

# CANADA – BRITISH COLUMBIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT PROGRAM RESULTS SUMMARY

2022/23



Canada



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

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

# Canada – British Columbia Workforce Development Agreement

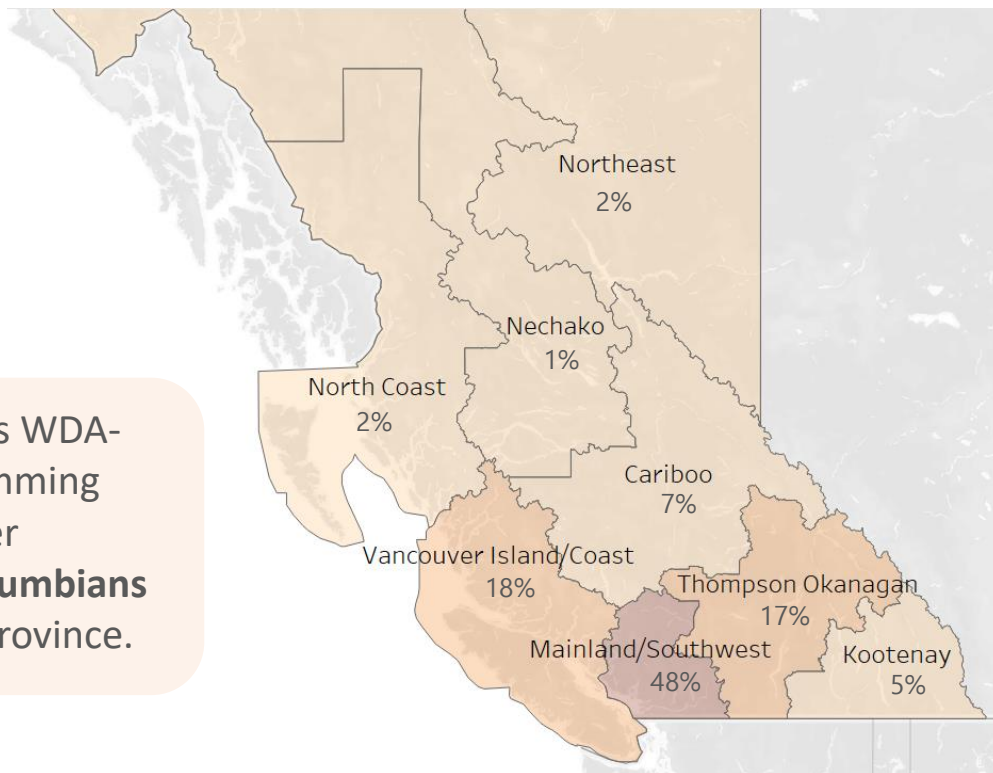
The *Canada - British Columbia Workforce Development Agreement (WDA)* provides funding to British Columbia (B.C.) to design and deliver programming that equips vulnerable British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, with skills and supports for employment, and supports employers and communities with training to address urgent and emerging skill and labour needs.

Through B.C.'s Ministries of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and Social Development and Poverty Reduction, over \$125M of WDA funding was invested in labour market development programming in 2022/23.

This report highlights WDA-funded program results by program focus: programs serving people who are vulnerable or underrepresented in the workforce; those focused on communities; those attending to employer skill demands; and those serving persons with disabilities.

Results from 2022/23 demonstrate progress toward meeting the WDA objectives to foster inclusive labour market participation, align skills with labour market needs, and create efficient labour markets while ensuring programs are client-centered, flexible and responsive to emerging priorities.

## Participants by B.C. Economic Region<sup>1</sup>



In 2022/23, B.C.'s WDA-funded programming served over **58,000 British Columbians** throughout the province.

<sup>1</sup>Broadly, these percentages mirror the population of each region. However, the Mainland/Southwest is approximately 11 percentage points lower than its population share.

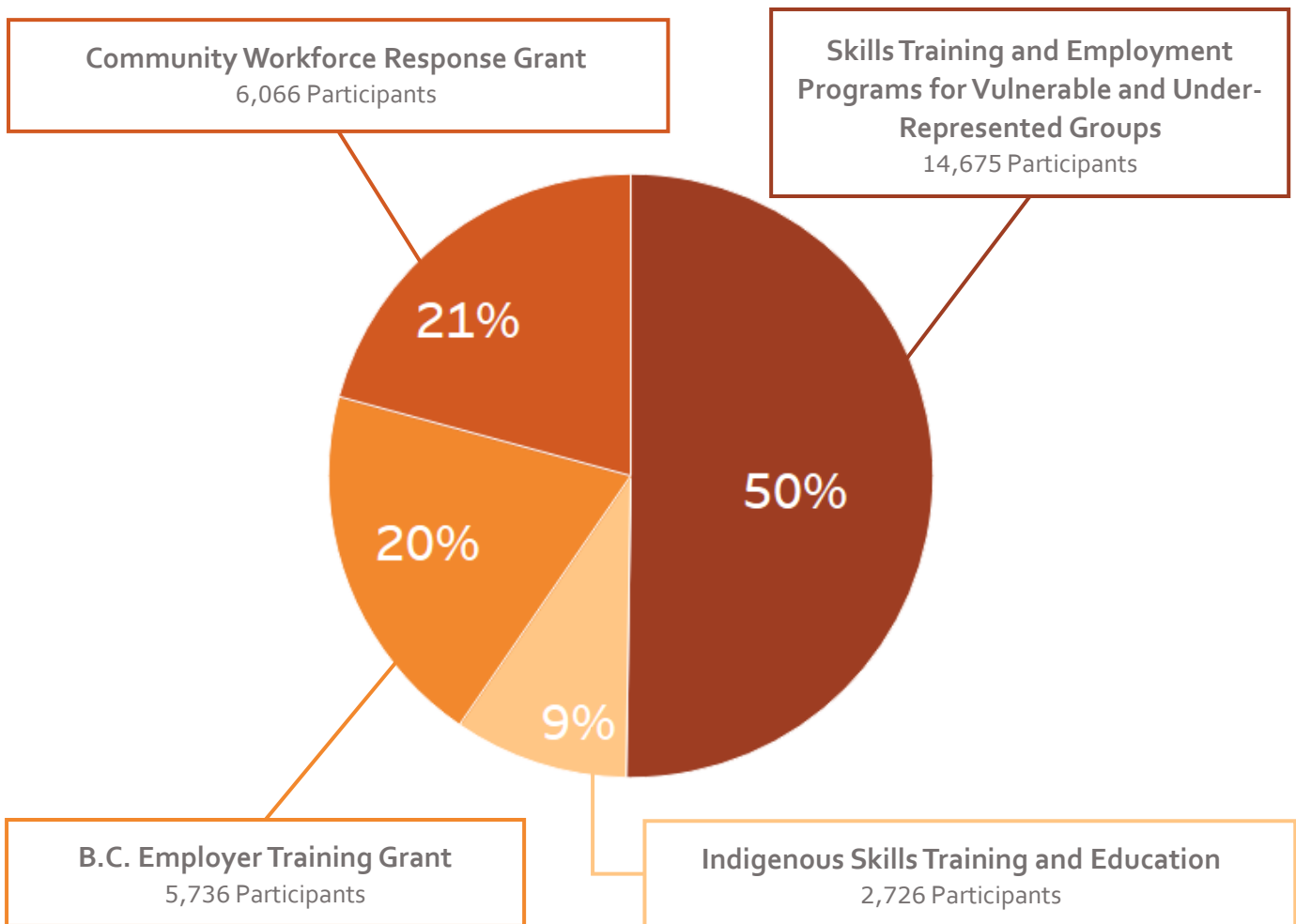
# Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills Programs

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills served a total of **29,203 participants** in 2022/23, delivering a broad suite of programs through partnerships with training and service providers, communities, employers, sectors, and Indigenous Peoples. Programs included: Skills Training and Employment Programs for Vulnerable and Under-Represented Groups; Indigenous Skills Training and Education programs; the Community Workforce Response Grant; and the B.C. Employer Training Grant.

