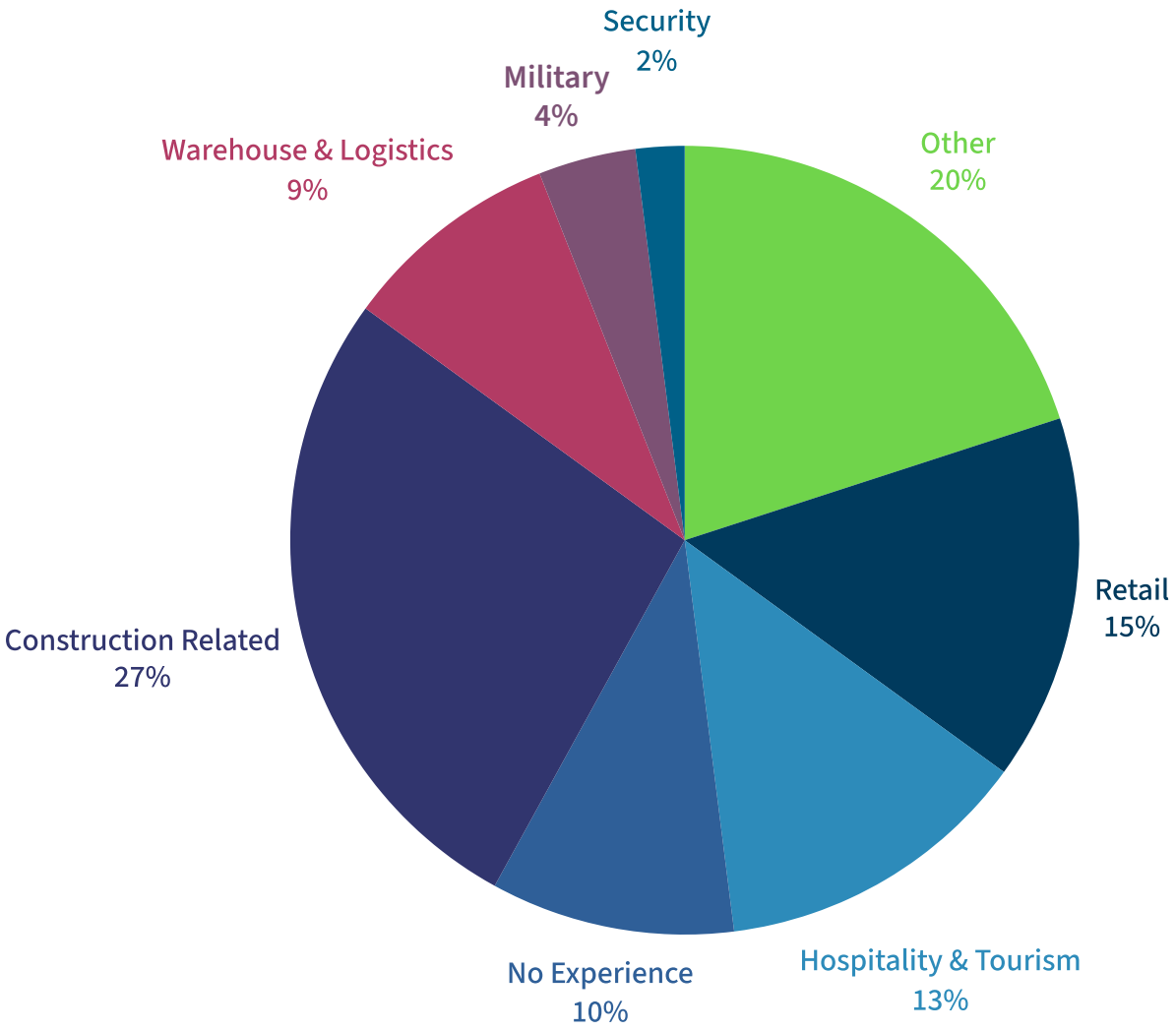
A total of 854 individuals completed an assessment with a CFBC team member. For general applicants, 62% were previously working or employed in a non-construction occupation. Retail accounted for 12% of applicants, and Hospitality and Tourism accounted for 13%.

Of those participating in training activities, 73% were from a non-construction sector. Participants previously employed in retail accounted for 15% of those in a Stage 1 or 2 training activities, hospitality and tourism for 13%, and no employment experience for 10%. A total of 29% were in other sectors. The most common other sectors were warehouse and logistics at 9% overall, military at 4%, and security guards at 2%.

Overall, 71% of applicants were unemployed, 28% were employed (almost all of whom worked in construction as labourers or helpers), and less than 1% were self-employed. Most employed individuals were identified to be experiencing one of three motivations: they were seeking a better wage (their current wage was below living expenses), they were physically limited from doing their job into the future (primarily labourers who had highly physical jobs for 15+ years) or were seeking greater job security (they worked in temporary employment, project specific employment, or seasonal).

Significantly, there were over 900 individuals who applied to the project but did not complete an assessment – data is not available for most people because they stopped responding or indicated they found work and no longer needed help. For those individuals that provided some information,92 of 101 were seeking higher pay or an immediate job start. The others were looking for new career path.

Graphic 2: Sector of Origin: Stage 1 & 2 Training Activities



Impact Area 2: People Achieved Sustainable Trades Careers

Sustainable trades careers were anticipated to prioritize apprenticeship starts and employment that would lead to apprenticeship A separate consideration was given to those with experience to achieve certification. Overall, the project achieved this impact as at least 155 people started an apprenticeship through training and an additional 130 people started in employment which would lead to apprenticeship. A total of 16 Newcomers participated in pilot training activities to support certification, with 14 achieving their Red Seal and progressing to employment.

The project has made trades employment more accessible and has demonstrated high rate of retention: 82% of people who participated in assessment and training activities have remind in the trade they started at the 6 month mark.

The duration of the project allowed for short term outcomes to be monitored which included retention over a year, apprenticeship registrations, and first year trades training enrollment. Data was gathered through Union's tracking (where applicable) and direct participant follow up.

Sufficient data is available for training activities with electrical, sheet metal, roofing, and ironworking and is included here. Insufficient data is available for participants in plumbing and carpentry activities and is not included in the report.

For individuals participating in Stage 2 Apprenticeship Preparation training, the follow data is available. This data is an accurate reflection of the project overall as it represents 84% of participants in training:

- Electrical: 97% of trainees transition from 3 weeks of training into employment as apprentices; 95% within 8 weeks of application or less (5% are in rural areas which experience longer delays due to distance from training locations and have fewer employment options).
- Roofing: 71% of participants transitioned from 3 days of training into employment as labourers or helpers; 100% within 2 weeks of application.
- Ironworking: 60% of participants transitioned from 2 weeks of training into employment; 90% started work within 5 weeks of application.
- Sheetmetal: 50% of participants transitioned from 1 day of training into employment; 100% do so within 3 weeks of application.

The timeline for training and employment indicates how these options can be reactive to emergent employment opportunities. It also shows how the project was attractive for people looking for work. The short timeline between application and job start is highly relevant for applicants who are unemployed and looking for immediate employment or must continue working to make ends meet. Because training is only undertaken when employment is guaranteed, many of the risks applicants face in taking time to participate are mitigated.

Higher rates for electrical retention from training to work with a two-step process which includes Stage 1: Gateway training upfront (1 day activity). The roofing and ironworking trades both utilize the training project as a practical assessment tool in which the trainer and participant can choose if the trade is an appropriate fit. This option creates an opportunity for informed decision making by applicants. For example, the majority of those not continuing as ironworkers withdrew after 1 week of a 2-week training program. Week 1 is, by design, a very physical week that replicates the expectations of a jobsite. It was most often participant who self selected out when they are saw they were not physically ready for the job requirements. Sheet metal training is operated as a 1-day activity where individuals will access significant shop-based training on the job for safety and practical skills. The majority of training is planned for on-the-job; this is consistent with what most other sheet metal apprentices experience. As such, continuation rates are mostly reflection of people's interest in the trade and less a reflection of the efficacy of training.

The data available provides a snapshot of transition and retention rates from apprenticeship prep training tested in Back to Work. It is significant to highlight the rates in the context of other training options. For example, BC's current apprenticeship registration rate following Foundation programs overall is 46% within 12 months. While more individuals may be working in the trades than are registered as apprentices, especially in trades like carpentry where apprenticeship registration is not required to be employed on site, the impact from the pilot is promising. Outcomes demonstrated in Back to Work suggest that a shorter, less expensive, training option is available that likely leads to a higher rate of employment attachment and apprenticeship registration.

Retention over time within differ for all trades as well. Retention stats are most available for electrical and roofing as the training activities started earlier in the project. For ironworking and sheet metal, retention data is not extensive as most activities occurred within the last 9 months of the program.

- Electrical: IBEW reported retention of 93% are employed with a signatory contractor after 12 months. 97% are retained in the trade overall. Only 3% had left to other non-construction occupations.
- Roofing: The combination of gateway training and roofing training resulted in a 15% retention rate in the trade after 1 year and a 75% retention rate in industry overall.
- Ironworking: Based on participant responses, all 87 individuals who completed training remain attached to IW97 and could be dispatched to employment when they want. Of those that started in the Lower Mainland or Vancouver Island, available information shows a minimum of 80% remained actively working in the trade.

Based on the feedback from employers and participants, the projects three biggest impacts on retention came from (1) the assessment process and making sure people were a good fit for the job they were pursuing (or redirecting them to an option that could fit better), (2) providing the skills people needed to be successful on the job right away, and (3) making sure people had access to a job immediately or shortly after training. Other factors seen as relevant were the ongoing follow up from unions to redispatch after a project or job ended (apprentices remained employed without needing to look for work), as well as the support to navigate onsite conflicts and other experiences.

The project has demonstrated that increasing the number of people in sustainable career options is possible by creating faster and more effective access to jobs that applicants were otherwise unqualified for or unaware of. Opening access to unpopular trades – particularly ironworking, sheet metal and roofing – was significant as many of the participants in these training options were not aware of the trade prior to application. For example, the first two sheet metal training options relied on participants who were introduced to the option after they applied for electrical or carpentry jobs.

The ability to create more access points to employment is a significant part of the challenge of reducing skilled trades shortages – retention is an additional one. In less popular trades, retention over time continues to be a challenge. Some factors, such as individual choice to pursue higher paying employment, are not within the influence of the project. All trades involved in the project attracted different types of applicants. More people than not who applied for electrical jobs or training had a clear idea of what the trade involved and were personally motivated towards a career in it. Some applicants to electrical were willing to accept a cut in pay in the short term to start a long-term career.

On the other end of the spectrum, applicants to roofing were exclusively motivated financially: no applicants indicated a personal passion for roofing or that is what their career of choice. Instead, it represented a higher paying and more stable job from other options available. Retention over time reflects these motivations: most people stayed in electrical and most people in roofing moved on to other things. Combined with higher prevalence of barriers such a transportation, childcare, and mental health and addiction considerations, lower retention rates in some trades should not be viewed exclusively as a training problem.

Other factors that increased retention included participants location of residence, proximity to multiple employment options, and the accessibility of employment (transportation consideration). Those outside of larger centers were more likely to be affected by the end of one building project and would be required to travel further or relocate for work. In the interior and northern BC, upgrading

training on in demand skills (ex. fibre optic and fire alarm training) and specific safety training was a critical tool for increasing individuals' ability to be employed by building a broader skillset. For those in stage 3 training, most of whom were in smaller urban centers or rural communities, sustained careers were directly tied to the diversity of skills they possessed.

Having an impact on sustainable careers by creating access points that support retention is important. However, the ability to increase people's ability o try out something new and to make an informed decision has been a significant part of the Back to Work project – even when it doesn't translate into a high retention rate because people choose to leave. Employer and participant feedback indicated that while sustained career starts are a key priority in response to skills shortages, providing a low risk and low-cost opportunity to try trades out represents a significant benefit for both employers and new workers. One employer response highlighted that for them specifically, direct entry is beneficial to provide the opportunity to trial the trade. The process of participating in a sample day, 2-week job site experience and 1-3 month on the job work experience helps identify whether or not this is the right fit and direction for the applicant to continue into a trades career.

Retention from Direct Entry

In addition to training pathways, sustained careers were possible through direct employment placement. 107 applicants transitioned from the application and assessment process directly into employment, the following data is available. This data below is drawn from a relatively small number of participants because response rates amongst past participants were low:

- Those identified to be lower skill and low readiness: Most individuals in this group did not respond to follow up. Of those that did, 52% remained employed in the sector, and 44% remained with the first employer. Apprenticeship outcome data is not available.
- Those identified to be low skill, but high readiness: A total of 72% remained employed in the sector, and 15% returned to unemployment.
- Those identified with relevant experience as a labourer or helper (higher skill and high readiness): A total of 86% remained in the sector overall, 11% were unemployed.

There are several factors that were observed to have been associated with a high rate of retention, or career sustainability, when direct entry options were provided. All individuals who were supported to a specific job or a specific employer completed an assessment which identified factors that may dictate long term success. This included several things such as what on site training options were possible, practical barriers such as transportation, and the connection between the applicant and their employer. The relationship aspect of the process was critical: the projects team ability to identify a best fit with employers and to "vouch" for individuals or trouble shoot as things came up created stable employment options for applicants.

Back to Work increased people's ability to connect with sustained careers because the project team's employer network provided access to the specific opportunity they were looking for. Most often applicants were looking for higher pay or more stable employment. Other areas of applicant need included employers with flexibility to accommodate daycare hours and employers able to accommodate individuals with disabilities including PTSD and other mental health considerations. A small number of applicants were seeking employers that prioritized green building. In some cases, individuals had experience but had never had to make a resume. In those instances, a quick discussion, standardized template, and a referral to employer was all that was required to get on the way.

Back to Work's most significant impact on helping people to achieve sustained careers has come from the development of accessible entry points into skilled employment. Accessibility has been facilitated through network development and creating training solutions that meet the needs of industry and applicants. Greater accessibility to good careers has led to high rates of retention.

Impact Area 3: Industry Develops Training Solutions to Meet Skills Shortages

A positive impact has been observed in this area because of the outputs of new apprenticeship starts and retention over time, as well as employer and participant feedback. Industry leadership came through Joint Training providers and Unions. Working with employers, the project team developed training that addressed skills shortages in each specific trade in a unique way. All training options prioritized practical skills over theory.

New solutions developed include the Gateways and Apprenticeship Preparation formats. Industry leadership in the development process, which included continuous employee consultation, ensured that all training prepared applicants for the tasks required for the jobs available. In addition to solutions developed to increase new entrants, the other solution tested to address skills shortages focused on increasing the number of supervisors available to train new apprentices.

Employer and participant feedback to training has been incredibly positive. The key priority for employers has been safety. Certifications such as Fall Protection and Ariel Work Platform were common solutions. However, what made the project unique was the approach to safety that came through the blend of the assessment process, which introduced expectations and realities of the job, and through hands on training. Hands on training solutions prioritized a "safety attitude" through communication skills, hazard awareness, and job-specific training. Training replicated job sites which provided a chance to introduce the methods of mitigating risk on an actual jobsite. Participants identified that knowing what was coming contributed to their feelings of confidence and safety on site.

Employers also highlighted how the model provides a chance to attract motivated people and to filter out people, "who are not prepared to be on a job." Employers identified the importance of having intermediaries meet with applicants first to explain jobsite expectations of showing up for work (or communicating ahead of time), being on time, and being prepared to work. Participants shared that these early conversations allowed them to develop some practical solutions to barriers they might face to being successful, while also clarifying their own expectations and addressing where their needs might not be accommodated on site. Overall, the upfront discussion provided a solution to a challenge that most employers can't resolve on their own: applicants are most likely to provide answers that they think employers want to hear and will not share those factors that might limit their success. Having an intermediary that works closely with both sides helps mitigate this issue.

