



Expanding and Enhancing a National Recruitment System for the Unionized Construction Industry

Phase three report

March 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project objectives, activities and anticipated outcomes

Since the launch of the first phase Virtual Recruitment project in 2021, the project objectives have been to design, implement and test solutions that can increase the number of individuals taking steps towards joining the unionized construction trades sector, particularly individuals from underrepresented groups, including youth (18–29 years), women, newcomers, and Indigenous peoples. Phases 1 and 2 included the development and launch of provincial websites, the online Build Your Skills (BYS) Learning Hub skills development platform and a series of social media campaigns that successfully attracted thousands of people to these sites. These phases also saw requests from the project’s national network of stakeholders for expansion, customization and optimization of components of the virtual recruitment system to be more responsive to local conditions, recruitment challenges and union-specific skills needs. The objective of Phase 3, which ran from April to October 2024, was to identify how recruitment and learning tools could be further refined so potential recruits could more easily find and apply to skilled trades employment or training opportunities. Phase 3 sought to better understand the barriers interested users faced in initiating steps towards apprenticeship training and union membership and explored possible solutions to overcome these barriers.

Equity, diversity and inclusion considerations were incorporated into multiple components of the evaluation and learning approach. Both the needs analysis interviews with Provincial Building Trades Councils and surveys of users focused explicitly on whether and how recruitment tools met the needs of specific underrepresented groups. The user surveys also included questions to identify underrepresented groups targeted by advertisement campaigns to determine whether there was group variation in learning, training and employment outcomes.

Methodology

Throughout all phases of the project, SRDC conducted a mixed-methods evaluation, partnering with SkillPlan and Provincial Building Trades Councils to develop and implement data collection. In Phase 3, the data collection consisted of ongoing analysis of social media campaigns, regional site and Learning Hub activity, as well as conducting needs analysis interviews with Provincial Building Trades Councils, implementing a new participant survey for those individuals seeking to connect with a union or training opportunities, and continuing to gather responses on the Learning Hub intake survey for those individuals accessing these online resources. Finally, a framework was developed for a Program Management Information System that Provincial Building Trades Councils could implement to assist in future data collection channels.

Outcomes and Findings

Evaluation findings include a variety of success stories and lessons learned. In summary,

- Although minimal advertising campaigns were launched due to time and funding constraints, **social media has been successful** in attracting a wide range of individuals, including underrepresented groups, to visit the regional Construction Trades Hubs and BYS Learning Hub to learn more about the skilled trades. These individuals have a wide range of readiness levels from those exploring the trades for the first time to those who have chosen a trade and are ready to start work or training. Many are engaging with the Learning Hub to learn about the trades or complete online courses on trades math, science and preparing for apprenticeships and/or Red Seal exams.
- **Most Provincial Building Trades Councils have capacity constraints** and lack the resources to engage with and/or support potential new recruits in accessing local unions and training centres, and capture user data, primarily due to staffing availability and the volume of people seeking opportunities in their regions.
- It is a **time consuming process for new recruits** coming through the project's virtual recruitment channels to enter employment or training, and is challenging to track these individuals due to multiple factors, including varying regional contexts, inherent bottlenecks in hiring needs in the construction industry, varying readiness levels of job seekers, and the capacity of Provincial Building Trades Councils and local unions to engage with and gather data on potential new recruits. Additional barriers new recruits face include not knowing anyone within the trades and having their work experience undervalued.

Recommendations, Implications, Next Steps

Recommendations going forward are to expand the promising practices discovered in this phase of the project and leverage them to further align the virtual recruitment process with construction industry needs. Building up a system to effectively connect with and track individuals ready to join the construction workforce has the potential to better support the sector's fluctuating labour needs. This work could include:

- **Supporting Provincial Building Trades Councils and/or local unions** to further enhance their capacity to engage with new recruits coming through the virtual recruitment channels.
- **Continuing to provide potential job seekers with easily accessible online resources** through the BYS Learning Hub, to educate and optimize their readiness to begin trades employment or formal training.
- **Establishing a common set of key metrics** for regions and/or unions to better track potential new recruits.

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Since its launch in 2021, the objective of the Virtual Recruitment and Assessment for the Unionized Construction Industry project has been to design, implement and test solutions that could increase the number of individuals initiating steps towards becoming an apprentice and joining the unionized construction trades sector. To date, the project has focused on technical solutions, including the development of nationwide online advertising campaigns that drive traffic to provincial sites. On these sites, users can learn more about various construction trades in their region, sign up for additional online learning resources, and connect to unions and/or trades training opportunities. Users can register for access to the Build Your Skills Learning Hub, an online skill-development platform where they can access thousands of learning resources, including trades-specific assessments and learning tools to better prepare them for both apprenticeship training and the workplace.

To date, the project has sought to address two key problems prevalent within the unionized construction skilled trades sector. First is how to increase the representation of groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the construction and building trades, such as youth (18-29 years), women, newcomers and Indigenous peoples. By generating online marketing campaigns and website recruitment content that targets these groups, the project aimed to increase awareness and overall interest in the sector and give both potential recruits and their recruiters (e.g., unions, training schools) supportive resources. Underrepresented groups face challenges entering the construction trades due to lack of awareness, knowledge, necessary skills and connection to the industry. Now, the Provincial Building Trades Councils in Canada have enhanced the technological infrastructure needed to facilitate efficient ways for underrepresented individuals to become aware of construction opportunities, identify and address skills gaps and become connected with trade unions to start their careers in construction. The construction industry is embracing this transformative approach to recruitment, upskilling and access to jobs. Second, the project has aimed to increase the recruitment capacity of the unionized construction trades sector. More often than not, unions recruit through traditional advertising, career fairs and word-of-mouth. Expanding their access to social media and online resources can extend their reach to underrepresented individuals outside these traditional industry networks. The project supports sector-wide recruitment through the generation of a range of tools and assets that even a small union can use to find and onboard new members.

The creation of these project resources has been successful in reaching new audiences. Over the course of the project, hundreds of thousands of online users have seen advertisements online

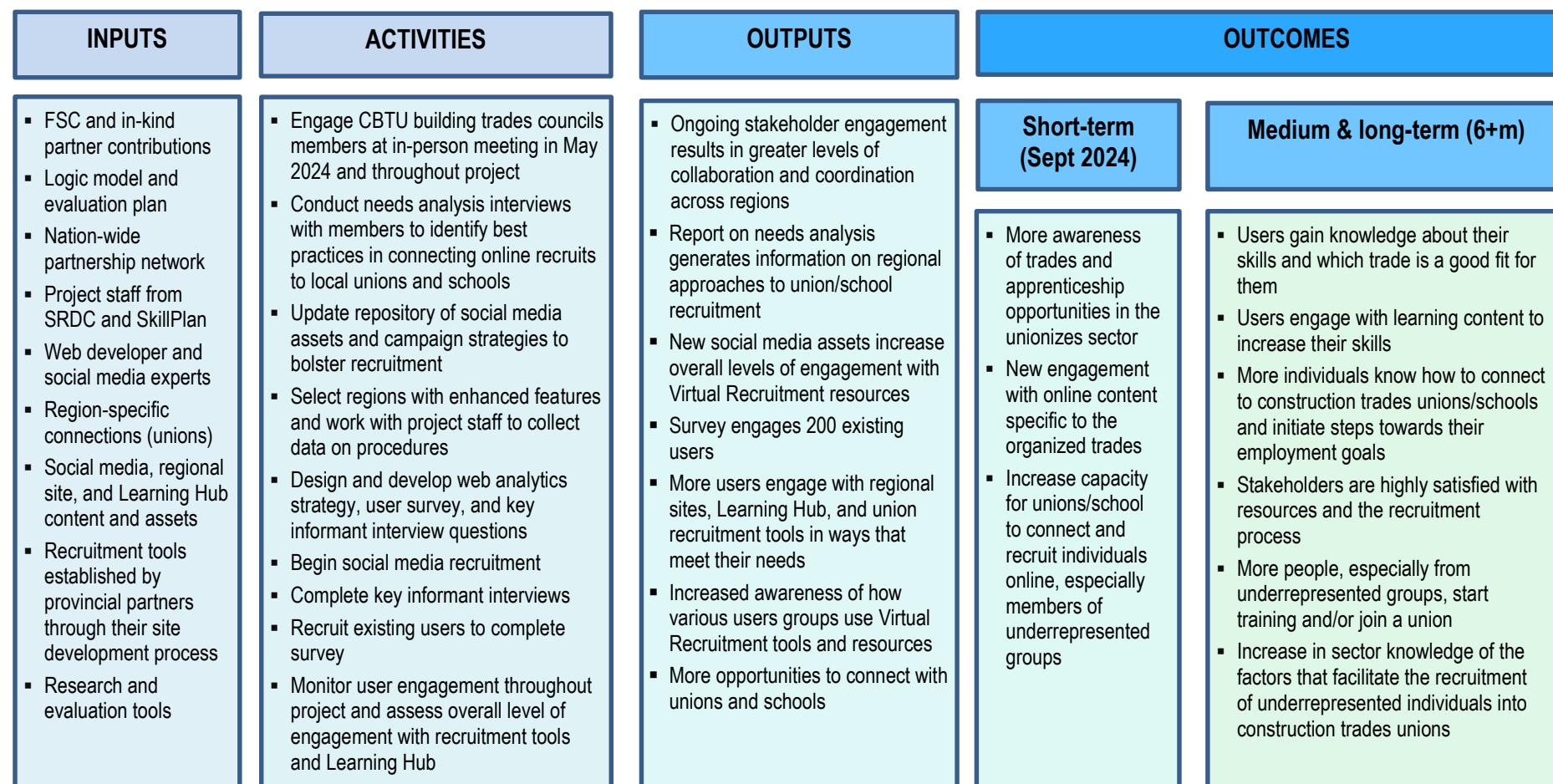
and visited a regional site. Over 5,000 people have signed up for the Build Your Skills Learning Hub to access trade-specific skills training through the provincial sites, and an additional 12,000 have registered into the Learning Hub directly. This virtual recruitment and training system continues to help prospective workers and underrepresented groups explore careers in the unionized construction trades, connect to an innovative system for online skills assessment and learning supports, and to connect with Provincial Building Trades Councils across Canada for opportunities for careers in the unionized construction industry. Nonetheless, the project has not yet been able to track how many of these individuals go on to join a union or initiate steps towards starting a career in the skilled trades sector after they initiate contact via the online registration form. In terms of moving from interest to action, connecting with a union and/or training opportunity is the most complex part of the recruitment process, one that often requires both technical and human interventions.

Broadly, the overall goal of this phase of the project, which ran from April to October 2024, was to identify how recruitment and learning tools could be further refined so potential recruits could more easily find and apply to skilled trades opportunities, whether that entailed connecting with a union or beginning pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training. With a range of online resources now established, building upon the success of previous phases, Phase 3 of the project sought to better understand the barriers interested users face in initiating steps towards apprenticeship training and union membership with the goal of exploring possible solutions to overcome these barriers.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The “Theory of Change” or “Logic Model” used in this project describes the relationships between project inputs, activities, outputs and immediate and short-term outcomes, to address the issues of focus. They present the changes the project is trying to bring about and describe the pathways by which the project interventions are assumed to bring about this change. The Virtual Recruitment and Assessment Logic Model is presented in Figure 1. Planned work represents the inputs and activities identified at the beginning of the project in April 2024. The main activities included: engaging Provincial Building Trades Councils in ongoing communication throughout the project; conducting in-depth needs analysis interviews with Provincial Building Trades Councils to identify different strategies regions are using to engage with online recruits; implementing user surveys to gather feedback on their experiences; monitoring social media campaigns; and monitoring user engagement levels with recruitment tools and the Learning Hub. Main outputs included analyzing and reporting on data from the interviews, surveys, social media activity and Learning Hub engagement. Short-term intended outcomes included increasing awareness and opportunities for individuals to engage in trades employment or training.

Figure 1 Virtual Recruitment Logic Model



METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND APPROACH

SRDC was contracted as a third-party evaluation and learning partner to manage the evaluation of this phase of the Virtual Recruitment and Assessment for the Unionized Construction Industry project. SRDC and SkillPlan collaborated to co-create learning goals and data collection tools as well as monitor the ongoing evaluation activities.

The key learning questions that directed the research and evaluation in this phase of the project were:

- Did the project resources (i.e., regional sites and Learning Hub) support the recruitment aims of stakeholders, including underrepresented groups?
- How did users engage with recruitment tools and did they provide access to effective support and opportunities?
- Were the social media and advertising campaigns effective in terms of driving traffic to Virtual Recruitment resources?
- How effective were Learning Hub resources for Virtual Recruitment users?

Equity, diversity, Inclusion and Reconciliation (EDI&R) approach

EDI&R was incorporated into multiple components of the evaluation and learning approach. In both the needs analysis and user survey phases, research explicitly focused on whether and how recruitment tools met the needs of specific underrepresented groups. As discussed further below, these groups were identified with regional partners and depend on their existing EDI&R aims and activities. The user survey also included questions to identify underrepresented groups targeted by advertisement campaigns to find out whether there was group variation in learning, training, and employment outcomes.

As in previous phases, all advertising campaigns targeted underrepresented groups using both images and text, as well as advanced targeting techniques using demographic and behavioural data (e.g., ensuring women see specific ads). Several Learning Hub resources also promoted EDI&R among incoming and established trades people, such as courses on “Indigenous Awareness for Tradespeople” and “Diversity and Inclusion Training.”

Limitations

There were four main limitations to the proposed evaluation approach: 1) having enough time to track user outcomes; 2) regional site staff capacity; 3) survey response rates; and 4) cyclical and economic fluctuations that affected recruitment.

In terms of the first limitation, the short project timeline meant that we were not able to track outcomes at regional sites. Union recruitment or starting an apprenticeship program takes weeks or even months from when a person initially makes contact with a regional site. This timeframe can be longer if a person requires upgrading, if the union has a lengthy recruitment process, or if training intake is only once or twice a year. To mitigate this barrier, the evaluation instead examined outcomes among existing users and sought to report on implementation outcomes for the regional sites.

Regional staff capacity constraints can also affect their capacity to collect data. The project completed suggestions for a personal management information system (PMIS) that aligned with data collection procedures already active at regional sites in order to ensure that participation in outcome tracking would not substantially impact staff workload and could be integrated into long-term work processes. Staff buy-in would also reduce the risk of collecting low-quality data (e.g., high levels of missing values). While it will be ideal to collect a high volume of data on each interaction with users, the PMIS suggestions were designed to support compliance and long-term use.

While our aim was to recruit at least 250 existing users to complete the outcome evaluation, low response rates made this challenging. To increase response rates we: offered people a \$20 gift card for completing the survey; minimized the length; sent email reminders and phoned and/or texted individuals to encourage survey completion. Unfortunately, due to several factors such as (a) the limited time the survey was in the field and (b) the potentially minimal connections that individuals had with regional trade unions and/or SkillPlan, there were slightly fewer survey responses.

The final limitation concerns the way user outcomes will be impacted by cyclical and economic fluctuations that impact recruitment in the construction sector. For example, a person may engage with a recruitment tool in the hopes of joining a specific local union only to find that the union is in the midst of a hiring freeze. In this sense, outcomes may be impacted by economic and employment changes that cannot be fully anticipated. Rather than characterize this as a recruitment “failure,” the planning and development phase of the project worked with pilot sites to address ways to redirect users who may face these types of barriers. The goals of users may change as they gain more information about sector opportunities.

RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Along with continued evaluation of the Virtual Recruitment resources (e.g., advertising campaigns, website and Learning Hub user activity), this phase of the project engaged new and existing users who had interacted with both standard Virtual Recruitment resources and/or regional adaptations (potential “pilot sites”) that aimed to connect online users with unions, training, and/or advisors that provide recruitment support. To date, regional adaptations have included:

- Ontario’s “Apprenticeship Navigator” a technical solution that allows users to search for and apply to apprenticeship opportunities by trade and region in Ontario. When a user selects a local or school, they can use the navigator tool to apply to it directly using an online form.
- British Columbia’s “Speak to an Advisor” program, which begins with an online form that connects users to an advisor who can provide more information on how to connect to available construction job opportunities within local unions or provide information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school.
- Newfoundland and Labrador’s “Indigenous Skilled Trades Office” which seeks to support and create employment opportunities for Indigenous apprentices and journeypersons. Indigenous users can register with the office in order to receive supportive services.
- SkillPlan’s “Learner and Recruitment Support” services, which are accessible through multiple regional sites and the Learning Hub. On these platforms, users can fill out a contact form if they are interested in learning more about how to connect with unions and training schools. SkillPlan staff will then connect directly with users to provide individual support and/or a personal handover to regional organizations that may be able to provide further guidance.

More specifically, the project created and implemented the following data collection approaches:

- **Semi-structured interviews:** this analysis documented the use and perceived effectiveness of the recruitment resources among project staff at SkillPlan and most regional sites.
- **User surveys:** a new participant survey was designed and implemented in both English and French for existing users who had already signed up for the Learning Hub and/or completed a registration form to gain more information about users’ experiences with unions employment and/or training opportunities. In addition, the existing Learning Hub intake survey implemented in the previous phase of the program continued to be sent to new registrants for the Learning Hub to gather user demographics and perceptions regarding the online resources.

- **Program Management Information System (PMIS):** a framework was developed to collect user data based on information gathered about how SkillPlan and regional sites collect and document information on the users engaging with resources at regional sites. This tool could be refined and used in future by SkillPlan and regional sites to collect information pertaining to the background of the user and their engagement goals and outcomes. Due to the short length of this phase, it was not possible to implement this across provinces and conduct interprovincial comparisons.
- **Social media and advertising analysis:** based on quantitative data, this analysis provided insight into how social media and advertising campaign content performed in terms of generating increased awareness and engagement with Virtual Recruitment resources, both overall and through targeting specific underrepresented groups. Due to funding and time constraints during this phase, there was minimal advertising. Certain provincial partners also engaged in their own social media outreach through organic and paid posts/campaigns.
- **Regional site analysis:** based on quantitative data, this analysis provided insight into level and type of website traffic, including where users come from and how users engage with the tools at each regional site.
- **Learning Hub analysis:** based on quantitative data, this analysis provided insight into how users engaged with the Build Your Skills Learning Hub over the course of the project.

