

Community Impact Report

2021-2022



The Skills Centre is a non-profit strengthening rural and industrial communities and workplaces through workforce skills development, training services, social development and poverty reduction programming.

Our Vision: The Skills Centre is a leader in fostering inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities.

Our Values: Diversity, Collaboration, Innovation, Advocacy & Accountability

We offer skills training and employment programs for youth, mature workers, under-represented groups, and pre-employment healing & wellness programs for survivors of violence and abuse.

Our programs are free for clients and offer training, certifications, wage subsidies, support for childcare and transportation, and bonuses for completing a program.

"The program exceeded my expectations in how each piece complemented the other. The support each professional delivered was amazing."

– Heart participant



Of our Tools for Trades participants completed their training plans



Of them started post-secondary training or found sustainable employment

Diversity

Skills Centre staff and board members continue to take equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training to ensure our organization reflects the communities we serve in personnel, cultural sensitivity, attitudes and practices. With our diverse staff, we can offer services in four languages: English, Spanish, Gujarati and Hindi.

We also continue to draw attention to the importance and value of EDI for today's workforce and will soon be offering EDI training resources to all of our clients as well as employers.



Collaboration

The Skills Centre partners with 5 local governments to deliver their official poverty reduction program, Thriving for All. We also manage the web presence for the Lower Columbia affordable housing listings on our new website.

Our partnerships for our programs include working with CBAL, Trail FAIR Society, Teck, Red Mountain Resort, Trail & District Public Library, Selkirk College, Interior Health Authority, Apex Forest & Wildfire Services, Community Futures Boundary, along with other organizations and businesses.

Innovation

To help address the dire shortage of workers in public health, we developed a new partnership with Thompson Rivers University (TRU), RBC and the Ministry of Advanced Education to pilot a way for people in the Kootenays to take TRU's medical lab assistant training in their own communities.

Students in five Kootenay communities are in the midst of their training and will have their practicums in their home towns with a very high probability that they will be able to move directly into jobs when they are done.

"They made the process of starting school again so much easier and less stressful than it would have been. I'm so appreciative of all the help they've given me." – Shaye, Tools for Trades participant

Advocacy

The Skills Centre is an advocate for paying a living wage, the four day work week, and paid sick days among other social development and poverty reduction solutions.

We demonstrated this in the past year through stories in the media promoting the benefits of the four day work week, encouraging businesses and organizations, such as the Village of Fruitvale, to become a living wage employer, and joined 64 other organizations signing an open letter to the BC government to legislate a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year for all workers across the province.

Accountability

We achieved 3-year accreditation for Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in July 2021. CARF accreditation shows that our organization strives to improve efficiency, fiscal health, and service delivery – creating a foundation for client satisfaction. Our Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification ensures our facilities and services are accessible and inclusive, and we openly promote that we are a safe space for LGBTQ2S+ people.



25

Years of service to the community as the Skills Centre celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2022

75

Percent of Brave Beginnings clients who started school or a job by the end of the program

23

Partnerships with local businesses & organizations

2.1

Million dollars total budget in 2021/22



Skills Training

Our employment programs provide skill development and training for an equitable workforce.

Brave Beginnings for Newcomers

Brave Beginnings for Newcomers offered recent immigrants personalized employment assistance services, skills training and financial support.

Brave Beginnings achieved 100% intake, and 80% of participants completed a training plan.

"Brave Beginnings is a great program that is helping me and my daughter to improve our personal and working skills. Bethel and Harshil have been very kind, patient and supportive. We are so much grateful to them and the program." – Damaris

Mature Workers

Older workers are returning to the workforce for various reasons, including longer life expectancy, increasing need for financial security, and changing views on traditional retirement.

We work with people 55+ to get or refresh the skills and certifications they need to be competitive in the labour market.

88% of Mature Worker clients took substantive training or found sustainable jobs as a result of being in this program.



Skills Training for Youth

We help youth identify jobs they are interested in, the training they need, and help them get up to \$1,500 in certifications so they can get those jobs.

Spark Your Start-Up

We helped youth make an educated decision on whether or not to commit to starting a business. They worked with professional business consultants to learn about business ownership and how to develop a business concept.

"I felt I could reach out at any time and get the answers I needed. The support from the staff was very helpful and got me to dive deeper into thinking if entrepreneurship is right for me, analyzing my business concept and getting a better understanding of marketing/communications and how I could apply them to my business." – Hannah

Tools for Trades

Tools for Trades helped youth and persons in under-represented groups get into the Trades Foundations program at Selkirk College, find job placements in the trades, provided financial support for tools, equipment and clothing required for training or apprenticeship, and matched clients with employers.

More than 1/2 of our clients are young people, ages 17-29, and 1/3 are from visible minorities or other under-represented groups.



Social Development

Our pre-employment programs increase our clients' resiliency through counselling and training to prepare them for further education or the next step of job readiness.

HEART

This four week holistic healing program helped women heal their mental, spiritual and physical self after experiencing the trauma of domestic violence or sexual abuse. Heart included equine-assisted learning, art therapy, yoga, mindfulness and group workshops in a safe, confidential setting.

93% of Heart participants completed the entire program.

Survivors of Violence or Abuse

SOVA creates a supportive training environment to finding employment. We work with clients to create a plan that addresses mental, physical and emotional supports to help them move forward in their employment journey.