Employers also place a high importance on having new hires show up to the job site with the proper safety work gear, their own tools and basic knowledge on how to use those tools. The most positive feedback from employers has been on new hires ability to do the specific tasks required of a first-year apprentice. In some cases, those trained through the project were seen as favorable to applicants from foundation programs because they had specialized knowledge that is not covered in other training options. Overall, training options were simplified to include baseline safety, basic awareness of tools and materials, as well as several practical and task specific skills.

Amongst 58 participant respondents, 25% felt Somewhat Prepared for employment following training, and 75% felt Very Prepared. Past participants suggestions for improvement included more experience with specialized tools or equipment, as well as more time in training generally. More time was often a suggestion when individuals had no experience previously, however it was not associated with individuals feeling unsafe or unprepared.

The amount of time needed to train has been a significant consideration throughout the project. The priority has been to efficiency in training, which has come with prioritizing only the skills that would be required to get started. In some trades such as sheet metal and roofing this can be achieved in a very short time, and others, such as electrical, ironworking, and plumbing, it was anticipated to be achieved in weeks. As such, duration was determined by training content, which in turn was informed by employer needs. Shorter training lengths were also based on applicant needs: in trades where there were fewer applicants, a short training duration increased people's ability to participate because it meant less time before employment started. The ultimate measure was safety – if an individual was a risk to themselves or others then training was too short. Overall, 80% of respondents felt they were very prepared to be safe on site, and 20% felt somewhat prepared.

In total, less that 5% of past participants indicated a mismatch between what they were trained in and what was expected of them on the jobsite. These respondents indicated that they were asked to do tasks that would normally be expected of a later term apprentice. Participant feedback indicated that only two thirds felt that they received significant on the job training. The most significant concerns from participants were that there was a lack of available journeypersons available to train. This consideration was echoed by employers who struggled to provide the ideal amount of onsite training because of current skills shortages and external pressures to reduce labour costs on jobs. Apprenticeship Preparation has specifically benefitted employers in this area because participants are trained in specialized areas and have been immediately useful onsite. As one employer noted, "they all come with a knowledge base to start working right away."

Additionally, the project was able to test different solutions to increase the number of supervisors on jobsites by upskilling later term apprentices to remain employed (especially in rural areas), facilitating technical or specialized training for supervisors such as Field Safety Representative training and code knowledge so that there are more qualified supervisors in place, and by supporting Newcomers with trades experience to challenge certification exams and access gap-training based on Canadian jobsite requirements. All solutions tested were developed with industry input and in response to industry demand.

Not all trades have the same requirements. The diversity of options tested demonstrates the importance of having a flexible model so that specific trades can modify the length, content, and pace of training in response to different pressures. This matching of demand and supply expectations is a unique feature of the project. This approach created unique opportunities to promote the trades, including lesser-known options, while simultaneously increasing people's readiness for the jobs available. This balance was made possible by having intermediaries including CFBC, WJETS and other union representatives responsible for collaborative problem solving.

Integrating employment expectations in training has impacted the specific trade skills taught, the approach to safety training (often specific to the jobsite trainees would be employed on), and the schedule and pace of training (which replicated the physical demands of the job). The outcome of this was that individuals were more aware of jobsite realities, and better prepared to respond to expectations of employers. Feedback from employers suggests that this approach has had a direct impact on jobsite safety as trainees are more aware than other applicants of the unique risks and mitigation strategies in their trade.

Impact Area 4: Futureproof BC's workforce

Back to Work emerged in the context of measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Testing resiliency of the workforce was an active experience. As tradespeople continued working throughout the pandemic, construction and other trades-dependent industries demonstrated their role as a key element of a shock-resistant and resilient workforce.

However, as the project evolved so did the considerations of what futureproofing BC workforce will require. During implementation the team had to address challenges brought by increased competition for new workers, skills shortages amplified by retirements, emergent technologies, and evolving building codes. Looking forward, urgent issues such as climate mitigation strategies that rely on trades-based solutions or the ongoing housing crisis will amplify the need to build a trades workforce that is adaptable and diverse in order to be responsive to future stressors.

The networks, activities, and tools developed through the pilot have played a role in establishing a more resilient workforce. Into the future, many of these activities will continue to be relevant. Back to Work can be observed to have positively impacted the resilience of BC's workforce in the following ways:

1. Increased opportunities for a diversity of applicants to access apprenticeships including women, Indigenous people, newcomers, and individuals who self identify as LGTBQ2S+.
2. Created transition options for the Trades Adjacent workforce: those individuals who are not progressing into apprenticeships from labouring or helper roles.

3. Ensured new entrants and apprentices have the right skills for in demand jobs by creating training options that are flexible and responsive to labour market conditions.
4. Demonstrated the importance of BC's unions in creating new options to get started in the trades while also supporting individuals to navigate their apprenticeships through evolving industries.
5. Explored the role intermediaries play in problem solving challenges that impact both industry and job seekers.

Increasing the participation of Equity Deserving Apprentices has been a positive outcome of processes that were intended to resolve financial, academic, and other barriers to apprenticeship experienced by many in BC. Other barriers included the limited exposure and access to the trade jobs that disproportionately affect women, Indigenous people, youth, and others who are considered underrepresented amongst tradespeople. Over the duration of the pilot 20% of all applicants were women. Women also made up 16% of participants in Apprentice Prep training – 92% of whom transitioned to apprenticeship. A total of 11% of applicants to training activities self-identified as Indigenous with 8% identifying as Newcomers.[9] The project also provided a launching point for youth. Around 50% of those who completed an assessment through the project were under 30, and youth made up 62% of those participating in Gateway and Apprenticeship Prep training.

16%
participants in Apprenticeship Prep training were female

92%
female participants transitioned to apprenticeship

50% **applicants that were youth under 30 years of age**

62% **participants in Gateways and Apprenticeship Prep training were under 30**

Back to Work has demonstrated how creating accessible entry points for a diversity of applicants, including those who experience marginalization in industry, will have a significant positive benefit without negatively affecting those who are most likely to succeed in the current system. The pilot shows how a broadly inclusive design to training and employment services will likely improve the likelihood of success for all applicants – many of whom may struggle silently in the current system.

One specific group who are struggling appeared as applicants who had significant experience in the industry but had not progressed past labouring or helping jobs. This group often faced stagnating wages, limited job security, and are more likely to face injury or shortened careers due to the physicality of their jobs. For this project, they have been identified as Trades Adjacent. Many have experienced academic or personal barriers to progression and advancement – including personal instability with housing, addictions, or other mental health considerations. Financial conditions also significantly impact their ability to change course. A total of 57% of applicants over 30 had construction or other trades experience. Fewer than 10% having been previously employed in an apprenticeship.

Individuals who are considered Trades Adjacent have benefitted from the short duration training approach of Back to Work because it allowed them to progress without being unemployed for significant periods of time. It may be possible that additional solutions that enable the skilled labourer and helper workforce to transition into apprenticeship can play a significant part in futureproofing BC's construction workforce. The project demonstrated that this process would require accessible (short and free) training options that result in immediate employment. It may also require upgrading in anticipation of, and throughout, technical training as many applicants were identified to have likely gaps in their numeracy and literacy skills.

[9] Indigenous and Newcomer Identity data was only recorded for applicants to training activities, not those who were seeking help accessing employment.

Both the Gateway model and the Apprenticeship Prep model of training mitigated some of the structural barriers to a trades careers faced by many (including norms, policies, and practices). These options created a more equitable starting point. Addressing structural barriers required establishing no-cost and low-commitment opportunities to try a trade in a shop or jobsite environment, as well as providing short training and guaranteed work experience. The short duration and direct entry approach eliminated tuition costs and the lost income associated with six or more months of training. This approach is significant as financial barriers to entry have been the most consistent barrier participants have identified to starting a trade.

Of those that participated in training, 65% indicated time in school/cost of living was a barrier to the trade, 42% identified tuition costs, and 30% identified waitlists as being a barrier they experienced from pursuing entry level trades training.[10] Only 12% felt that they faced no barriers to an apprenticeship prior to their participation. While this data did not distinguish responses by gender or other identity-based categories, qualitative assessment data indicates that more women than men indicated that they faced barriers such as exposure to the trade (awareness of options), and opportunity to connect with an employer willing to hire them without experience or training.

BC's Building Trade Unions have a critical role in futureproofing the workforce. There have been several ways that this has occurred through Back to Work. Potentially the most significant role has been the ability to facilitate training that results in guaranteed employment. Unions can not only create adaptive entry points that prepare participants for the requirements of the job, but they can also facilitate employment on sites that provide on the job training. They also provided continuous follow up and intervention when issues came up, including discrimination and harassment of apprentices. Union partners have also demonstrated how they can affect ongoing employability of individuals by organizing specialized training and upskilling for later term apprentices. Upskilling and reskilling is likely to be a more critical consideration as new code requirements and emergent technologies related to reducing carbon consumption and mitigating climate change proliferate. In the project, upskilling included training in areas where unemployment was highest, such as rural communities. As well, because members include both the apprentice and those who are supervisors, Unions have been able to influence opportunities for more new entrants on site by increasing the number of, and capacity of, onsite trainers.

While the project helped develop the resiliency of the future workforce, there is still work to be done. Further efforts need to be undertaken to address systemic factors that impact individuals over the duration of their career. While the collaboration undertaken has demonstrated that industry has some tools to create more accessible entry points, there are factors beyond the scope of Back to Work that perpetuate barriers to apprenticeship completion. Many of these are well documented and will require system wide approaches to change: daycare access, transportation challenges, housing and food insecurity, cultural safety, and academic gaps. Some factors are more industry specific.

The Back to Work team has observed two intertwined issues are of critical concern for the future of BC's trades workforce. One issue has been how the mental health and wellbeing of apprentices is affecting their potential for success. In many situations, the project team has been unable to facilitate short-term interventions or provide ongoing options to address the negative impacts of addictions, depression, or other mental health crises. Second, the pilot team has also observed how an apprentice's experience of discrimination, harassment, and/or exclusion affects their ability, and willingness, to stay in the trades. It is likely that the solutions to both concerns are connected: providing greater access to mental health services and developing onsite solutions that address well being. Both concerns will continue to limit workforce resiliency.

Ultimately, Back to Work has demonstrated that solutions that resolve skills shortages, build diversity in industry, and futureproof the workforce are interrelated. Relationships and collaborative problem solving have been the critical foundation to the projects positive impact in these areas. Collaboration is also what will determine how successful future solutions are, including those that

[10] This question was only posed to Ironworkers and Electrical trainees.

address mental health and addictions, certification completion, and ongoing retention of all tradespeople, but especially Equity Deserving Apprentices.

Impact Area 5: Demonstrate Scalability and Sustainability

As a Sector Labour Market Partnership, since the launch of Back to Work the project team have integrated consideration for sustaining the activities and networks beyond the summer of 2023. Developing replicable solutions has been the key priority for creating sustainability. The focus has been on establishing activities that can be continued by all partners in the project as part of regular organizational activities, as well as integrated into the existing pre-employment training and employment services in the province.

There have also been assessment tools and processes that can be replicated by multiple partners in the provincial training system. This includes consideration detailed in Section 2 of this report for expanding the Apprenticeship Preparation model of training to additional trades as well as replication by other training provider and employer partnerships. Tools established that can be replicated at scale include the rubrics and the use of practical assessments as a means of having both applicants and training providers determine appropriate fit.

The following activities will continue to be undertaken:

- Network to Support Innovation – The relationship between project partners will continue to be called upon to support workforce development activities. This includes community and social services, Unions and Joint Training Providers, employers, industry organizations, high school educators, First Nations organizations, and employment services.
- Recruitment on Behalf of Industry – Back to Work has required promotional activities that recruit people to industry generally and to the training activities specifically. Coordinated promotion on behalf of employers will continue by project partners.
- Non-biased and trust-based assessments – the tools and processes developed through Back to Work have been integrated into CFBC's services and programs.
- Gateways – The short form trades discovery workshops are being replicated by all project partners who have previously undertaken them. These are also being replicated by additional BC Building Trade unions, some community services, and some school districts. The projects used in Gateways have also been posted online to the Skills Ready Projects Website.
- Apprenticeship Preparation Training – The model of training for known employment will continue by partner unions as part of the activities for roofing, sheet metal, ironworking and electrical on a limited basis. Further replication by other BC Building Trades is anticipated.
- Reskilling, Upskilling, and Supervisor Training – Some of the processes and models tested in Back to Work for Stage 3 and 4 training will continue as part of Union or joint training provider activities.

The following activities could continue or be replicated and scaled contingent on private and/or public funding:

- Assessment and Job Placement Activities – Unique aspects of the Back to Work approach, including employer networking and supporting system navigation for new applicants are all activities that can be integrated into programs funded by Provincial or Federal services. Practical assessment activities which are hands on are likely to be impactful for a broad group of people but require more resources than interview formats.
- Intermediary activities – the role of the intermediary as an advocate for change can be continued by a diversity of BC organizations and should be undertaken through a combination of funding from industry and public sources to ensure that these groups are able to balance industry expectations and job seeker needs.
- Expanded Apprenticeship Preparation Training – The model of training can be undertaken by any industry group that is able to guarantee employment. Currently in BC, the Building Trade Unions are best positioned to provide this.
- Retention, upskilling, and certification training activities – While BC's Building Trades will provide this to member apprentices, additional funding will be required to expand these options generally. These solutions may be critical to sustaining efforts to increase diversity in the trades. They will also support transitions for Newcomers or tradespeople from other industries.

- Trade Adjacent Solutions – Transitioning labourers or helpers into apprentices may be a critical part of addressing skills shortages. This will require facilitating organizations to identify, assess, train and support ongoing upskilling of individuals.

Sustainability has been achieved through strong collaboration. The centralized organizing role that CFBC and WJETS have undertaking will end with the project. However, most of the collaborations established though Back to Work will continue and additional training funding will be pursued based on need and where options are available and relevant. For example, Employer Training Grants, Skilled Training for Employment Programs or the Union Training and Investment Program. Significantly, additional options to scale, replicate, or sustain the project's activities will be based on the relevance of the model to industry engaged, their ability to guarantee employment, and the capacity of service and training providers to provide identify participants and address barriers.

The scale where Back to Work has been most impactful is where it has been used as a tool to address targeted labour market demand: when recruitment, assessment, and training activities were targeted based on known job outcomes. This has meant the project has responded to a specific regional, employer, trade, or project opportunity. Training was undertaken only when employment was guaranteed. As such, the project activities are best utilized in collaboration and in a way that is responsive to a map of how many new entrants needed to be trained where and when.

By isolating regional demand for a specific trade, and in some cases a specific sub-sector of industry, the project has demonstrated that the groups involved in implementation are as important – if not more important – than the content of the training undertaken.

Sustaining this model of apprenticeship development is challenging as it requires multiple pieces to move together. However, it is likely lower cost per outcome and more effective than other options currently funded in BC. Ensuring future scaling and replication will require intermediaries with an awareness of supply and demand conditions – scaling up these roles will require additional resources that are not part of funding typically provided for training programs by either industry or public sources. Intermediaries are unique in their ability to address barriers before and after any training and employment placement activities. They are also critical tools for facilitating change. Intermediaries are part of funded systems for housing, health services, and community development. The successes of back to Work suggest it may be worth expanding resources for the role of intermediaries in training programs as well.

Section 2 Activities Summary

Back to Work piloted several different strategies for recruitment as well as models for assessment, training, and employment placement. The goal has been to test alternative approaches that can be replicated into the future by the project partners and other organizations involved in trades promotion and apprenticeship development.

This section reviews the activities proposed in the project plan and provides an in-depth description of the implementation process over the 2021-2023 delivery of the pilot. A detailed narrative of the outcome of each activity type, and the key success factors are also presented.