Of those with reported outcomes, 78.1% of participants were employed upon completing their programs, while 8% were pursuing further education or training, a positive outcome rate of 86.1%<sup>2</sup>.

The following section of the report provides participant demographic and outcome information per program area.

## Participant Count by Program



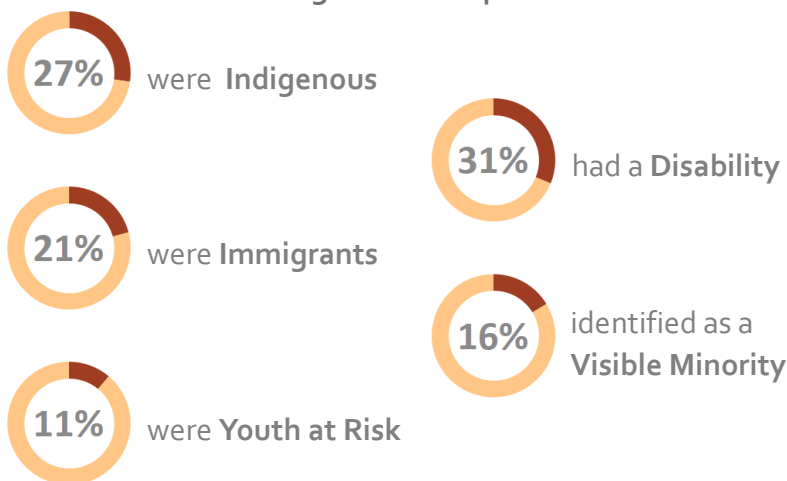
<sup>2</sup>This high outcome rate is influenced by unique program and reporting characteristics of the B.C. Employer Training Grant and Skills Training for Programs for Vulnerable and Underrepresented Groups. Furthermore, outcomes at program exit are not collected for all participants. Throughout this report, participant outcome percentages are calculated based on those participants with reported outcomes.

# Skills Training Programs for Vulnerable and Under-Represented Groups

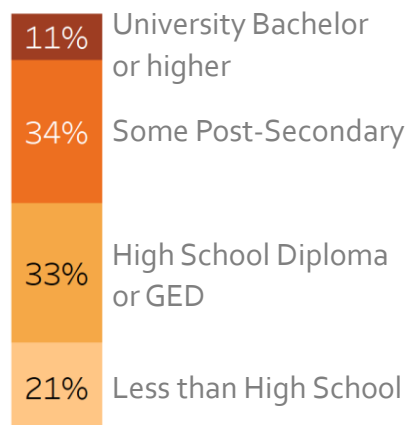
The Skills Training Programs for Vulnerable and Under-Represented Groups serve people who face barriers to employment and are not employment-ready. Participants are expected to increase their skills and employability, enroll in subsequent training or education programs, and/or to become sustainably employed and resilient in the labour market. Funding is distributed across the following three program areas: Skills Training for Employment, BladeRunners and SkilledTradesBC Pre-Apprenticeship Training.

## Participant Demographics<sup>3</sup>

### Designated Groups



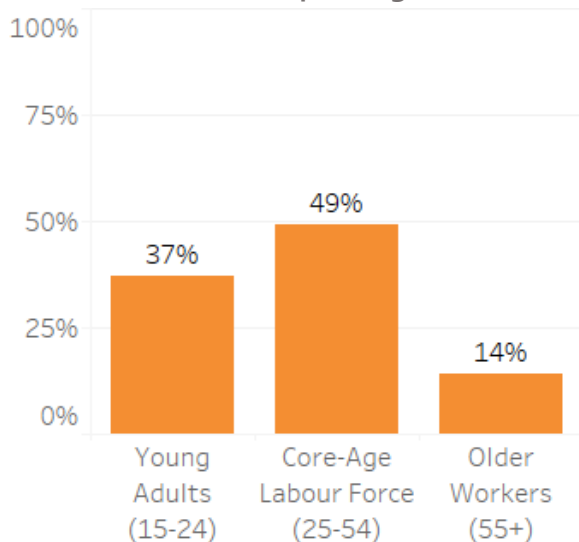
### Education Levels



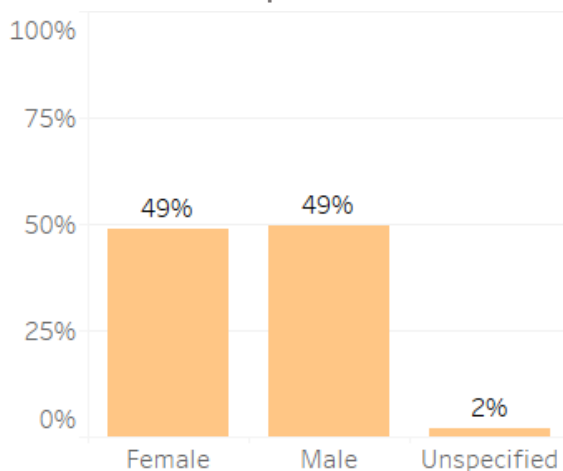
In total, over two-thirds of the programs' participants self-identified in at least one of the above categories, with many participants self identifying in more than one.

54% of the programs' participants had high school education or less.

### Participant Age



### Participant Gender

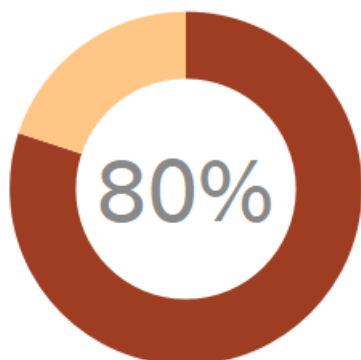


<sup>3</sup> Throughout this report, missing and "prefer not to report" responses are not included in our percentage calculations.

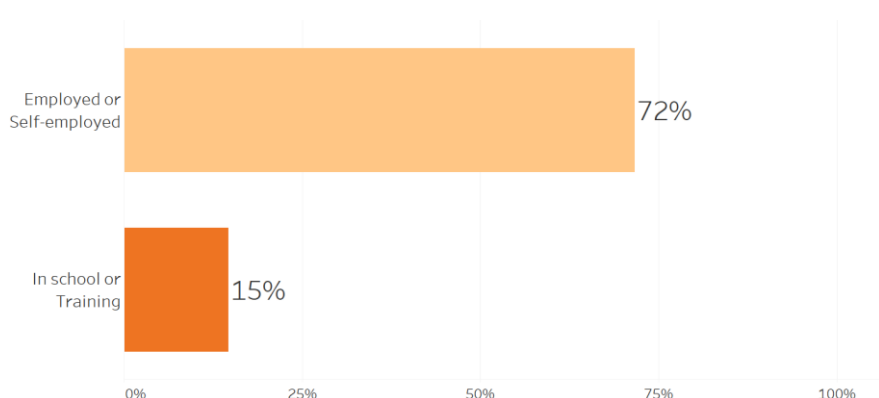
# Skills Training Programs for Vulnerable and Under-Represented Groups

## Participant Outcomes

Certifications Received



Employment Status at Program Exit <sup>4</sup>



### Success Story: Finding employment through the FreshSTART program

Recently relocated from the Vancouver area to Penticton, Amanda faced several barriers on her path to employment – 18 months of unemployment, lack of current certifications, and a networking weakness as a result of being new to the Okanagan. She was also hampered by financial challenges, a previous relationship turned abusive, loss of self-confidence, and low self-esteem.

However, Amanda was able to clear those multiple barriers and start believing in herself again when she found Partners in Resources (Piers), a long-standing Okanagan-based social purpose organization focused on services for community members in need. With funding from the Skills Training for Employment program, Piers offers a FreshSTART program, designed for people like Amanda, to acquire skills and readiness training needed for employment.

