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# Supporting Mid-Career Workers in Retail and Meat Processing

## Partners

United Food and Commercial Workers Union Canada

**\$495,000** over 12 months

## Locations

[Across Canada](#)

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## Topics

Pathways to Jobs  
Sectors  
Skills Training  
Tech and Automation

## Related Tags

[career pathways](#),  
[employer driven](#),  
[labour market and skills information](#),  
[mid-career](#),  
[mid-career workers](#),  
[sector specific](#), [training](#)

Technological  
and  
demographic  
pressures  
are  
threatening  
the  
future  
livelihoods  
of  
mid-  
career  
retail  
and  
meat  
processing  
workers  
who  
face  
displacement  
due  
to  
automation.

The  
United  
Food  
and  
Commercial  
Workers  
Union  
(UFCW)  
represents  
more  
than  
45,000  
cashiers  
and  
40,000  
food  
manufacturing  
workers,  
many  
of  
whom  
work  
in  
meat  
processing  
and  
may  
need  
to  
secure  
quality  
employment  
in  
other  
in-  
demand  
sectors  
of  
the  
economy.



This  
project  
tested  
how  
to  
equip  
union  
members  
–  
from  
600  
communities  
across  
Canada  
–  
with  
the  
requisite  
skills

to  
transition  
to  
high-  
growth  
apprenticeship  
trades.

Leveraging existing training delivery mechanisms, the project evaluated a new suite of training modules focused on building and enhancing digital and soft skills as well as a hybrid approach that blended on-the-job experience with digital technologies.

While more than 900 union members received digital and soft-skills training and 250-plus received pre-apprenticeship training, the project found upskilling and reskilling efforts to help workers transition to high-growth sectors in the trades needs to address barriers faced by training providers and individuals.

Additionally,  
to  
maximize  
success,  
the  
project  
showed  
that  
curricula  
should be  
developed  
in  
partnership  
with  
employers  
and  
in  
collaboration  
with  
recognized  
educational  
institutions.

Training  
providers  
found  
a  
lack  
of  
recognition  
for  
pre-  
apprenticeship  
courses  
created  
disincentives  
for  
participants  
to  
undertake  
training.  
The  
program's  
reach  
was  
further  
limited  
by  
difficulties  
in  
securing  
buy-  
in  
among  
employers  
for  
on-  
the-  
job  
training  
opportunities.

On  
an  
individual  
level,  
the  
project  
highlighted  
the  
need  
to  
raise  
awareness  
among  
members  
about  
the  
risks  
of  
automation  
and  
job  
displacement,  
and  
encourage  
a  
culture  
of  
lifelong  
learning.

Blueprint worked with UFCW to evaluate the program from 2019 to 2021. This report summarizes the findings from this evaluation to understand the outcomes achieved by participants and the experiences of participants and program staff in interacting with the program.

The Future Skills Centre acknowledges that the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee share a special relationship to the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory,' where our office is located, bound to share and protect the land. As a pan-Canadian initiative, FSC operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, the name given to the North American continent by some Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to work in this territory and commit ourselves to learning about our shared history and doing our part towards reconciliation.

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