The project created accessible pathways into employment and apprenticeship for a diversity of applicants. Accessibility required that the project activities be relevant to the needs of both individuals and employers. Assessment processes worked with applicants to identify realistic expectations quickly and, where feasible, provide a direct link to employers. Where necessary, training was undertaken that was short and job relevant – from 3 days for roofing to 3 weeks for electrical. Training could be short because the project team relied on employers to provide on the job training as they would for any apprentice. In practice, this meant that all training or skill development focused on (1) safety, (2) relevant practical skills, and (3) preparing people to learn on site.

Back to Work maintained a *direct-entry priority. Which meant apprentices started with a job and sponsorship before progressing into Level 1 technical training after a year of work.*[11] This was achieved through Unions – who dispatched apprentices to work – or through job placements facilitated by CFBC.

[11] Level 1 technical training is 5-10 weeks depending on the trade. A pre-apprenticeship program, also known as a Foundations program or Institutional Entry, is 4-8+ months depending on trade and delivery model, and most do not guarantee employment.

Table 3: Back to Work Phases Summary

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Timeline	5 Months	12 Months	12 Months	Ongoing
Start Date	February 2021	July 2021	September 2022	September 2023
End Date	June 2021	August 2022	August 2023	-
Key Activities	• Program set-up • Partnership confirmation • Industry opportunity inventory • Initial recruitment • Develop referral agency partnerships	• Recruitment • Trades Gateways • Assessment • Short Term Training • Referrals	• Continue & Expand Phase 2 activities • Deliver targeted project training solutions	Ongoing implementation
Key Milestones	• Project implementation starts in two economic regions. • Demand side tracking process established. • Convene all committees and validate process. • First 30 assessments complete.	• Implementation sites expand to additional economic regions. • 1/3 of targets for assessment, training and employment achieved. • Additional funding applications completed as required for project expansion.	• Implementation occurs in all regions. • Targets for assessment, training and employment achieved. • Ongoing project funding secured. • Best practices published.	• Funding established for project activities prioritized by industry. • Process is replicated by industry, labour and service providers.
Key Priorities	• Project design. • Partnership infrastructure build. • Grassroots Labour Market Information.	Immediate transitions in high-impact areas using adapted training.	Regional partnerships for project specific training & employment.	Post SLMP: Scale & Sustain.

Note on Table 3: The project was to be undertaken in 4 phases with each phase introducing additional project elements. The phases were to evolve in response to industry's priority and evolving economic conditions. The project did follow the plan as outlined here with minimal variation. Deviation from the plan includes considerations for how the project's variations elements have been broken up into multiple initiatives as well as how the models and processes are being replicated elsewhere.

Summary of Project Activity Categories from Plan through Pilot

Back to Work tested a process for collaboration between multiple partners with different roles. The process was anticipated to follow four steps from (1) engagement (recruitment) through (2) assessment into relevant (3) training and ultimately (4) employment. A key goal of the process was to establish a format that was replicable and scalable while still allowing for significant variation depending on employment need and the available applicants.

While presented linearly, the process was intended to be flexible based on applicant need and employment opportunity. Adaptation was anticipated with a priority to processes that were both quick and accessible. This was anticipated to mean that individuals could skip steps or move between categories throughout their participation. For example, around 42 individuals jumped straight from application to employment. These included individuals with and without experience – many were primarily looking for help to find a better job than they could find on their own. A small portion of these started in employment to experience the trade as a labourer before moving into some training that transitioned them to an apprentice role. In at least 8 cases this included individuals moving to a different employer. As well, very early on the project team began using the training activities as engagement tools, especially for individuals with limited experience and minimal access to work experience. This led to a direct entry pathway from engagement to employment with very minimal assessment.

Table 4: Summary of Original Activity Categories (From Project Workplan)

ENGAGE	ASSESS	TRAIN	EMPLOY
Undertake innovative ways to attract new audiences to trades. Recruit individuals with diverse backgrounds, skillsets, and experiences. Partner with regional and community organizations to attract transitioning workers.	Determine individual pathways based on interest, competencies, and opportunity. Three prominent groupings anticipated: 1. Low Skill, Low Work Readiness 2. Low Skill, Work Ready 3. Moderate to High Skill, Work Ready	Multi-partner solutions to trades discovery. Adaptive pre-apprentice or project specific skill training. Upgrading and gap-training for Level and Certificate of Qualification Challenges.	**Job placement for Low Readiness**: work experience, developing employability through on the job training, or referral to services for additional support. **Job match Work Ready**: Where possible, "Recruit to Train." Assessment and skill development based on known job outcomes. **Dispatch for Moderate to High Skill**: Job Placement through union dispatch.

Progress and Variations: How the Four Categories Evolved in Response to Labour Market Conditions

The original four categories and program flow was based on best practices and observations gathered during previous CFBC programs which included the Skills Ready pilots. Central to the design was partnerships with organizations that could facilitate training and employment, as well as a central role for an intermediary organization that could provide consistent support to those applicants navigating their options or not-progressing through training.

Over time, the four categories did not change significantly, and implementation continued to depend on intermediaries to facilitate participant progress from application to employment. However, discreet variations emerged within the categories and distinct new sub-categories were developed. Some sub-categories such as the Gateways were anticipated at the project's outset as engagement and promotion tools but evolved significantly to become assessment and training activities. Variations within categories often emerged in response to either the employment opportunity requirements or the number of applicants interested. For example, roofing training became very short as there were few interested applicants and low entry requirements. Opportunities in electrical or plumbing had much higher rates of applicants than employment opportunities. This created a degree of competition for entry

and required the partnership to be selective in who was trained. For this, the Assessment Tool became relevant as a screening tool.

The project concept for training was developed during the public health restrictions related to COVID-19 which encouraged smaller groups with shorter time spent together. The original training design was based on the early success of the Workplace Alternative to Trades Training (WATT) project that was established by WJETS and included a short term, direct-entry, training for electrical apprenticeships.

That model included a process that was linear with applicants moving through training and into employment or returning to the assessment stage if they were not successful in training. It was anticipated that the four categories would be somewhat consistent for other trades when the model was replicated. Minimal variation was anticipated and most of it was assumed to be within the training activities. This was not the case in the pilot. Through implementation a whole new process emerged for each trade with variation coming in all four categories.

The process changed in response to several factors. These included variations between trades, employer groups, and regional labour markets. The project saw the most success when a new entry point to an existing pathway or process could be established. Entry points could come at any stage and included introducing a new collaboration for recruitment into a job which had low training requirements, creating new training for available employment, or taking on a full new process from recruitment through to post-employment follow up.

The different project partnerships were most successful when the four different categories were integrated effectively. This also required weaving the project's activities into existing processes that would result in employment either through Union dispatch or direct application to an employer. When there was a discontinuity between stages, such as from assessment to training, then participant disengagement increased. Discontinuity could be created by a delay in time between application and next activity, from a disconnect between the assessment process and training activities, or from other factors such as mismatch between applicant expectations and training or job experience.

Overlap between types of activities created the most new or innovative activities. For example, the project team created a mechanism for practical assessment through short workshops. This allowed instructors to spot the potential in applicants with minimal experience, but it also created a space for applicants to assess the opportunity for themselves. Trying out the trade in a workshop format at a training center with a union partner could be enough to open the door to employment, or for individuals to decide the career was not for them – which was a significant outcome in itself.

The table below identifies the updated project activity categories that are based on what was undertaken consistently during the pilot. These are generalized and would look different based on the individual, the training option available or it's requirements, and employment opportunities.

Table 5: Updated Project Activity Categories (Based on Actual Activities)

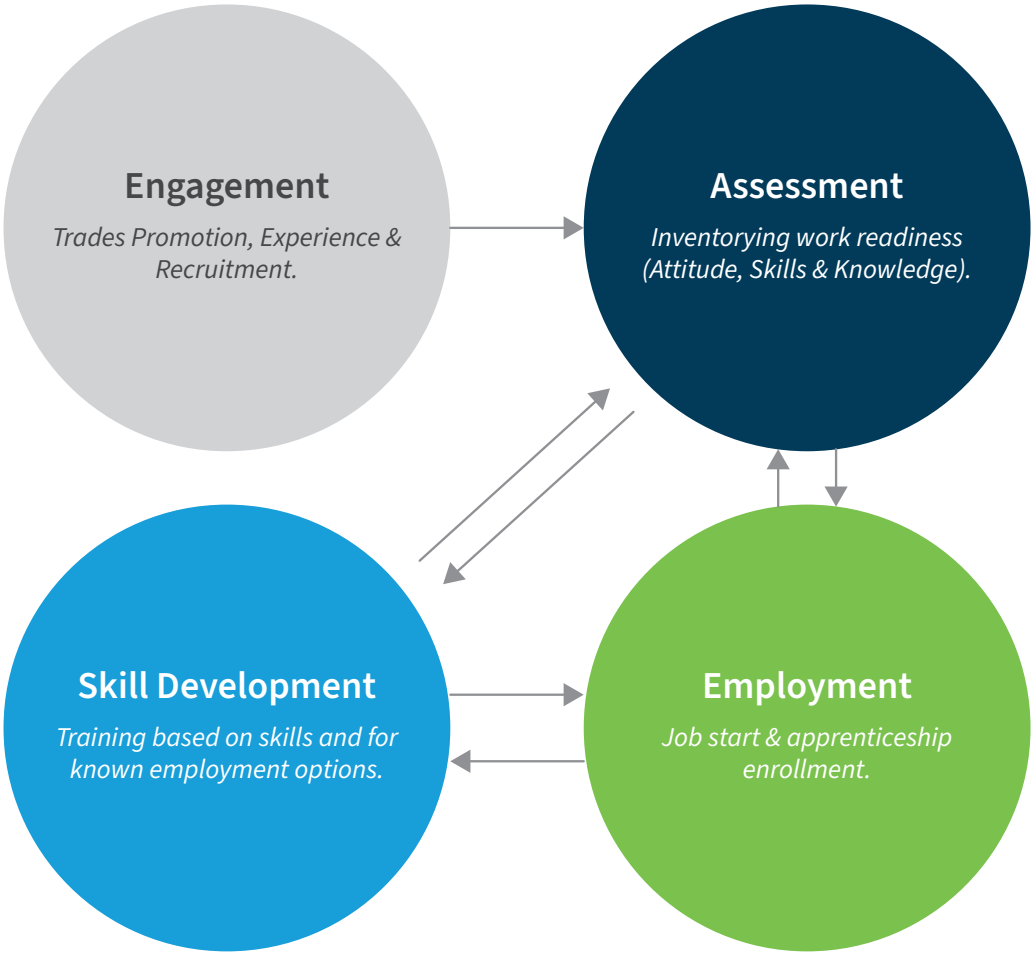
ENGAGE	ASSESS	TRAIN	EMPLOY
Identify potential participants through a combination of online and in person activities. Engagement achieved through: (1) Online and virtual recruitment campaigns. (2) Partner with regional and community organizations to identify people with diverse backgrounds, skillsets, and experiences. (3) Network with training and service organizations to identify potential applicants.	Determine individual pathways based on interest, ability, and the opportunities available. Assessment achieved through: (1) Intermediaries (CFBC primarily) complete assessments using semi-structured or informal interviews. (2) Training or employer partners complete practical assessments through training activities (Gateways).	Undertaken multiple formats of training to increase the access to trades, facilitate a return to work, or to increase the number of apprentices on site. **Stage 1 – Gateways & Common Core**: Short term training activities that increase readiness for work. **Stage 2 – Apprentice Prep & On-Site training:** Direct entry training leveraging on the job opportunities. **Stage 3 – Refresher& Upgrading Training:** Specialized training to increase employability. **Stage 4 – Refresher & Upgrade:** Training to facilitate certification and more supervisors to provide on the job training.	Collaborate with Unions and Employers to match people to sustainable employment. Employment achieved through: (1) Referral: Individuals are provided information on viable employment options. (2) Matched to Employers: Individuals are connected to employers by an Intermediary (CFBC). (3) Union Dispatch: Building Trade Unions facilitate employment.

Summary of Program Flow

Original Flow summary

The concept at the onset of the project was that a network of partners would provide opportunities based on the needs identified for individuals and industry. This would mean that several different pathways would emerge depending on a combination of different factors. While no specific number of pathways were identified, the *Participant Experience* flow chart identifies that there would be at least 10 different pathways. Through the pilot, four predominate pathways emerged, but within these there were significant variations depending on trade pursued and geographical location.

Graphic 3: Original Program Flow Visualization (Simplified)

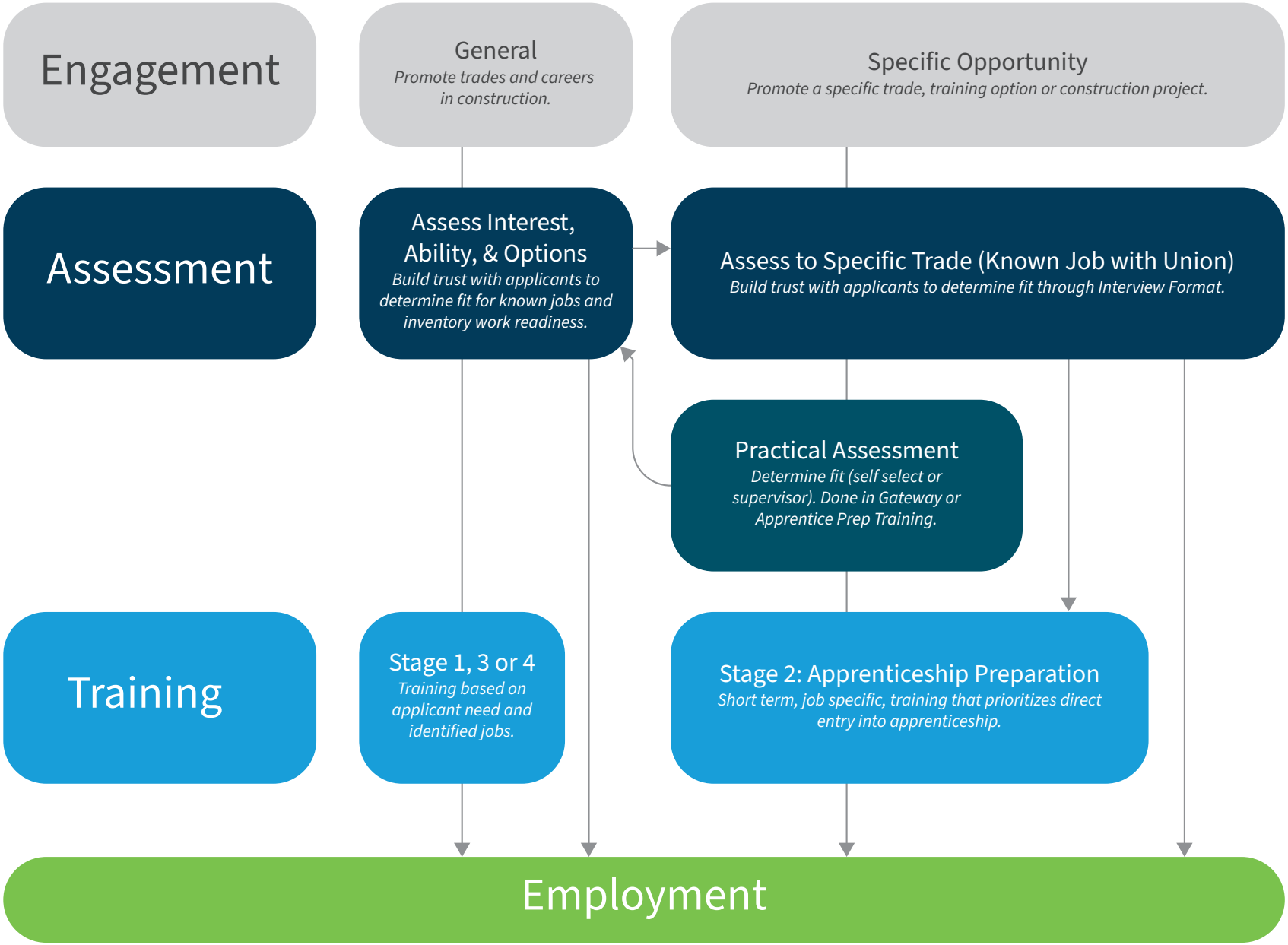


To mange scope of a non-linear approach to implementation, the project team developed initial concepts for pathways based on anticipated employment outcomes or groups of individual applicants. Most of these pathways were group based because they involved a component of training that made most sense as a cohort model. However, many individualized pathways were developed that did not involve training. Each of the different pathways exist independently of each other but share common features. For the most part, the pathways followed the visualization presented in the *Project Workplan* in that they started with some form of assessment before leading into either training or employment. Variations included using the engagement process as both an assessment and training tool.