In alignment with her goal to be a health care aide for the elderly in a supportive living environment, Amanda completed workshops in document use, interview skills, goal setting, and problem solving. She also earned First Aid and FOODSAFE certifications, and received assistance acquiring uniforms and appropriate footwear.

The support provided by Skills Training for Employment Piers and FreshSTART removed the barriers and enabled a new beginning for Amanda in a full-time position as a health care aide at a local retirement home.

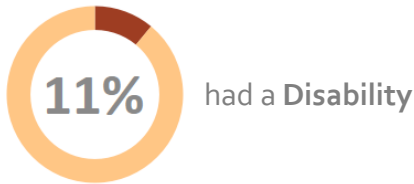
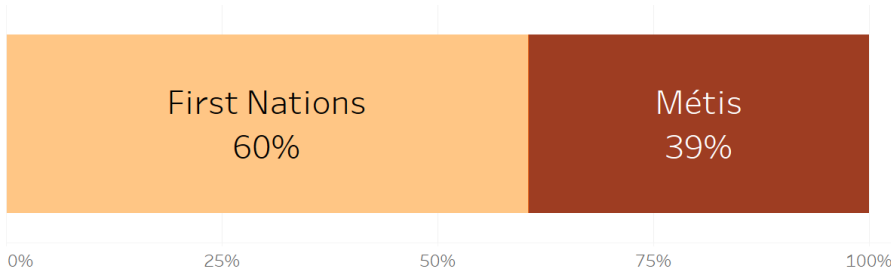
<sup>4</sup>The Skills Training for Programs for Vulnerable and Underrepresented Groups are multi-year agreements with service providers, and, due to the program's flexible, client-centred approach, participants may move in and out of the programs as needed by their personal circumstances. They are only exited from the programs once they have achieved employment or moved onto other training or education. As a result, outcome rates are typically positive.

# Indigenous Skills Training and Education

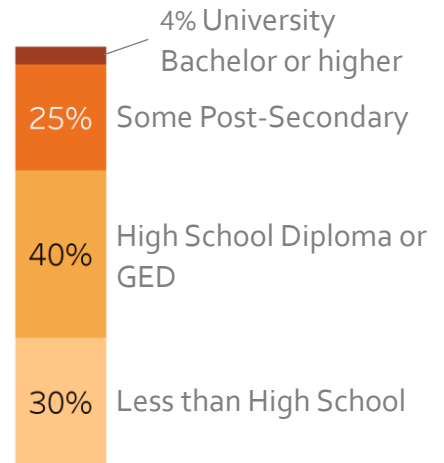
The Indigenous Skills Training and Education programs provides funding to support community-based skills training and post-secondary education for First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous people in B.C. This funding is intended to reduce barriers to accessing education and support the self-determined labour market and socio-economic priorities of Indigenous Peoples.

## Participant Demographics

### Designated Groups



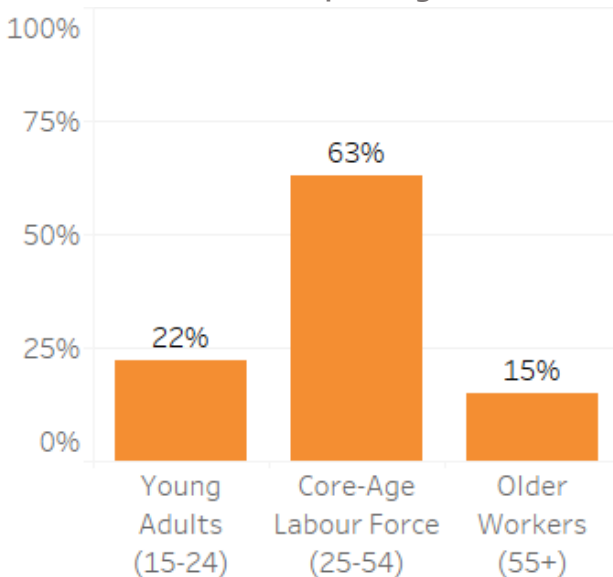
### Education Levels



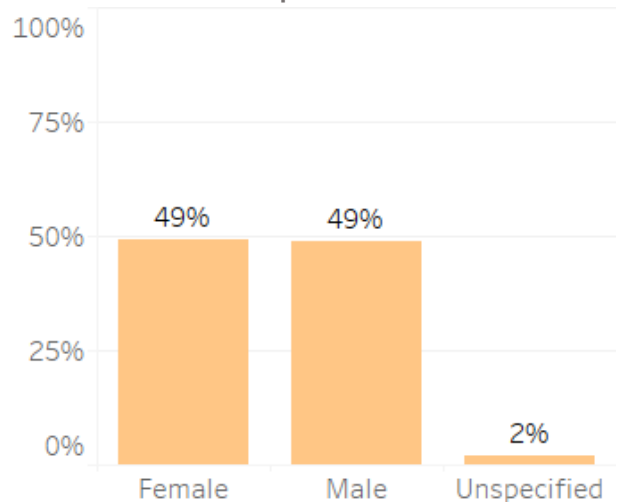
In 2022/23, the Métis Nation of British Columbia served several hundred participants through the program, composing over a third (39%) of the Indigenous Skills Training and Education participant base.

70% of the program's participants had high school education or less.

### Participant Age



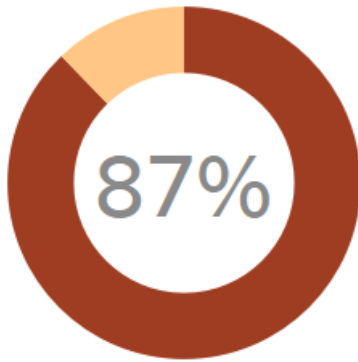
### Participant Gender



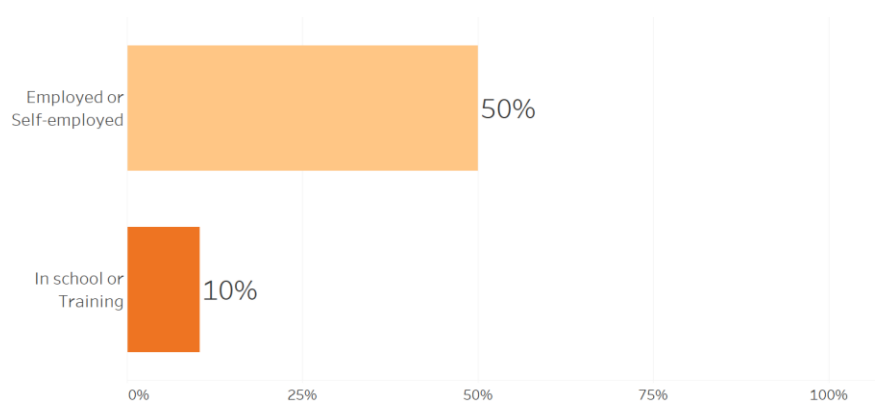
# Indigenous Skills Training and Education

## Participant Outcomes

### Certifications Received



### Employment Status at Program Exit



### Success Story: Mike's success through the My Canoe Journey program

Mike participated in the 'My Canoe Journey' program at Hiiye'yu Lelum Friendship Centre in Duncan, B.C. This training program includes essential skills, cultural teachings, literacy, self-care, and Hul qumi num language short-term training.

Mike applied for the program as a 52-year-old man with no self-confidence who felt extremely negative about himself. Mike has a hearing impairment and literacy challenges, and he suspects he is affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. He was evicted from his home during the program.

Despite his many barriers, Mike's attendance was almost perfect. He was very open and expressive with his cohorts about daily difficult situations he found himself in. The other participants always supported him. As so often happens in groups, this began the close bond the group members had. They all began trusting and opening up.

With the support of this program, Mike found the strength to not only complete the program, but to attain employment. His work experience supervisors raved about his outgoing nature and customer service skills. Mike said he did not know he had those skills before the program and had not thought of any jobs in customer service.