Please note that usability testing was an additional data collection tool was considered for this phase of the project, but due to limited time and staffing capacity was dropped. Usability testing may be introduced in a future phase to provide further insight into the functionality and usability of the virtual recruitment process from the perspective of users themselves.

The evaluation matrix depicted in Table 1 illustrates how the data collection methods and sources aligned with each of the key learning questions and sub-questions.

Table 1 Evaluation Matrix

Key Learning Questions	Sub-questions	Key Metrics	Data Collection Methods & Sources
Did the resources (i.e., regional sites and Learning Hub) support the recruitment aims of stakeholders, including underrepresented groups?	<p>Did the project resource increase their ability to respond to prospective apprentices and enable direct connections to jobs/apprenticeship training?</p> <p>How did the site interact and adapt project resources to meet their local needs?</p> <p>What needs were met and/or unmet?</p> <p>What additional features or capacity is needed?</p>	<p>Staff description of recruitment aim and recruitment tool outcomes, both overall and among underrepresented groups</p> <p>Staff description of recruitment tool development and future plans</p> <p>Staff description of current and future recruitment needs</p> <p>User description of resource engagement, both overall and among underrepresented groups</p> <p>User outcomes, both overall and among underrepresented groups</p>	Semi-structured interviews; user surveys
How did users engage with recruitment tools and did they provide access to effective support and opportunities?	<p>Did the tool meet both the overall needs of users, as well as those from underrepresented groups?</p> <p>What were the key supports offered at the pilot sites? What type of support enabled users to access resources and apprenticeships and/or job opportunities in construction?</p> <p>Are the new and enhanced resources effective in terms of their usability and ability to connect users to training, unions, and/or apprenticeships?</p>	<p>Number of users engaging with recruitment tool and served at each pilot site</p> <p>Follow-up engagement and outcomes after using recruitment tool, both overall and among underrepresented groups (e.g., number who completed a union application, applied for additional training, accepted into union)</p> <p>Level of usability and satisfaction among users</p> <p>Staff perspectives on usability and the effectiveness of tools in generating meaningful outcomes</p>	Semi-structured interviews; User surveys; web analytics; PMIS

Key Learning Questions	Sub-questions	Key Metrics	Data Collection Methods & Sources
Were the social media and advertising campaigns effective in terms of driving traffic to Virtual Recruitment resources?	<p>What advertising assets performed the best?</p> <p>What type of audiences did advertising content engage?</p> <p>How do social media outcomes compare to previous periods and/or similar campaigns?</p>	<p>Number of impressions, video views, and clicks overall and disaggregated by groups (where possible)</p> <p>Click-through-rate overall and disaggregated by groups (where possible)</p> <p>Regional site engagement metrics (e.g., page views, session time, sign-up form engagement)</p>	Social media and website analytics
How effective were Learning Hub resources for Virtual Recruitment users?	<p>How many Virtual Recruitment users engaged with Learning Hub resources?</p> <p>When they logged on, what type of learning resources did they engage with?</p>	<p>Percent of Virtual Recruitment users logging on to the BYS Learning Hub, disaggregated by user group</p> <p>Percent accessing course/learning content, disaggregated by subject and user group</p>	Learning Hub data; website analytics

FINDINGS

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTCOMES

SkillPlan Campaign

SkillPlan ran a three-week paid advertising campaign between September 20 and October 11, 2024, on two social media platforms—Facebook and Instagram—as well as through Google advertising. On the social media platforms, the campaign used video ads. On Google, the campaign used sponsored ads that appeared in search results after users inputted relevant keyword searches. Differing from social media ads, each individual user saw slightly different ad content on Google depending on their keyword search and user profile.

Example visuals from video ads



The goal of SkillPlan’s paid campaign was to drive traffic to the Build Your Skills Learning Hub section of their website (i.e., <https://skillplan.ca/learn/>) where a person could first find out more about the learning resource through information and an introductory video and, if interested, sign-up for a free account through a simple registration form. To compare outcomes across the three platforms used in the campaign, “conversion” rates were calculated as the percentage of people who completed the Learning Hub registration form after viewing the information page.

Table 2 provides an overview of how the campaign performed on each advertising platform. In terms of the number of impressions, ads were viewed over 453,000 times (i.e., the number of times an ad loaded on a device screen), with users on Facebook making up more than half of all impressions. In total, video ads started to play over 134,000 times on Facebook and Instagram. It

is notable that, while ads had a greater number of impressions on Facebook, the number of video ad plays were approximately equal on both platforms. This suggests ads received higher video play engagement on Instagram.

Overall, SkillPlan's Build Your Skills Learning Hub information page received 28,500 visits from users from Google, Instagram and Facebook over the campaign period. The number of visits was highest for users who navigated from Facebook. This is to be expected given that ads on this site received the highest number of impressions. Conversely, the number of impressions was much smaller on Google, yet there were a greater number of users from this referral source compared to Instagram. In many ways this is to be expected, as Google users are searching specifically for website content and therefore are more likely to view website pages external to Google. On the other hand, social media users are browsing content and not necessarily intending to visit web pages external to the social media platform they are on.

Table 2 Overview of SkillPlan's paid advertising campaigns led by provincial partners

Platform	Ad type	Impressions	Video views	BYS info page visits	BYS registrations	Conversion rate
Google	Sponsored search results	26,876	NA	5,531	105	1.90%
Instagram	Video ads	178,264	69,973	2,691	64	2.38%
Facebook	Video ads	247,881	64,293	20,373	10	0.05%

Among the people who viewed SkillPlan's Build Your Skills Learning Hub information page, 179 navigated to the registration page and completed the form to register for the Learning Hub—an overall conversion rate of 0.63 per cent (as divided by the number of page visits). The conversion rate was highest for people who navigated from Instagram (2.38 per cent) and lowest for those who navigated from Facebook (0.05 per cent). People who navigated from Google, also had a higher conversion rate (1.90 per cent). Why conversion rates differ across the platform remains unknown; however, one possibility is that Instagram users tend to be younger and may be more inclined to sign up for the Learning Hub if they are just starting their journey into a skilled trades career.

Paid & organic provincial campaigns

Adjacent to the SkillPlan managed paid social media and search campaigns, certain provincial partners also engaged in social media outreach over the course of the project through organic and paid posts/campaigns that shared information about virtual recruitment resources. Regional

differences in social media outcomes—mainly, the number of Construction Trades Hub site users that were referred from a social media platform—are connected to partner variation in their use of organic and paid social media posts.

Unlike previous phases, Phase 3 of the Virtual Recruitment project did not run coordinated paid advertising campaigns in each province; certain provinces planned and managed their own advertising campaign during this phase with the intended aim of increasing traffic to their provincial Construction Trades Hub websites. Along with paid advertising campaigns, provinces were also active in promoting their Construction Trades websites through organic social media posts. Table 3 shows the social media accounts that partners had during Phase 3—although, their level of activity varied across platforms. Most partners had a Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter account, while a smaller number had LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube accounts. Typically, partners were most active on their Facebook accounts and least active on YouTube, although some partners were very active on X/Twitter and Instagram.


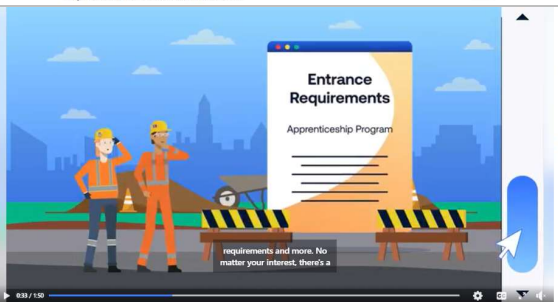

Table 3 **Regional variation in social media accounts**



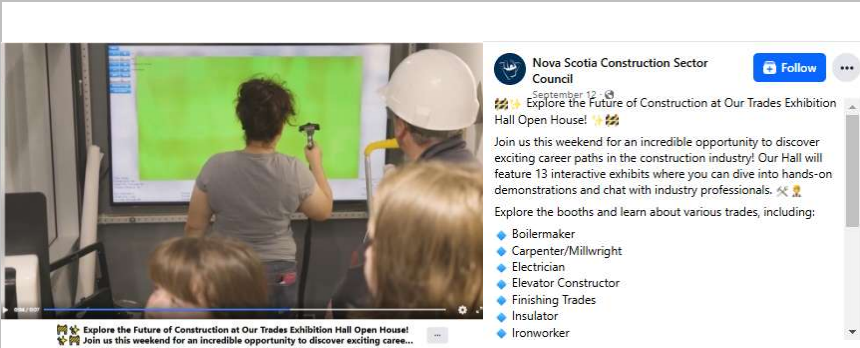
	Social media platform					
	Facebook	Instagram	X/Twitter	LinkedIn	TikTok	YouTube
British Columbia	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Alberta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Saskatchewan	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Manitoba	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ontario	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Quebec	✓	✓				
Nova Scotia	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
New Brunswick	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Newfoundland and Labrador	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓


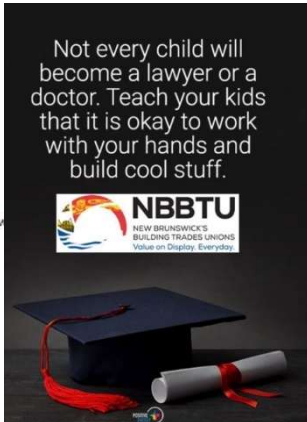


For most provincial partners, the majority of their organic social media posts were not about virtual recruitment resources but rather shared information about regional events, activities and opportunities. Some partners, such as the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, had more frequent posts about their provincial site throughout Phase 3. As all councils were active on Facebook, Table 4 describes some of the most popular posts made by provincial partners that shared information about virtual recruitment resources. As it shows, regional partners created a wide array of posts with unique features that promoted their provincial Construction Trades Hub sites and the unionized construction skilled trades. Regional partners used and/or repurposed many of the shared social media assets created in a previous project phase. Examples of posts that attracted the most impressions and clicks include: a video on “Does the construction sector interest you”; a graphic encouraging parents to teach their children that it’s okay to work with your hands; a meme highlighting a misconception about

salaries in the skilled trades; and a graphic describing opportunities to build skills to prepare for apprenticeship programs and careers in the skilled trades.

Table 4 Example of Facebook post in each region promoting the trades

	Post type	Post visual	Impressions	Clicks
British Columbia	Video	 <p>College of the BC Building Trades Join the trades as a construction craft worker and be supported along the way by experienced co-workers and mentors! See less</p> <p>Join the trades as a construction craft worker and be supported along the way by experienced co-workers and mentors!</p>	59	0
Alberta	Video	 <p>Building Trades of Alberta For many students, summer is a great time to prepare for their careers. The unionized skilled trades are an amazing career path to earn great wages and build lifelong skills. Looking for a place to start? Check out the Alberta Construction Trades Hub: https://alberta.constructiontradeshub.com/! This program was developed by our wonderful partners in SkillPlan. Sign up for FREE to access virtual guides and lessons that will get you ready for your apprenticeship. Connect with Alberta's Building Trades unions and build your career in the most skilled workforce in North America! #buildingtradesofalberta #Buildingtrades #constructiontradeshub #skilledtrades #apprenticeship #preapprenticeship #skillplan See less</p> <p>For many students, summer is a great time to prepare for their careers. The unionized skilled trades are an amazing career path to earn great wages and build lifelong...</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p> <p>257 Plays</p>	268	3
Saskatchewan	Meme	<p>MILLENNIALS: YOU CAN'T MAKE 100K A YEAR WITHOUT AN 8 YEAR DEGREE</p> <p>TRUCK DRIVERS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, ELECTRICIANS, WELDERS, AND ANY OTHER SKILLED TRADES WORKER:</p>  <p>Saskatchewan Building Trades May 17 · 🌐</p> <p>Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions about working in the skilled trades! We're here to show you that choosing the skilled trades can be the right path for you and you along the way.</p> <p>Did you know, according to BuildForce Canada, approximately 55,810 Construction Workers be needed by 2030? 🤖</p> <p>Check out all the different trade possibilities at https://tinyurl.com/5br4n98j.</p>	1,458	81

	Post type	Post visual	Impressions	Clicks
Manitoba				
Ontario	Graphic	 <p>What is an apprenticeship? An apprenticeship is a form of education and training that combines on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. It allows individuals to learn a skilled trade while getting paid for their work.</p> <p>There are over 150 designated trades in Ontario that individuals can apprentice in. Some examples include carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, welding, hairstyling, and automotive service.</p> <p>Learn more at CTAOntario.ca/FAQ</p>	184	4
Quebec	Video	 <p>Travailler en construction Est-ce que le secteur de la construction vous intéresse ? Si oui, avez-vous déjà considéré le métier de soudeur haute pression ? Prenez le temps d'écouter le témoignage de Michael et consultez notre site web afin d'en apprendre un peu plus sur les métiers de la construction en consultant le https://travaillerenconstruction.com/ See less</p>	5,224	268
Nova Scotia	Video	 <p>Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council Explore the Future of Construction at Our Trades Exhibition Hall Open House! Join us this weekend for an incredible opportunity to discover exciting career paths in the construction industry! Our Hall will feature 13 interactive exhibits where you can dive into hands-on demonstrations and chat with industry professionals. ☺ Explore the booths and learn about various trades, including: ◆ Boilermaker ◆ Carpenter/Millwright ◆ Electrician ◆ Elevator Constructor ◆ Finishing Trades ◆ Insulator ◆ Ironworker</p>	438	3

	Post tyle	Post visual	Impressions	Clicks	
New Brunswick	Graphic	<div><p>New Brunswick's Building Trades Unions April 11 · 🌐</p><p>Visit the New Brunswick's Building Trades Unions Build Your Skills Trades Hub to find out how to start your journey into the construction trades in NB! https://nbbtu.com/construction-trades-hub</p></div>		1,629	28
Newfoundland and Labrador	Graphic	<div><p>Trades NL: Building Trades of Newfoundland and Labrador April 4 · 🌐</p><p>Have you had a chance to check out our Construction Hub yet? 🏠</p><p>This is an online portal that gives you everything you need to start a career in construction 🛠️</p><p>That means salary information, entrance requirements, job demand, and so much more.</p><p>It's also 100% free for anyone to use. Check out the hub now and take the first steps towards a new career!</p><p>Visit www.nl.constructiontradeshub.com/build-your-skills/ #CollegeofSkilledTradesNL #BuildingTrades</p></div>	<div><h2>Build Your Skills</h2><h3>Start and enhance your career in the skilled trades!</h3><p>The Build Your Skills Learning Hub is your personal hub and all you need to succeed in a career in the construction trades.</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free sign up• Tons of resources• All construction trades• Connection to available union jobs• Info on union apprenticeship training</div>	3,666	3

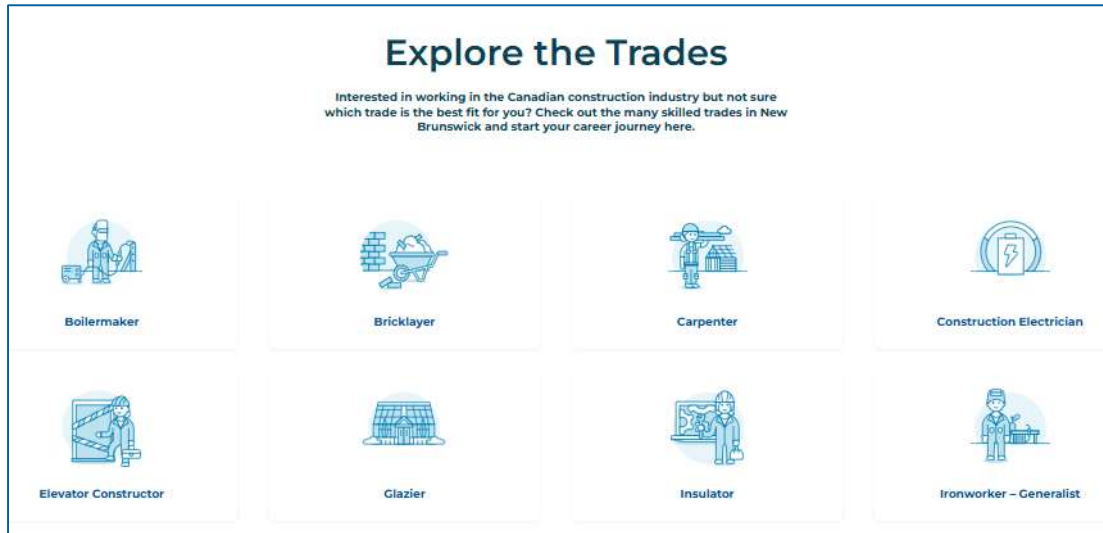
NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL CONSTRUCTION TRADES HUB OUTCOMES

The following section describes user engagement with the national and provincial Construction Trades Hub sites from April 1, 2024 to October 15, 2024. Users arrive on each site after navigating from a range of sources, for example, from clicking on an organic social media post to searching online for trades-related resources. Along with describing the number of new users who visited a site over this phase of the project, this section documents the regionally-specific 1) pages that tended to attract the most views and 2) level of engagement with key activities the project tracked to better understand the number of users exploring the trades, seeking more information about unions, and signing up for the Build your Skills Learning Hub.

The Construction Trades Hub sites currently include nine provincial sites, as well as a national site where users can select and navigate to a provincial site. While the national site is a main homepage landing page, the provincial sites are comprehensive and include a range of features and pages, some of which are unique to a particular site. Most provincial Construction Trades Hub sites, however, share three common features:

- An **“Explore the trades” page** with links to individual trade pages that list information about unionized trades in the particular region (see Figure 2). On this page, users first access a quick pop-up to read brief information about a trade and, if they are interested, can visit a new page that provides information about that specific trade, such as key responsibilities, skills, and salary range. Most trades pages are interactive, with authentic trade videos users can watch and downloadable summary sheets that can be saved as a reference.

Figure 2 Example Explore the Trades page on a provincial site



- A **“Connect to Unions”** section that highlights the benefits of joining a union in content and video, and access to union partners in the province. From this page, users can directly contact unions through their website (that are hyperlinked on the page) or using provided contact information (such as the phone number for the union). On all regional sites other than Ontario and Nova Scotia, users can provide their name, email, and phone number if they are interested in learning more about available construction job opportunities or apprenticeship training (see Figure 3). In the Learning Hub intake form, users can also check a box if they are interested in “receiving information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school,” serving as an alternative way for potential recruits and unions to connect through the provincial site.