The most significant observation has been that ongoing success is best achieved through continuous follow up and support on both the employment readiness side – which can include training – as well as the personal side – which includes mental health and wellbeing considerations. Some of these ongoing considerations were identified in the assessment process for those who participated, while others emerged throughout employment.

The most significant change was in the role and method of the assessment process. Assessment was anticipated to be two stage and occur only at the beginning. It was also anticipated to be primarily done by CFBC and include a significant focus on individual interest and readiness. In practice, an ongoing assessment process was most effective at identifying factors that contributed to sustained success. As well, in some cases the personalized assessment process was not required for individuals to be successful. This was observed amongst individuals who were active in a trade but had been displaced by COVID or other labour market factors including major project lay offs. These individuals had a good sense of what they were interested in and what prevented them from being employable. For these individuals the assessment was specifically about the technical skill or certification that was needed to return to employment. This was critical for keeping at least 85 people employed. The example of retention solutions shows that there is a need to have options that work to support or coach individuals based on their personal experience or need, as well as options that respond to industry's needs. The merger of the two will consistently yield the most significant success over time as demonstrated by individuals who started with an assessment at the start of the process then moved into a direct entry pathway before receiving skill upgrading or certification training through a Joint Training provider post employment start.

Graphic 4: Updated Program Flow Visualization (Simplified based on Actual Activities)



Changes Made Through Implementation – Program Flow Update

As the original program flow plan was broad, the major change that was noted during implementation came because of the constraints encountered. These constraints shaped the viable or feasible pathways that were available regionally and within trades.

The major constraints can be defined as:

1. Employment Opportunity Available – The most significant constraint was the employment opportunities. There was consistently high demand for trades such as carpentry, roofing, and general labouring. For other trades, such as plumbing and electrical, direct entry options were more restricted. Individual applicant needs and interests needed to match employment options for a clear pathway to emerge.
2. Training Opportunity – In those scenarios where individuals were unsure of which option to pursue or were requiring some level of training to get started, timing and the opportunity available were the most consistent restraints to how an applicant would move through the process.
3. Volume of Applicants to Cohort Based Activities – When a group training or trades discovery option was organized the main constraint on the flow of a participant was how many people applied. In cases where low interest was noted frequently, such as for roofing training and carpentry, the number of skills of applicants at any given time would determine which pathways were open.
4. Previous Experience and Interest – Those with previous experience in labouring or trades roles had more options available to them. However, they often had a much clearer idea of where they wanted to go which would put constraints on the pathways forward. Often, those individuals with experience would skip training activities with assessment leading straight to employment.

As the project evolved, CFBC did not play a centralized role in engagement and assessment for all project activities. In the case of plumbers, carpenters, and ironworkers, many of the individuals participating in skills training activities would apply directly to the Unions who would organize training and dispatch as needed. In these scenarios, CFBC would redirect applicants directly to the Union at the start or would receive referrals for individuals who were not progressing into employment. For more on this please refer to the intermediary description in this report.

Description of most common pathways

During implementation there were 12 separate pathways that emerged from the four categories of activities. These pathways were based on different combinations of training and employment opportunities. While it was anticipated that the majority of individuals would be tracked through all stages of the project, the expansive project partner network meant that several additional pathways were developed that were not directly tracked by the core project team. This included referrals to other services and programs, as well as direct referral to employers. The project workplan assumed that there would be individuals participating in multiple pathways consistently. However, three pathways that accounted for approximately 95% of participant pathways that resulted in tracked employment.[12] The three are discussed below and emerged due to recruitment constraints (promoting multiple pathways proved challenging), as well as the efficacy that certain training options demonstrated. As well, as the project evolved with a rapidly changing labour market, consistency in service provision became necessary as it allowed for more stable management of applicants and fewer delays between application and employment – a critical factor in project success was being able to respond to the urgent need for employment that many applicants expressed. The balance of participants followed pathways that were unique to their situation – many of which participated in short term training leading to retention in their trade.

The pathways and program flow concept provided a relevant way to demonstrate how services that support employment and training should be flexible. While most individuals followed the three predominant pathways, there were discreet variations within

[12] Employment outcomes are anticipated for approximately 200 additional applicants. These are not reported in aggregate stats as these are employment outcomes that were found independently by applicants and therefore not assumed to be directly attached to project activities (for example, individuals who participated in Gateways or workshops who went on to retail or food service employment), and due to a lack of response from individuals (for example, people referred to employment opportunities who did not respond to contact).

those. The flexibility in the support offered two critical things. The first is that it allowed for multiple stakeholders to collaborate using a consistent framework to develop new pathways for individuals while drawing on previous observations and learnings. The structure provided a means to communicate the roles and expectations of each partner, and led to discussions about how different trades, employers, or regional variations would impact opportunities. The second critical piece of the flexibility provide by a multi-pathway model of programming is that there could be adaptations made to supply and demand factors. In practice, this includes changing the timelines, assessment requirements, and even post-employment follow up based on the needs of employers and needs of applicants. This model could better serve direct entry opportunities, but it does come with a high level of coordination and collaboration.

One major limit to the multi-pathway model is that it is difficult to communicate during recruitment. Communicating one pathway proved easier than promoting a variety of options. In promotion materials this often meant that specific training or trade opportunities were promoted distinctly. At times, this meant that there was a perception of a "one off" nature to the pilot that limited mass recruitment opportunities. Moving forward, this can be mitigated through promoting either a consistent model that multiple partners subscribe to – such as a gateway to employment model – or through individual trades promoting an opportunity unique to them. The later solution does create a unique challenge in that multiple groups are competing for the same limited number of applicants. This is described further in section 2.

Three Common Pathways: Back to Work Program Flow Updated

Over the course of implementing the Back to Work pathway there were three pathways that accounted for 95% (n=395) of known employment outcomes. Other pathways included a combination of short-term training leading to employment, on the job training (direct application to employment outcome), and other interventions.

Pathway 1: Engagement - Assessment - Employment

Approximately 185 individuals proceeded directly through the assessment into employment with no training required. Most had some level of previous training or trades experience. This pathway was relevant for people who had 10+ years of experience as labourers and helpers and were seeking more stable apprenticeship, youth with no experience looking for their first job, and skilled apprentices looking for better employment options (better pay, stability, or working conditions/environment). There was also a group of individuals supported here who were transitioning from mental health and addiction treatment programs.

The pathway was relevant for those with an acute need for work and very frequently involved less than 2 weeks of support between application and employment start because of the network of employers available. Most individuals applied online or were referred to the project.

This pathway resulted in employment with both union and non-union contractors.

Pathway 2: Engagement - Apprenticeship Preparation (with assessment) – Employment

Approximately 110 individuals proceeded from application to training without up front assessment, and then into employment. This pathway emerged in response to high volume of employer demand and low volume of applicants with skills. Apprenticeship Preparation in this pathway included the Ironworker "Bootcamp" with 2 weeks of training leading to employment, the Sheetmetal Gateway of 1 day (or 2 half days) leading to employment, and the roofing training which included 2.5 days of training before employment. A similar model for pipefitting was tested over a series of evenings for individuals with transferable skillsets and experience in other trades.

The logic with this pathway was to provide as easy access as possible to employment without screening people out during the application process. The model was relevant for trades that are not well known. As training was short, it provided equal part opportunity to try the trade and to train for employment.

In this pathway the assessment was integrated as a practical assessment during training. For ironworking the first week was used

to assess physical ability to do the job. Physical ability was also relevant for roofing where the ability to lift and move materials was critical to the role. For sheet metal the requirement in the practical assessment was the ability to learn quickly.

Progress in this model was limited to 60-80% from assessment to employment. Attrition resulted mostly from individuals choosing not to progress due to a lack of interest or physical ability. A small percentage of about 10% were not offered employment due to a lack of ability, and around 5% were unable to regularly attend or show up on time and were not offered employment.

All individuals who completed this pathway ended with union contractors. Those who left early or were asked not to progress were supported into other employment including union and non-union employment.

Pathway 3: Engagement - Assessment - Gateway (practical assessment) - Apprenticeship Prep - Employment

Over the duration of the project 122 people followed a Pathway 3 which included the most steps, took between 4-8 weeks from start to finish and had the highest rate of continuation and retention. This model was primarily applied to electrical and was made possible because there was a higher level of applicants than employment opportunities.

This pathway starts with an application (most often through an online ad) before CFBC completed an in-depth assessment relative to employer expectations. For this, the assessment rubric development in the *Assessment Plan* was used extensively. In this pathway, the assessment functioned as a screening process because there were more applicants than opportunities. Where other pathways prioritized increasing access to job starts, this pathway provided more space to ensure people were a good fit and prepared.

Having a competitive-entry process created a different relationship with the applicant because it encouraged a more in-depth discussion of the factors that might limit long term success. While this led to higher levels of retention over 6 months and 1 year, it did restrict access and meant that more individuals with lower levels of readiness were excluded from participating. This restriction did mean that there needed to be intentional focus on the assessment and screening factors to mitigate biases and unintentional exclusion of diverse populations. For example –applicants who identified as women were far less likely to have had shop class experience and therefore presented lower levels of practical skills at application. To address this, factors such motivation and positive attitude were emphasized over skill factors.

Because of the assessment functioning as a screening process, the success rate from apprenticeship preparation training to employment as an apprentice was 97%. Those who were not able to demonstrate readiness were supported to explore other trade and employment options in the short term, with recommendations to consider before reapplying at a later date.

From the assessment with CFBC, applicants transitioned to the Gateway training which provided an opportunity for a practical assessment as well as a chance for those with minimal trades experience to try the trade firsthand. The majority (approximately 80%) of people transitioned from the Gateway into Apprenticeship prep. Attrition resulted from individual's choosing to opt out for a lack of interest or other intervening factors including personal commitments, other employment options, or mental health considerations.

Apprenticeship preparation training included safety and practical skills training and resulted in dispatch. All participants in this pathway were attached to union employment.

Summary of Pilot Activities & Success Factors

The *Project Workplan* from March 2021 identified five primary types of activities to be undertaken to support pilot implementation.

These included:

1. General Implementation Activities – includes labour market monitoring, employer engagement, partnership development, and committee activities.
2. Engagement and Recruitment – includes outreach and community networking, print and digital advertising, and project promotion through events and presentations.
3. Assessment Activities – including multiple options for mapping applicant skill to training and employment opportunities. Assessment was anticipated to included individual support to progress into employment or training.
4. Skill Development Activities – activities that provided the skills required for known employment opportunities.
5. Employment and Apprenticeship Activities – primarily anticipated to referral to employer, or dispatch with a metal or building trades union.

This section details which activities were tested and the factors that made them successful. Further explanation is provided for where activities were not repeated or tested.

General Project Implementation Activities

Back to Work depended on a collection of partners for recruitment, training, and employment. Various collaborations were established to monitor employment opportunity and ensure applicants were supported to access appropriate job options. General project implementation activities were to include the following:

1. Demand Side Tracking
2. Employer Engagement and Consultation
3. Steering Committee Engagement
4. Partnership Development

All program activities identified in the Project Workplan were initiated and the majority were maintained throughout the duration of the project. One major activity which was anticipated to be a key part of demand side tracking, the major project inventory, was not sustained as it was not necessary to review on an ongoing basis – major projects identified at the outset were the same projects that drove employment demand throughout the duration of the project. Instead, ongoing dialogue with unions and some key employers provided sufficient input to determine when and where recruitment and training activities should be coordinated. Planning based on major projects, including for the BCIB project in Duncan, was undertaken. However, because training activities could be undertaken quickly there was not a significant need to coordinate training ahead of time through Back to Work.

As well, demand side monitoring was anticipated to be highly relevant to determining how many people to train in a specific region or trade. However, labour demand remained high for the duration of the project which reduced the need for general tracking – as one employer observed, “someone is always hiring labourers.” Having more direct connection to employers – either through a union or directly between a CFBC staff and an employer – provided the best method of connecting applicants with the best fit for work. Maintaining these relationships and a knowledge of what employer expectations and capacity were became critical to the project’s success.

Engagement & Recruitment Activities

Engagement and recruitment activities were the most challenging aspect of the project. One major project assumption was that there would be significant numbers of unemployed people looking for stable employment. In large part this assumption was driven by the observation that trades workers were deemed essential and employees in construction and other trades dependent industries continued to work through COVID restrictions that shut other industries down. While this situation continued into 2022, there were several intervening factors that did not contribute to individuals needing to work.

During the course of the pilot several different recruitment strategies were attempted. These included:

1. Online advertisement
2. Print media
3. Presentations, info sessions, and Workshops
4. Networking and partner collaboration

Online engagement and advertisement included a combination of Google AdWords, social media advertisements and postings, as well as postings to online job boards. Based on digital analytics, including click through rates, the most effective strategies for digital recruitment came through job board postings – specifically Indeed. In part, this may be because of the audience that was already engaged with job boards. These are individuals who are actively looking for work whereas social media and Google AdWords reached a more passive audience. As well, because of posting restrictions, all Indeed and other job board postings were required to be for employment. Feedback from applicants consistently identified that a call for individuals looking for *good paying* or *stable* work was more appealing than any trades discovery or career discovery type activity. Online promotion resulted in an average of 5 applicants who were either out of country or non-responsive to every 1 applicant that demonstrated interest in the posting. As such, for the 1900 individuals that were identified as engaged there are another 3000+ who inquired through online channels. Outside of the project, various partner unions utilized social media advertisement and specialized recruitment services to attract new applicants with varying degrees of success.

For the audience who were not yet looking for employment, or who had not considered a trades career, the in-person outreach and shoulder tapping via partnership networks was more effective. However, consistently these individuals required significantly more follow up and support to progress into any form of training or employment readiness activities. A lot of this work included collaboration with social agencies and community services to ensure that individuals had a network of available supports over time. Referrals from these organizations accounted for a small portion of those assessed (about 90 people or 11%). Hands on workshops and simpler versions of the Gateways were useful engagement tools with these groups.

Print media include rack cards and posters. A generalized poster was made as well as trade specific and even event specific materials were made. These were effective tools for supporting partnership development with referral agencies. However, as a direct marketing tool they were not observed to attract a significant number of applicants. In person events and networking activities were effective in attracting small and targeted groups of applicants – most often for direct placement into employment. In areas where a major project or specific employment opportunity was offered, community networking and info sessions were utilized as recruitment strategies. The most success was observed when an individual who was well known in the community could be identified as a key partner or when existing relationships could be tapped into.

At the best of times, promoting apprenticeships is challenging. During the delivery of the pilot, three notable experiences affected recruitment activities. These were (1) the extension of the Canadian Economic Recovery Benefit (CERB), (2) rapidly increasing wages in sectors that typically have lower than median pay, and (3) increased competition for workers due to a combination of factors including retirements, rapid economic recovery, and lower than typical labour market participation. Additionally, factors related to the cost and availability of housing, rapid inflation, and mental health and wellbeing considerations all played a role in who applied and how prepared people were for trades and apprenticeship employment. During the project, construction employment lost a

significant wage advantage as employers in retail, food services, and hospitality increased their wage packages and flexibility – which attracted the same group that was anticipated to benefit from the project.