Mike's newfound confidence and pride are very obvious now. He beamed as he gave his speech at the My Canoe Journey commencement luncheon.

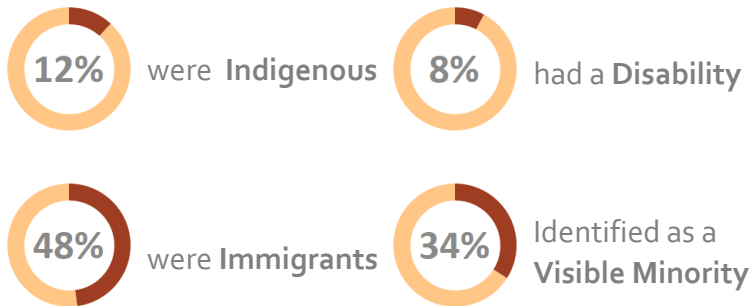
Mike is now permanently employed as a salesclerk at the Real Canadian Superstore in Duncan.

# Community Workforce Response Grant

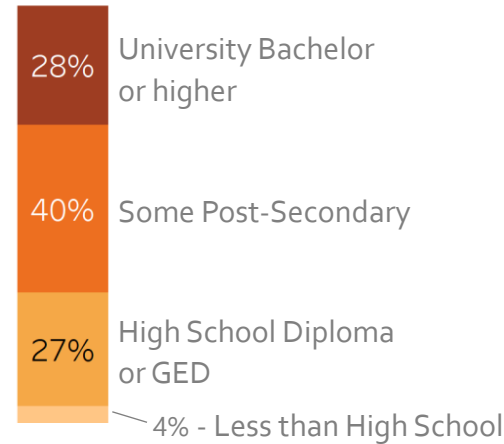
The Community Workforce Response Grant provides funding to communities and industries to support in-demand skills training leading to secure and sustainable employment aligned with local labour market needs for unemployed or precariously employed (part-time, seasonal, or casual) British Columbians. Participants are expected to obtain full-time employment or become self-employed.

## Participant Demographics

### Designated Groups



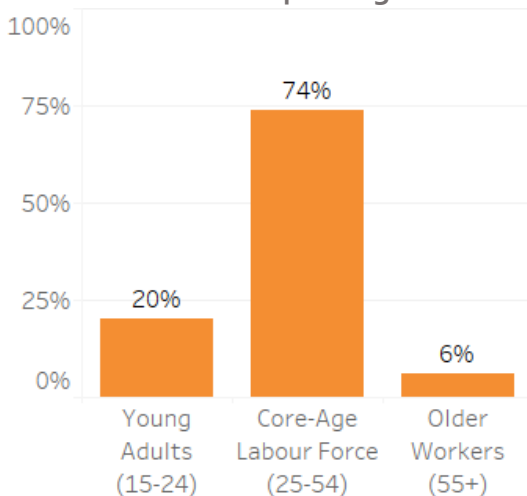
### Education Levels



70% of the program's participants self-identified as at least one of the above groups, with 48% of participants identifying as immigrants.

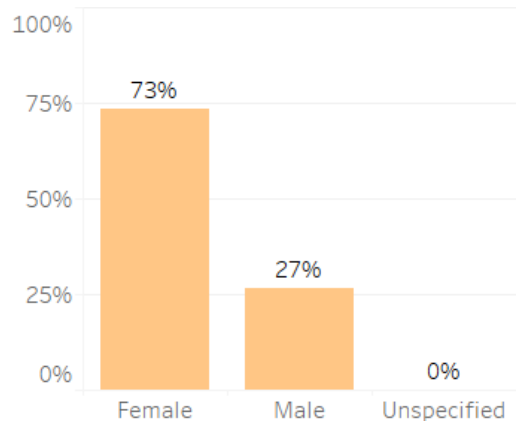
About 31% of the program's participants had high school education or less.

### Participant Age



Older workers were far less prevalent in the program (6%) than they are in B.C.'s labour force (22%), with young adults and core age workers being proportionally more represented.

### Participant Gender



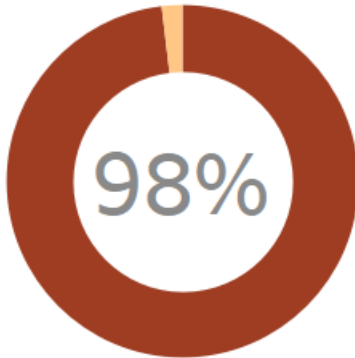
The Community Workforce Response Grant programs served substantially more females (73%) than males (27%).



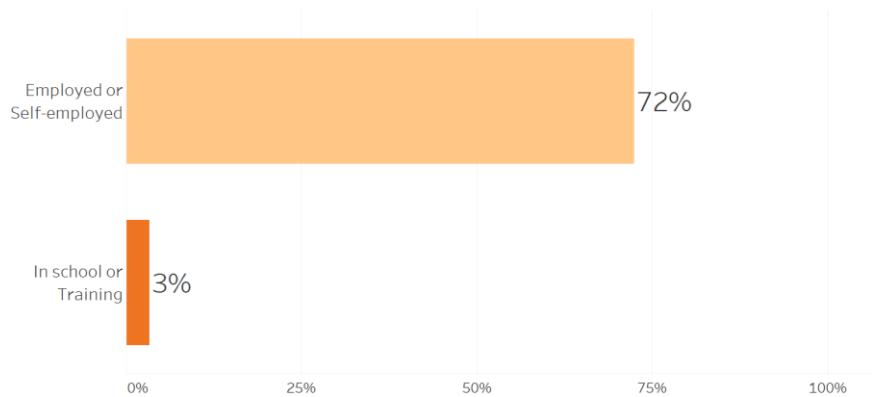
# Community Workforce Response Grant

## Participant Outcomes

### Certifications Received



### Employment Status at Program Exit



### Success Stories: Jaspreet's training leads to employment in the truck transportation sector

Rapid growth in the freight industry continues to fuel an ever-increasing demand for qualified professional truck drivers in B.C. Recognizing this growing need, the Community Workforce Response Grant and its Emerging Priorities stream funded a Transport Truck Driver Project in Surrey to help keep products moving and the economy rolling.

The Community Workforce Response Grant partnered with the Kurdish Canadian Society on the project. Society member Jaspreet is now licensed as a transport truck driver and on the road to success after completing Class 1 mandatory entry-level training (MELT) at the Coast Mountain Driving School.

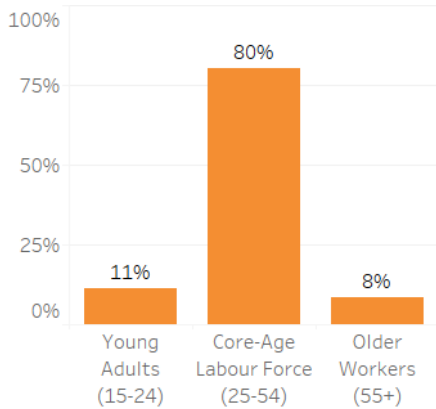
"I couldn't be happier about it. I know I was one of the least experienced in my class, but with the support and kindness of everyone around me, I was able to pass my road test on the first try. The whole journey took me about a year, but every moment was worth it. I was lucky enough to land a job as a driver for a courier company right after passing my test. And the best part? They even gave me paid training and a great starting wage," said Jaspreet.

# B.C. Employer Training Grant

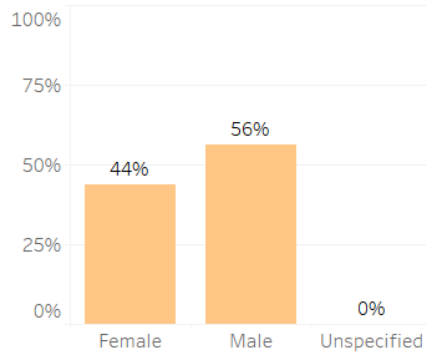
The B.C. Employer Training Grant provides funding to employers for skills training for new or current employees to improve existing skills to meet the skill needs of the business. Participants are expected to improve job-related skills to get a job or better job (which means increased pay, advancement, a change in employment status (part-time to full-time, temporary/casual/seasonal to permanent), or increased job security).