Figure 3 “Connect to a Union” sign up form

Connect to a local union

Learn how joining a union can support you in your successful career!

Your Name *

Your Email *

Your phone number *

I would like to:

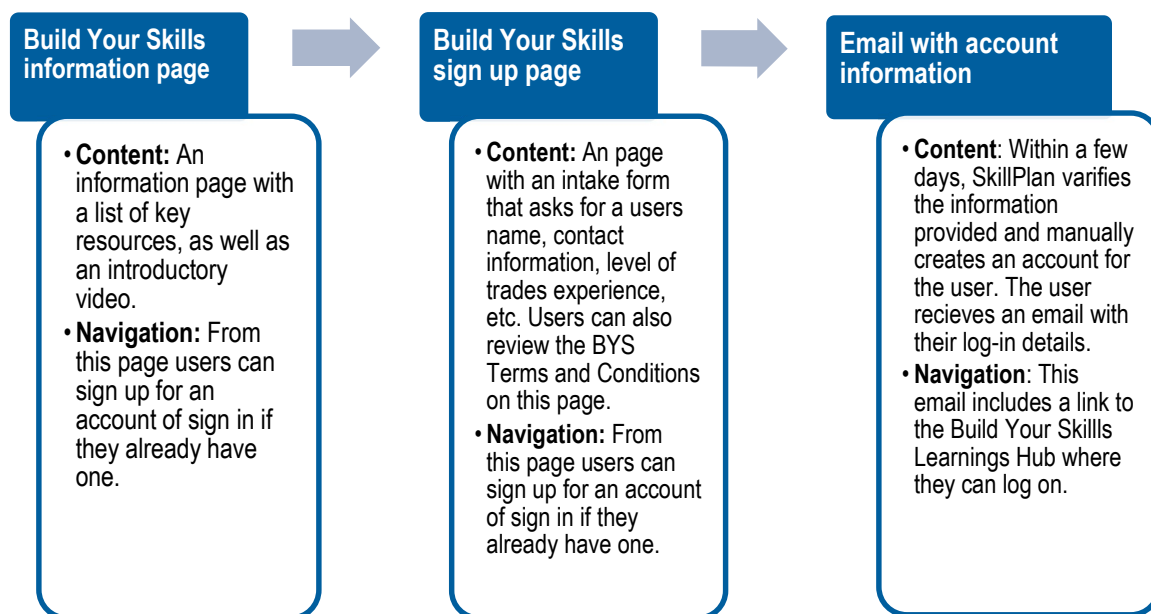
☐ Connect to available construction job opportunities with a local union

☐ Receive information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school

Submit

- A **“Build Your Skills” section** that encourages users to develop useful skills to succeed in the skilled construction trades by connecting to the Learning Hub. As shown in Figure 4, the first page describes the Learning Hub and invites users to create an account. To sign up, the user navigates to a second page with a short intake form. Once a user submits the form, they then come to a page that thanks them for signing up and letting them know they will receive an email with their account information shortly after.

Figure 4 Build Your Skills Learning Hub sign-up process



Along with these three main areas of each provincial Construction Trades Hub site, certain provincial partners also developed unique site features that serve their local needs. Table 5 presents a summary of site features and provincial customizations. The table shows that:

- All provincial sites have an Explore the Trades section, although the trades listed and the content on each page differs by province.
- All sites other than Quebec have a Build Your Skills section where users can sign up for the Learning Hub. On the Quebec site, users click on a “Se Connecter” link that takes them to a sign-up page on Conseil Provincial Du Québec Des Métiers De La Construction’s (CPQMCI) website. CPQMCI then sends SkillPlan contact information directly for any users who are interested in accessing learning resources.
- While the Connect to Unions section is similar in five regions, it is customized in British Columbia (which has pages that list union training schools and a sign-up form to “Speak to

an Advisor”), Ontario (which has pages where users can explore local councils and unions, but no sign up form to receive personalized support), Quebec (which has no information or sign up pages directly on their site but rather link users to the CPQMCI website), and Nova Scotia (which has a “Connect to Industry” information page without a sign-up form).

- A key customized feature on the Ontario site is their Apprenticeship Navigator, which allows users to search for and apply for apprenticeship opportunities in their area. Using this tool, users select their trade of interest and location to see current opportunities. If there is an opportunity that fits their criteria, a user can submit an application form directly through the navigator tool (although in certain cases the “apply now” hyperlink takes a user to the union’s website). This application is then automatically sent to the union so they can follow up with the user directly.

Table 5 **Summary of provincial Construction Trades Hub site features and customizations (C)**

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	NFL
Explore the Trades section	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build Your Skills information and sign-up	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	C	✓	✓	✓
Connect to Unions section	C	✓	✓	✓	C	C	✓	C	✓
Apprenticeship navigator					C				
Other information pages	C			C	C				

- Four provincial sites also have various types of information pages. For example, the BC site has pages with informational resources (e.g., describing what an apprenticeship is), while the Manitoba site has a page about their Trades Exhibition Hall.

Given the similarities and differences across each provincial Construction Trades Hub site, as well as variation in the population size each provincial site serves and how active the provincial council is in publicizing their website, outcomes are expected to vary regionally. As will be discussed next, sites in provinces with larger populations and more website features (e.g., Ontario’s Construction Trade Hub) typically have a larger base of new and returning users.

New site users

Between April 1 and October 15 2024, 36,400 new users visited the national and/or a provincial site. Growth over time was consistent with no major spikes in new users, an expected result

given there was no advertising campaign that drove traffic to the sites (See Figure 5). Unlike previous phases of the project coordinated Urchin Tracking Module (UTM) codes (i.e., a text snippet added to the end of a URL that allows Google Analytics to track traffic sources) were not used. As a result, the majority of new users had unknown referral sources and could have navigated to a site in a variety of ways (e.g., via a social media post or a link on another website).

Figure 5 Cumulative number of new users to any Construction Trades Hub website over Phase 3 (April 1-Oct. 15, 2024)

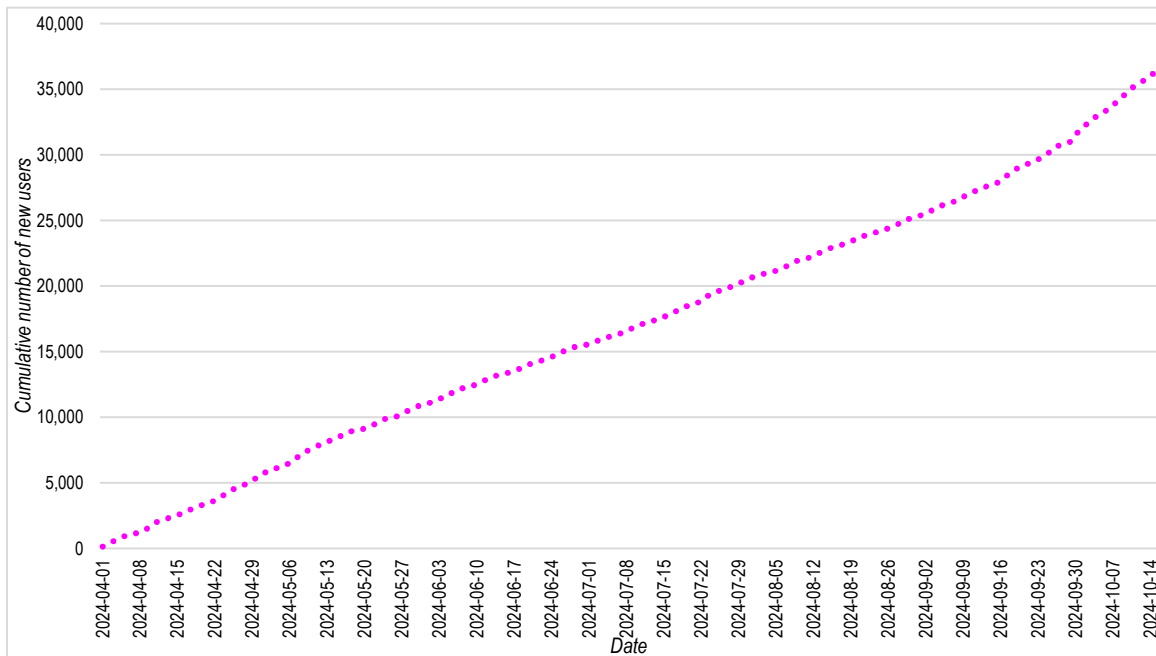
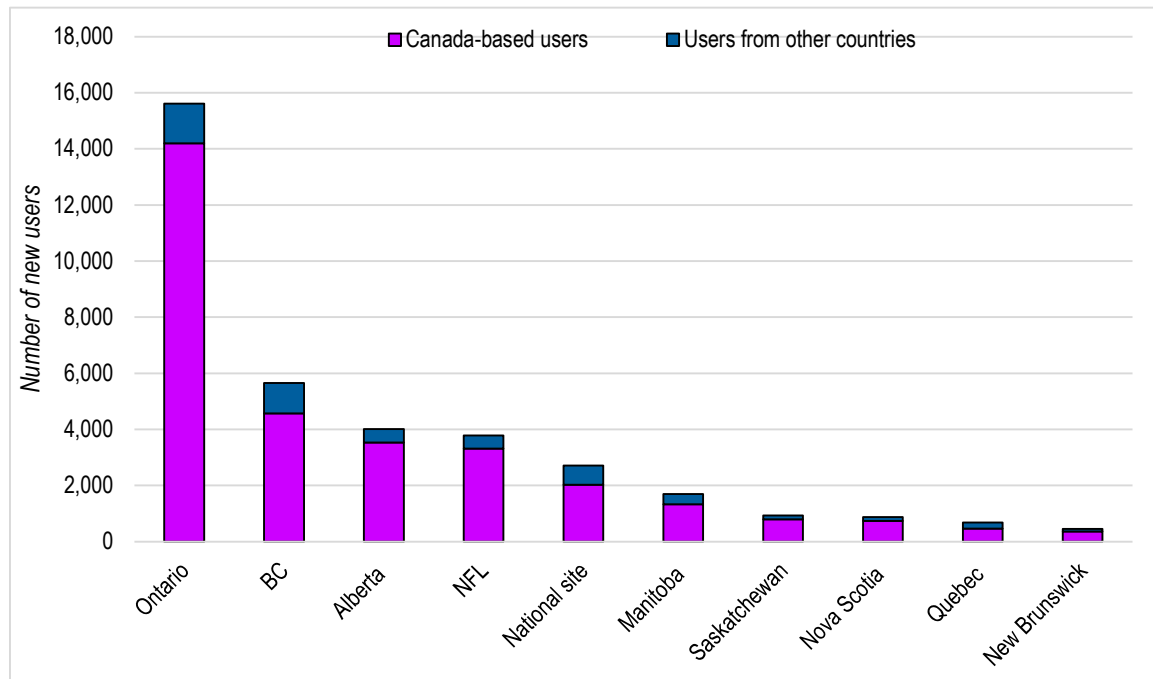


Figure 6 presents the total number of new users from within and outside Canada who visited each provincial site during this Phase of the project. In general, the majority of new users navigated to a provincial site using a device located in Canada. The national site, which allows users to navigate to their provincial website, did not attract a large number of new users; however, people who did visit this landing page could navigate to a provincial website (where they would be counted as a “new user” again).

In terms of variation across regions, the number of new users was highest in Ontario and lowest in New Brunswick. Both Ontario, BC, and Alberta’s provincial councils were more active in publicizing their websites, which increased the number of new users. In previous phases, Quebec had active paid social media campaigns that drove traffic to their site. Without an active campaign in this phase, the number of new users to the Quebec Construction Trades Hub dropped considerably.

Figure 6 Number of new users by site

Overview of engagement: Page views and events

Once new and returning users landed on each site, they had varying levels of engagement. Some had high levels of engagement (e.g., viewing multiple pages, signing up for the Learning Hub), while others had little to no engagement. In order to track engagement across the regional sites, this section first describes overall page views to showcase which areas of each site received a high amount of traffic. It then discusses key “conversion” activities that showcase how many users performed engaged activities in terms of exploring the trades, learning more about unions, or signing up to access the Learning Hub.

Similar to the number of new users, the total number of page views was highest in Ontario and lowest in New Brunswick. However, examining regional differences in page views on the homepage (Figure 7) and other pages (Figure 8) highlights several important trends. Overall, homepage views were similar on the Ontario, BC, and Newfoundland websites, each of which were viewed over 10,000 times over Phase 3. Instead, there was much greater variation in the amount of traffic on other pages, with Ontario’s traffic taking place on other areas of their site. The Ontario website has a variety of other information pages and customized features not present on the other provincial sites. In addition, they had an active social media presence over Phase 3 that showcased different areas of their website.

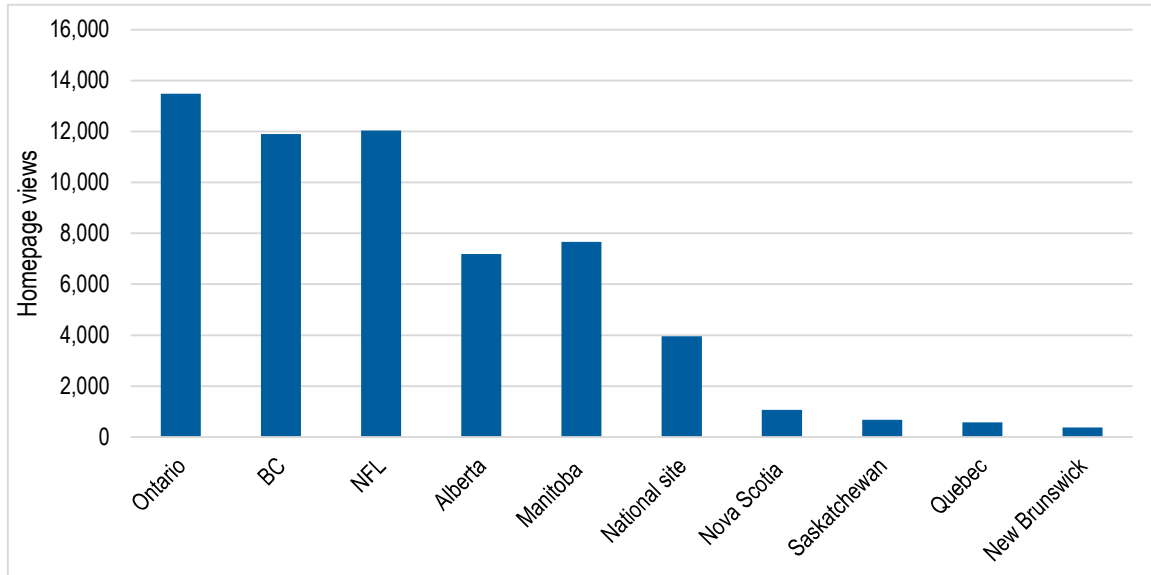
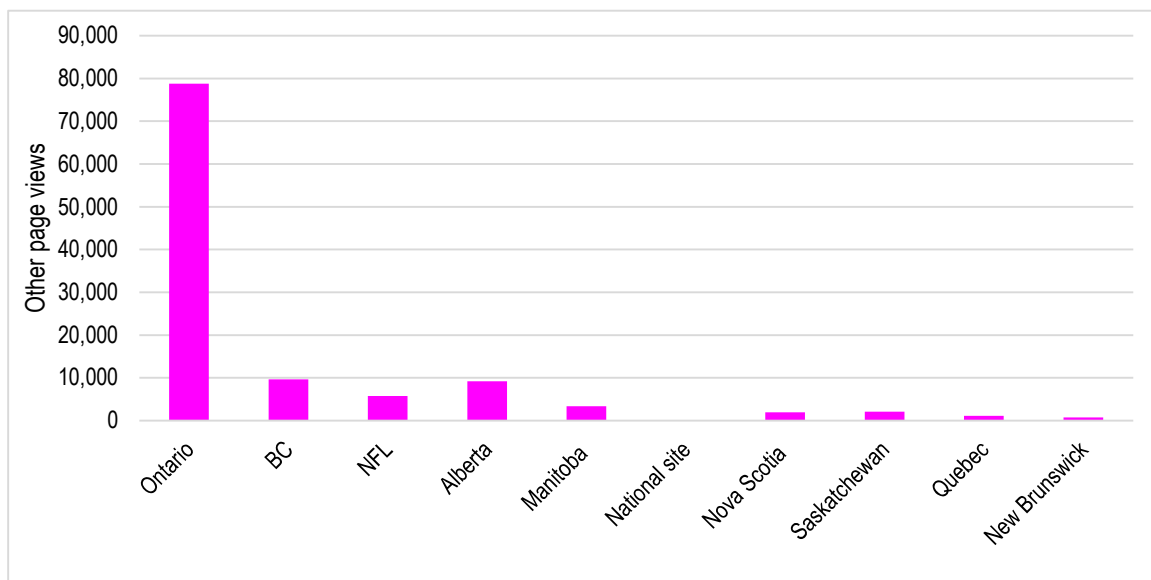
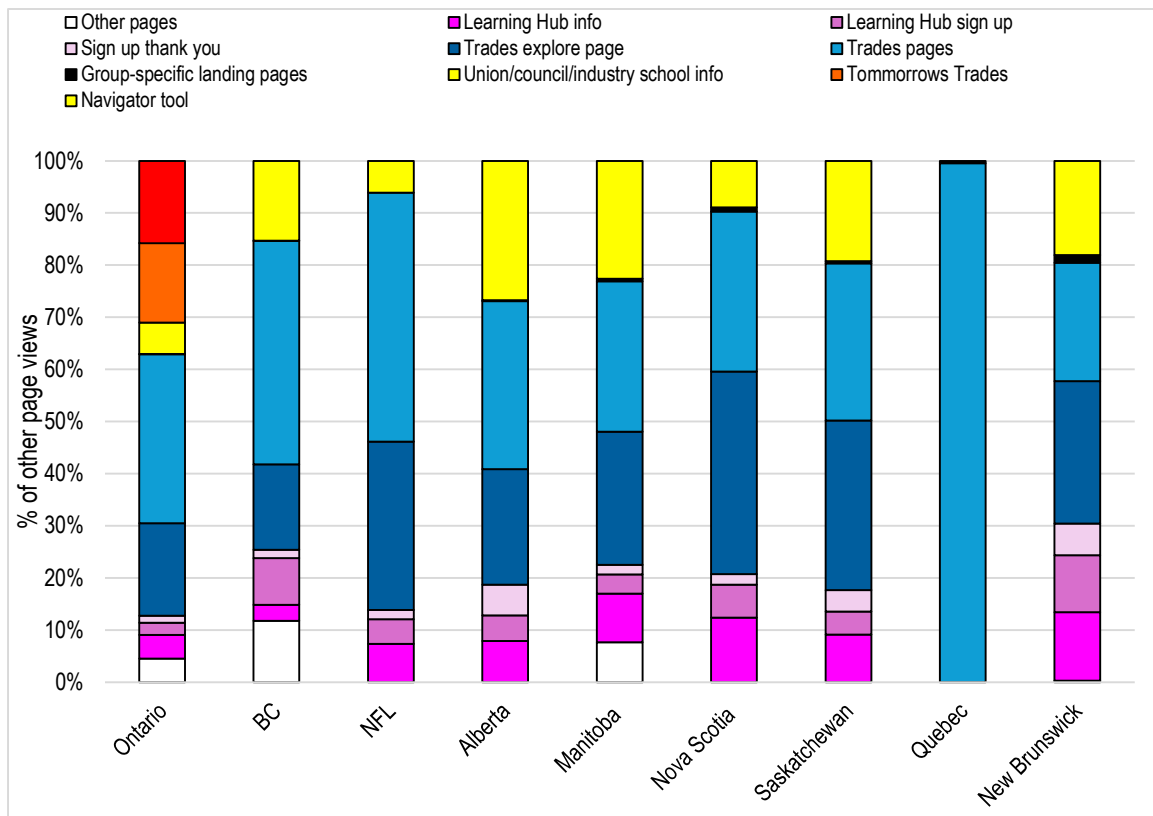
Figure 7 Homepage views by regional site**Figure 8** Other page views by regional site

Figure 9 describes the *percentage* of page views in each area of a provincial site. Rather than present page counts, which varied considerably by region, this graph explores the areas of each site that were most popular in terms of page views. Each category can represent one (i.e., the yellow bar typically refers to the Connect to Unions page) or multiple (i.e., the medium blue bar refers to multiple pages describing various trades in each region) pages. As discussed above,

regional sites differ in terms of the pages they offer; for example, the Ontario website has sections for their navigator tool (red bar) and information pages on their Tomorrow's Trades program (orange bar).

