



# Canada-BC Workforce Tariff Response

## Introduction

The [Canada-BC Workforce Tariff Response](#) is a joint initiative between the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, providing \$70.4 million through the Canada-BC Labour Market Development Agreement over three years to support BC workers within the softwood lumber, steel and other directly and indirectly tariff-affected industries.

The initiative will help more than 8000 workers adapt, retrain, and succeed in rapidly changing economic and labour market conditions. Targeted supports will assist steel and softwood workers, other impacted workers in forestry-dependent communities, and affected workers across impacted sectors in BC to remain resilient and adjust to economic shifts.

Supports will be delivered through BC's established WorkBC service network, alongside a newly established province-wide Canada-B.C. Workforce Tariff Response – Forestry Grant and other diverse initiatives that will ensure timely, responsive, local supports for workers including:

- Impacted unemployed workers who want to build new skills to move into in-demand jobs
- Workers participating in Work-Sharing agreements with their employer who need training to gain new skills as their industries change and new opportunities emerge and
- Employed workers seeking to upgrade their skills to stay adaptable and resilient, especially in industries directly and indirectly affected by tariffs and global market shifts or their supply chains or in communities that rely heavily on these employers, such as single-industry communities.

Together, these actions will help stabilize forestry-dependent communities, reduce risk of long-term unemployment, and support workers and regions affected by tariffs to build a more resilient and inclusive future.

[StrongerBC: Look West](#) plays a complementary role within British Columbia's Workforce Tariff Response (WTR) by supporting workers, employers, and communities to adapt to trade-related disruption and reduce reliance on any single international market. Look West is anchored by a provincial investment of \$241 million over three years starting in 2026/27 to expand and strengthen skilled trades training, increasing seats in apprentice programs and addressing waiting lists for critical industrial trades, and ensuring faster access to training. Look West also creates close to 300 new technology training spaces for specialized professionals needed to support economic diversification, building on the 5,000 new tech program spaces added since 2017.

Look West is designed to catalyze up to \$200 billion in private sector investment over the next decade, with approximately \$88 billion in major projects projected to advance over the next three years, creating sustained labour demand across construction, LNG, energy, mining, infrastructure, marine, and advanced manufacturing sectors.

## Strategic Engagement

Since early 2025, BC has undertaken broad outreach across key tariff-exposed and adjacent sectors, including forestry and value-added wood manufacturing, steel, construction, mining, advanced manufacturing, transportation, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The province is engaging employers, workers, industry partners, and communities to ensure training and supports respond to real, on-the-ground needs. Through ongoing consultation, the province is working to align training with current and emerging job opportunities, ensure Work-Sharing supports are practical for both businesses and employees, and help workers at risk of job loss access timely skills development.

Labour unions representing workers across sectors including forestry, steel, mining, and manufacturing continue to provide critical insight into evolving workforce pressures, including layoff risks, shifting skill requirements, Work-Sharing needs, and barriers to accessing targeted training and other employment services. Their input has informed BC's focus on flexible training pathways, employer-supported reskilling, and targeted support for impacted and at-risk workers.

This collaborative approach will help workers gain the skills they need to stay employed or transition to new opportunities, while supporting employers to retain and grow their workforce. Together, these efforts will strengthen the resilience of BC's labour market and help communities adapt to economic changes.

Through Community Transition Tables, BC engages directly with rural, remote, Indigenous, and forestry communities facing significant disruption. These tables, supported by provincial ministries include local leaders, Indigenous governments, employers, unions, WorkBC Centres, and Service Canada, provide a coordinated, place-based mechanism to assess emerging impacts, identify training needs, and align services with local economic opportunities and major projects.

For 2026/27, BC plans continued targeted engagement with these critical partners and groups to ensure that labour market programming is responsive to industry and employer needs and that skills training supports are available for mid-career workers.

## Canada-B.C. Workforce Tariff Response - Forestry Grant

The Canada–B.C. Workforce Tariff Response – Forestry Grant, with funding provided to Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) for a province-wide strategic grant, will enable rapid, flexible deployment of funding and scales across BC, while concentrating resources in regions experiencing the most severe impacts. This includes supports for:

- Impacted forestry workers affected by permanent closures or prolonged curtailments
- Access to skills training for employed forestry workers at risk of job loss, including those participating in Work Sharing and
- Other impacted workers in forestry dependent communities facing broader economic adjustment pressures.