## Participant Demographics

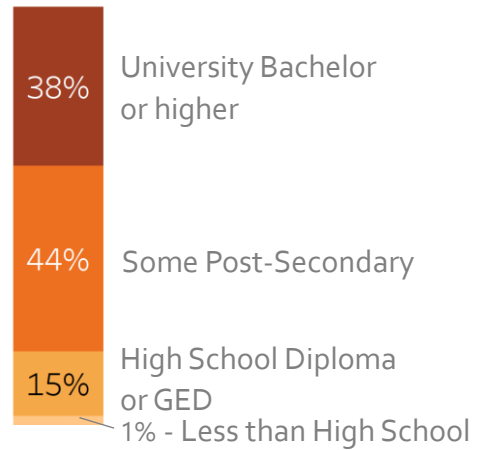
### Participants Age



### Participants Age



### Education Levels

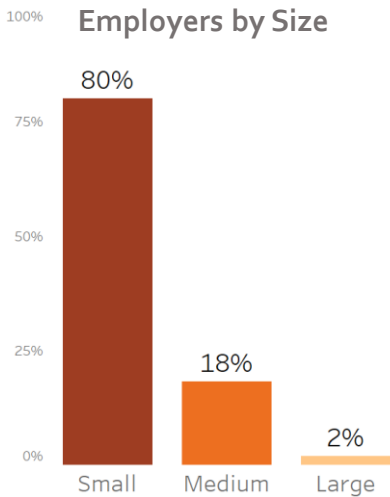


The program strongly favoured the core age group (80%) and served more male (56%) than female (43%) participants.

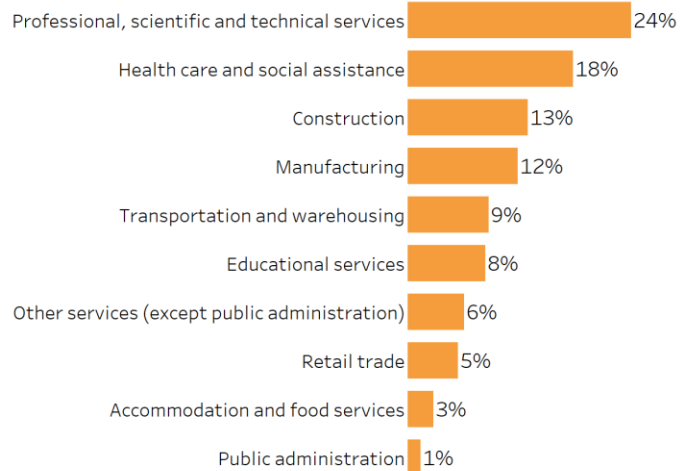
82% of the program's participants had some post-secondary education or a university degree.

## Employer Information

### Employers by Size



### Top 10 Industries by Share of Employers



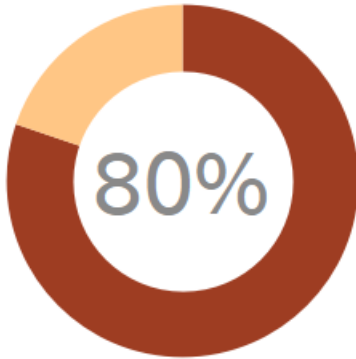
98% of the program's employers were small and medium businesses.

The largest industry represented by the program's employers was the Professional, scientific and technical services industry. However, notable growth was seen in transportation and education services, representing a focus on early childhood education and courses for road freight drivers.

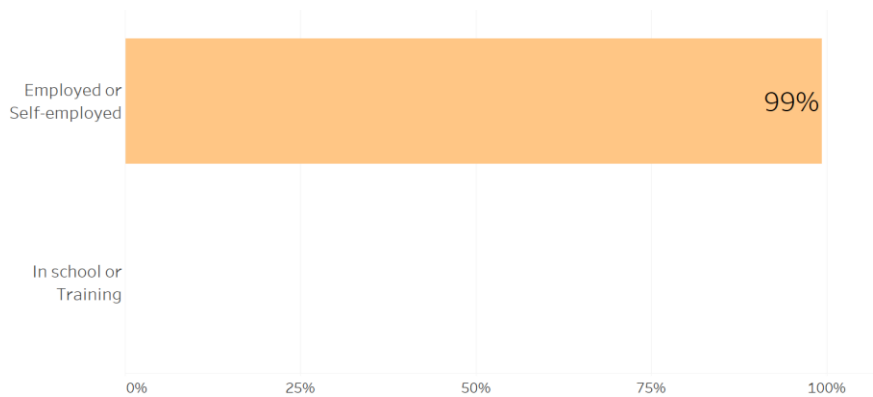
# B.C. Employer Training Grant

## Participant Outcomes

### Certifications Received



### Employment Status at Program Exit<sup>5</sup>



### Success Stories: Supporting skills training in the automotive sector in Merritt

Automotive experts in Merritt, B.C. have some additional certifications and credentials to hang above their workbenches and in their garage bays, thanks to funding support provided through the B.C. Employer Training Grant. The program helped two automotive-sector employers respond to labour needs in the Nicola Valley.

Merritt Auto Wrecking Ltd. is a used automotive parts and services company. They received \$3,300 in 2022/23 to provide technical training for employees to enhance their knowledge in the growing sub-sector of hybrid and electric motors, drivetrains, and diagnostics.

JW Storry Enterprises operates the local Canadian Tire and is dedicated to promoting from within. They received \$7,100 in 2022/23 to provide automotive apprenticeship training delivered by the British Columbia Institute of Technology. This training allowed an employee to fulfil requirements to become a Red Seal Program technician.

<sup>5</sup> Almost all B.C. Employer Training Grant participants are employed when they begin a program leading to a 99% employment rate at program completion.