As well, a new group of individuals appeared who were not anticipated. Where the project was designed primarily for new entrants to the trades, a large contingent of skilled labourers and trades helpers applied for training or inquired about better employment opportunities. This was most notable in the last two years of the project and most likely resulted from wage stagnation. This group, which had been described in reports as "near apprentices" or "trades adjacent" were individuals who represent a significant opportunity to address skills shortages – but face barriers to apprenticeship success. Further consideration to this group is given in Section 1.

Assessment Activities

Rubrics developed for pre-training and employment assessment, as well as training assessment are included in the appendix for reference.

A total of four components were anticipated as part of the assessment process. These included (1) personal motivation, (2) work readiness, (3) practical skills, (4) literacy and numeracy where required for training.

Only the first three components were implemented on a regular basis with all applicants – literacy and numeracy assessments were not used regularly. The personal motivation and work readiness was part of an assessment process led by CFBC in most cases, while the practical skills assessment was most frequently integrated into training activities. In some cases, such as for the Ironworkers, the only assessment that was prioritized was the practical assessment which was integrated into the first week of a two-week training program.

CFBC developed and tested three iterations of the assessment framework for work readiness and personal motivation. The most significant format for the assessment process was the ability of staff to develop trust with applicants. This created an opportunity to reduce the pressures associated with applying to either work or training. The CFBC staff team were able to work with applicants to identify potential pathways that were best for them based on a combination of factors and opportunities. Most often applicants were interested in a specific trade or were responding to a post regarding a specific trade opportunity. For these individuals, the assessment was about ensuring that they were a good fit for the training option available and that they were ready for longer term success. For around half of the applicants assessed, the assessment process became about navigating different options.

Assessment for motivation and readiness were intended to ensure that the individuals were provided with guidance towards a pathway that made sense for them. Frequently, the process involved working one-on-one with individuals, helping them navigate and overcome barriers to re-entering the workforce or move into a higher skill or more stable career option. The significance of the assessment process became associated with the connection and trust established. The trust and connection made it possible to have honest conversations and encouraged ongoing dialogue which facilitated retention either through talking through individual experiences at work, connecting with additional services and supports (including mental health and peer-to-peer mentorship opportunities), or by supporting individuals to pursue alternative opportunities.

The practical assessment was a chance to test an applicant's ability to learn the practical skills or demonstrate their capacity. Originally, it was anticipated to be a screening tool used by training providers to determine who would be accepted into programs. However, in practice the practical assessments proved more beneficial to applicants who were experiencing the trade for the first time and were able to make the decision to opt out or continue. Because the demand for new workers remained high throughout the duration of the project, demand from employers consistently was higher than the number of people applying. As such, very rarely were people who expressed an interest asked not to continue because of a lack of skills. As such, practical assessments – or more accurately hands-on exposure – became an important way of forecasting the likelihood of an individual's long-term retention because they were making an informed choice; it became more relevant for the applicant than it was for the training provider or employer.

Rubrics for practical assessment in training were developed to support as non-biased an assessment process as possible. Feedback suggested that the rubrics for practical assessment were relevant but rarely used as a screening tool because those who were in training were very likely to proceed into employment (85% continuation overall). For the most part, those individuals who were not continuing from training to employment were self-selecting out because of the physicality of the job (approximately 70% of non-continuations) or because of a lack of interest in that specific trade/preference for another trade (approximately 25%). Personal health/medical was the only other reason provided for non-continuation. Physicality of the job was the most common case for roofing and ironworking, while interest was more common for sheet metal and carpentry activities – both of which followed a one-day gateway or workshops format.

In consultation with employers and Joint Training providers it was identified that literacy and numeracy assessments should not be used to screen out applicants. All partners were committed to prioritizing practical skills and potential over academic proficiency. In large part, this was motivated by a need to attract and prepare as many people as possible. Additionally, while Foundation programs maintain pre-requisites for most programs, level 1 training does not. Most common pre-requisites are Math 10 and English 11 or 12, though some programs such as the mechanical trades and electrical require Math 11 and some require Physics 11.

Opening apprenticeship opportunities to a diversity of learners, including those without high school graduation, has the potential to impact long term trades certification success. To mitigate this risk the project team began integrating literacy and numeracy assessments into training activities, such as was done for electrical, or as a follow up option where there was concern about potential long-term success. The goal in this case then has been to identify which applicants would need further literacy or numeracy interventions leading into Level 1 technical training. It has been observed that most individuals who were identified as potentially struggling with learning were not interested in accessing assessments or follow up support.

The assessment process has been a critical tool for increasing retention outcomes for some trades and location specific cohorts that had participants presenting with multiple barriers. Assessment helped shaped training processes where distinct needs were identified. For example, in anticipation of the Duncan Hospital project a group of individuals was trained for commercial roofing. One individual was identified to have a low level of literacy which would prevent them from being successful completing WHMIS training independently. Instead of isolating that individual, the whole group of 6 participants completed the training together, taking turns to read the content out loud. This adaptation increased everyone's success rate on their first quiz attempt and also created space for discussion along the way.

The process also functioned as a method to identify other trade options that individuals may not have previously considered. This was how many of the individuals involved in the initial sheet metal activities were recruited – specifically by encouraging those with an identified interest in carpentry or electrical to consider other trades. The assessment process provided a means of encouraging individuals to consider trades with low public visibility or negative public perceptions.

Assessment also provided a means of preparing people for what to expect on the jobsite. Feedback gathered through participant interviews indicated that the process created the possibility for "predictability." In conversation with a multitude of applicants it has become apparent that a lack of certainty about what was going to happen or changing jobsites elicits anxiety and apprehension. Providing a sense of predictability has been observed to be of particular importance when an applicant is transitioning out of unemployment. Many applicants expressed they would prefer to remain unemployed when given the choice between the predictability of unemployment or the destabilizing unpredictability of work that might change location, involve new relationships with colleagues and bosses that they didn't know, or a new worksite culture.

One avenue to mitigate the situation has been to use the assessment process to lend predictability to what will happen through training, dispatch, and post-employment. When applicants are forewarned of potentially destabilizing experiences and armed with the knowledge that it is temporary, expected, and shared, then they have been more likely to stay in the job. Responses from participants indicated that forewarning offered the opportunity to shift their perspective before they experienced discomfort.

When they did experience mental and emotional stresses associated with being on a jobsite, they indicated feeling an increased preparedness to cope, as they knew the experience was normal and temporary. As such, the assessment process has been, for many, more about building trusting relationships that create confidence when moving forward than any form of filtering or screening out process; it is an opportunity to anticipate structural, systemic, and personal roadblocks to success and prepare accordingly.

Training Activities

This section provides a review of the different training activities that were anticipated at the outset, those activities that emerged as a priority, and the development of new terminology to describe an emergent type of training that could be considered as a feasible option into the future.

The original project workplan identified a significant number of training options to develop and deliver based on the anticipated needs of both employers and applicants. Through implementation, all of the identified activities were tested. Key activities were the Gateways and Apprenticeship Prep training, as well as gap training for individuals with some trades experience. The plan also identified Gateways as a potential type of engagement activity to promote trades to a broader audience. In practice, Gateways were utilized almost exclusively as training activities because they contributed directly to the opportunity to start employment or advance into further training.

As well, the term Apprenticeship Preparation emerged at the project's midpoint as a term to distinguish the model being developed in Back to Work and the Entry Level Trades Training or Foundation Programs that post-secondary institutions provide as pre-apprenticeship training. The term specifically refers to skills development activities that lead to direct entry employment in a trade that leads to apprenticeship and then Level 1 technical training.

All activities identified in the project workplan were implemented by CFBC or a partner organization. Not all activities were feasible within Back to Work and were tested instead through other funded activities including CFBC's All Roads or Skills Ready initiatives for youth in school and young adults (indicated with * and not included in summary stats for this report).

1. Trades Gateways – workshops to introduce the trades (single or multi-trade).
2. Trades Camps* – multi-trade discovery camps over 1-2 weeks.
3. Adult Shop Class* – partnering with adult learning centres to provide a trades exploration experience.
4. Short term certification – provided for site safety and as required for employment.
5. Apprenticeship Preparation – short term skills training for employment. Training led by a joint training organization.
6. Job Specific Skills – "just in time" training leading to apprenticeship.
7. Gap Training – short term training for unemployed and precariously employed apprentices.
8. Challenge Process – technical or theory training for individuals transitioning from trades related employment into apprenticeships. Challenge was for level or full certification.
9. Onsite Training – training by journeyperson onsite where a cohort is not feasible. Includes leadership or mentorship training to facilitate more apprentices onsite.

Of all the options listed, the most frequently implemented types of training are described in detail below. These include Trades Gateways, the Apprenticeship Prep options (which started to include Job Specific Skills), and gap training (including certificate training).

Trades Discovery Options – A starting Point for Work Readiness

Trades Discovery camps are a tool for supporting individuals who are not yet ready for employment to explore trades options while gaining practical skills towards employment. Outcomes include increased awareness of career options and the apprenticeship pathway, increased confidence and self-esteem, and increased work readiness. Employment outcomes are not anticipated to be high because of the activities. Instead, these should be understood as gap programs and recruitment tools to support transitions into further programming. Critically, this means they are most feasible and sustainable when there is a secondary benefit such as

graduation credits, as a part of a wellness program, or integrated into organizational activities that promote the trades. In the context of Back to Work, the pilot intended to test the model in partnership with BC's public-school districts and First Nations Schools as a bridge towards more job-specific training either onsite with partner employers, in community trades training (post secondary provided), or in collaboration with a Building or Metal trades union/Joint Training Group.

The trades camps were tested with youth in school and young adults through CFBC's Skills Ready and All Roads projects. These were effective tools for trades promotion but had limited outcomes in terms of direct transition to employment. In part, this was because participants were not actively seeking work and the activities were utilized to promote general work readiness. The same was the case for the Adult Shop Class which was implemented in two First Nations Schools in BC through CFBC's All Roads initiative. Outcomes from both options included work experience for a small portion of participants. Work experience was arranged through specific employers who also contributed to the activities as co-instructors or presenters. Of the 38 people who participated in these programs, around 2/3rds moved into employment within a year and about half (n=18) transitioned into a trade, construction labourer, or other applied skill employment (ex. swamper, maintenance, etc.). Others remained on income assistance, struggled with mental health and addictions challenges, or joined training programs – including adult graduation programs.

There are currently no adult shop programs run by school districts in BC that could be identified. This is due to a combination of liability considerations, student interest, and cost. As well, districts often point to trades type activities being within the jurisdiction of post-secondaries or pre-employment programs. In the context of First Nations schools, the adult shop option provided an option to undertake a community relevant training experience at less cost than a post secondary program, with more flexibility to the needs of participants and including a credit towards their Dogwood. Significantly, both options provide an in-between space for individuals who are not actively employment ready and still uncertain about their career options (including those struggling with confidence, mental health and wellness, or low self-esteem). It represents an option that could precede employment or training programming and is beneficial for people who are not yet work ready. In the context of Back to Work activities, a form of low-pressure trades discovery programming could be a launching point for entry into Apprenticeship Preparation programming.

These programs are most successful when combined with supports to individual well being and could include literacy and numeracy upgrading when integrated with a broader adult graduation program. Funding for these programs is rare because they fall between pre-employment programs (for example Skills Training for Employment or Workforce Development Agreement funding) and BC's Secondary Schools. Most funding for these activities has been enabled through grants, donations, or community specific capacity building programs.

Trades Gateways – Short Access to Apprenticeship Starts

A Gateway is defined as a short, trade specific, workshop. Gateways were as short as 3 hours, and no longer than 12 hours (two sessions), with most being 6 hours. Gateways introduce job expectations and realities, the trade itself (including the apprenticeship pathways), and the people who work in it. They are always project based with participants starting and completing something that emulates daily job tasks. In the context of Back to Work, Gateways were led by Joint Training Providers and Union partners.

Over the duration of the project around 80% of Gateway participants were interested in the quickest route to employment in that trade, and around 20% were interested in trying it out first. Approximately three quarters of both groups opted to continue post Gateway.

In practice, Gateways have functioned as a direct entry point for sheet metal, carpentry, and roofing employment. A version of the Gateway tested for plumbing also functioned as a direct entry point for individuals with previous trades experience. For electrical, Gateways were a stepping point into Apprenticeship Preparation training. For carpentry the gateway was tested as both direct entry and a step to training – however employment demand encouraged the shortest pathway possible which meant most individuals went straight from application to employment.

Trades Gateways have undergone the most significant evolution during the project. At the outset, they were anticipated to be mostly a promotion and decision-making tool. They were planned to be primarily used as a first step for individuals who were assessed to be low skill and low readiness. They were created primarily to serve as a place to make an informed decision, but over time they became critical transition and training tools with the one-day workshop format being all that was required to get into an apprenticeship for some trades. Gateways provided the following:

- Practical Assessment – training providers assessed individual capacity to learn the trade and their personal motivation, work ethic, and interest in the trade. For those with some skill, Gateways demonstrate their ability to do the job tasks. For those with no skill, the expectation is that they are assessed on their ability to learn. Practical assessment became critical for screening applicants for employment and identifying potential best-fit to employers. Assessment was sometimes done by a union representative who would be undertaking dispatch to employment. In future, variations could include employer representatives in the implementation.
- Increasing informed decision making – for individuals with minimal exposure to the trades, or to the specific trade they were trying, Gateways became a critical tool for low-risk and low-commitment opportunity to try before joining a training program or applying for employment. As such, they have been critical tools for supporting diversity in the project, as well as increase people's confidence heading into training or direct entry options. Notably, it was more often that participants opted out based on their experience than were screened out by training providers. As such, they function as a tool for increasing retention in training and employment.
- Trust and relationship building – Gateways relied on small cohort sizes (3-8 people), which provide more direct instruction and created a space for the participants to build trust with the instructor. The instructors were most often individuals who would relate to the participants over time as part of the Union or through the next training activities or future training through a Joint Training group after job start. This created a unique relationship which was often cited by individuals interviewed as a key part of building their confidence heading into work. As well, the project was able to test different formats for all women, Indigenous, and youth cohorts. Where possible these were led by an individual who reflected the group trained. This format did create a different dynamic for trust and connection which has been noted to impact success over time through peer to peer and peer to trainer support.
- Skill Building – Gateways provide enough time to develop some basic skills that can transition directly to jobsites. For example, in electrical, this included basic outlet installation and in sheet metal it was learning the 3 most common hand tools. However, the most impactful skill building that is done is related to the ability to learn practical skills. Gateways prioritize setting a structure and expectation for how individuals will learn as apprentices. This is a fundamental skill that supports their success in further classroom and on the job training.

Initially, when Gateways were prioritized and a promotional activity, two different formats were tested. The first was a multi-trade gateway which included a series of workshops over multiple nights. This was anticipated to include electrical, carpentry, sheet metal and roofing. For the most part this was determined to be unnecessary as most applicants were only interested in one or two trades. The option saw a high level of disengagement as a result with applicants choosing to pursue employment options elsewhere. A combination roofing and sheet metal gateway was tested as well with mixed outcomes. For the most parts participants knew which trade interested them already and it was identified that a focus on job specific training would be a more effective use of time. This initiated the use of Gateways as direct entry training options. By the second year of the project, all Gateways were trade specific and promoted as employment entry points.

At this point, the Gateways are training activities. Similar formats can be used as trades discovery type workshops, but the intention of a Gateway is that individuals will be moving into further training or employment. The known pathway and clear steps to progression are what makes these activities effective training tools.

They are intentionally meant to be low barrier and low commitment. As one participant described it, the Gateway acted like a "practice" first day of training or employment. The structure was more informal than a training program and required very little commitment to join. Almost all applicants are accepted to the Gateways, and they are arranged for evenings and weekends –

times that are convenient for those who may be employed. Individuals did not have to quit their jobs to participate – which was fundamental to making the option feasible for individuals in highly vulnerable economic positions. The structure of the Gateways was more informal than training but still resulted in skills that were immediately relevant. This created space to make an informed decision while also gaining practical experience that will contribute to their further development. Implementing the Gateway created a regular filtering opportunity which increased the likelihood of longer-term success in starting a job and retention over time.

