

Backgrounder

Scaling for Impact Announcement

March 3, 2025 — The Future Skills Centre (FSC) [announced a new investment of \\$14.3 million](#) to expand 13 innovative skills development projects that address Canada's urgent workforce needs. Selected projects have demonstrated strong ideas and proven capacity to drive systems change through further testing and innovation.

These projects focus on the priorities essential to Canada's prosperity, including solutions for labour market shifts driven by climate and technology changes, enhancing worker mobility while supporting the adaptability of the small and medium-sized businesses to achieve a critical outcome of a more inclusive economy.

Funding recipients:

Organization: Blue Door Support Services

Project Name: *Construct*

Blue Door's Construct expansion project aims to provide equity-seeking individuals facing homelessness and systemic barriers with rapid skilled trades training, addressing both employment challenges and Canada's skilled trades shortage. Key activities include partnering with two organizations to deliver training cohorts in new communities, equipping 32 participants with in-demand construction skills over 10 weeks. Partners will receive program management and training support, and SHS Consulting will lead knowledge mobilization efforts. This project demonstrates the scalability of Construct's model, integrating wraparound supports to foster stable employment, reduce homelessness, and create a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers to meet critical labour market needs. Location: Ontario, Canada-wide

Organization: Canadian Skills Training and Employment Coalition (CSTEC)

Project name: *Layoff Aversion Program (LAP): Retooling Labour Adjustment in the Automotive Industry*

CSTEC's project addresses the challenges faced by Canada's automotive manufacturing sector as it transitions to zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) production. By replicating the US Layoff Aversion Model, this initiative supports manufacturers and workers proactively to minimize layoffs and upskill the workforce during the shift from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles. Activities include supporting six manufacturers and 14,000 workers, developing online tools to transition production workers into industrial trades, and funding short-term training for apprenticeship pathways. The project aims to retain jobs, meet the demand for skilled trades, and align Canada's automotive workforce with the ZEV transition.

Location: Ontario, Canada-wide

Organization: City of Kingston**Project name:** Expansion of the Workplace Inclusion Charter

The City of Kingston's Workplace Inclusion Charter project addresses labour market challenges driven by demographic shifts and rising newcomer populations. To enhance talent retention, the project focuses on cultivating diverse talent, particularly racialized francophone minorities and visible religious minorities, by providing targeted skills development and employability support. It equips employers with tools to create inclusive workplaces and assists service providers in supporting newcomers through tailored resources. A symposium will showcase these tools, fostering a collaborative network to streamline newcomer integration. Outcomes include proactive labour market engagement, sustaining Kingston's reputation as a welcoming destination, and creating safe, equitable environments for marginalized groups.

Location: Ontario

Organization: ECO Canada**Project name:** *Pathways to Resilient and Inclusive Certifications and Careers in Canada's Blue Economy (Ocean Pathways 2.0)*

Ocean Pathways 2.0 addresses workforce challenges in Canada's Sustainable Blue Economy by expanding the Sustainable Blue Economy Professional designation and creating inclusive, sector-specific job pathways. Key activities include scaling certifications with tiered structures and micro-credentials, fostering a national innovation ecosystem for industry-academia collaboration, ensuring equitable access to training for underserved and Indigenous communities, and launching a digital platform for scalable, remote learning. The project aims to build a resilient, inclusive workforce, establish a collaborative framework for skills development, and create a self-sustaining certification model. Long-term impacts include economic growth, environmental resilience, and equitable opportunities across the Blue Economy.

Location: Canada-wide

Organization: Food Processing Skills Canada**Project name:** *Next Level – Focusing on Building Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Workplaces in Canada's Food Value Chain*

This project enhances leadership capabilities in Canada's food value chain by equipping supervisors and managers with social-emotional learning (SEL) skills and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) knowledge. It expands delivery of the STAC program for supervisors and the Refine Yourself program for managers, offering online courses, interactive workshops, and personalized assessments aligned with industry standards. Objectives include training 300 supervisors and 50 managers while evaluating the programs' impacts on individuals, teams, and organizations. Expected outcomes include improved SEL and DEI skills, greater job satisfaction, enhanced organizational productivity, and better recruitment and retention practices, fostering inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Location: Canada-wide

Organization: Guru-Link Inc.

Project name: *Scaling AI-Powered Career Navigation*

This project scales and enhances an AI-driven career guidance platform to address gaps in career services for underrepresented groups, including newcomers, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. By expanding partnerships with career service hubs and refining platform features based on pilot feedback, the initiative aims to increase accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and personalization. Key activities include developing training materials for career practitioners, integrating real-time labour market data, and optimizing the user experience. Expected outcomes include improved job placement rates, enhanced career service capacity, and personalized career navigation, fostering an inclusive workforce ready for tomorrow's challenges.

Location: Canada-wide

Organization: Monumental Projects Inc.

Project Name: Scaling the Impact of FutureBUILDS

Monumental aims to scale FutureBUILDS in 2025 to address systemic barriers for Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) professionals in real estate development and drive housing innovation in Canada. Key activities include delivering an updated cohort for BIPOC entrepreneurs, launching a Black Housing Leaders Fellowship, hosting community events and a conference, creating an online FutureBUILDS curriculum, and providing ongoing alumni support. These efforts aim to grow a network of skilled racialized professionals, expand access to real estate development opportunities nationwide, and foster community wealth building, innovation, and leadership in the housing sector, addressing both diversity gaps and Canada's housing crisis.