# Programs for Persons with Disabilities

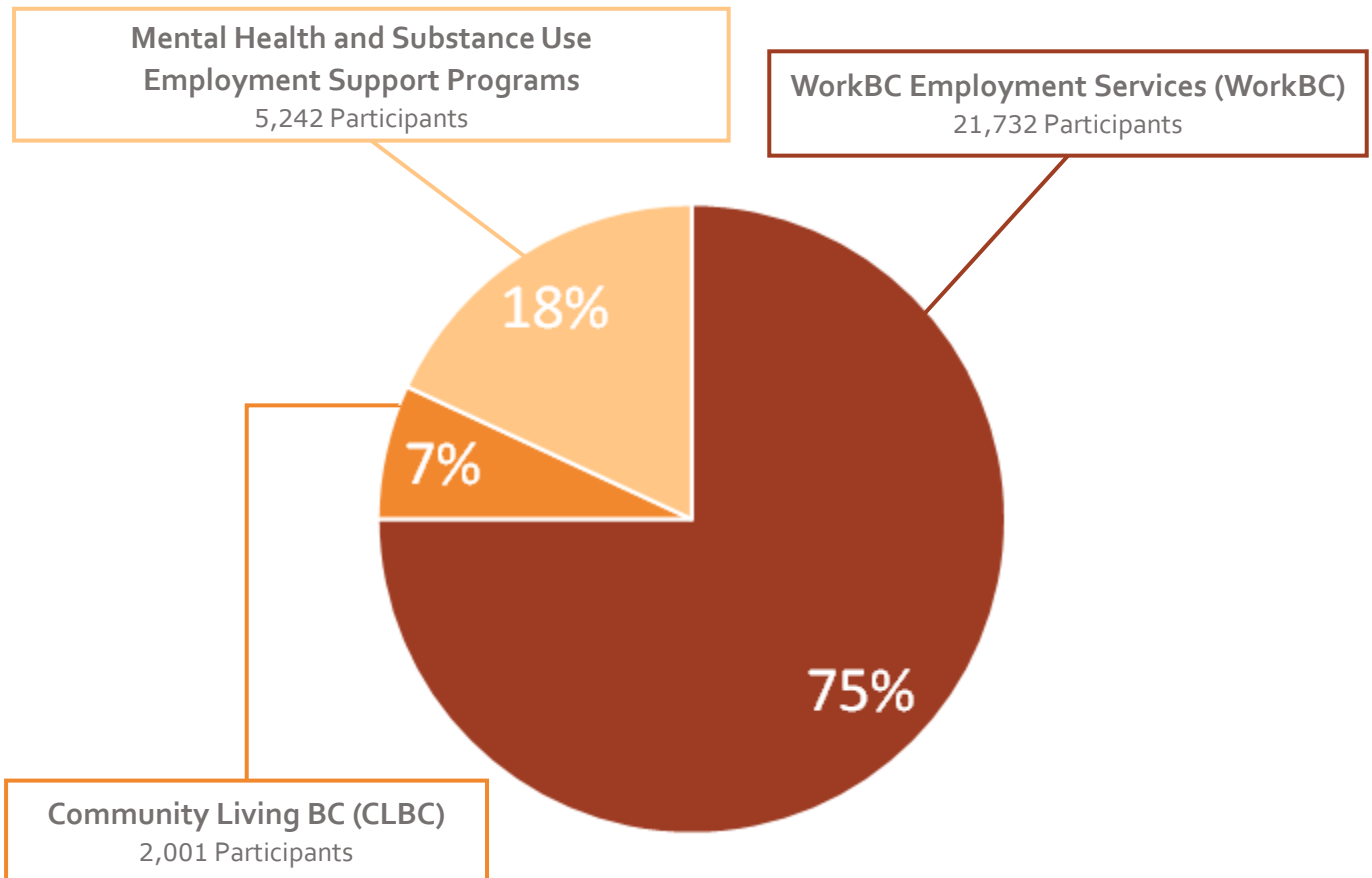
WDA-funded programing delivered by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, in partnership with Community Living BC (CLBC) and the Ministry of Health, is focused on decreasing barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

In 2022/23, programs served a total of **28,975 participants** through three program areas: WorkBC Employment Services provided over 21,732 persons with disabilities with Employment Assistance Services, Skills Development, and Work Experience services; CLBC provided supports to about 2,001 working-aged adults who face significant challenges in daily life and have developmental disabilities, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder; and the Ministry of Health had over 5,242 participants in their Mental Health and Substance Use Pre-Employment, Supported Education, and Supported Employment programs.

Of those with reported outcomes, 71% of participants were employed upon completing their programs, while 6% were pursuing further education or additional services for a total positive outcome rate of 77%.

The following section of the report provides participant demographic, information on the types of services delivered and outcome information per program area.

## Participant Count by Program

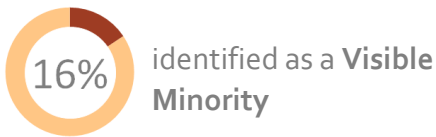
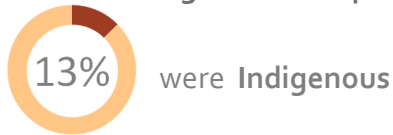


# WorkBC Employment Services

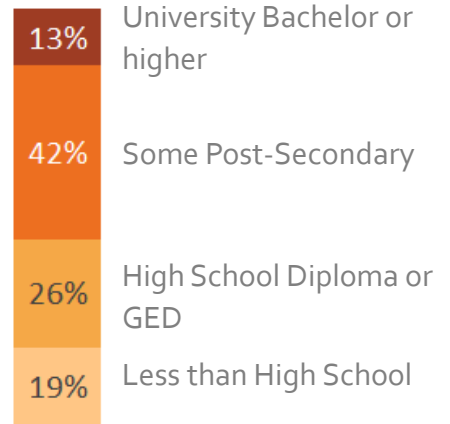
WDA-funded WorkBC Employment Services offer persons with disabilities access to a wide range of flexible employment options through one point of entry, making sure appropriate services and supports are available to reduce or remove the impact of an individual's disability or barrier to employment. Participants access the program through a network of 102 WorkBC Centres across the province via storefront, satellite, outreach, and virtual service delivery channels.

## Participant Demographics

### Designated Groups



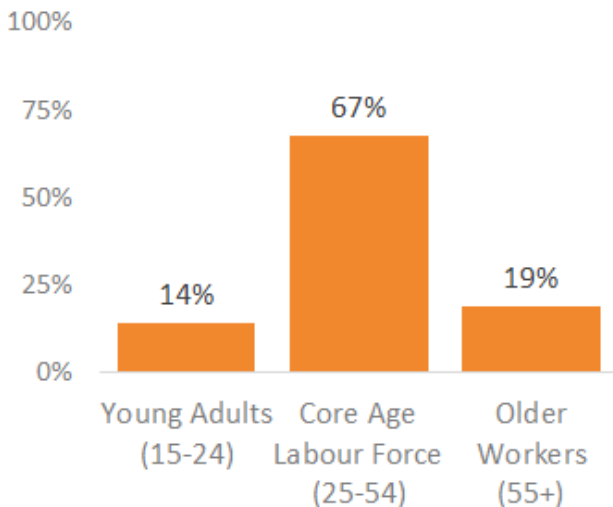
### Education Levels



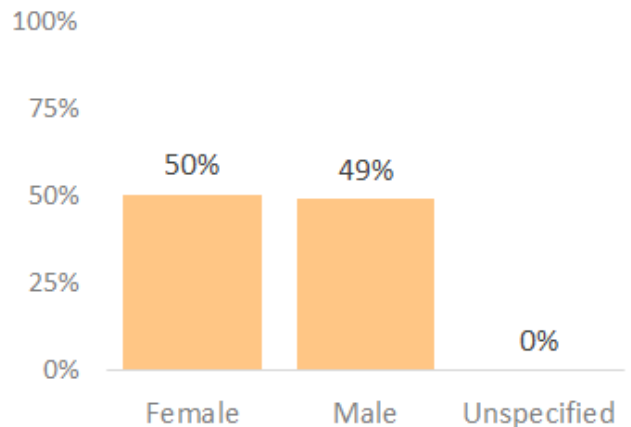
WorkBC's programming serves participants with one or more disability, however many participants are also dealing with other barriers to employment, with at least one quarter also self-identifying as one or more of the above categories.

At intake, 55% of the program's participants had at least some post-secondary training.

### Participant Age

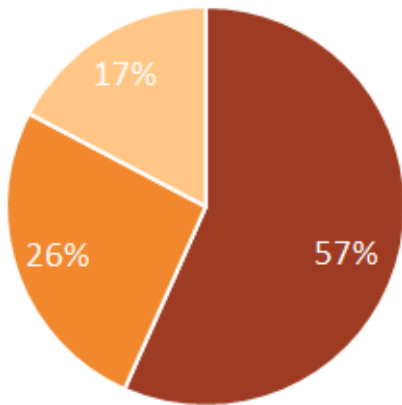


### Participant Gender



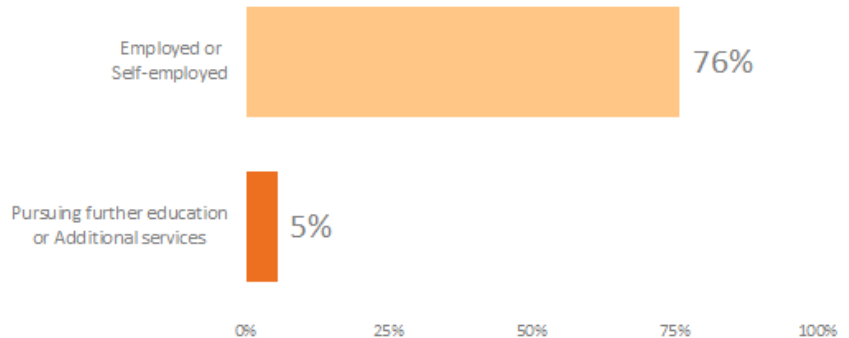
# WorkBC Employment Services

### Services Delivered



- Employment Assistance Services
- Skills Development
- Work Experience

### Employment Status at Program Exit



## Success Story: Vincent's Customized Path to Employment

Vincent has autism and requires autonomy along with mentoring and guidance to help him with the social skills needed in typical employment settings. He has significant communication and social challenges and came to WorkBC with no previous work experience. Vincent was referred to the Customized Employment program where WorkBC staff assessed his abilities and learned he had mechanical aptitude and a love of auto detailing.