The results in Figure 9 show variation in traffic across each regional site. The largest percentage of traffic to the Connect to a Union page was on the Alberta site, while a comparatively smaller percentage of traffic visited this page on the NFL site. In contrast, a higher percentage of users on the NFL website viewed the trades exploration page and the individual trades pages. For traffic on the New Brunswick site, a large percentage viewed the Learning Hub information page, and then went on to the registration page. In Ontario, a smaller percentage of traffic viewed these Learning Hub pages and instead a higher percentage of users viewed the customized features and pages. On the BC website, there was also a notable percentage of traffic to other information pages that are unique to this website.

Figure 9 Percentage of page views across unique pages by regional site



Across all websites, a minimal percentage of traffic navigated to the group-specific landing pages that targets newcomers, women, and youth. This is an expected result given that these pages do not have links on the homepage but rather were intended as alternative homepages that could be shared directly with these groups. Instead, the majority of page views on most regional sites

indicated that users engaged in many of the key activities the sites were intended to provide; that is, exploring the trades, learning more about union opportunities, and connecting with learning resources.

In order to provide insight into the number of users engaging in key website activities, Tables 6, 7, and 8 provide an overview of “conversions” that this project seeks to promote. The term conversions refers to the ability of a website to promote desired activities among users (e.g., completing a form)—a key performance indicator (KPI) tied to a website's intended purpose. The Virtual Recruitment project aims to support three types of activities among users, exploring the trades, learning about and connecting with unions, and signing up for the Build Your Skills Learning Hub. In 2023, the project implemented a new event tagging system on each site to enable these metrics to be monitored during this phase of the project.

Table 6 Overview of users exploring the trades by province (April 1-Oct 15, 2024)

	# of explorers	Conversion: Clicked on trades icon		Level of engagement
	# users visited the main trades explore page	#	%	Average number of trades page view per user
BC	906	640	71%	3.5
Alberta	1,190	980	82%	1.9
Saskatchewan	395	264	67%	1.3
Manitoba	501	388	77%	1.5
Ontario	6,598	3,582	54%	2.4
Quebec	386 ¹	118	31%	2.0
NFL	995	NA ²	NA	2.3
Nova Scotia	428	311	73%	1.0
New Brunswick	105	78	74%	1.2

¹ This total corresponds to how many people viewed the homepage, which includes a section where the user can explore the trades;

² At the time of reporting, this event was not configured on the NFL site.

Table 6 provides an overview of the number of users who were engaged in website activities that suggest they were exploring the trades. This expected pathway of engagement begins when a user navigates to the “Explore the Trades” section of a website (see Figure 2 above). From here we tracked how many went on the click on a trade’s icon, which opens an initial information box

and offers the user the opportunity to navigate to a separate page to review more information about that trade.

Overall, the number of users who visited the initial “Explore the Trades” page was highest in Ontario and lowest in New Brunswick—an expected result given these two sites had the highest and lowest amount of traffic overall. However, the conversion rate did not follow the same pattern in terms of being higher in high-traffic regions. For example, while the Manitoba and New Brunswick sites had lower numbers of overall traffic, they had the highest percentage of users who went on to read more about at least one trade. In contrast, the percentage of users in Quebec who went on to click on a trades card was much lower; however, on this website the trades page links are further down on the homepage (rather than on a separate page, as is the case with other sites), so user behaviour is expected to differ.

Table 7 Overview of users learning about and connecting with unions (April 1-Oct 15, 2024)

	# users interested in union opportunities	Conversion: Click on page links		Conversion: Submit “Connect to a Union” form	
	# users visited the union/ industry/ school info page	#	%	#	%
BC	1,130	318	28%	NA	NA
Alberta	1,528	768	50%	227	15%
Saskatchewan	280	113	40%	22	8%
Manitoba	476	201	42%	40	8%
Ontario	2,357	1309	56%	NA	NA
Quebec	65 ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA
NFL	267	142	53%	15	6%
Nova Scotia	131	98	75%	NA	NA
New Brunswick	86	41	48%	11	13%

¹ This total corresponds to how many people clicked the “Se connecter” link at the top of each page, which takes users to a CPQMCI webpage where they can fill out a contact form.

The next two conversions track the percentage of website users who engaged in activities that suggested they were interested in learning more and connecting with unions. The universe for calculating this metric comes from the number of users on each site who visited the “Connect

with Unions” page—although in BC this page is schools and in Nova Scotia it is industry partners. In Quebec, there is no parallel page on their website, but instead a link to an external CPQMCi webpage.

The first conversion in Table 7 tracks how many users who navigated to the union/school/industry page went on to click a link to an external site, which were largely links to websites for unions in that province. The conversion rate was highest on the Nova Scotia website (75 per cent), a page which has comparably less content compared to other provincial sites as it lists five organizations (e.g., trades councils, apprenticeship agencies), and lowest in BC (28 per cent).

The second conversion in Table 7 tracks the percentage of users who went on to submit a Connect to a Union form, a feature that was not available on the Quebec, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and BC websites. Overall, this conversion rate was low, ranging from 6 to 15 per cent. One reason for this low rate of take up among users may be a lack of clarity as to what providing their contract information will provide. As shown in Figure 3 above, the sign-up form allows users to select that they would like to “connect to available construction job opportunities with a local union” and/or “receive information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school.” However, it does not let the user know that by providing their information an apprenticeship liaison will contact them to provide tailored support.

Table 8 Overview of users signing up or the Build Your Skills Learning Hub (April 1-Oct. 15, 2024)

	# of users gain information about the Learning Hub	Number of users interested in signing up	Conversion: Submitting registration form
	# users visited the BYS info page	# users visited the registration page	# users submitted form
BC	231	484	27%
Alberta	489	299	64%
Saskatchewan	137	67	70%
Manitoba	213	93	54%
Ontario	2,501	1,040	74%
Quebec	NA	NA	NA
NFL	238	199	35%
Nova Scotia	164	100	33%
New Brunswick	66	55	83%

The final conversion (see Table 8) examined was the percentage of users who submitted the “Build Your Skills” registration form after opening the registration page (see Figure 4 above for an overview of this registration pathway). Overall, the rate of registration after navigating to the form was highest on the New Brunswick (83 per cent) and Ontario (74 per cent) websites and lowest on the BC website. On the BC site, multiple pages link to the Build Your Skills registration page by inviting users to “sign up” and navigate to the registration form directly. Because BC had a high rate of people accessing trades card pages, it is likely that more people navigated directly to the registration page rather than the information page first.

LEARNING HUB OUTCOMES

Overview of recruitment channels

On each provincial Construction Trades Hub site, users can sign up for the Build Your Skills Learning Hub by completing a brief intake form, which includes: name; email; phone number; trade experience or pathway (options include: exploring a trade, pre-apprentice, apprentice, or training provider); trade of interest (including “still deciding”); and how they learned about the online Learning Hub (options include: social media, a trainer/teacher/councillor, an event, a union, or other). There is also an additional section on most provincial Learning Hub registration forms where individuals can indicate that they would like to: “connect to available construction job opportunities with a local union,” and/or “receive information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school.”

Ongoing recruitment to the Learning Hub also occurs through the SkillPlan website (www.skillplan.ca), where interested individuals can also register to the Learning Hub. They complete a form which is very similar to the registration form on the provincial Construction Trades Hub sites, except that it asks additional background questions (e.g., if the person is a learner exploring the trades, apprentice, union training provider, college training provider, community or support organization, etc.).

All new Learning Hub registrants from provincial Construction Trades Hub sites (except Quebec) have an option to click the “connect to a union” box on the intake form. When they select “connect to a union” they are added to a spreadsheet administered by SkillPlan. The SkillPlan administrator shares these contact details with representatives of the provincial building trade council or follows up with the person directly to provide support. The Quebec Construction Trades Hub site links to an external Learning Hub sign-up form. For new Quebec registrants, a SkillPlan administrator shares the Learning Hub usernames and contact details with the Quebec trades council.

Along with the provincial and the SkillPlan sites, Learning Hub users can come from other recruitment channels. There are a number of direct enrollment channels to the Learning Hub through training partners and unions who have new and previous relationships with SkillPlan (e.g., in-class programs delivered by SkillPlan, SkillPlan tutoring, union intake testing preparation and support, etc.), through networking and conference presentations, as well as a variety of special projects (e.g., CBTU Apprenticeship Services, school boards/post-secondary schools, etc.). In the analysis below, Learning Hub users who signed up through these other recruitment channels or via the SkillPlan website sign-up form are referred to as “non-virtual recruitment users.”

The registration process and initial contact with users

When a provincial Construction Trades Hub or SkillPlan site user completes the intake form, SkillPlan manually registers them for the Learning Hub. For all regions other than Quebec, the Learning Hub registration process through the provincial sites and SkillPlan website is similar. Users who select explorer, pre-apprentice, or apprentice as their experience level are registered in all Foundational courses (Trade Math 1, Trade Math 2, Math Applications, Practice Test, Trade Science). Selecting a trade of interest does not change the enrollment options. Users are then sent a welcome email from the SkillPlan E-Learning Administrator, which includes course topics that are included in the online Learning Hub, how to login to access these courses, as well as the URL, their username, and initial password.

Users who select their trade experience level as “trainers” are contacted via email by the SkillPlan E-Learning Administrator to set up a meeting to discuss options to use the Learning Hub. Typically, following this meeting, the trainers are given an “auditor” rather than a “learner” account. If they do not identify a trade of interest, instructors will receive access to foundational courses. If they do specify a trade of interest, they will receive access to a trade course package, which includes foundational and trade-specific courses. Instructors then receive a welcome email with login information to their auditor account, where they can view courses, take quizzes, and get a general feel for how to navigate the tools and resources on the Learning Hub.

All new users who have not signed in after three days automatically receive a reminder that they have been enrolled in the Learning Hub. If they still have not signed in, another reminder is sent after 10 days. Most new users, regardless of whether they have logged on or not, receive an email invitation to complete the intake survey seven days after registration; although, some non-VR users who participate in projects with specialized data collection procedures do not receive an invitation to this intake survey.

New user acquisition on the Learning Hub

Figure 10 illustrates cumulative Learning Hub Virtual Recruitment registration numbers during Phase 3 (April 1 to October 31, 2024) from all provincial sites and the SkillPlan website. The number of new registrations to the Learning Hub has shown continual growth, with 2,841 new users signing up during this phase of the project.

Figure 10 Total VR3 registrations on the Learning Hub (n=2,841)

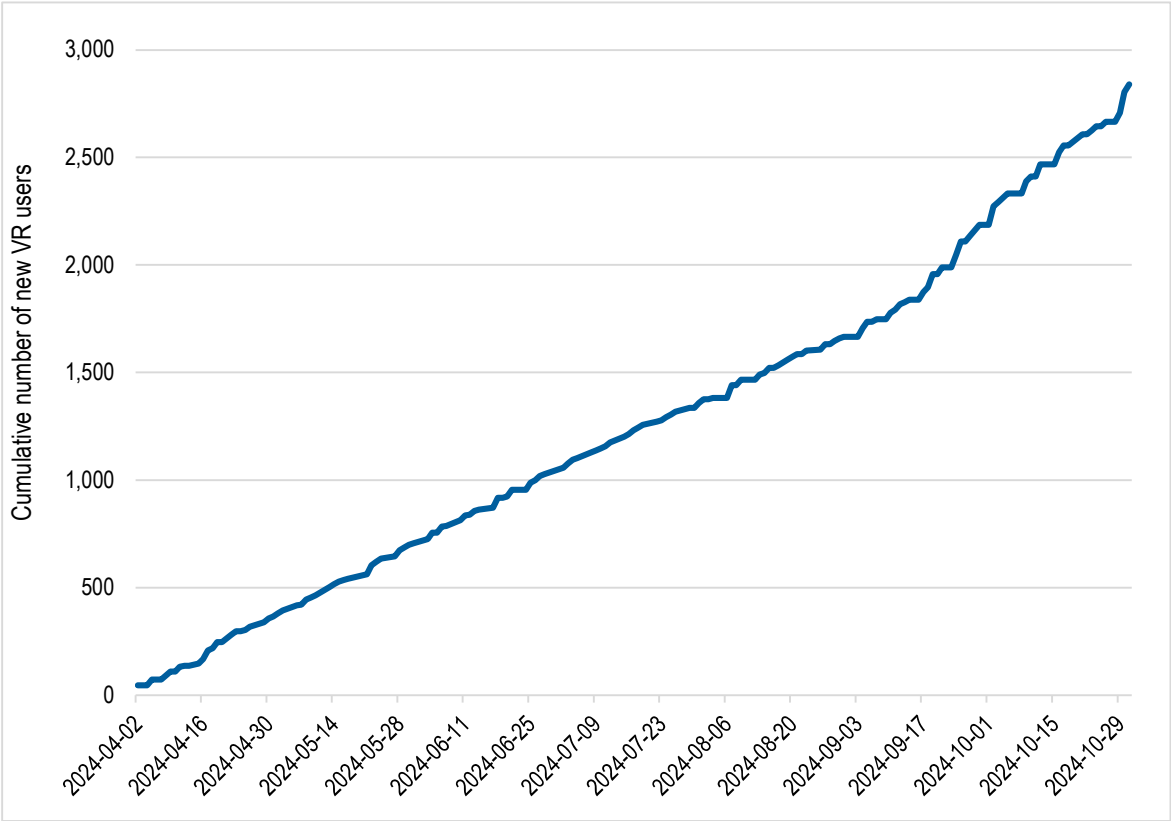


Table 9 illustrates the increase in registration numbers by region during this phase of the project.

Table 9 **Number of new VR 3 users by form (n=2,841)**

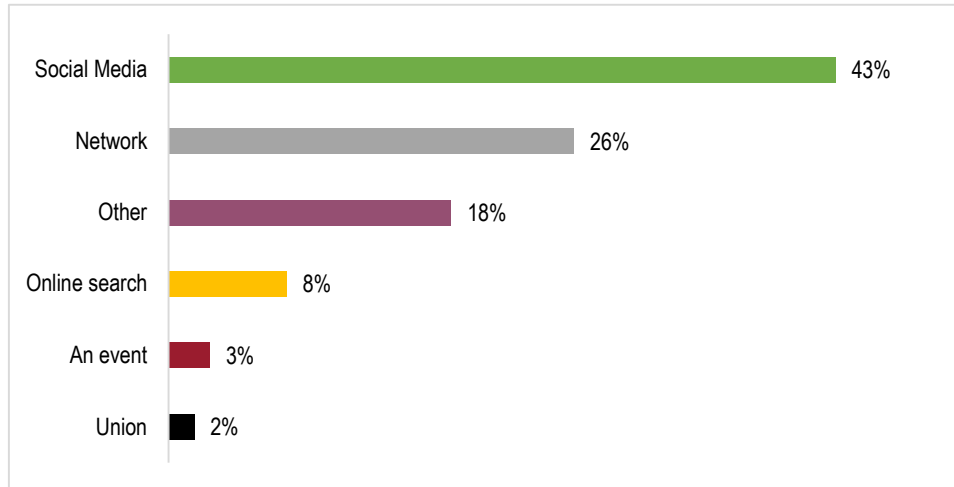
Region	n	%
SkillPlan form	957	34%
Quebec	653	23%
Ontario	639	22%
Alberta	223	8%
British Columbia	135	5%
Newfoundland	85	3%
Manitoba	51	2%
Saskatchewan	44	2%
Nova Scotia	33	1%
New Brunswick	21	1%

Intake form results

Figure 11 shows how VR Phase 3 users learned about the Learning Hub, choosing from one of the options listed on the intake form. This information was available on most provincial site registration forms other than the Quebec form. Just under half the registrants learned about the Learning Hub from social media, while approximately a quarter learned about the site from their network (e.g., a friend, teacher, employer). These results differ slightly from Phase 2, where 56 per cent new users learned about the Learning Hub through social media and only 13 per cent through their network. Likely, the decrease in social media campaigns accounts for this change.