## Worker Transition and Training

Supports focus on job linked and opportunity-driven pathways, including:

- Lateral transitions that leverage transferable skills
- Reskilling and upskilling into in-demand occupations

## Employer Driven and Preventive Supports

To stabilize employment and retain skills:

- Employer-supported training and upskilling to adapt operations and diversify
- Wage subsidies and on-the-job training to support redeployment of forestry workers into local opportunities such as civic infrastructure, wildfire mitigation, and road construction
- Targeted supports for forestry owner operators to pivot business models and retain workers

## Strategic Objectives

The forestry workforce tariff response is designed to:

- Enable timely re-employment and sustained labour-market attachment for unemployed forestry workers
- Support early intervention for employed and at-risk workers, including those participating in work-sharing arrangements to retain employment
- Provide job-linked reskilling and upskilling aligned with real labour demand
- Deliver community-driven, place-based transition solutions in heavily impacted regions
- Strengthen long-term workforce and community resilience through diversification and economic transition



## Coordinated Community Transition Model

The cornerstone of BC's approach is its rapid community transition response model, which provides one-window, coordinated access to provincial and federal supports. Through Community Transition Tables led by the Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth, BC ministries work in partnership with local governments, Indigenous partners, employers, unions, WorkBC Centres, and Service Canada to:

- Share real-time information and support community-driven solutions to leverage emerging opportunities
- Identify local workforce and training needs
- Align funding with regional opportunities, including major projects and infrastructure initiatives

This model ensures responses are locally informed, adaptive, and responsive to evolving conditions.

# WorkBC Centre Supports

## Supports for Workers

Impacted workers can access employment supports across the province through BC's network of 102 WorkBC Centres, which provide a comprehensive suite of employment and training services, including:

- Employment counselling and job-search assistance
- Skills training, including short-duration training, micro-credentials, and required occupational certifications
- Paid work experience opportunities and on-the-job training
- Financial supports such as:
  - o Tuition and training costs
  - o Transportation assistance
  - o Dependent care supports
  - o Living-away-from-home allowances

These supports are designed to enable timely re-employment, facilitate transitions into in-demand occupations, and support sustained labour market attachment.

## Supports for Employers

WorkBC Centres also support employers in forestry-impacted and transitioning regions by:

- Connecting employers with skilled and job-ready workers
- Providing wage subsidies and employer incentives to support hiring, training, and workforce retention
- Together, these services help employers address immediate labour needs while supporting broader workforce transitions aligned with regional and sectoral economic shifts.

Learn more: [WorkBC Employment Services - WorkBC Centres](#)



# Integrated Supports for Workers, Employers, and Communities

## B.C. Employer Training Grant (ETG)

Employers play a critical role in supporting early intervention, reskilling, and worker retention. The B.C. Employer Training Grant (ETG) helps employers train new or existing employees by sharing the cost of skills training aligned with labour-market needs. This includes supporting forestry employers and employers in affected communities to upskill workers, adapt operations, and facilitate redeployment into emerging opportunities. ETG supports employers navigate tariff impacts by ensuring that their employees have access to training that allows businesses to pivot, adopt new technologies and diversify their operations.

Learn more: [B.C. Employer Training Grant](#)

### Community-Driven initiatives include:

- Cohort-based training aligned with locally-identified labour demand
- Community-specific transition projects emerging from Community Transition Tables
- Supports for regional diversification and long-term economic resilience in forestry-dependent areas

## Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP)

CEP supports projects that create training, work-experience, and labour-market solutions through local and regional partnerships, including communities impacted by tariffs and major employment disruption.

Projects that respond to labour market impacts in communities or for people affected by tariffs - such as those in forestry, steel, agriculture, manufacturing, and other sectors - will be prioritized and expedited.

Eligible projects could include (but are not limited to):

- Job fairs
- Community impact reports
- Skill gap analysis
- Occupational skills training

Learn more: [Community and Employer Partnerships](#)

## Community Workforce Response Grant

The Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG) provides flexible, rapid-response funding to support skills training that helps workers transition into in-demand jobs. CWRG prioritizes projects in rural, remote, and forestry-dependent communities experiencing economic disruption, and supports partnerships that align training with real employment opportunities. Communities, non-profits and local organizations can use the program to ensure that local workers can get the training they need for local jobs.

Learn more: [Community Workforce Response Grant](#)



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