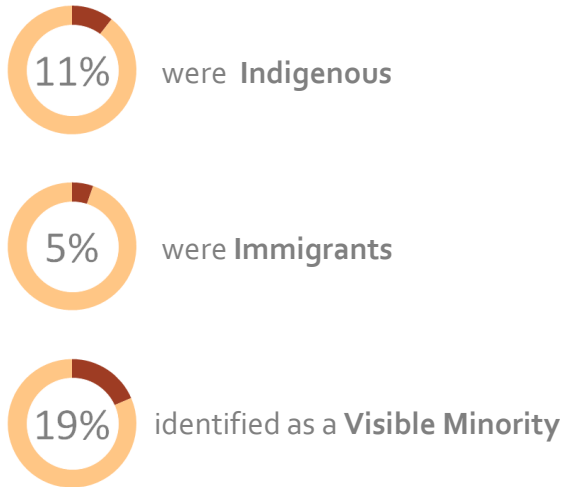
WorkBC searched for a patient and understanding employer that could customize an environment that suited Vincent's needs and aptitude. Vincent began an unpaid work experience with a manufacturing employer. Once the work experience was complete Vincent was offered a part-time position performing detailing on company vehicles. He developed confidence and gained experience and social skills performing automotive and maintenance duties. To ensure Vincent continues to receive support and remain successful in employment, WorkBC staff will transition him to Community Living BC support.

# Community Living BC

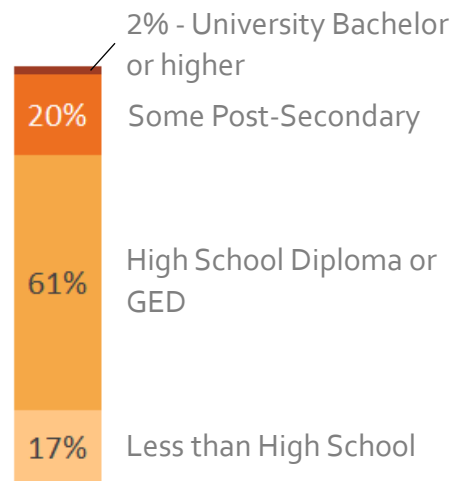
Community Living BC (CLBC) funds a range of supports to adults with developmental disabilities as well as individuals who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Employment services administered by CLBC, provide support to eligible adults to enter the workforce alongside employees without disabilities for competitive wages.

## Participant Demographics

### Designated Groups



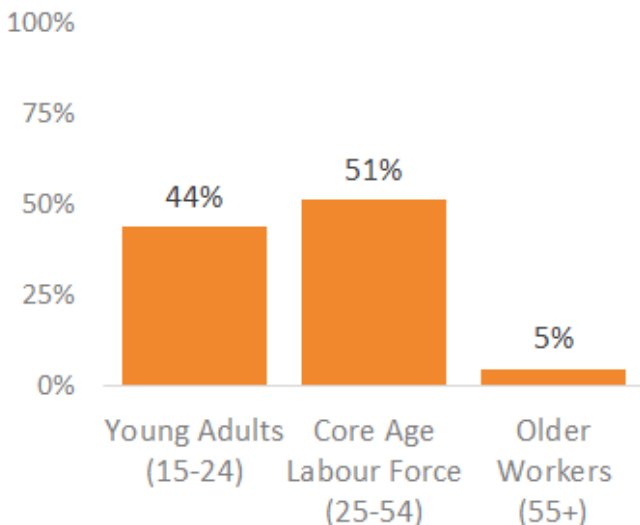
### Education Levels



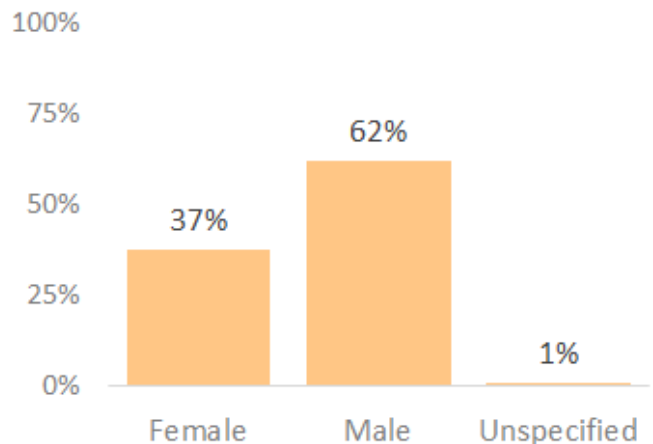
CLBC programming serves participants with one or more disabilities, however many participants are also dealing with other barriers to employment. In particular, 19% of participants identified as a visible minority.

78% of the program's participants had high school education or less.

### Participant Age

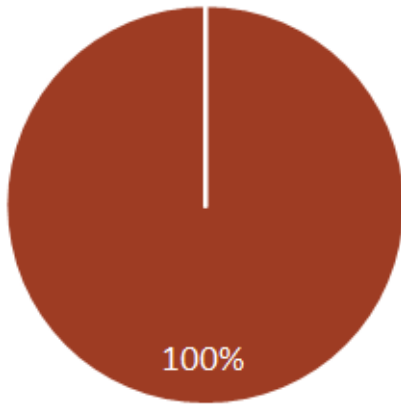


### Participant Gender



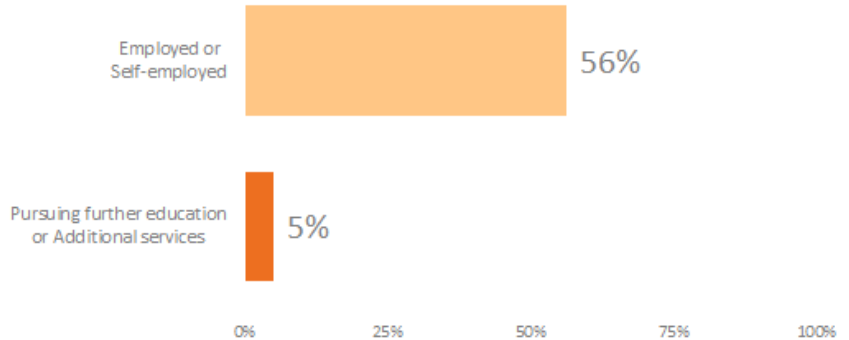
# Community Living BC

## Services Delivered



- Employment Assistance Services
- Skills Development
- Work Experience

## Employment Status at Program Exit



### Success Story: Aela Finding Extra Courage

A few months after arriving in Victoria from Saskatchewan, Aela was hospitalized and diagnosed with bipolar disorder. It was then that she got connected with a health care team that helped her find the right balance of medication and therapy. She also learned about CLBC and was connected to services to help her reach her goals, using CLBC support for employment and schooling. Over the next year, Aela secured jobs and now works as a supervisor at a dispensary. Apart from work, Aela is working towards earning her high school diploma.

“It has been extremely inspiring to see the growth and resilience in Aela since I started working with her in September 2021,” says Peter Buitendyk, a CLBC facilitator in Victoria, B.C. “She has made efforts to overcome her struggles and mental health to pursue her life goals and make the world a better place. She is just a wonderful person.”