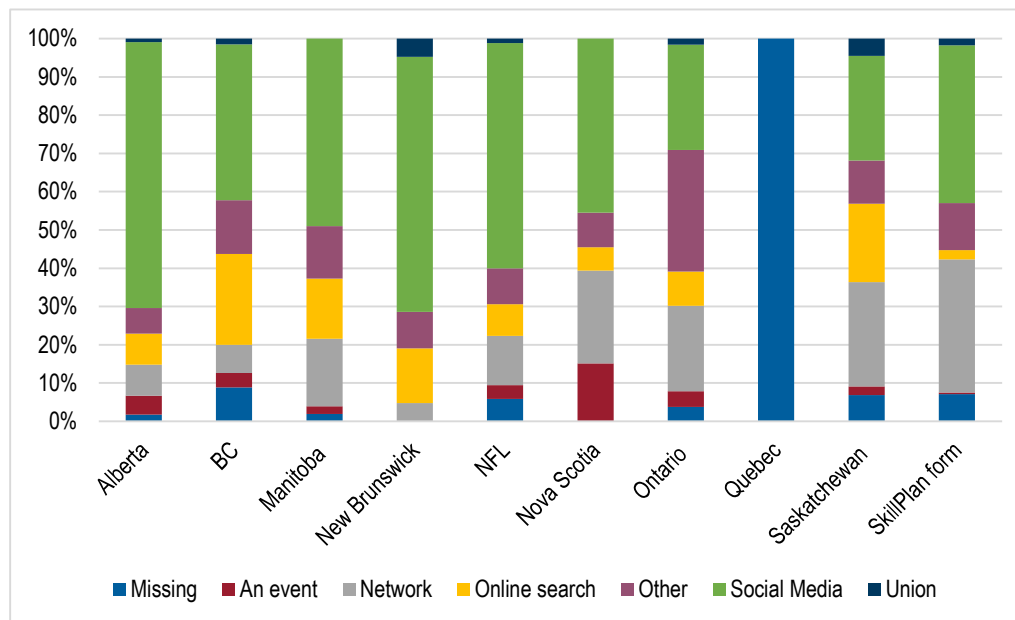
Figure 11 How VR registrants learned about the Learning Hub (n = 2,071)

Excludes n=770 new users who did not provide information about how they learned about the Learning Hub.



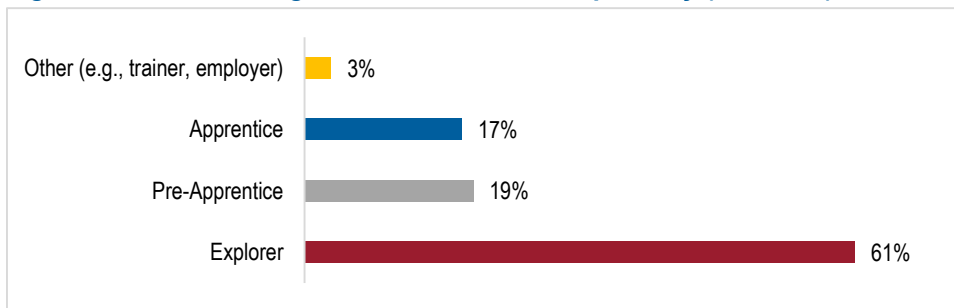
There was some variation in how VR users learned about the Learning Hub across each region (see Figure 12). Social media was the most frequently stated way users heard about the Learning Hub in all provinces except Ontario and Saskatchewan, where networking, other methods and online searches attracted many users.

Figure 12 How VR users learned about the Learning Hub by region (n = 2,841)



On the intake form, VR users also indicated their trade pathway at the time of registration, though this was not included on the Quebec intake form. In Figure 13 we see that 61 per cent of registrants were explorers, 19 per cent were pre-apprentices, and 17 per cent were apprentices. There were also 64 trainers/employers, and people who did not identify as one of the three pathways.

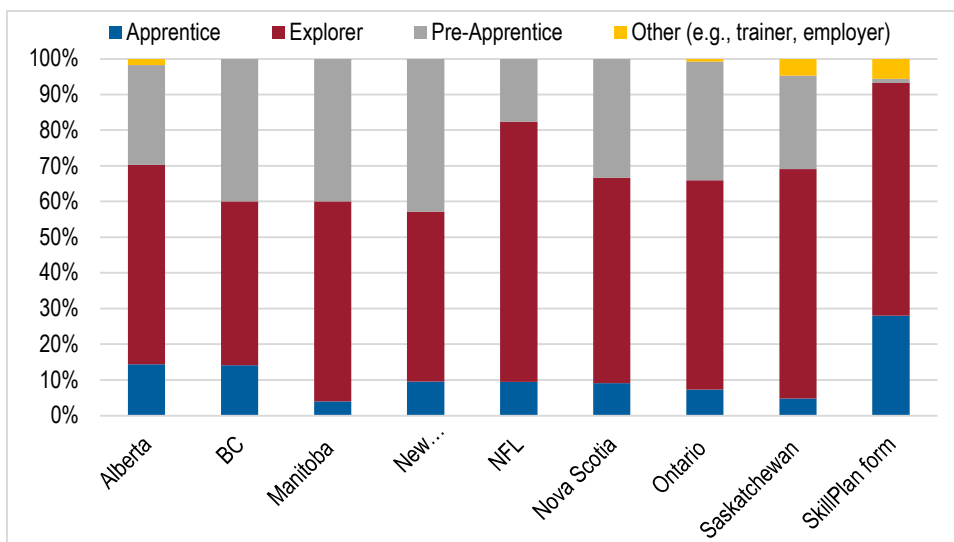
Figure 13 VR 4 registrants declared trade pathway (n = 2,155)



Excludes n=668 new users who did not provide information.

We also looked at the distribution of user trade pathways provincially (see Figure 14). In most regions, approximately 50 to 65 per cent of VR registrants were explorers except in NFL where 73 per cent were explorers. There was more variation in the proportion of pre-apprentices across regions—ranging from 1 per cent on the SkillPlan form to 43 per cent in New Brunswick. There was also more variation in the proportion of apprentices across regions, ranging from 5 per cent in Saskatchewan to 29 per cent on the SkillPlan form.

Figure 14 VR trade pathways by regional form (n = 2,155)



Excludes n=668 new users who did not provide information.

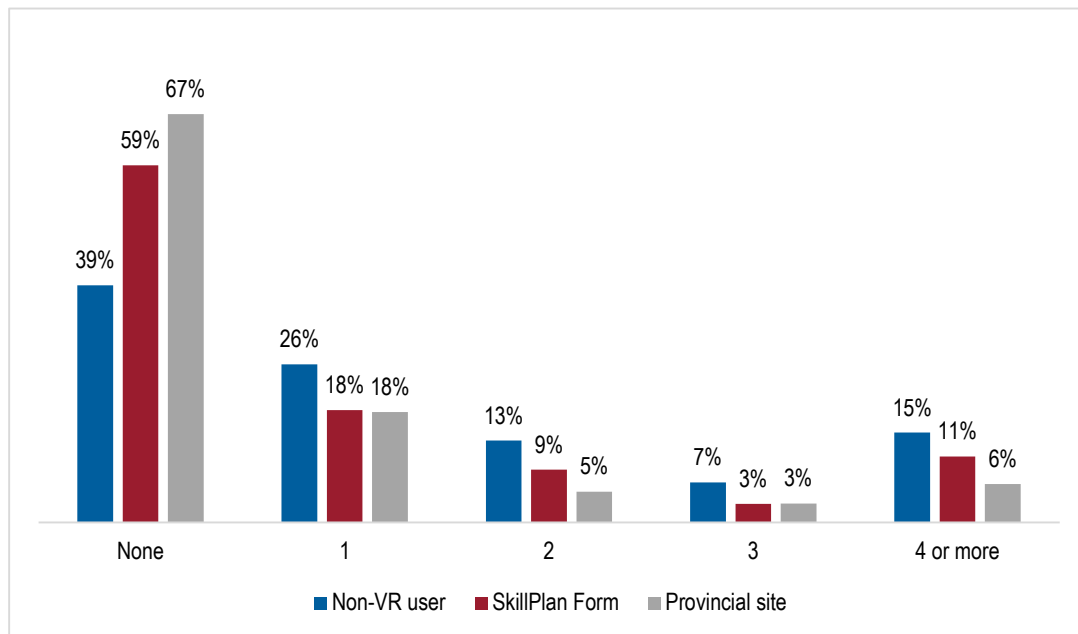
Learning Hub engagement

Additional analysis captured actual VR and non-VR user activity and engagement trends on the Learning Hub. This section provides a summary of the number of times new VR user (e.g., registered through VR site or the SkillPlan form) and non-VR users (i.e., those who registered through another project or by SkillPlan directly) logged on to Build Your Skills (between April 1 and Oct 31, 2024), the number of courses users accessed, and types of courses they started. For VR users, we were also able to describe user engagement by trade pathway (e.g., explorer, pre-apprentice, and apprentice) as well as by the regional site they registered through. The data in this section includes user engagement data from users who had a “learner” profile on the Learning Hub, a total of 2,839 VR and 5,505 non-VR Learning Hub users who registered between April 1 and October 31, 2024. Note that new users coming through virtual recruitment are registered as “learner” within the Learning Hub even though a small number of these users self-identify as “other” (i.e., employer, trainer).

Times logged onto Learning Hub

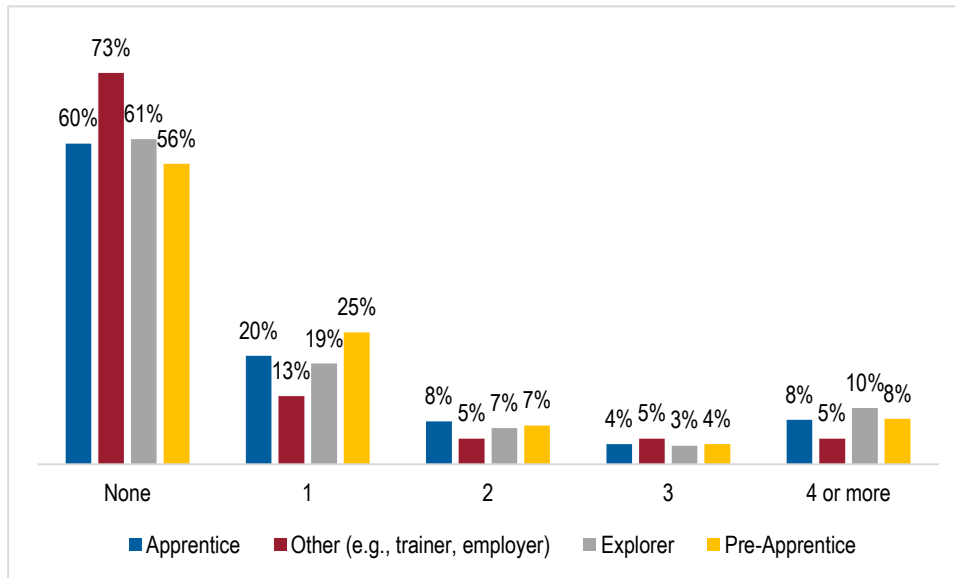
The majority of VR users who were registered by SkillPlan did not log onto the Learning Hub (59 per cent SkillPlan Form and 67 per cent provincial site), while 61 per cent of non-VR users logged on at least once (See Figure 15). About a quarter of non-VR users logged on once, while 18 per cent regional VR users and 18 percent of SkillPlan VR user logged on once. However, 11 per cent of SkillPlan VR users and 15 per cent of non-VR users logged on four or more times, demonstrating high levels of engagement.

Figure 15 **Number of times VR and non-VR users logged onto the Learning Hub (n=8,344)**



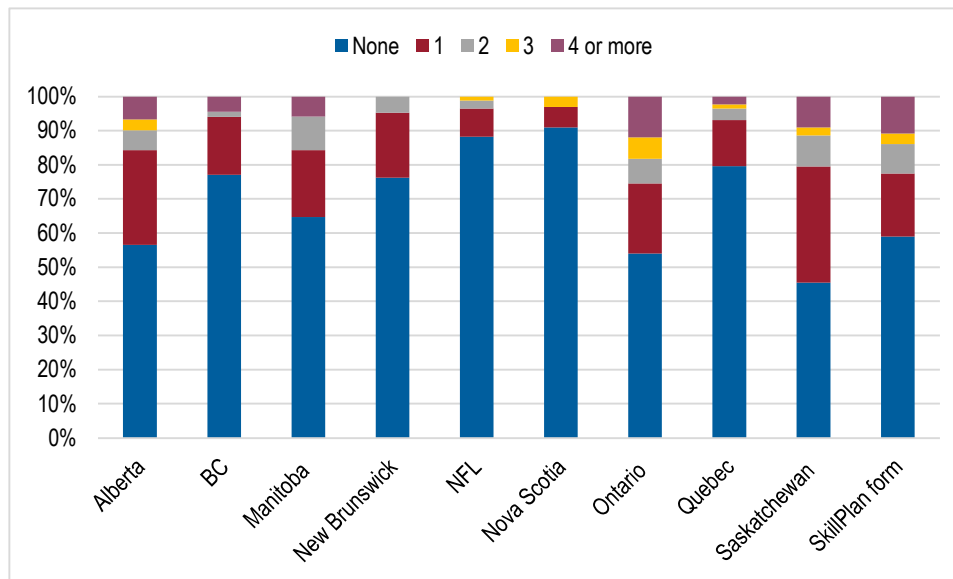
Non-VR user n =5,505; SkillPlan form user n = 957; Provincial site user=1,882.

We were able to dig a little deeper into engagement levels by looking at VR users' trade pathway indicated on the intake form (i.e., explorer, pre-apprentice, apprentice and "other" (i.e. trainer, employer)) as seen in Figure 16. Between 56 and 73 per cent of users across all four trade pathways did not log onto the Learning Hub, with the largest proportion being "other." Between 13 to 25 per cent of all trade levels logged on once, with pre-apprentices being the largest proportion. A similar proportion of explorers, pre-apprentices and apprentices logged on two three, and four or more times. The trend suggests that learners coming through the VR channels during this phase display very similar levels of engagement, while employers and trainers are less engaged. This differs from the previous phase, where explorers were less engaged than pre-apprentices and apprentices.

Figure 16 Number of times VR users logged on by trade pathway (n = 2,153)

Exclude n=686 people who did not provide this information.

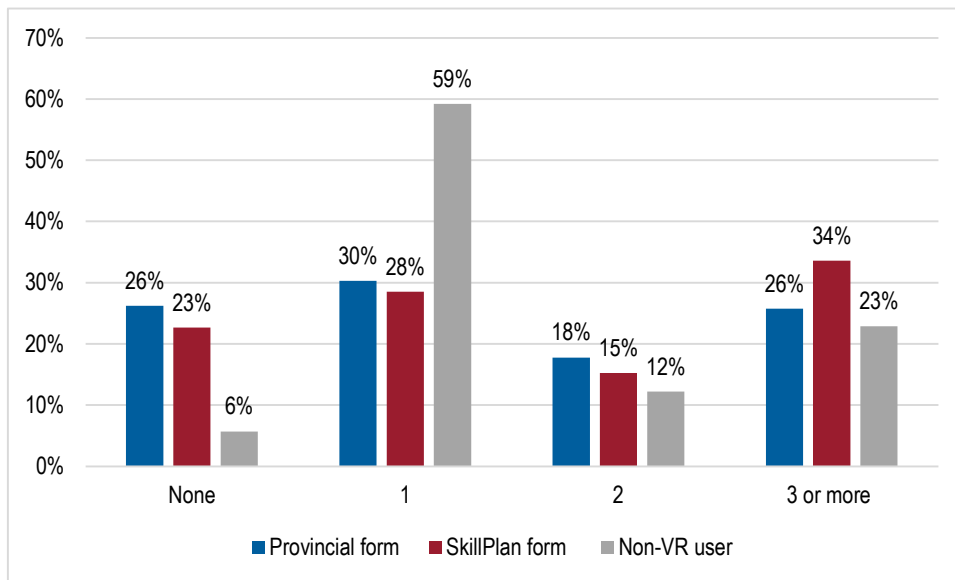
Figure 17 illustrates the number of times VR users logged on by regional form/province. Across all provinces, the proportion of users who never logged on ranges from 45 per cent in Saskatchewan to 91 per cent in Nova Scotia. The number of times users logged on once was consistent across provinces as the next highest percentage, ranging from 6 (Nova Scotia) to 34 (Saskatchewan) per cent. Ontario had the highest proportions logging on four or more times (12 per cent).

Figure 17 Number of times VR users logged on by regional form (n = 2,839)

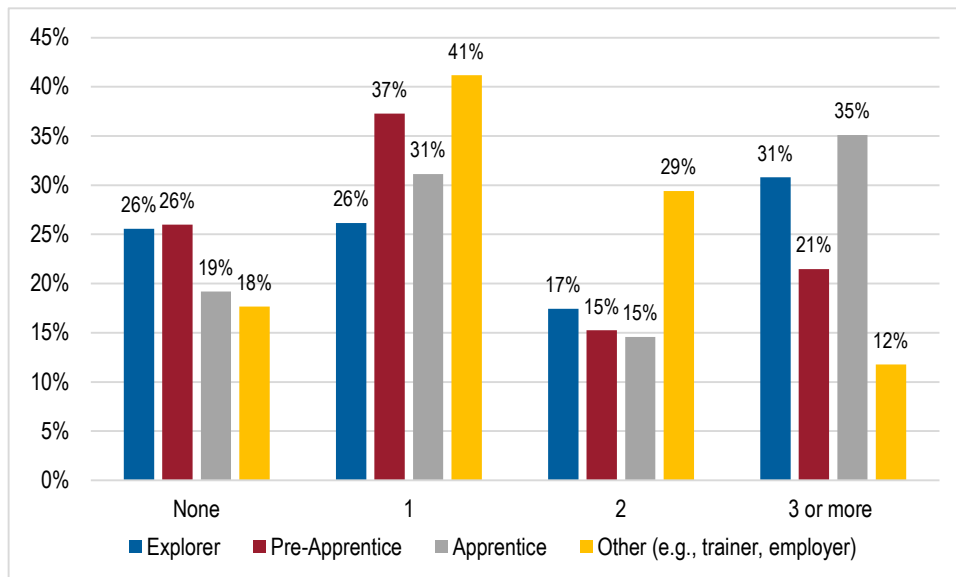
Number and type of courses accessed

Looking at the number of different courses accessed by registered VR (divided into SkillPlan and regional) and non-VR users who logged on at least once, we see that 49 per cent of VR users and 6 per cent of non-VR users did not start any courses (see Figure 18). These users are likely accessing other resources on the Learning Hub, such as the trades information in the Explorer Hub section. A similar proportion of VR users than non-VR users accessed one course compared to non-VR users (58 per cent vs 59 per cent), however more VR users accessed two courses (32 per cent) compared to non-VR users (12 per cent). Nearly two-thirds of VR users who login were highly engaged on the Learning Hub, accessing three or more courses.