As the intention is to coordinate Gateway activities based on employer demand, one critical challenge has been timing. This was most problematic when Gateways were being used as general promotional tools. As general promotional tools we need more applicants than were often available – especially for trades like carpentry or roofing that were either easy to get a start in or were generally of low interest. Over time, Gateways became less about increasing interest by creating "try a trade" opportunities, and more about integrate the "try a trade" element into direct entry training. The logic has been twofold. First, if someone raises their hand to try it then make it a short step to a jobsite if they like it. Second, to keep people who are motivated engaged there has been tremendous effort to shorten the time and space between application and a job start.

Ensuring that there are enough people and not too many people available because of Gateway activities has been critical to success: timing is key. Predicting the sequence and timing for recruitment and assessment activities – both interview style and practical assessment in the Gateways – has involved working closely with industry to anticipate demand for specific skillsets or in specific regions. Hosting Gateways only when demand is anticipated means that there are fewer people accessing training as only those available in a small window participate. Alternatively, hosting regular Gateways increased the number of applicants. However, this was associated with another challenge: if there is not an option for work or apprenticeship prep training immediately after then many people move on. Great applicants who are motivated to find work have not waited for a cohort – they often start a labouring or other job.

The balance between too few applicants, and of having more trainees than can be absorbed onto jobsites can be addressed through adjusting the cohort size, working closely with different individuals within the sector from the job sites to business developers who have a view of what's coming. There is a significant amount of time that has been spent in recruitment and assessment. Creating as many efficiencies as possible by recruiting for multiple options, increasing engagement in anticipation of increased demand, and working with multiple partners to ensure application flow is consistent is very like to impact the scalability of this model – especially as a third-party intermediary can help share costs between multiple partners who may not be able to resource an assessor on their own. In the project, it began to make sense to allocate limited resources less to general trades promotion and more to ensuring as many applicants as possible were transitioning to work. This was associated with a shift to using the Gateways as entry points to employment or training, and not as recruitment tools for the trades.

Gateways are inexpensive to implement. Used strategically they represent a relatively low cost but impactful for organizations that can provide employment or dispatch apprentices to establish a pathway to employment with a higher rate of retention potential. As such, they do represent a critical tool for creating accessibility to apprenticeship – especially for trades that have low entrance requirements for skills, struggle to attract new workers, and do not have a widely available training program to start with/low levels of training infrastructure established. Uniquely, Gateways can be implemented directly by employers or on behalf of employers by union training organizations.

Graphic 5: What is Apprenticeship Prep?

Graphic 6: Comparative Timelines – Apprenticeship Prep and Pre-Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship Prep: Pre-Apprenticeship & Job Specific Skills Training models

Note: Key Components described in this section come from the Onsite Training Plan deliverable from August 2021. Pieces of this are included in the appendix for reference.

Apprenticeship Preparation training is short, job specific, training resulting in direct entry into trades employment. The model is meant as an accessible entry point for individuals who face barriers to trades training and was utilized as a tool for increasing the number of new entrants in 5 trades: electrical, carpentry, sheet metal, roofing, and plumbing. Apprenticeship Preparation training is non-certified and only functions effectively because it is led by groups with direct access to guaranteed employment. However, it is outcome focussed with apprenticeship being the primary outcome. Depending on the trade, apprenticeship happens immediately, within the first three months, or after Level 1 technical training is completed.

In total, 215 people participated in this format of training with an average of 92% continuation from training to employment,[13] and a median rate of 80% retention after 6 months. The range is 50% for roofing to 95% for electrical and results from a significant variety of factors described below.

The format ranged from 3 days to 3 weeks, with most in person practical training being undertaken in two weeks. Training length was primarily determined by demand side factors such as the safety and skill requirements for a first-year tradesperson. Skills trained were based on the anticipated job types available – for example, commercial flat roofing processes. Consideration was also given to supply side factors such as the availability of applicants and their skillset. It is likely that more training could be completed in the same amount of time if applicants came with transferable skills and experiences. Selecting which training activities would be included or not, and how much time spent on each, was often reactive to the group that was present unless there was an upfront assessment completed like it was in electrical. Generally, supply side factors that influenced training format were not as significant as demand side factors.

However, one area that was not predicted was how long applicants could be unemployed and how long they would wait for training. Some training activities and trades including carpentry and roofing were only feasible when they could be short in duration and provided immediately after application. The composition of applicants was mostly individuals needing immediate employment and not people who had a specific interest in that trade. Significantly, how easy it is to start in a trade as a labourer with no previous experience had a direct impact on how training was designed. If activities were too long, people would opt to chose something else or just apply for direct entry jobs. For example, roofing preparation mostly attracted individuals in low-paying and unstable survival employment (security guards, seasonal agriculture work, etc.) and was made as short as possible to ensure they experienced minimal wage disruption. As such, the model should be seen as prioritizing adaptability to labour market conditions. The appeal of the apprenticeship preparation option to potential applicants is very different for each trade and the interests, motivations, and incentive to potential applications needs to be considered.

Apprenticeship Preparation replaced the use of "pre-apprenticeship" training to distinguish the model from Entry Level Trades Training (ELTT) or Foundation programs. The two models of training have the same objective: to prepare new entrants for the requirements of apprenticeship. However, there are some key distinctions. ELTT and Foundation programs provide Level 1 certification and some work-based training hours after 4-6 months. An Apprenticeship Preparation program is less than 3 weeks and would require an individual to return for Level 1 technical training after accumulating work-based training hours through employment (3-10 weeks depending on trade). Most Foundation programs do not include safety certifications, whereas Apprenticeship Preparation options have included SiteReadyBC, Fall Arrest, Lift Training and others based on job site requirements.

[13] This percentage is factoring for those models such as the Ironworker 97 Bootcamp that merged Gateways with Apprenticeship Prep training and intends the first week to provide a trial space for participants. Including all participants results in a median continuation rate of 83%.

The two program types also differ in entry requirements. Within Back to Work there has been distinct entry requirements for Apprenticeship Prep based on employer requirements or considerations that would increase the potential for sustained employment (like drivers' licences). Most Foundation programs have an academic pre-requisite that restricts entry for those with low levels of literacy and numeracy, or who did not complete school. While these pre-requisites may impact potential for long term success in school, they are not employer requirements. BC is unique in that the entry requirements for trades training are not mandatory – they are recommendations, and it is up to each individual college to implement as they choose. There are no academic pre-requisites on level training, which means an individual following a direct-entry pathway will not be restricted from joining level 1 technical training because of missing academic courses. As such, this pathway is a potential option for transitioning individuals who have trades-related experience into apprenticeship without requiring upgrading first.

Apprenticeship Preparation training is also distinct in that the practical skills and tools covered, as well as the technical process taught, can change completely based on employment outcomes. This also means that the time in training can change based on content requirements. For example, one version of the model for carpentry excluded all wood framing and prioritized concrete forms because demand for new apprentices was very high in commercial jobs which were exclusively concrete focussed. As well, theory was often excluded from Apprenticeship Prep curriculum because it was not required for individuals in a first year to have or because it would be taught on the job anyways. The direct connection to the employment requirements of the job is the most distinct marker of Apprenticeship Preparation training.

Apprenticeship Preparation models are possible because union partners have been able to guarantee employment for all participants. Without a guarantee of employment this format for training would not be as effective or as relevant to the applicants. Almost all applicants were motivated by an immediate need for employment and this model provided quick and stable access. This led to some very distinct planning considerations. With small exceptions, all participants in these training cohorts were anticipated to go to work and were either screened for readiness ahead of time, or options to screen during training were integrated intentionally. The second option included exit points with follow up from CFBC to ensure that individuals were redirected to other trade options that may be a better fit. Built in trial proved effective for trades with a high level of physical demands like roofing and rebar. The process increased accessibility while addressing some inherent biases around assessing applicants' physical limitations.

The model of union-led Apprenticeship Preparation also has a degree of built in accountability because, in all cases, the unions and employers have financially invested in the training model. It also has a high priority to retention as they are preparing future members that may be with the union for their entire career. These considerations present some limitations for other organizations replicating the model, including employment service providers and post-secondary partners, as the guarantee of employment is not as likely. The other unique aspect of the model is that ongoing follow up and training is built into the plan. The groups that provided up front training are also the parts of the unions that provide ongoing and continuous professional development, organize release to technical training, and can intervene when there are issues with employers or others trades workers. In most cases, the unions are also able to support diversity through member services and internal committee that can facilitate mentorship options.

Significantly, this model is far from being a common in BC and is only starting to emerge in Canada. Groups in Ontario such as Supporting Ontario Youth (SOY) as well as groups in Alberta and Manitoba focussed on specific trades or projects have begun implementing similar models. When examined further, a large part of the emergence of these models is in response to critical labour shortages and incentives to increase participation of Equity Deserving groups. In most scenarios the models are being implemented as part of a provincial or federal funding initiative. Only those attached to a union or employer group are guaranteeing employment – in most cases this is contingent on passing the program which includes different assessment considerations such as participation, demonstrated skills, and in some cases literacy and numeracy skill development. It should be noted that most models are developed in response to provincially specific requirements and apprenticeship regimes.

There are some limitations identified through the implementation of this model. It is primarily effective for people who are motivated and ready to work. For individuals who have limited experience and are not ready to work, including youth who have not worked before, or individuals who need additional time and support to learn – including those who are experiencing some level of mental health struggle – then the high paced nature of Apprenticeship Preparation is not conducive to their success. Longer term programming options are very effective options for these individuals. For those who have literacy and numeracy limitations, Foundation programs that include Skills for Success training or academic upgrading options may be a better fit. Ultimately, having both options available will serve a population with a diversity of needs.

The priority for Apprenticeship Preparation training is to draw more people into the trades in a way that is accessible but also prepares them for long term success. It is not meant to replace other pathways or reduce the standard of quality or capacity required to be a skilled trades person. Instead, it is an entry point that will require additional ongoing support from employers, labour organizations, training providers, and community support or service organizations to ensure competency and certification completion. These individuals do not require any different supports than apprentices on other pathways do. However, because this option is more accessible, it has created opportunity for individuals who are often excluded from other pathways because of financial barriers (training cost or lost wage), academic limitations (including program pre-requisites), or access (including those in rural areas or areas with long waitlists). As such, the project has highlighted the need to have support services for all apprentices such as those that address undiagnosed learning disabilities, mental health and addictions challenges, and literacy or numeracy gaps – especially for those who have experienced discrimination in K-12 environments. Developing and expanding services to support underrepresented and marginalized populations will ensure that Apprenticeship Preparation options can be utilized as a tool to address skilled trades shortages while increasing participation of equity deserving apprentices.

Gap Training: Certification for Job Starts, Skills for Retention and Challenge Support

Gap training activities were identified as part of the original pilot based on three assumptions:

1. Identified infrastructure projects, as well as new investment in infrastructure such as hospitals and road building projects, would be used as tools to drive post-COVID economic recovery.
2. Individuals displaced from hospitality and retail employment may have transferable skills and require only safety certifications to be onsite.
3. The number of new entrants that could be effectively hired and trained would depend on qualified people onsite to provide on the job instruction and supervision.

These assumptions were accurate during the implementation of the project. However, there were fewer individuals transitioning from other sectors than anticipated, in part because of the extension of CERB. Safety training was provided for many and was more often integrated with other training supports than used as the only training intervention because it was not perceived as a barrier to employment for most.

Gap training in the form of practical skills training, safety certifications, and code refresher courses became critical tools to support individuals to prepare for new employment opportunities. Primarily undertaken on Vancouver Island and in Thompson Okanagan, the gap training options were key tools to ensuring individuals in rural parts of the province remained employable. Of the 248 individuals participating in gap training activities, the majority of them (74%) were in a rural community and participated in practical skills training such as fire alarm or fiber optic training in order to access employment in camp situations (including LNG Canada and Site C), or to have a specialized skill that increased the likelihood that they could access employment options as they possessed in demand skills.

As well, gap training provided the options to train more individuals to be prepared for site leadership roles. For electrical, this included supporting individuals to achieve the Field Safety Representative certification. The direct outcome of this was that 32 individuals

were able to find more stable employment opportunities which also enable an estimated 46 apprentices to be on sites across BC.[14] It is worth noting that support for this training has now been made possible through BC's investment in the Future Skills training grant which offers $3,500 over an individual's lifetime for this type of training.

Additional leadership support included facilitating Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for employers working with individuals demonstrating mental health and addictions challenges. MHFA was a useful tool for ensuring that employers had some skills to respond when employees were in crisis. This option was enhanced where site leaders could be provided with contact information for community service workers or emergency health professionals that had the capacity to intervene. The approach was tested as part of the collaborations leading up to the Duncan hospital project.

The third assumption included the acknowledgement that Newcomers with transferable skills would continue to be one source of skilled labour or competent trades workers. Ensuring these individuals were supported to achieve certification would increase the opportunity for new entrants. For every 1 person that followed a challenge route to achieve certification, 4+ apprentices could be hired. As well, the Government of Canada had indicated its intention to open up options for skilled tradespeople to apply for and access immigration pathways which would include permanent residence. Initial signals indicated this was anticipated for early 2022, however these did not come to fruition until Spring of 2023.

However, a total of 16 people were supported with refresher and upgrading training through this project. This included 14 Newcomers who participated in skills assessment and had access to code courses and assistance with apply to challenge their Red Seal certification.

Employment Activities

Back to Work prioritized employment outcomes for all applicants. Throughout the duration of the project there were three types of employment activities most often undertaken:

1. Dispatch through a building or metal trades union.
2. Placement with a partner employer.
3. Referral to employers known to be hiring.

Dispatch involved building trade unions organizing employment for applicants. These included individuals transitioning directly from an assessment into employment, as well as following a training activity. The dispatch process involves a representative of one of the unions partnered on the project working with contractors that are signatory to their collective agreements to find employment for an applicant. There were over 105 potential employers associated with the project because of the collective agreements. Almost all unions partnered with this project manage dispatch directly through a union hall – in rare cases were individuals referred directly to a unionized employer by a CFBC team member. Additionally, individuals associated with the union received additional dispatch to employment if their job came to an end. Within the project, a minimum of 288 – or approximately 70% – of known employment outcomes were through a dispatch process.

The other employment outcomes came through job placements by CFBC or a referral to known employment. This activity heavily depended on CFBC maintaining relationships with employers and being aware of emerging job opportunities and their requirements. Demand side tracking activities were critical to facilitating quick and accruing job connection support. Job placement involved connecting an applicant directly with an employer and accounted for 89, or 22%, of known employment outcomes. This included working with Ukrainians arriving under CUAET status who needed assistance to navigate employment options but did not require training; 22 people were supported to employment this way.

[14] These estimates are not included in the statistics on individuals employed.

Referrals involved an individual applying directly to a job opportunity identified by CFBC. Referrals were most relevant for people with skill and looking for a specific employment opportunity. For the most part, the goal was to have them connect with hiring employers as quick as possible. Referrals account for 8% (n=35) of reported employment outcomes. Tracking of this outcome was dependent on individuals responding to follow up. Response rates for this group was around 50% and it is anticipated that the number of people achieving employment through a referral is higher than what is reported.

Most of the individual applicants that were supported to employment directly were either immediately in need of employment, would benefit from a specific type of opportunity, or would not be a good fit for the opportunities available through one of the partner unions. There were several reasons that individuals were not a fit: they were interested in a trade that was not being hired through a partner union, that they had an interest in work that may be more in residential construction where there are not as many union companies, or that they were a good fit for a trade in a non-construction occupation. Those who were not successful in training or opted out of the trade they tried were assisted to connect with other work which included both union and non-union employment. Around 5% of individuals supported into direct employment were transitioning from high school into their first job and were placed with companies that are known to provide supportive onsite learning opportunities including in the marine and manufacturing sectors.