Aela said her outlook on life has changed from being a negative person to seeing the possibility in life. She feels connected to her community in a way she didn’t before. When asked what contributed to this, Aela speaks to healthy habits like sleep and going for walks, but also emphasized the importance of getting the help you need.

“It was not an overnight process,” Aela says, “but I think being on the right medication, getting the proper resources and actually not just getting resources but utilizing them. Anyone can offer you resources, but it takes extra courage to actually step out and use one of them. To call somebody or to get in touch with support services takes courage.”

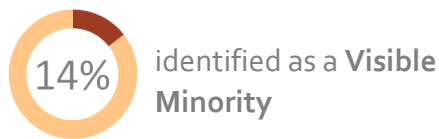
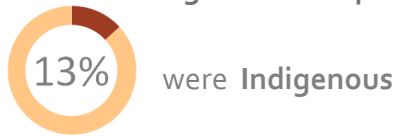


# Mental Health and Substance Use Employment Support Programs

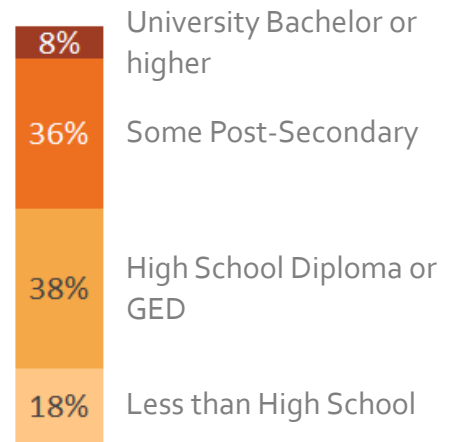
The Ministry of Health administers a suite of mental health and substance use employment support programs to assist clients in obtaining pre-employment skills, education skills, and opportunities for supported employment. Intended outcomes include improved education and employment status, increased community and social integration, and increased vocational and financial independence.

## Participant Demographics

### Designated Groups



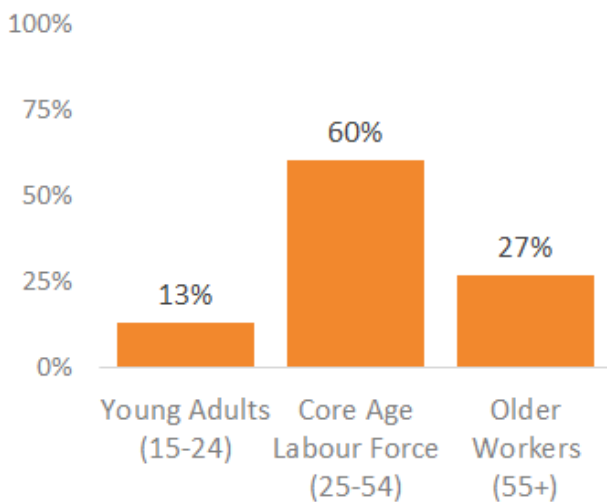
### Education Levels



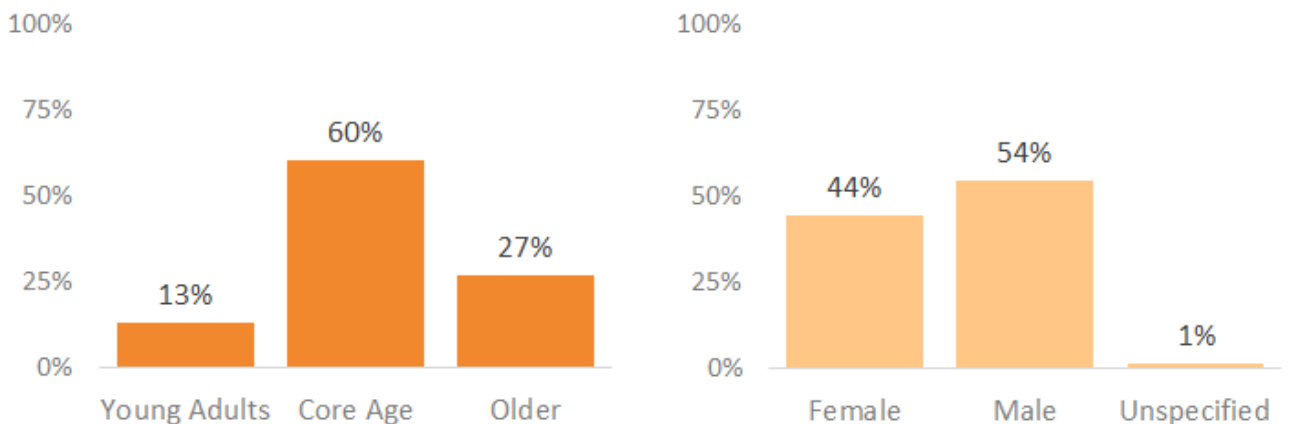
The mental health and substance use employment support programs assist clients with severe mental health and/or substance use disorders. Participants may also have other barriers to employment.

56% of the employment support programs' participants had high school education or less.

### Participant Age

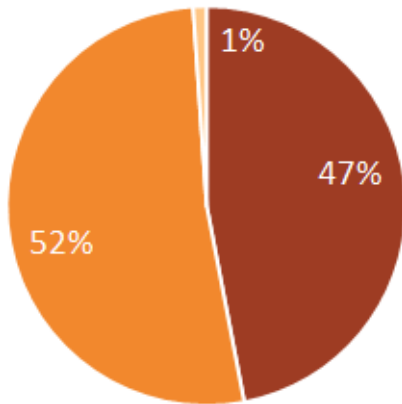


### Participant Gender



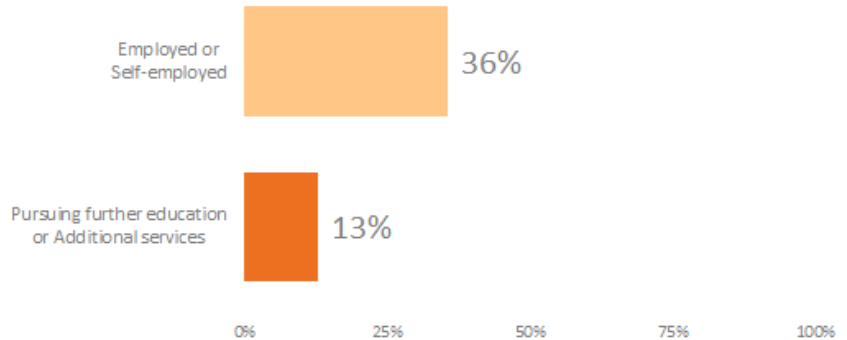
# Mental Health and Substance Use Employment Support Programs

Services Delivered



- Employment Assistance Services
- Skills Development
- Work Experience

Employment Status at Program Exit



## Success Stories: Jenny's Journey

Driven by her love for animals and a desire to effect positive change, Jenny's journey began when she stumbled upon an opportunity to volunteer with a local conservation society through the Therapeutic Volunteer Program, within the Clubhouse.

The Clubhouse Program serves adults living with a mental illness who are seeking a community of understanding, like-minded people who might share the same experiences that they do. Clubhouses provide a supportive environment where people can socialize, participate in recreational activities, learn new skills, and increase their involvement in the community.

Jenny felt volunteering would add to her sense of wellness and her experience far exceeded her expectations, connecting her with like-minded individuals who shared her passion for environmental conservation. Engaging in habitat restoration, wildlife surveys, and educational efforts, Jenny discovered a fulfilling sense of purpose.

As her 12-month volunteer placement came to an end, Jenny realized how much she had grown and how deeply she cared about the work she had been doing. Determined to continue her journey in conservation, she decided to take online courses, joined the Supportive Employment Program, and was then able to continue working in gardening and landscaping.

Jenny's journey from a new volunteer to now having a newfound passion for the agricultural field has been amazing to witness. Jenny knows that by combining her volunteer experience, online education, and future schooling, she can be well-equipped to continue in this field.