We were also able to analyze the number of different courses VR users (who logged on to the Learning Hub at least once) accessed by trade pathway. In Figure 19 we see that almost a quarter of explorers and pre-apprentices did not access any courses. Users from each trade pathway who accessed one course ranged from 26 to 41 per cent, while 15 to 29 per cent accessed two courses. Explorers, pre-apprentices and apprentices were highly engaged, accessing three or more courses, ranging from 21 to 35 per cent. It is positive to see the high engagement levels in courses among learners in all levels of trade pathways.

Figure 18 Number of courses access by VR and non-VR users (n=4,359)

Provincial form n=614; SkillPlan form=393; Non-VR user n=3,352

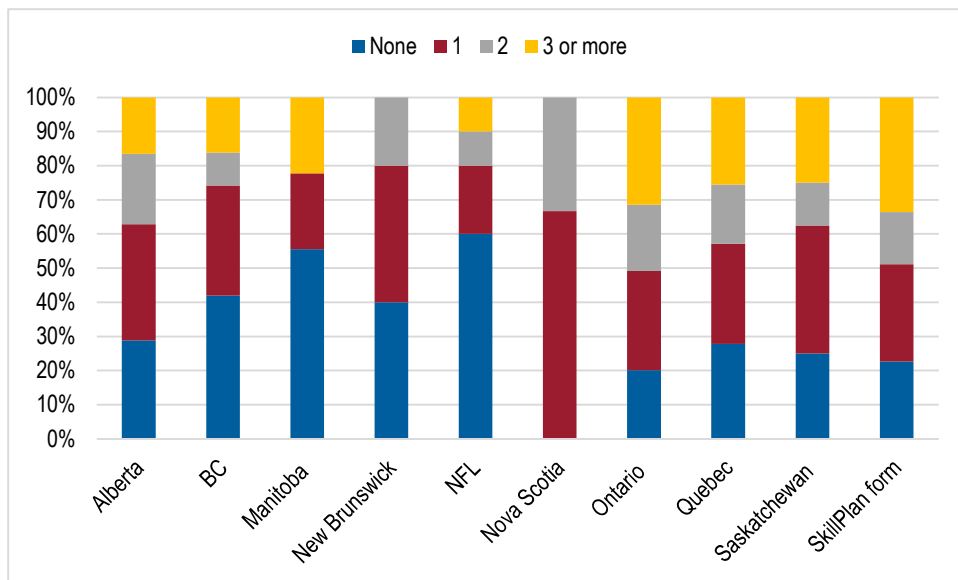
Figure 19 Number of different courses of VR users by trade pathway (n=861)

Explorer n=516; Pre-apprentice n=177; Apprentice n=151; Other n=17 logged on at least once and had form information on their trades pathway

We also analyzed the number of different courses of VR users (who logged onto the Learning Hub at least once) accessed across all site regions. In Figure 20 we see that approximately 20 per cent of users in all provinces except Nova Scotia did not start any courses, 22 to 67 per cent

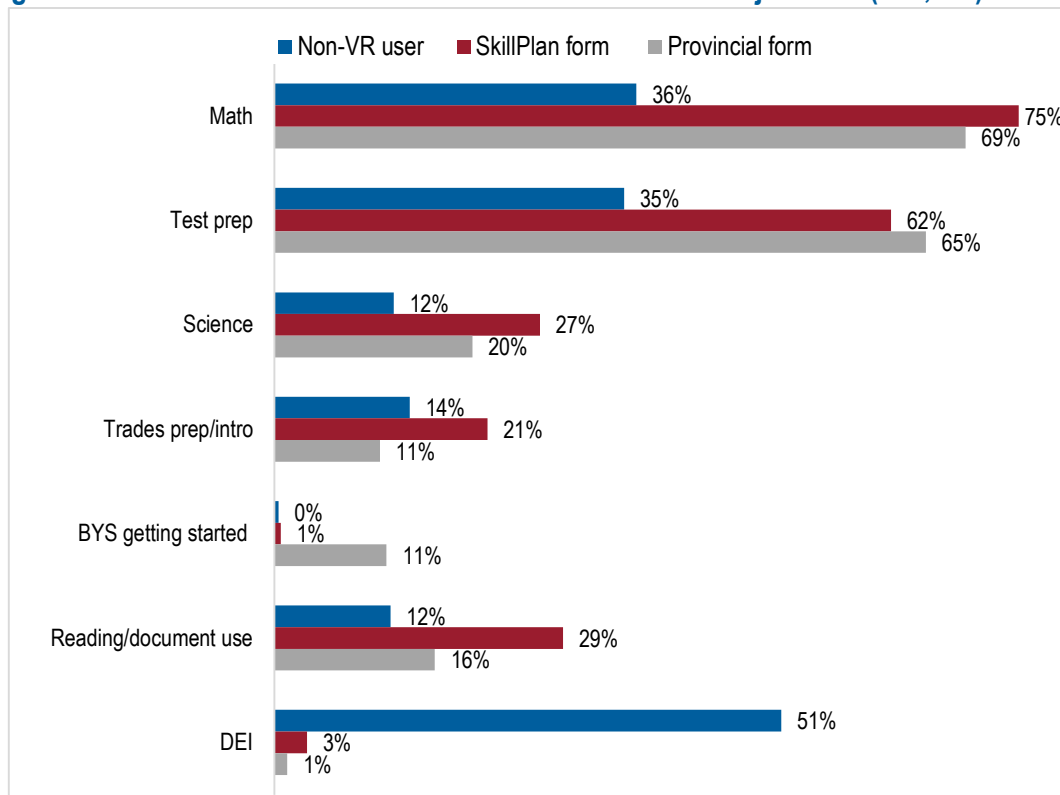
accessed one course, 10 to 33 per cent accessed two courses, and zero to 33 per cent accessed three or more courses. Overall, there was a good deal of variance across the provinces in this phase in terms of the proportion of users who accessed multiple courses.

Figure 20 Number of different courses of VR users by province (n=1,007)



It was also possible to examine the types of courses both non-VR and VR users accessed (excluding those who did not access any courses), grouping courses into subject-specific categories including: math; science; test preparation; reading & document use; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI); preparing for a trades course; the Learning Hub “Getting Started” course; and other courses not included elsewhere.

In Figure 21, we see that math courses were the most popular among both VR and non-VR users (75 per cent SkillPlan VR, 69 per cent provincial VR and 36 per cent non-VR respectively). The next most popular type was test preparation, with 65 per cent of SkillPlan VR users, 62 per cent of provincial VR users and 35 per cent of non-VR users accessing this subject area. Science courses were also popular, where 27 per cent of SkillPlan VR users, 20 percent of provincial VR users and 20 per cent of non-VR users accessed these courses. Some courses, such as reading and document use, DEI, and various preparing for a trades course were developed more recently, and therefore fewer users had a chance to access them.

Figure 21 VR and non-VR courses accessed in each subject area (n=3,918)

Provincial VR users n=453; Provincial VR users n=304; Non-VR users n=3,161 who accessed at least one course

In summary, trends in learner engagement for both non-VR and VR users indicated that while the majority of VR users who registered for the Learning Hub never logged onto the site, those who did log on were often engaging in a variety of resources, including courses and test preparation. Trades math courses were the most widely used, and test preparation courses were also used by approximately half of all users who accessed course material. The majority of non-VR users did log on and displayed similar engagement patterns as VR users. Notably, non-VR users exhibited a high level of engagement in the DEI courses compared to VR users, which may be due to the placement of these courses in the Apprentice section of the Learning Hub.

Learner Hub intake survey results

Overview

One week after most new users received log-on information for the Learning Hub, they were invited to complete an intake survey. Between April 1 and October 31, 2024, a total of 422 individuals completed the survey. Approximately one third (n=130) of these responses were from individuals who registered for the Learning Hub through a virtual recruitment provincial

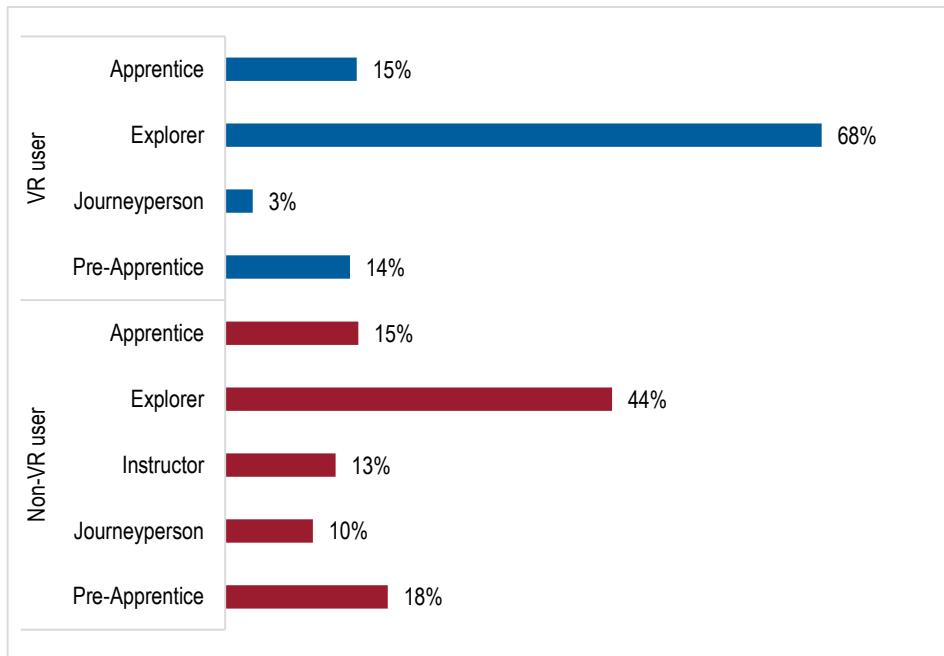
site or the SkillPlan form. The other two-thirds (n=292) were users who came from a variety of other recruitment channels to the Learning Hub.

The intake survey consisted of approximately 25 questions, of which 10 were geared to collect demographic data such as age, gender, Indigenous status, racialized status, newcomer status, disability, province, and education. The bulk of the survey collected information on respondents' current training status, trade level, current trades employment status, future plans within the trades, and confidence in skills (e.g., math, reading, etc.). There were also several questions about their initial engagement on the Learning Hub, their perceptions of its usability, and how they intended to use the site. The survey took users less than 10 minutes to complete.

The intake survey invitation was sent out to new users designated as “learners” on the Learning Hub, though this population did include a small number of training providers from trades colleges and training centres as well as high school staff. Within the survey itself, those individuals identified as training providers in the trade level question were directed towards questions pertaining to their training role, while all other respondents completed separate questions on the topics previously described.

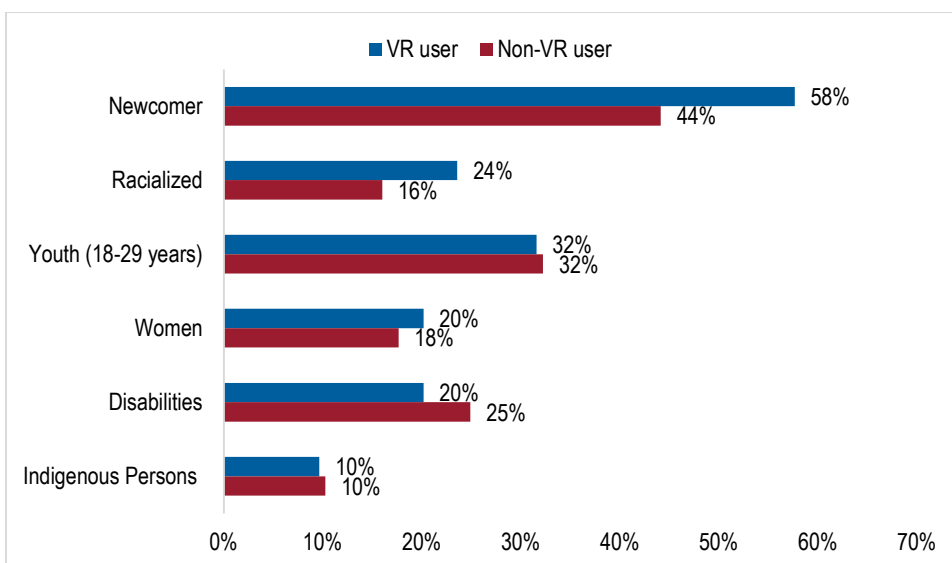
Profile of VR learner respondents

The vast majority, 68 per cent, of the survey respondents coming through the virtual recruitment (VR) channels were “explorers,” while 44 per cent of non-VR users were explorers. 14 per cent of VR respondents were pre-apprentices, 15 per cent were apprentices and 3 per cent were journeypersons (see Figure 22). For non-VR survey respondents, there were 18 per cent pre-apprentices, 15 per cent apprentices, 10 per cent journeypersons and 13 per cent instructors. In this phase of the project, virtual recruitment outreach did attract a large proportion of explorers who were interested in accessing the Learning Hub, as well as a growing number of pre-apprentices, apprentices and journeypersons.

Figure 22 VR and non-VR user trade levels

Note: VR user n=127; Non-VR user n=271. Missing values (n=24) excluded.

Figure 23 provides a summary of the demographic profile of VR and non-VR users who completed the Learning Hub intake survey. The representation of equity-seeking groups was quite high in both the VR and non-VR user groups, with some notable differences.

Figure 23 Underrepresented VR vs non-VR users

Note: VR user n=106 to 114; Non-VR user n=247 to 273; Missing values excluded.

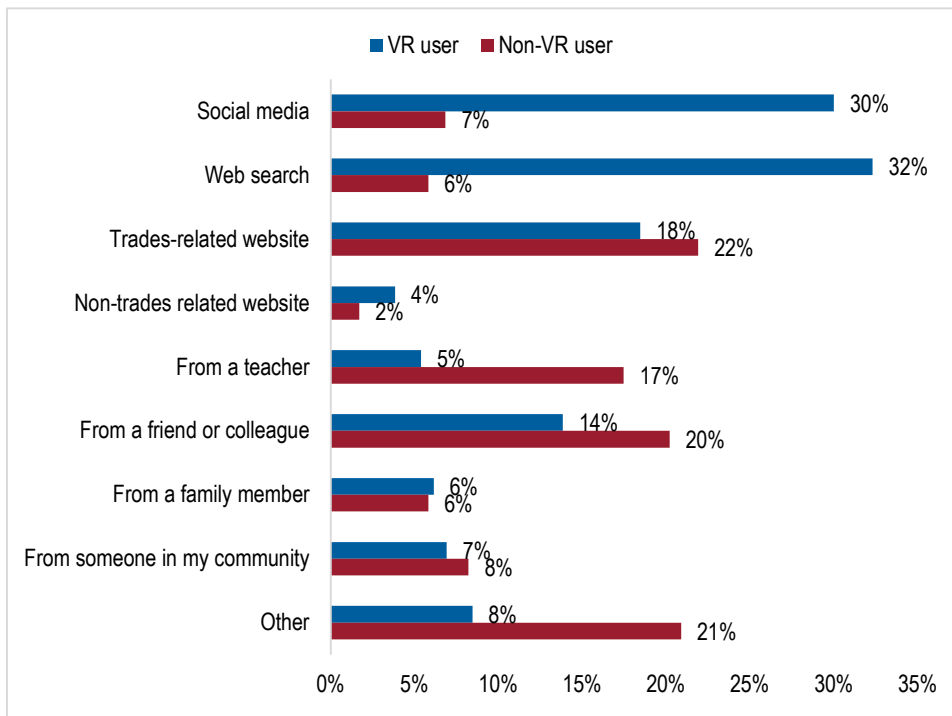
The most prominent difference between VR and non-VR respondents was the proportion who were newcomers, which was 58 per cent of VR users but 44 per cent of non-VR users. A higher percentage of VR users also identified as being racialized (24 per cent) compared to non-VR users (16 per cent). This result suggests that the virtual recruitment resources were particularly effective in attracting newcomers and racialized groups ready to engage in online training.

The proportion of youth and Indigenous Persons was the same for VR and non-VR users, with slightly more women (20 per cent) coming through VR channels compared to 18 per cent non-VR. There was also a higher proportion of people with disabilities coming through non-VR channels (25 per cent) compared to 20 per cent coming through VR channels.

Learning hub introduction and intention

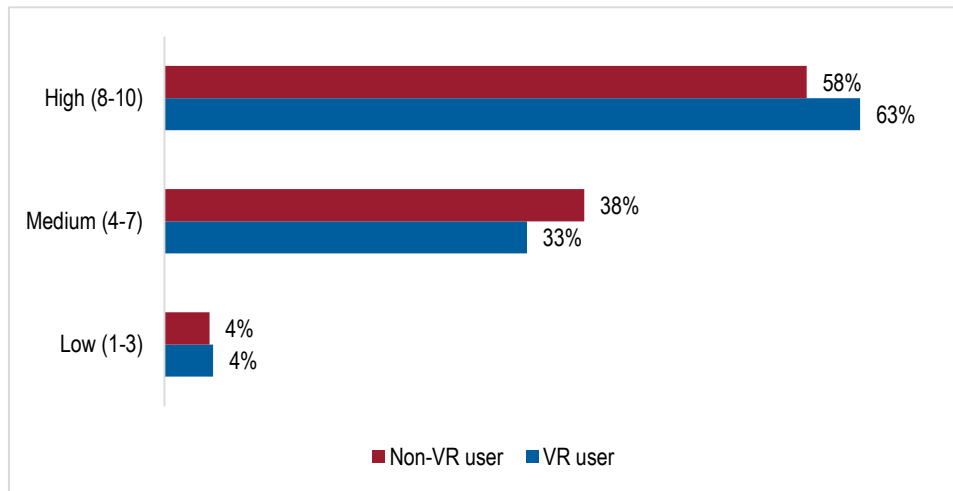
Looking at recruitment channels for VR and non-VR users who completed the intake survey (see Figure 24), approximately 30 and 32 per cent of VR users came to the Learning Hub through social media and web search channels respectively, and 18 per cent from trades-related websites. There were still a number of VR users who found the Learning Hub through word-of-mouth channels, such as from a colleague, teacher, community member or friend (14, 5, and 7 and 6 per cent respectively).