Through the duration of the project there were significant number of inquiries by people who were employed and were seeking better paying options, more stable employment, or an opportunity to transition from semi-skilled labouring employment into an apprenticeship. In the last 8 months of the project there was a rapid increase in the number of these inquiries. These were not tracked initially, but data from the last 5 months of the project indicated that these accounted for about half of all applications received. The increase is most likely correlated to the inflation and the rising cost of living. However, other contributing factors may include a new emphasis on certification, as a result of the reintroduction of compulsory trades, increased competition for workers which has disrupted the labour market in multiple ways, demographic shifts in industry and other factors. Notably, this group was the most likely to be searching for employment through multiple avenues and many were able to secure new work before an assessment could be arranged (within 3 days), or before a training cohort started. These employment outcomes are not included in the counts, but many were given suggestions of unions to apply to directly or employers to contact. As there have been considerations to maintaining privacy while also sharing data, the exact scale of these outcomes is unknown.

Observable impact on retention

Two factors were identified through participant engagement to impact retention. The most significant factor has been the direct connection to employment. The second factor resulted from the assessment process and was identified as the ability to connect with the right type of employer and trade.

Dispatch through building and metal trade unions had the highest rate of retention amongst past participants. In large part this is because they were able to provide continuous employment options when layoffs occurred because of slow periods, projects ending, or other factors. As well, unions were able to provide continuous support for many of the participants and intervened when there were experiences of bullying and harassment. Where attrition did happen, it was most often associated with a mental health or addiction challenge, structural factors in individual's lives like precarious housing or a lack of drivers' licence, or because the person decided to pursue something else. Where tracked, most attrition occurred within the first 6 months of employment. Apprenticeship registration was also more common amongst individuals attached to a union (noted as 95% of participants vs. 65% of participants in non-union employment, many of whom are in the residential sector).

Retention was also observed to be impacted by how prepared people felt for the job they started. While practical skills were identified to be significant for those who participated in training, it was the relationship and emotional factors – such as anxiety and stress – that were identified to play a significant role in participant's choice to stay in the job they started. Many identified that they felt prepared for the experience of being on a job site and the unpredictable nature of changing site locations frequently, or changing crews. This was noted by all participants regardless of union or non-union outcomes. Many people interviewed felt that they were prepared ahead of time to see uncomfortable or difficult experiences that they had as "normal," and knew that they could reach

out to people on their crew or part of the project team for help if they needed it. This psycho-social support was often identified as a main reason that people chose to stay. It was also noted that there was a sense of trust and connection that came from being in a small cohort during Gateways or Apprenticeship Prep training. Often people ended up on site with those that they trained with – an experience that is unique to the Back to Work model.

Other Employment Related Activities

The project plan also identified BC Infrastructure Benefits employment and jobs facilitated in partnership with programs or agencies. Collaboration with BCIB was ongoing for the duration of the project and referrals were made where possible. For the initial stages of the project there was minimal training or employment support to undertake together as most projects were highway related. Into late 2022 and 2023 collaboration around recruitment and training in anticipation of the Duncan hospital project was undertaken. This was led by the Vancouver Island Building Trades partners and included collaborations with organizations in Duncan to support electrical, roofing and ironworking training. A minimum of 25 people accessed employment because of these activities. Additional tracking is not possible at this point due to confidentiality and privacy considerations.

Referrals to pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship programs, WorkBC Services, and other community services were made when individuals were assessed to be not work ready. Referrals were most often made when individuals required training, upgrading, or case management support that the project team was unable to provide. As well, individuals who were uncertain about the type of work they wanted or were not interested in starting a job right away were referred to appropriate organizations. Referrals almost always included direct introduction to an individual as opposed to just providing the applicant with a number or organization name. Referrals were tracked for 48 individuals and employment outcomes are known for 12. Additional reporting is limited due to privacy considerations.

Section 3 Assessment Tools & Process

Summary of participant types, numbers, experiences/feedback

The Assessment Tools and Process developed for Back to Work created a pathway for a diverse set of individuals to be supported to access training and employment opportunities quickly. The assessment was intended to be used as a means of navigating individuals into known employment opportunities based on what they were motivated to do and the skills they possessed. To accommodate a diverse set of abilities and needs, the project team developed rubrics that intended to reduce biases in the selection process. Critically, the assessment was not a screening process but rather an opportunity to gain information about what applicants needed to be successful. Applicants were assessed based on the know expectations of employers and the opportunities available to them. As such, the lessons learned, and tools developed have relevance to other organizations that provide employment and trades promotion services.

Assessment tools and rubrics are included as appendices to this report. The rubrics were used as a way of tracking applicant ability to demonstrate work readiness against a set of pre-defined measures. These measures were developed based on the original Industry ASK (Attitude Skills and Knowledge) from the Skills Ready project, with updates based on industry feedback and labour market conditions. The expectations defined in the ASK were also disaggregate to each trade participating in the pilot to ensure that applicants were assessed against the expectations of the outcome they were pursuing.

The assessment tools used when applicants were most effective with individuals who had no previous work experience and for those with limited trades experience. The rubric structure was not as relevant for applicants with experience in the sector or those with an awareness of the trade they were most interested in. The two considerations that determined the efficacy of assessment were the assessor's awareness of employer expectations and opportunity, and the motivation of individual applicants.

This section identifies how the tools were used, who benefited, and lessons learned.

Building a Framework: Rubrics to Mitigate Bias, Trust to Move People Forward

The concept of an assessment framework was developed to support consistency between different project partners when identifying the potential for an applicant to be a good apprentice. Assessment rubrics were developed for initial assessment and for training with the intention that a score could be referenced when making decisions about who is dispatched to employed and who may not be a god fit for the trade they're pursuing. The scoring system relied on different factors and ranged from 1 (not yet meeting expectations) to 4 (exceeding expectations).

The tools were intended to facilitate communication between CFBC which was undertaking most upfront assessments, training providers, Unions, and employers. This was determined early on to be critical as a way of ensuring some level of objectivity within a process of training that was new and unfamiliar to most. They were also identified as a key quality control mechanism that could be used to ensure that training was consistent and meeting the needs of the job. For example, if employers identified an individual was underprepared, the rubric could be used as a reference point for how.

In practice the rubrics provided a highly accurate means of tracking how much applicants demonstrated potential. They were not used as a checklist, rather as a reference point. The scoring worked as a way of noting observations and flagging areas of additional need. However, they were not required for communication between partners as much as anticipated. Additionally, the score that was developed for each applicant did not function as a factor for screening or decision making. In practice, the process of discussing opportunities and barriers with people created the space for individuals to self-select out or for key needs to be identified. These key needs were then utilized in the process of planning training and support to accessing employment. The scoring system was most effective at validating the observations that all partners had of applicants; most applicants score at around a 3 overall.

What mattered most in the process was the relationship of trust built with the individual applicant than the score. This relationship created a means of identifying conditions for success. As one assessor noted, "it is about inviting people to participate as opposed to getting answers out of them." When the rubric and assessment process was used like an interviewing tool, applicants would provide the answers that they thought people wanted to hear. This led to new issues appearing at later stages. In some cases, this resulted in serious concerns for individual safety. Alternatively, the assessment process was much more effective when it was used as way of having an honest discussion about the reality of the jobs available. This allowed for more complex factors to be addressed, including psychosocial factors such as mental health and addictions.

Building trust at each stage of the assessment process meant that it became possible to spot potential and best fit. In the original project design a matrix was proposed to distinguish the needs of applicants. The matrix used two key measures along a spectrum of low to high readiness. The two measures were (1) Skills, which assessed an individual's ability to perform the tasks of their desired job (or the job available), and (2) general work readiness which included factors related to access to work and general attitude. The tool was meant to provide a framework for determining if training would be required and what the next steps may be. While it was always assumed that the demand side factors such as jobs available and skill requirements would be important determinant factors in the pathways offered to applicants, over time demand side factors have proven to be by far most significant because the most important question has become, "how willing are they to do the job available?" and "how likely are they to succeed on the sites that are hiring?"

Most people who were willing to work went to work. This was largely possible because of a high level of demand for workers. If someone was motivated, it didn't matter what they scored in the assessment; they could still be supported to find a job. Another way to view it, was the score showed how much they matched the job they wanted, the process dictated how they were supported to find a job.

In practice, the assessment team's knowledge of the jobs available meant that assessment was a navigation of opportunities and matching what individuals were looking for with what was available through the project. When the project did have options to offer, then the assessment process became a support tool. This included for individuals who were not ready to do the jobs available but were highly motivated. For them, training options were key. For those individuals who were ready and willing to work, the project

team could utilize a network of employers to ensure that individuals connected with a job. For the majority of people participating in assessment activities, the process did provide a means of stepping forward with support.

When the project didn't have something to offer, then the assessment process did act as a screening tool. For example, those that were seen to be not ready or willing to work in the jobs available were referred training programs that could best support them. One major area was when applicants or trainees were experiencing substance use challenges. If they became a member of a BC Building Trade then the rehab and benefits plan could be accessed. However, when substance use appeared before they were members (most often in the first three months of employment), then little was feasible. Significantly, the priority became using the assessment process to ensure applicants were set up for success. When that wasn't possible, the project team relied on a network of services and support individuals as best as possible.

Who was Assessed?

Back to Work received applications from a broad range of BC residents. There were several trends that were be identified amongst applicants. The rubric scores for individuals participating in the assessment process ranged from 1.4 to 3.8, with most people around a 2.8. Based on the rubric, this indicates that most would meet employer expectations in the trade they were pursuing.

Applicants had many different priorities, but the majority were seeking a better paying job from individuals with no work experience or training, to people with trades certification and looking for a career change. Applicant details are discussed in Section 2 of this report, but key data is summarized here:

1. 78% of all applicants were Male, 11% were female and less than 1% identified as non-Binary.
2. 11% of applicants Self Identified as Indigenous.
3. 8% were Newcomers.
4. 60% of applicants were youth, 85% were under 40 years of age.
5. Around half of individuals assessed had high school or less that high school education, with 21% having some level of post-secondary (13% had a 4-year degree). 18% of all individuals assessed had some level of trades training – more than half of which were Foundations graduates.

Through the delivery of the project unique trends emerged that distinguished different types of applicants. The original matrix of low to high readiness and low to high skill provide a useful reference point for planning activities generally. Throughout implementation the categories of readiness and skills were not as useful in working with specific individuals. The needs, motivations, and barriers that each person experienced required a response to assessment and continuous program support that was dynamic. Critically, what determined an individual's success was the fit for the opportunity available. Where they were not yet prepared, the predictor was their ability to engage fully and learn quickly.

As such, the assessment process became a support process where intermediaries such as CFBC and the training partners collaborated to continuously define the restrictions and options available. What made the process feasible was that, for the most part, most applicants had the motivation and capacity to address barriers that they were experiencing in their own life. This became increasingly apparent over time as there was an increase in the portion of applicants looking for better pay or were motivated to start a career.

Some of the groups identified are described here with a summary of the support that was provided.

Summary of Groups Assessed: Diverse Needs and Individualized Experiences

Not motivated or ready for work - Very few of these individuals applied to the project. When seen they often came as a referral from a service provider. There was not a significant amount that the project team could offer individuals. Some participated in Gateways as a means of exploring career options.

Low Skill but Motivated – This group required minimal support. These were mostly young people who had recently graduated with no experience, but they were motivated and interested in a trades career. This was often the least common applicant type because they can find employment on their own – however employer observations suggest there are not a lot of people like this applying. For this group, the efficiency of service provision is key: keeping them engaged required quick responses. A maximum of 2 days to access an assessment, 1 week to be on track for a job or training option and employed as soon as possible.

Ready and Willing but Need Support – These are individuals that face intersecting barriers that can be addressed without major intervention or can be resolved by the participant independently over time. Many are experiencing the impact of poverty or financial insecurity. Individuals here demonstrate an interest and potential to learn quickly. This group made up at least half of those assessed. A barrier faced could range from easy to resolve, such as not having the right tools, to disruptive and complex conditions such as couch surfing or a disability that restricts the type of work that is feasible (ex. Noise sensitivity, PTSD). Challenges such as childcare, recovery from an injury, poverty factors, and drivers licensing challenges such as fees or fines required intervention beyond the scope of the project. Additionally, individuals with significant literacy or numeracy gaps are often in this category as they face barriers to progressing in an apprenticeship and may have a higher likelihood of not completing. This group requires a mix of supports that are best delivered in a network of services.

Complex solutions – This includes those interested in a specific trade, or trades generally, but unprepared in a way that could not be immediately resolved by the project team or network. This included people who were unable to access work due to transportation restrictions, a physical requirement that could not be met such as weight or physical injury, minimal language skills in a high-risk environment that required quick and clear communication, struggles with mental health that restricted their ability to attend work, or other barriers that required ongoing, or sustained, mitigation strategies and external support. For this group, alternatives could be organized but this requires significant resources that were not always available. Through Back to Work, options to provide direct intervention were limited to the adaptations to the expectations of individuals that could be facilitated through the partnership – including employers.

Ready but not able or willing to do the job available – Throughout the project there was a general group of individuals who can do the jobs available, but are disinterested in them, unable to do the job, or a combination of these factors. Often this group were looking for help to access a specific job or wage they needed to cover their living costs. The options for this group are limited to the employment available. Support has meant helping individuals navigate to another job, which may be a different career path altogether, or a longer-term plan to progress into the trade they want (including to employers willing to sponsor apprentices). While referrals to existing employment programs have been common, the strength of the project team has been an acute insight into industry that can facilitate access to employment that matches an individual's threshold for a survival wage.

Skilled but no longer committed – This group are characterized by people with high literacy and numeracy skills, technical training, and/or trades experience. Many of this group had made progress in their apprenticeship. Most were considering changing trades or leaving the industry for personal reasons. Within this group are individuals who have had negative employment experiences, started a trade but are unsure if they want to stay with it, have significant learning challenges that affect their ability to succeed in school, or are left unemployed following a major project and unsure if they will stay in the sector. Some in this group are at the intersection of multiple challenges. There are very few solutions commonly available to help them navigate their career – leaving individuals feeling left on their own to figure out what comes next. Unfortunately, many will leave the trade when that challenge becomes overwhelming. A portion of this group may emerge more when unemployment rates are low because there is a sense of confidence that other employment is available. CFBC is working in partnership with many organizations and employers to develop potential solutions that support retention and progression of this group – including certification completion.

Trades Adjacent – In early 2022 the project team observed an increase in the number of applicants with previous experience but no training or certification. Many were interested in changing career paths within the sector and often looking for a better wage, starting an apprenticeship, or less physically demanding work. Further consideration is relevant because they may be one of the largest groups of available workers who could be transitioned to address shortages of skilled tradespeople.

Many applicants were previously working in sub-sectors or parts of industry where trades certification is less common – including residential construction and un-certified concrete or carpentry type laboring. While individuals in this group have been working alongside trades people, for the most part they are not eligible for prior hour recognition or certification challenges because they have not done the technical tasks of the trade. However, they have a set of relevant skills and knowledge that is easy to build on. Significantly, they mostly will not immediately transfer into an apprenticeship role without some form of short-term technical skills training or long-term academic upgrading support.

There are also many practical reasons that prevent them from transitioning to an apprenticeship on their own. This is especially a consideration when it represents a choice to start over from the beginning of a career pathway. Reasons such as the wage disparity (they make more currently than they would in a new career or apprenticeship), physical limitations including injuries or general bodily wear and tear, and because they lack confidence around learning.

A review of BC's Labour Market Forecasts suggests that there may be as many as 24,000 people who exist in a trades adjacent position. If this is accurate, there are potentially almost as many trades adjacent workers that could be tradespeople as there are currently certified and uncertified carpenters. What makes this group worth noting from a training or employment program perspective is that they fall into a gap between existing opportunities. They are not eligible for most employment or funded pre-apprenticeship programs because they are employed. Most have not had the educational experiences or possess the financial stability that would enable them to pursue an institutional route into apprenticeship. They may also have low levels of literacy and numeracy which affects their perception of themselves as capable of post-secondary learning.