Location: Ontario, Canada-wide

Organization: Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)

Project name: *An Innovative Education System for Rural and Remote Communities: Addressing Indigenous Labour Shortages via Environmental Skills Training*

This project transforms environmental training for northern Indigenous communities in Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories by integrating culturally relevant, immersive methods aligned with traditional ecological knowledge. Key activities include upgrading five existing environmental courses, developing six new ones in areas such as greenhouse operations and forest management, and using technology for interactive field-based learning. Region-specific versions tailored for the Northwest Territories ensure localized applicability. The initiative will reach up to 10 Indigenous communities, providing pathways to careers in environmental services while supporting economic development, reconciliation, and stewardship of traditional lands through accessible, culturally appropriate training.

Location: Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories

Organization: Royal Roads University

Project name: *Building Foundations for an Inclusive Northern Economy: Advancing Innovations within the Northern and Indigenous Skills Ecosystem*

This project addresses the dual challenges of high unemployment among Indigenous Northern residents and significant job vacancies in Northern Canada, including critical shortages in Nunavut's public service. By testing culturally responsive and flexible approaches to education and training, this initiative aims to build an inclusive Northern economy. Activities include delivering regionally tailored programs, strengthening the Northern and Indigenous skills ecosystem through partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and formalizing pathways for Indigenous learners to achieve career and educational goals. Outcomes include increased Indigenous workforce participation, reduced job vacancies, and improved training efficiency, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable Northern economy.

Location: Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut

Organization: SkillPlan and Partners

Project name: *The Pan-Canadian Virtual Recruitment and Training System for Canada's Unionized Construction Sector*

A partnership of Canada's Building Trades Unions, Provincial Building Trades Councils, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, Magnet and SkillPlan, this project enhances Canada's construction workforce by advancing a Pan-Canadian Virtual Recruitment and Training System (VRIV) to address labour shortages, fragmented apprenticeship pathways, and barriers faced by underrepresented groups. VRIV integrates findings from prior virtual recruitment projects to improve access to apprenticeships, union jobs, and skills training. Key activities include user-driven system enhancements, stakeholder collaboration, and evaluation of recruitment and training outcomes. By streamlining pathways, fostering equity, and leveraging partnerships with unions, schools, and community organizations, the project aims to support diverse candidates entering the skilled trades, strengthen labour market inclusion, and contribute to Canada's economic growth.

Location: Canada-wide

Organization: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

Project name: *Pathway to Productivity: Using Pay-for-Performance to Facilitate SME Investment in Human Capital*

This project expands a pay-for-performance model to support Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in investing in skills development while promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and Reconciliation. It extends the model to new sectors, including food processing, biotechnology, and environmental industries, and deepens its impact by tying incentives to comprehensive employer behaviors like pre-training planning and continuous learning. Activities include capacity building, SME engagement, training delivery, and rigorous evaluation of outcomes. By reducing training barriers, improving decision-making, and enhancing employee skills, the project aims to increase SME investment in human capital, strengthen training equity, and provide evidence to inform future policies.

Location: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia

Organization: University of Alberta**Project name:** *Nurturing and Evaluating the Growth of a Rural Career Development Ecosystem: A Model for Supporting Sustainable Jobs and Communities*

This project supports Drayton Valley, Alberta, and surrounding rural communities in developing a “Rural Career Development Ecosystem” to facilitate equitable transitions to sustainable jobs in a net-zero economy. Key activities include evaluating skills training opportunities, supporting small and medium-sized businesses with professional development and wrap-around supports, aligning workforce needs with the Zero-Fee Tuition Program and the Local Energy Stewardship Plan, and engaging community organizations to assist un- or underemployed workers. Outcomes include fostering collaboration among stakeholders, addressing out-migration, and building sustainable pathways for youth, newcomers, and mid-career workers, ultimately ensuring the community’s economic and social resilience during the net-zero transition.

Location: Alberta

Organization: University Health Network**Project name:** *Fostering Equity and Inclusion in Healthcare by Accelerating Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence*

This proposal advances workplace education for healthcare providers (HCPs) to effectively adopt AI-enabled tools, addressing the evolving demands of healthcare. Using a three-pronged approach, it aims to transform mindsets, skillsets, and toolsets. Mindset transformation involves workshops and dialogues to emphasize equity, transparency, patient rights, and inclusivity in AI use. Skillset development focuses on tailored educational programs for specialties like mental health and cardiac care, addressing gaps through iterative design. Toolset enhancement includes mentorship, coaching, and an Equity Toolbox to promote responsible AI use. This initiative equips HCPs to navigate AI-driven systems, fostering equitable and effective patient care integration.

Location: Canada-wide

About the Future Skills Centre

The [Future Skills Centre](#) (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour groups, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and The Conference Board of Canada, and are funded by the Government of Canada's [Future Skills Program](#).

Media Contact

Annamaria Nunziata, Communications Manager, Future Skills Centre
communications@fsc-ccf.ca
647-242-6156