In contrast, approximately 22 per cent of non-VR users came to the Learning Hub through trades-related websites and teachers, with only 7 per cent coming through social media and web searches. Other common recruitment channels for non-VR users included other means (e.g., job fairs and radio) and friends or colleagues (21 and 20 per cent respectively).

Figure 24 Recruitment channels among VR and non-VR users

Percentages do not equal 100% as respondents can select all that apply.

There were some differences between VR and non-VR users regarding their comfort level with online learning. Figure 25 shows results for user comfort level with online learning. 63 per cent of VR users reported being very comfortable (selecting 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point sliding scale) compared to 58 per cent of non-VR users. Only 4 per cent of VR users and non-VR users indicated low comfort levels with online learning. Comfort level with online learning may play a role in determining how appealing this medium of skills training is to individuals, particularly as the trades work environment and traditional training are highly hands-on in nature.

Figure 25 Comfort level with online learning of VR (n=113) vs non-VR users (n=269)

Missing values excluded.

Table 10 provides insight related to how VR and non-VR intake survey respondents intended to use the Learning Hub. Compared to non-VR users, a larger proportion of VR users planned to try a practice test (92 per cent), review their skills (90 per cent), and complete a course (89 per cent). Only 78 per cent of VR intake respondents indicated that they intended to connect with a union. In comparison, non-VR users seemed most intent on completing a course (82 per cent) and taking a mandatory assessment (76 per cent). This may be due to more non-VR users already being connected with unions before registering on the Learning Hub, and were directed to complete an assessment. Overall, the VR users responding to the intake survey indicated that they intended to engage with the Learning Hub in a variety of ways, such as exploring trades, taking a practice test, and trying different courses.

Table 10 VR and non-VR user intentions with the Learning Hub

At intake, were likely or very likely to:	% VR	% non-VR
✓ Explore information on different trades.	80%	70%
✓ Try a practice test.	92%	75%
✓ Review my skills.	90%	79%
✓ Look at the different courses.	86%	73%
✓ Start a course	88%	74%
✓ Complete a course.	89%	82%
✓ Take a mandatory assessment.	87%	76%
✓ Connect with a union.	78%	71%

Initial impressions of usability

Looking at initial impressions of usability for VR and non-VR intake survey respondents (see Table 11), nearly all users agreed or strongly agreed that the content on the site was useful, the information was relevant, and they were satisfied overall with the design of Build Your Skills (83 to 85 per cent). Slightly more VR users agreed or strongly agreed that was clear how to use the site and the layout out was well organized (82 per cent and 83 per cent), compared to non-VR users (78 per cent and 79 per cent). The percentage of both VR and non-VR users who agreed or strongly agreed that “accessing different courses is easy” and that they are “able to access technology support when needed” decreased slightly to the 75 to 72 per cent range. This may indicate that the process or information regarding accessing different courses and tech support could be clearer on the site.

Table 11 VR and non-VR impressions of the usability of the Learning Hub

At intake, agreed or strongly agreed:	% VR	% non-VR
✓ I find the content on the site useful.	85%	84%
✓ The information on the site is relevant to me.	86%	82%
✓ Overall, I am satisfied with the design of Build Your Skills.	83%	85%
✓ It is clear how to use the site.	82%	78%
✓ The layout of the site is well organized.	83%	79%
✓ Navigating the site is straightforward.	83%	79%
✓ Accessing different courses is easy.	75%	72%
✓ I am able to access technology support when needed.	74%	70%

Comments from Learning Hub users

Open-ended comments on the intake survey show how the learning resources were relevant to learners exploring the trades. One responder stated:

“SkillPlan is teaching me exactly what I need to succeed in the trades, I'm so glad I get to use SkillPlan, excellent program.”

One learner who was just starting to explore the Learning Hub stated:

“With what I have experienced so far I think it is a great tool and plan on looking at more courses and exploring it further in the near future.”

Another learner appreciated the scope of courses available to them:

“It was pretty much incredible and enjoyable to access to all the courses and initiate learning and gaining more knowledge regarding what we will have in the occupation.”

People from underrepresented groups also commented on the benefits of the Learning Hub. One newcomer commented:

“Currently, I am taking ESL (English as a Second Language) classes to improve my English skills while also trying to become a skilled tradesperson in Canada. Therefore, along with improving my English, I am learning technical skills to contribute to my own growth and the development of Canada. If I receive proper training and support, I am confident that I can prove myself as a skilled tradesperson.”

There were a couple of comments from learners who were directed to access the Learning Hub by their employer or training provider. One responder stated:

“Very interesting and useful website, I'm glad my employer introduced us.”

Another responder commented:

“Was requested to review this program over the summer going onto my trades program at school.”

There were a couple of suggestions for future consideration. One user stated:

“I think it could have courses on actual skills that you would learn in the trade besides just generalized things like math and reading.”

CONNECTING USERS TO UNION OPPORTUNITIES

This section highlights the information gathered from the in-depth interviews conducted with the SkillPlan Apprenticeship Liaison staff member and the seven regional building trade council members. We provide details on the regional contexts, engagement processes and capacities, the readiness levels of potential new recruits, and the practices developed for supporting members of underrepresented groups.

SkillPlan's Apprenticeship Liaison reported that his previous experience working in the trades and as a trades instructor had given him unique insights into the unionized construction trades that he can share with users. Over the course of the project, the liaison has learned which resources and information to share with users depending on their location, as trades and union training programs vary regionally. The liaison also noted that many unions' websites are difficult

to navigate and have limited information on current training and job opportunities, so he will help users find the information they need. Equally, unions may be slow in responding to the users referred to them by the apprenticeship liaison, which can be frustrating for users who may face long waits after submitting an application.

Provincial key informant interviews

Context

The provincial councils' contexts are vastly different, particularly regarding government support, labour needs and union structures. Overall, the demand for labour in the construction industry ebbs and flows, as well as the demand for different trades, which is highly regional, with each provincial council facing unique challenges in hiring trade workers. The instability in labour demands is particularly evident in provinces where construction projects are tied to natural resource industries, such as Alberta and the Atlantic. For instance, in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, the demand for labour is regional and largely tied to large-scale infrastructure and energy projects, leading to an unstable demand for labour. This instability often results in the out-migration of skilled trades workers in periods with fewer projects and labour shortages when new projects get approved. In Ontario, while there is a shortage of skilled trades in the province, this shortage has affected the unionized sector to a lesser extent, particularly for more popular trades, such as electrical, carpentry and plumbing. Similarly, in BC, while labour needs are dynamic, certain unions consistently face high demand for applicants, such as the union for electrical workers.

The structure of unions and apprenticeships varies in each province and impacts how the provincial councils can approach recruitment. One of the key challenges for the Alberta Provincial Council is the lack of public and government support for unions in the province, which limits the capacity of unions to hire and train new workers. Conversely, the strong government support for unions in Nova Scotia has enabled the provincial council to create a comprehensive recruitment strategy through which they can nimbly respond to industry needs and provide financial support to new workers through their apprenticeships.

The union structure in Quebec stands apart from the other Canadian jurisdictions as the entire commercial construction sector is unionized as required by provincial legislation. This legislation results from the Act respecting labour relations, vocational training and workforce management in the construction industry, commonly referred to as Loi 20, which legislates the labour relations system in the province and outlines the duties and rights of unions and employer associations. Consequently, all tradespeople working in the commercial sector are required to be represented by one of the five unions in Quebec. Unlike in other provinces, unions can only provide mandatory site health and safety training and do not provide trades-specific

training for apprentices or professional development training for journeyworkers. Training falls under the responsibility of the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ) through the provincially-run Centres de formation professionnelles (vocational training centres).

Provincial councils' capacities and engagement practices

Each provincial council reported differing capacities and resources for recruitment, with most of the councils indicating that their staffing in particular limited their activities. The provincial councils in the more populous provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta faced significant challenges in recruitment due to limited staffing and resources. The Ontario Provincial Council reported that their limited staff restricts their level of engagement as they don't have the capacity or resources to do in-person recruitment events. Given the limited capacities of most of the provincial councils, the implementation of the virtual recruitment tools enabled staff to reach a wider audience than is possible with traditional recruitment methods, such as job fairs.

The levels of engagement of provincial council staff with the virtual recruitment applicants was influenced by the capacities and resources of each provincial council (Table 12). The provincial councils in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec noted limited staffing capacities and that these limitations led them to play a brokering role, where they directed the applicants to the appropriate union, training centre or resource, had little direct contact with applicants and did not track the outcomes of applications. While the BC Provincial Council noted limited capacities and resources, they enabled direct engagement with applicants through the 'Speak with an Advisor' feature on their hub. The council described this engagement with applicants as 'triaging', as it allowed staff to more effectively assess applicants' interest, qualifications and readiness to work before directing them to current job and training opportunities with unions and training centres.

Meanwhile, the provincial councils in the Atlantic provinces seek to provide personalized services to virtual recruitment applicants where possible. In effect, the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Council indicated that they value a personal touch and seeing people in person as much as possible and that they primarily communicate by phone as part of their recruitment efforts. In New Brunswick, the provincial council staff noted that their ability to provide more personalized services to the virtual recruitment applicants is facilitated by the smaller geographic area and population size that they serve. The Nova Scotia Provincial Council is especially well-resourced and funded, with six staff responsible for recruitment retention and attraction activities, and the organization is keen on making personal connections with applicants and offering personalized and unique solutions to people seeking to enter the trade. In this, Nova Scotia Provincial Council recruitment staff answer the initial, exploratory questions

from virtual recruitment applicants to provide as much information to people as possible before connecting them with the appropriate union, and the unions know that the person they've connected them with has undergone a degree of assessment.

Table 12 Key Brokering Activities by Provincial Councils

Provincial council	Brokering activities
Alberta	Forwarding applicants' names and emails to affiliated unions and apprenticeship coordinators, who follow up when possible Very limited engagement with applicants
British Columbia	Following up directly with applicants via email Providing direction and advice to applicants through the 'Speak to an Advisor' feature Directing applicants to relevant resources and opportunities
New Brunswick	Providing direction and advice based directly to applicants on current industry needs Providing applicants with resources as needed
Newfoundland and Labrador	Following up directly with applicants via phone or email Providing information on current job opportunities or available seats in training programs
Nova Scotia	Following up directly with applicants via phone or email Providing personalized assistance to applicants, including assessing job readiness and needs for financial assistance during training
Ontario	Navigator tool automatically forwards applications to the appropriate union or training centre No direct engagement with applicants, apart from answering any questions about the navigator tool via email
Quebec	Forwarding applicants' names and emails to affiliated unions who follow-up within 48 hours Answering general questions about the trades and working in construction Assisting applicants interested in applying to the open labour pool

The Nova Scotia Provincial Council stated that their virtual recruitment hub has enabled them to undertake their recruitment activities more efficiently and that applicants are better able to receive information and pursue the right trade.

Applicant Job Readiness

As part of the virtual recruitment practices, the provincial councils indicated that one of their key tasks is to assess applicants' readiness and ability to work in the trades. This includes helping determine the suitability of applicants for certain trades based on their abilities, education, training and work experiences, and ensuring that people understand the realities of working in the trades as well as basic job expectations, such as showing up to work on time. The provincial councils typically have to provide more guidance and information to virtual recruitment applicants who are exploring the trades, as they tend to have very limited knowledge and need information about the basics of the trades, apprenticeships and union system. The Nova Scotia Provincial Council takes a personalized approach to determine the qualifications, abilities and comfort levels of each applicant who is exploring the trades and to help them decide which trade would be the best fit. The Nova Scotia Council also noted that unions and employers have different expectations of readiness among applicants, and some may require applicants to have certifications and training (e.g. working at heights).

Several provincial councils commented that the virtual recruitment applicants were eager to find employment and begin working right away. However, many applicants were simply not job-ready as they lacked the prerequisites for their trade and needed improvements in language skills, literacy, and numeracy. Further, many applicants expected to be on the job right away and were unaware that the apprenticeship process can be lengthy, particularly in certain regions and for certain trades, and that some trades only take on apprentices during certain periods of the year. To increase job readiness, the BC provincial council often recommends that applicants with little knowledge of and experience in the trades gain experience in construction as labourers before pursuing training and apprenticeship. This way, applicants can better understand what it is like to work on-site and can potentially increase their likelihood of getting hired in desirable trades. Meanwhile, the Ontario Provincial Council staff commented that the virtual recruitment applicants need to be self-starting and be willing to follow through with the application process by filling in their forms correctly, providing the necessary documentation, completing any required health and safety training, and attending any mandatory information sessions provided by the union.

"Because they don't know, because they don't have the aptitude. Like maybe they don't like standing for eight hours a day, they don't like being cold. It's dirty, it's messy, it's rough. You're working with rough folks... Either you are comfortable in it or you're not." BC provincial council

Recruiting from underrepresented groups

All the provincial councils reported that one of their key priorities for recruitment is increasing the number of applicants from underrepresented groups, particularly women and Indigenous peoples. Most notably, the provincial councils in Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and Nova Scotia have dedicated staff and resources aimed at recruiting and retaining apprentices from underrepresented groups. For instance, the BC provincial council has aimed to increase interest in the trades in multicultural communities by translating their ‘trade cards’, which provide information on different trades, into multiple languages, including simplified Chinese and Punjabi, and by partnering with cultural organizations and community services.

The virtual recruitment tools allowed the provincial offices to promote the trades to underrepresented groups as well as facilitate connecting applicants to existing resources. In Newfoundland, the provincial council could connect virtual recruitment applicants from underrepresented groups with the Office to Advance Women Apprentices and the Indigenous Skilled Trades Office, which can provide these applicants with more information and resources, such as bursaries available to assist with training costs. In Ontario, the council could direct applicants from underrepresented groups to the Tomorrow Trades Program, depending on the program’s regional availability, through which they could receive additional support in navigating the apprenticeship progress.

While virtual recruitment tools can increase the ability of provincial councils to reach a wider audience, there remain challenges in recruiting from underrepresented groups. In New Brunswick, the provincial council indicated that they struggled to attract Indigenous peoples to the trades due to the limited available work near Indigenous communities. Meanwhile, the provincial council in Ontario reported that they saw a high level of interest in receiving more information about working in the skilled trades on the part of people from underrepresented groups, but there was a lack of follow-through as people were not taking steps to become apprentices.

“And there's a huge interest in people seeking that knowledge. But it's funny that they found us and we can communicate that stuff to them, but they generally don't make it to the union's front door... So that's something I think we need to address as an industry. What are we missing there? Like how come these people aren't coming to the door? Like, what are we missing to get people to feel comfortable to come to the doors.” Ontario Provincial Council Staff

Newcomers

Provincial councils across Canada reported that a significant portion of virtual recruitment applications were from newcomers, who face unique challenges in seeking employment in the trades. The Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia provincial councils indicated that unions regularly find good talent among newcomers and that there are intentional efforts by the

provincial councils to connect newcomers with job opportunities in the trades. However, newcomers who applied through the virtual recruitment hubs often required more assistance navigating the apprenticeship process. For instance, many newcomer applicants face language barriers and need guidance in navigating the work permitting system to be able to work in Canada legally.

The Ontario Provincial Council shared that the messaging around work readiness is not getting across to newcomer applicants, many of whom have different immigration statuses, such as refugees and Temporary Foreign Workers, and may not be eligible to apply for an apprenticeship position. In Quebec, the Provincial Council stated that newcomers need more information about recognition for their foreign work experience and training. In effect, the Quebec Provincial Council staff found that many newcomers with experience in the skilled trades seek equivalency at a journeyworker level but lack the necessary experience with provincial building codes and standards that employers expect and therefore find it difficult to find and retain employment.

Lessons learned and organizational needs

Nova Scotia Provincial Council as exemplary

The other provincial councils view the recruitment practices of the Nova Scotia Provincial Council as exemplary, particularly their emphasis on building personal connections, and the council's recruitment capacity and resources. The Nova Scotia Provincial Council staff noted that their virtual recruitment hub has not replaced any of their recruitment practices but has helped enhance and refine their practices. Further, the council staff commented that provincial councils need to focus on the customer service aspects of recruitment to ensure that applicants receive adequate guidance and are connected to the right union. They warned that if applicants are not followed up with by the council or the union, they are unlikely to continue pursuing a career in the skilled trades. However, the council staff also recognized that the support and funding provided by the Nova Scotia provincial government are instrumental in developing and maintaining a comprehensive and responsive recruitment strategy. The BC Provincial Council echoed this, noting that uncertain funding limits their recruitment activities and how they will employ virtual recruitment in the future.

"It [virtual recruitment] hasn't replaced anything. It's helped to enhance what we are, what we we're already doing and it's helped to provide another layer of information and direction and triaging, for lack of a better term...The virtual space provides a wonderful opportunity, and I think it has served us very, very well in that introductory piece. I do kind of wonder if our sector and by extension, the people who work in that, want to see it become so structured or if they want to still have a relationship aspect to it. And I say that, you know, when I worked on construction projects on board or I talked to people who have done research projects, they all shake the hands, and on the very first day on the job site, they want to get to know each other." Nova Scotia Provincial Council

"I don't know that it's in the scope, but we want a person really being able to push the speak to an advisor. Like we've not dialed that up, but I would love to get that in. You know, reach out, connect with us, and that we have a human being who's triaging [applications]." BC Provincial Council

Connection with unions

Provincial councils with close connections to unions were better able to align their virtual recruitment efforts with industry needs. The BC and New Brunswick provincial councils stated that open and continual communication with unions was vital to know which unions needed workers most to orient referrals and advise applicants. The connections with unions were also essential to enable provincial councils to track the outcomes of virtual recruitment applications. Most provincial councils indicated that they faced challenges in tracking the outcomes of applications, as they had limited knowledge of the follow-up done by unions and training centres with applicants and would not know whether applications were successful. The Alberta Provincial Council noted that they faced additional barriers in tracking outcomes given that unions were reticent to provide information on their members and that there was a need for their council to work more closely with unions to improve their recruitment practices. Similarly, the Ontario Provincial Council would like more opportunities to connect with and learn from union training directors and coordinators about how to improve their virtual recruitment strategy.