Conclusion:

Back to Work has had a positive impact on the lives of people living and working in BC. It has created an opportunity to demonstrate how trades careers can be made more accessible and reiterated the critical role of onsite or workplace-based training to support apprenticeship success. While not every element or activity undertaken through the project will continue in the way it was established, the lessons learned, processes and tools established, and training models tested have been replicated into BC's apprenticeship system. Many of the most successful features of the project have transformed how training and direct entry are being considered – especially in the context of major projects with diversity and local hire objectives.

Moving forward, three critical areas have been identified that project partners are committed to addressing together. These include:

1. **Accessibility to Apprenticeship and More New Entrants** –Effectively balancing the need for general trades promotion so that there are a greater number of applicants to choose from with the urgent demand for motivated and capable new entrants into a trade – especially when employer, union, or community resources are limited.
2. **Retention and Progression** – Solutions that support the retention and progression of trades people who are at risk of leaving the industry. This includes increasing the collective understanding of the experiences and needs of individual apprentices who may experience learning challenges (including undiagnosed learning disabilities), mental health and addiction struggles, discrimination and harassment, or who have other experiences that affect their retention. Investments in retention may be more critical than those in new entrants at this point.
3. **Support Transitions for the Trades Adjacent** – BC may have a significant untapped solution to skilled trades shortages in the form of skilled labourers and trades helpers who face financial and learning barriers to transitioning into an apprenticeship. Building on those that are in the industry already could be a critical part of shortening the training path from new entrant to competent journeyperson while also limiting attrition associated with other training solutions. The Apprenticeship Preparation model and innovative learning strategies may be critical to the feasibility of this solution.

Back to Work has had a material impact in the number of BC workers accessing sustainable careers in an apprenticeship, as well as addressing pieces of the skilled shortages that employers experience. It has also impacted how training and direct entry options are considered as the project has demonstrated practical and affordable mechanisms for preparing people to be successful in the trades.

Appendices

The following appendices are included in this report:

1. Advisory Member List (active as of 2023)
2. Assessment Tools
    a. Rubric for Assessment at Application
    b. Rubric Tools for Assessment and Training Activities

Appendix I: Back to Work Committee Members

Organization	Representative	Title
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 230	Phil Venoit (Chair)	Business Manager/ Financial Secretary
Construction Foundation of BC	Abigail Fulton	Executive Director
BC Regional Council of Carpenters	Merissa Cox	Training Coordinator
	Tim Bolderson	Representative
Sheet Metal Workers International Association Local 276	Jason Pedersen	Business Manager
BC Infrastructure Benefits (Contractor Representative)	Sofia Morales	Executive Director for People and Corporate Services
	Tina Khan	Manager, Workforce Development
SkilledTradesBC	Craig Woods	External Relations
Ironworkers Local 97	Danielle Shaw	Trade Improvement Coordinator
UA Local 324	Jim Noon	Business Manager
Observers or Presenters		
Post Secondary and Future Skills (Sector Labour Market Partnership Program)	Susannah Machelak	Senior Program Manager
Construction Foundation of BC	Jordan Perrault	Director of Strategic Initiatives
Western Joint Electrical Training Society (WJETS)	Adrien Livingston	Executive Director

List is updated as of August 2023

Appendix II: Assessment Rubric

Factor	Consideration	1 – Low Readiness	2 – Approaching Expectation	3 – Meets Expectations	4 – Exceeds Expectations
Has complete CV/Resume		No resume or cover letter	Resume & letter need updating	Up to date & relevant resume	N/A
Knows what they want					
	Has a trades interest	Does not know which trade is appealing	Has a few interests	Has a clear preference	Has a preference they are already pursuing
	Knows what work will be like (physicality, work environment, time commitment, etc.).	Demonstrates no-to limited understanding	Is aware of general employer expectations	Has some reference for trades (friends or family)	Has demonstrated experience in related environments
	Understands training & employment options	Is not familiar with apprenticeship	Knows that apprenticeship requires employment	Understands that apprenticeship is a training & work-based program	Has identified training options
	Self-reflection on skills & training gaps	Unaware of current gaps	Is aware of some personal skills gaps and training options	Aware of skills gaps & can identify potential training options	Can identify training, upskilling or other skill required skill development.
Barriers to employment[15]					
	Driver's licence + Vehicle	No licence, no vehicle	Has at least an L, can get to work.	Has at least a Class 7 (N) & vehicle access.	Class 5 or higher plus endorsements

[15] Note that barriers are based on the employment options and may not be an accurate assessment category in many situations.

Childcare	No childcare	Ability to identify potential solutions & understands expectations.	Childcare solutions are in place from job start to end (7AM-4PM)	Childcare solutions are in place for any shift (24 hrs. plus camp work)
Housing Stability	Instability will affect ability to work	Reasonable plan in place to support full attendance at work	Housing is not actively a barrier to employment	N/A
Mental Health & Well Being	Mental health & addictions limit commitment	Demonstrates self awareness around limitations	Ability to participate safely on site (low risk to self and others)	Demonstrate leadership in supporting others wellbeing
Physical Ability	Physically unable to do required trade tasks	Understands the expectations & is working towards physical fitness	Can do the physical requirements & perform most trade tasks. Can communicate & plan for limitations	High level of physical fitness & no limitations for trade tasks
Demonstrates a Positive Attitude				
Motivated	Requires external guidance to get started & progress	Is interested in working but is unclear of options & needs guidance to progress	Is interested in working but unclear what the next step is. Needs some support to progress	Knows what they want & need, requires assistance with connecting to supports
Hardworking (Punctual & Dependable, Diligent, Positive)	Late, unavailable for work, is untidy, takes shortcuts & complains	Rarely late, available to work, concerned about quality, follows directions. Is hesitant to take on new tasks	Never late, prepared, available for work & overtime, is careful to produce good work, follows directions & asks questions. Is engaged & wants to participate	Arrives early, leaves when cleanup is complete, takes pride in work, enjoys details, & follows direction. Asks questions & anticipates needs. Enjoys the tasks.

Willing & Ready to Learn (Inquisitive, Problem Solver, Self-Reflective)	Does not ask questions, only sees problems, & is unaware of skills & knowledge gaps. Has no goals.	Sometimes asks questions. identifies problems, struggles to find solutions. Reluctant to learn & cannot see gaps. Has a vague goal.	Asks questions to learn. Offers solutions to problems & asks for help. Has a realistic sense of skills & is open to input. Can set short- & long-term goals.	Proactive & asks questions. Applies previous experiences to new challenges. Can identify skills & knowledge gaps, seeks advice to improve. Has short- & long-term goals.
Responsible (Accountable, Determined, Organized, Safe)	Does not take responsibility, gives up, is disorganized & takes risks	Avoids responsibility for mistakes but corrects errors when guided, completes most tasks, is somewhat organized & cleans up when instructed. Is concerned for the safety of others.	Identifies, owns & corrects mistakes. Completes what they start. Is organized & cleans up after themselves. They ask before exposing themselves to risks. Follows safe work practices.	Identifies, owns & corrects mistakes, plus seeks help to improve. Starts & completes tasks without direction. Is organized. Ends the day by planning the next. Take steps to minimize risk & seeks to learn how to be safer.
Team Player (Co-operative, Engaged, Leads & Supports)	Unwilling to do what is asked, blames others, offers opinions out of turn & does not listen	Supports others when asked, often disengaged, & has limited input	Sees themselves as part of team, follows directions & is engaged with others in the task at hand. Offers & receives constructive feedback.	See themselves as part of a team & actively supports others. Engaged & can increase efficiency independently. Demonstrates leadership & collaboration.
Initiative (Motivated worker, Responsive to Change)	Needs to be told what to do & finds it difficult to adapt to new situations	Knows what needs to be done but waits for direction. Likes routine & resists change.	Can be left to work independently. Open to taking on new roles or challenges.	Anticipates what is needed & adapts quickly to change.
Previous Experience				

Related Work Experience	No previous work experience	Has had a previous job	Has had a previous labouring or manual job	Trades experience
Trades Skills (Tools & Technique)	No experience with tools	Casual at home or school experiences	Enrolled in school program or has personal interest	Has significant tool and trades related experience
Previous Training				
Certifications for Safety	No certificates	WHMIS or other short-term certificates	Multiple Certificates required for work	All required certificates for work (Advanced OFA, etc.)
Formal Education Complete	Ungraduated	Graduated. Basic math and science	Graduated. Physics 11 & Math 12	Technology certificate or diploma, post-secondary in related field (ex. engineering or science)
Technical Trades Training	No previous training	Awareness of training options	Foundation programming	Completed other technical training
Work Based Trades Training	No work-based hours	Some related experiences, no hours	Labouring or helper hours	Apprentice hours accumulated
Transferable Skills				
Tool & Physical Literacy	No related experience	Some experience with tools or physical literacy	Related occupational trades or manual work. Demonstrates dexterity or machine use.	Significant work experience in related field: machine use, manual labour, or technical employment

Other	No other transferable skills	Some demonstrated transferable skills	Demonstrated skills related to known labour market demand	Significant skills related to known labour market demand
Employment & Apprenticeship Skills				
Employment specific tools, techniques, process, or equipment as required for the applicable trade.	Unable to perform the tasks or use the tools required for work	Has the potential to learn through additional training and supervision	Can perform the tasks or use the tools required for work	Can work independently as an apprentice
Can work safely	Cannot work safely. Puts others and self at risk.	Can work safely. Requires supervision and further training.	Can follow safety procedures and demonstrates an ability to keep self and others safe	Demonstrates safe work practices, anticipates requirements, & proactively seeks solutions with others

Appendix III: Rubric Tools for Assessment and Training Activities

Part 3: Assessment Tools

Assessment tools were developed for assessment and training activities. These used a rubric format that references the *Industry ASK model of (1) Not Meeting Expectations to (4) Exceeding Expectations.*

The rubrics were used to varying degrees across all partners.

Assessment Tools

	Assessment	**Gateway**	**Apprenticeship Preparation Training**	**Onsite Training**
Tool Used	Assessment Rubric	Gateway Rubric	Apprentice Readiness Assessment	Onsite Rubric
Purpose of Assessment	Identify general readiness	Identify if applicant is a fit for training & employment	Identify if applicant is ready for apprenticeship	Identify progress & readiness for apprenticeship
Who completes	CFBC Team	Gateway Leader	Instructor	Supervisor
When it is completed	At intake	At conclusion of Gateway	At conclusion of training	After work experience concludes

Assessment Rubric			
Participant Name			
Completed by		**Date Complete**	

Work Readiness		**Score (1-4)**
Has complete CV/Resume		/4
Knows what they want		
	Has a trades interest	
	Knows what work will be like	
	Understands training & employment options	
	Self-reflection on skills & training gaps	
Sub-Total		/16
Readiness for Employment		
	Driver's license + Vehicle	
	Demonstrates requirements for the opportunity available	
Sub-Total		/8
Demonstrates a Positive Attitude		
	Motivated	/4
Work Readiness Total		/32
Work Readiness Average		/4
Skill Readiness		
Previous Experience		
	Related Work Experience	
	Trades Skills (tools & technique)	
	Physical Readiness	
	Demonstrates safe work practices	
Sub-Total		/16

Previous Training		
	Certifications for safety	
	Formal Education Complete (high school or higher)	
	Shop Class or Trades Exploration	
	Technical Trades Training	
	Work Based Trades Training	
Sub-Total		/20
Transferable Skills		
	Has Transferable Skills	
Sub-Total		/4
Skills Total		/40
Skills Average		/4

Gateway Rubric	
Participant Name	
Gateway Trade	
Instructor Name	
Dates	

Work Readiness		**Assessment Score (1-4)**
Demonstrates Positive Attitude		
	Hardworking (Punctual & Dependable, Diligent, Positive)	
	Willing & Ready to Learn (Inquisitive, Problem Solver, Self-Reflective)	
	Responsible (Accountable, Determined, Organized, Safe)	
	Team Player (Co-operative, Engaged, Leads & Supports)	
	Initiative (Motivated worker, Responsive to Change)	

Work Readiness Total		/20
Work Readiness Average		/4
Skills & Knowledge		
Employment & Apprenticeship Skills		
	Has previous tool knowledge & tool literacy	
	Can physically do the job	
	Is able to use the tools	
	Demonstrates ability to learn	
	Can work safely	
Skill & Knowledge Total		/20
Skill & Knowledge Average		/4

Recommended next steps (Indicate all that apply)	
Safety Certification	
Further Training (Pre-App)	
Direct Dispatch	
Recommended Employer	

Apprenticeship Prep		**Assessment Score (1-4)**
Participant Name		
Trade		
Instructor Name (Org.)		
Date		
Work Readiness		
Demonstrates Positive Attitude		
	Hardworking (Punctual & Dependable, Diligent, Positive)	
	Willing & Ready to Learn (Inquisitive, Problem Solver, Self-Reflective)	
	Responsible (Accountable, Determined, Organized, Safe)	
	Team Player (Co-operative, Engaged, Leads & Supports)	
	Initiative (Motivated worker, Responsive to Change)	
	Organized & Tidy	
	Work Readiness Total	/24
	Work Readiness Average	/4
Skills & Knowledge (Employment & Apprenticeship Skills)		
Safety Training is Complete		/4
Tool Use		
	Tape Measure Use	/4
	Hand Tools	/4
	Power Tools	/4
	Machinery & Equipment	/4
	Tools Subtotal	/16
Techniques & Abilities		

	Layout & Interpret Drawings	/4
	Perform General Trades Tasks	/4
	Perform Specialized Trades Tasks	/4
	Can Work Safely	/4
	Techniques & Abilities Sub-Total	/16
Trade Knowledge		
	Demonstrates knowledge of the trade	/4
	Identify & Describe Common Materials	/4
	Identifies Hazards & Risks	/4
	Identifies Safety Mitigation Strategies	/4
	Trade Knowledge Sub-Total	/16
	Skills & Knowledge Total	/52
	Skills & Knowledge Average	/4

Recommended next steps	
Direct Dispatch or Other Training/Resource	
Recommended Employer	

Onsite Training Rubric	
Applicant Name:	
Company Name:	
Company Contact Person:	
Date Created:	
Assessment Completed by:	
Trade	

Work Readiness		**Assessment (1-4)**
Demonstrates Positive Attitude		
	Hardworking (Punctual & Dependable, Diligent, Positive)	
	Willing & Ready to Learn (Inquisitive, Problem Solver, Self-Reflective)	
	Responsible (Accountable, Determined, Organized, Safe)	
	Team Player (Co-operative, Engaged, Leads & Supports)	
	Initiative (Motivated worker, Responsive to Change)	
	Organized & Tidy	
	Work Readiness Total	/24
	Work Readiness Average	/4
Skills & Knowledge		
Tool Use		
1.	*As defined in onsite training plan*	/4
2.		/4
3.		/4
4.		/4
5.		/4
	Tools Subtotal	/20

Skills – the applicant is able to:		
1.	*As defined in onsite training plan*	/4
2.		/4
3.		/4
4.		/4
5.		/4
	Skills Sub-Total	/20
Knowledge – the applicant demonstrates knowledge of:		
1.	*As defined in onsite training plan*	/4
2.		/4
3.		/4
4.		/4
5.		/4
	Knowledge Sub-Total	/20
	Total	/60
	Average	/4
Recommended next steps (further training, hire as labourer, or apprentice sponsorship)		

Construction Foundation of BC

215-963 Langford Parkway

Victoria, BC V9B 0A5

250 220 5861

info@constructionfoundation.ca

constructionfoundation.ca

The Construction Foundation is a registered Canadian charitable society.

Charitable Registration: **BN 83026 6300**

CFBC

Building foundations
for empowered futures