All of our staff have participated in trauma informed workplace training and mental health first aid.

Two-thirds of SOVA participants started school or a training program, or found sustainable employment through this program.



Poverty Reduction

We are leading the way in bringing awareness to poverty issues in the area and finding solutions for the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Our poverty reduction programming supports our most vulnerable community members by helping them access supports and services in the community.

The Skills Centre continues to deliver the **Thriving for All** poverty reduction program on behalf of its 5 local government partners, the City of Trail, City of Roseland, Village of Fruitvale, Village of Montrose & Village of Warfield.

Bringing Community to Your Door, a program that delivered 1,700 healthy meals to people in need during the peak of the pandemic, and **Community Kitchens**, a weekly gathering of people to learn to make healthy meals, budget for food, and socialize are two successful components of this collaboration.

We thank the Union of BC Municipalities for their support of this program as well.

"I have learned so very much from this program--so much more than I ever could have imagined. You have been so helpful and have pushed me to try things and do things that I never thought I would. I am very grateful for having had this experience, just very grateful." – Mature Workers participant



Success Stories

The Skills Centre is an inclusive, accessible, safe and welcoming place for people of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, ethnicities and lived experiences. We're here to help you succeed, and we're ready to help today.

We promote inclusivity, equity and diversity in the community and in the workplace. We also believe in skills development throughout our careers, so we're constantly learning and passing these new skills on to our clients.

We launched our new website, www.skillscentre.ca, in the fall to serve our clients, the business community and our partners better with a faster, more informative resource.

We brought the **Lower Columbia affordable housing** listings and **Thriving for All** into the new website as well since both fall under the Skills Centre's umbrella of responsibilities.

We're in the Boundary, too

Grand Forks, Greenwood, Midway, Rock Creek & stops in between, we're there for you, too. We serve the Boundary region and can meet you in your community, or you can access our services virtually if that works better for you.

106

Exams taken in our Pearson Vue testing centre

4

New Economic Recovery Skills Training Programs

3

Of these new programs met 100% of their targets, and the 4th met 75%

13

Participants accessed additional financial support for training through CBT's TFSP



We celebrated some big milestones with staff and board members this year.

Marla Dean Smiley retired last June after 8 years with the Skills Centre.

Mary Lynn Manwell retired in March after 23 years with the Skills Centre.

Roberta Post retired from the board this spring after 23 years on the board of directors.

Bethel Torres celebrated her family gaining their Canadian citizenship,

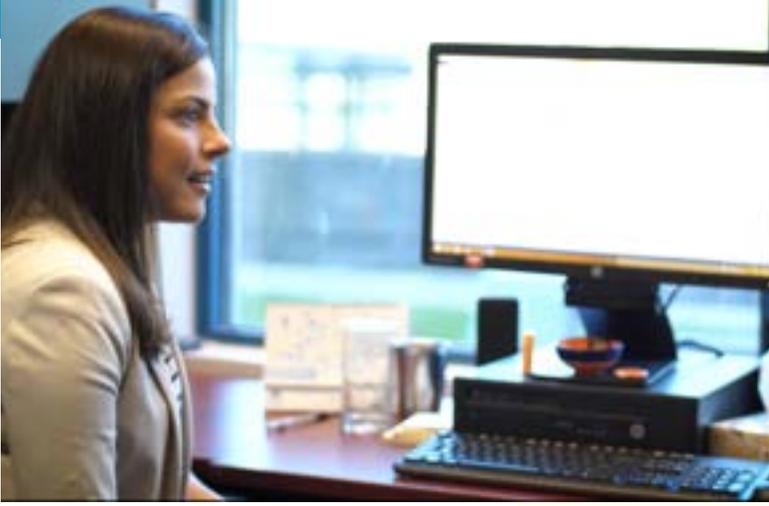
and **Jay Shete** became a permanent resident. Congratulations to all!



Support for business

We help employers as well as employees. We offer human resources expertise, succession planning, wage subsidies & staff training—we'll customize our approach for your business or organization's needs.

Our best example of our success is the Teck Wellness & Learning Centre. We work with Teck Metals Ltd. to organize short courses, sports and fitness activities, and health and wellness awareness campaigns.



Looking Ahead

Our staff and board worked hard to develop a new Five Year Strategic Plan this past year that will guide the Skills Centre through 2027. [A summary of the plan is available on our website.](#)

A few things to look forward to later this year include:

- Financial literacy training for people living with low income
- Community Kitchens will continue through September
- More bootcamps for youth workers

Join our community

Be the first to hear! [Sign up for our quarterly newsletter](#) to stay up-to-date on happenings in your community & at the Skills Centre.

And be sure to follow us on social media.



2022 is the Skills Centre's 25th anniversary, and we'll be celebrating with you later this year!

Contact us

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We are grateful to live and work on the unsundered traditional territories of the Sinixt, Ktunaxa, Syilx and Secwepemc First Nations. We honour our relationships with these First Nations and all other First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who reside in these territories.

The Government of Canada, BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, the Industry Training Authority (ITA), Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), LeRoi Foundation, RBC Foundation, Beaver Valley Food Action Initiative & Columbia Basin Trust fund our employment skills training programs and poverty reduction initiatives.