Creating personal connections

While the virtual recruitment hubs can help the provincial councils reach more people, they may be disadvantaged by the limited level of engagement with applicants. The Quebec Provincial Council found that they were unable to have meaningful discussions with people interested in the trades the way they could at job fairs and other in-person events and that only a small number of those who clicked on their Facebook or Instagram ads would end up following through with an application. In effect, the Ontario Provincial Council stated that, with the automated nature of the Navigator tool, they could not ensure unions received high-quality applicants, and unions were less likely to trust their recruitment efforts if they sent applicants who were not ready or able to work.

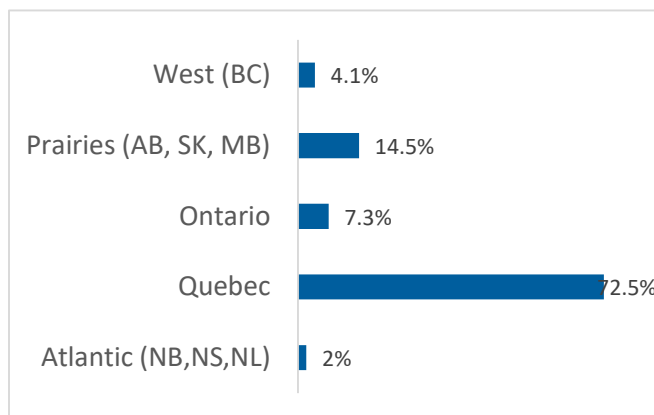
As mentioned, the provincial councils in the Atlantic provinces and BC found that maintaining a higher level of engagement with virtual recruitment applicants increased the likelihood that people would be connected with the right trade and union. The Ontario Provincial Council also saw the benefit of increased engagement with applicants, asserting that they would need additional staff that could help guide potential apprentices in selecting and applying for the right trade and navigating government supports and grants.

Participant-level survey results

A new participant-level survey was designed and implemented in both English and French for existing users who had already completed a registration form to gain more information about users' experiences with unions employment and/or training opportunities. The English version of the survey was designed first, with input from SkillPlan and the provincial building trade unions. The French version was co-designed with the Quebec building trade council (Conseil provincial du Québec des métiers de la construction) to ensure that it encompassed the unique trade culture and practices in Quebec. Many of the questions were the same for both the English and French surveys, while some questions and/or response options were customized for Quebec residents. Implementation of the two surveys also differed, where the English survey invitations were emailed by SkillPlan to individuals from across Canada who had completed a form on a regional Construction Trades Hub or the Build Your Skills Learning Hub requesting more information on connecting with a union or with apprenticeship training, while the French survey invitations were emailed by the Quebec building trade council to individuals who had completed a form on the Quebec Trades Hub indicating that they wanted to connect with the construction industry.

Invitations were emailed to individuals between September and November 2024, and \$20 electronic gift cards were offered to respondents to boost response rates. A total of 202 surveys were completed, 52 English and 150 French. Figure 26 illustrates the percentage of respondents by region. Quebec residence is overrepresented in this sample due to low response rates from the English survey. SRDC and SkillPlan will look for opportunities in 2025 to field the survey again to increase the number of responses.

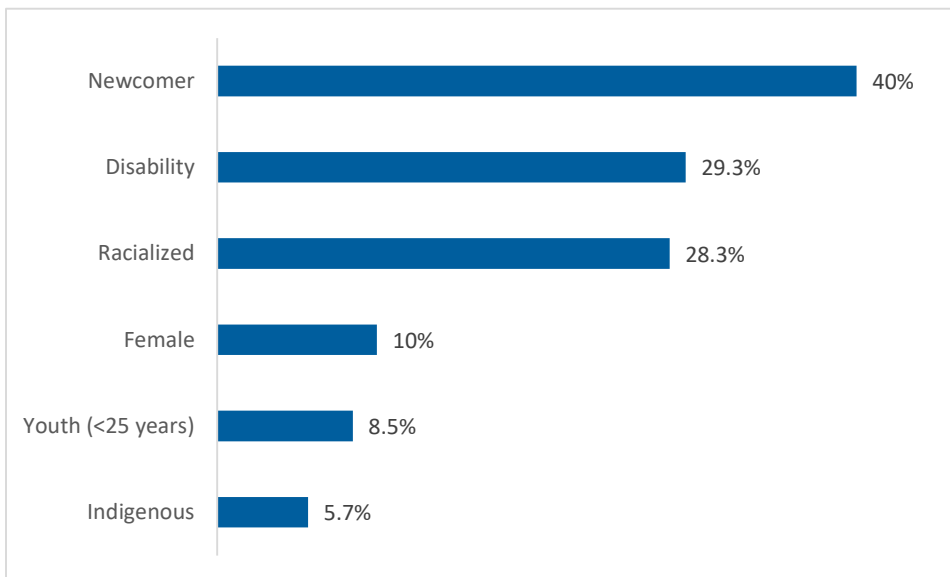
Figure 26 Survey respondents by region (n=193)



Missing values removed

Demographic variables presented in this report combine English and French respondents, as the results were similar across surveys and the questions were identical. There were approximately 88 per cent male and 10 per cent female respondents, 5.7 per cent Indigenous peoples, and 40 per cent newcomers to Canada (see Figure 27). The largest proportion of responders were between the ages of 35 and 44 years (33 per cent), while only 8.5 per cent were youth under 25 years. Close to 30 per cent of respondents self-identified as having a physical, learning or psychological difficulty. Approximately 31 per cent completed a high school degree, 25 per cent completed a Bachelor's degree, and approximately 28 per cent completed a postsecondary certificate or diploma. The high percentage of newcomers responding to this survey was also observed in the intake survey implemented in Phases 2 and 3 of this project. This seems to indicate that newcomers were seeking information on the skilled trades in Canada through virtual channels. More research is needed to confirm whether this is due to this population group being more willing to respond to surveys, or whether the virtual recruitment channels are particularly effective for this group.

Figure 27 Demographics of underrepresented groups (n= 159 to 191)



Missing values removed

Participant work experience in trades

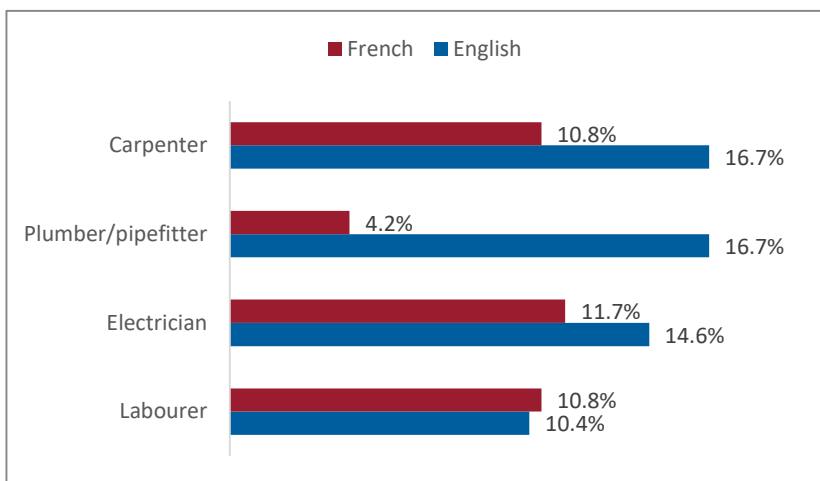
Survey respondents were asked whether they had ever had any paid work in the construction trades, either in Canada or outside of Canada. For both English and French participants, just above 53 per cent did have experience working in the trades, while almost 44 per cent did not.

Additionally, Quebec participants were asked whether they belonged to one of the five unions in Quebec. Twenty-two per cent responded that they belonged to a union, with 45.5 per cent being members of the Conseil provincial international, and 21.2 per cent belonging to FTQ-Construction.

Participant trade and trade level

Survey respondents were asked what trade they were interested in for both the English and French surveys. For the English respondents, the most frequent trades were carpenter (16.7 per cent), plumber/pipefitter (16.7 per cent), electrician (14.6 per cent) and labourer/construction craft worker (10.4 per cent). For the Quebec respondents, the most frequent trades were electrician (11.7 per cent), carpenter (10.8 per cent), and labourer (10.8 per cent), while 8.3 per cent hadn't chosen (see Figure 28).

Figure 28 Most frequent trades of interest



Participant goals

For both French and English respondents, the most frequent goal for completing the online forms to connect with a union were to explore different career options in the trades (50 per cent French and English), illustrated in Table 13. Next most common was that respondents knew what trade interested them and they were considering looking for a job in a union (42.3 per cent English, 38 per cent French). Finding out more about the benefits and responsibilities of joining a union was a common goal for English respondents (42.3 per cent), and slightly less common for French respondents (16 per cent). Notably, it was also quite common among both English

(32.7 per cent) and French (23.3 per cent) for respondents to have no experience in the construction trades and wanting to start a trades career. In addition, it was also common for English respondents indicate that they needed help navigating the process of joining a trades union (28.8 per cent). This response option was not included in the French survey as the process for joining a trades union in Quebec is direct and not as diverse as in other provinces.

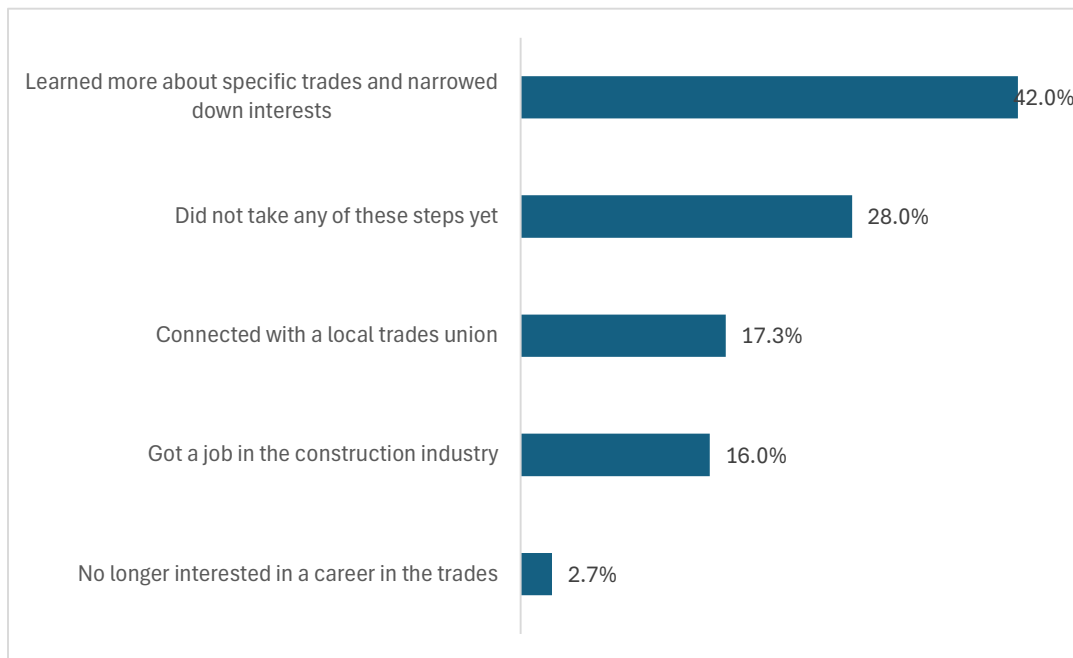
Table 13 English and French survey respondents' goals

Goal when filling in the online form:	% English	% French
✓ Explore different career options in the trades.	50%	50%
✓ Look for a union job in a chosen trade.	42.3%	38%
✓ Learn about benefits of joining a union.	42.3%	16%
✓ Start a union trades career with no previous trades experience.	32.7%	23.3%
✓ Seek help navigating the process of joining a trades union.	28.8%	N/A

Source: English and French Participant surveys

Participant actions

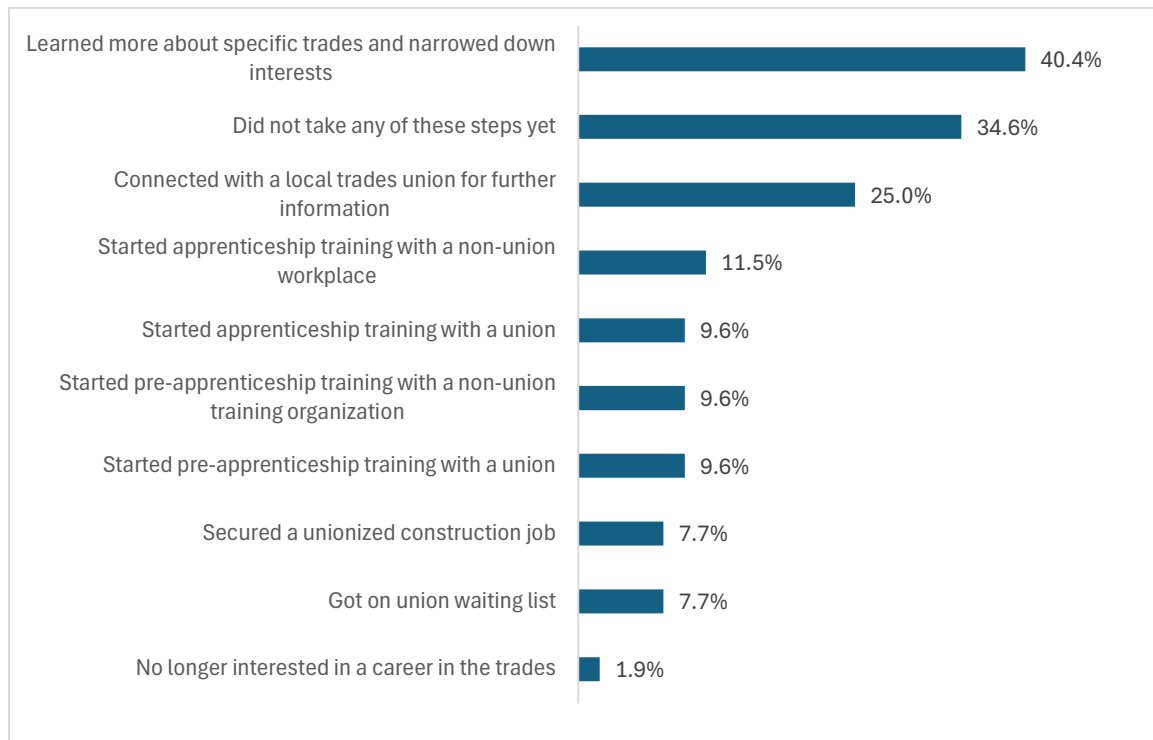
Respondents to the French survey were given a list of 5 possible actions that they could have taken since asking to connect to the construction industry (see Figure 29). Of those, nearly 1/3 took no action; 28 per cent said that they did not take any of these steps yet while 2.7 per cent said that they were no longer interested in the trades. A sizable portion of respondents sought out further information; 42 per cent said that they learned more about specific trades while 17.3 per cent said that they connected with a union for further information. In terms of joining the industry, 16 per cent of respondents said they got a job in the construction industry.

Figure 29 Actions taken since asking to connect to industry (French Responses)

Source: English and French Participant surveys. Note: The question allowed respondents to select more than one answer, so responses add to greater than 100 per cent.

Respondents to the English survey were given a longer list of 10 possible actions that people could have taken since asking to connect to a union or training (See Figure 30). The major differences are that the English survey asked about starting apprenticeship training and as well attempted to differentiate between union and non-union actions. Similar to the French results, approximately 1/3 took no action; 34.6 per cent did not take any steps while 1.9 per cent said they were no longer interested. A sizeable portion took important initial steps towards entering the trades. In total, 40.4 per cent learned more about specific trades and narrowed down interests, 25 per cent connected with a trades union for information, 7.7 per cent joined a union waiting list, and 7.7 per cent secured a unionized construction job.

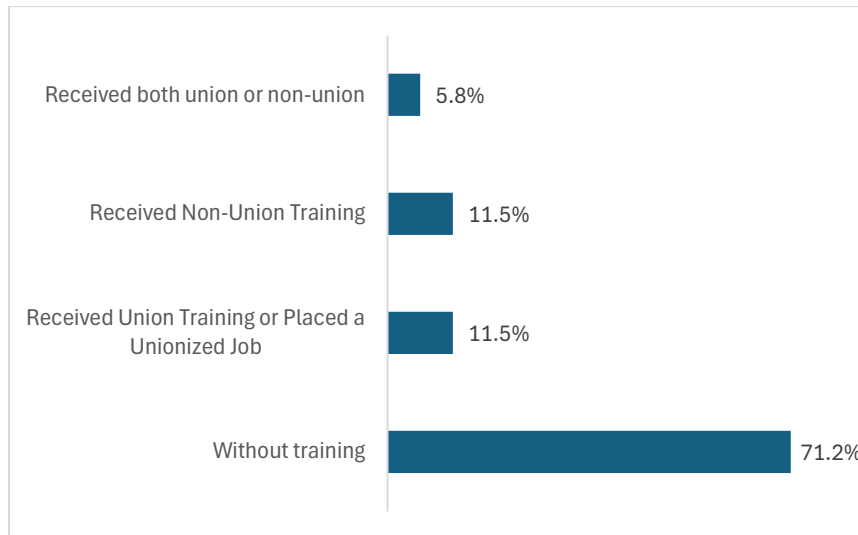
Figure 30 **Actions taken since asking to connect to a union or apprenticeship (English Responses)**



Source: English and French Participant surveys. Note: The question allowed respondents to select more than one answer, so responses add to greater than 100 per cent.

As shown in Figure 31, a small but significant portion of the sample took each of the possible actions of starting an apprenticeship or securing a job. Some respondents indicated that they did more than one of these actions. Once categories are combined, approximately 12 per cent said that they started union pre-apprenticeship training, apprenticeship union training or secured a union construction job since asking to connect to a union or apprenticeship. An identical proportion started non-union pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship training. A further 6 per cent said that they started in both union and non-union.

Figure 31 Combined responses related to union apprenticeship and work and non-union apprenticeship (English Survey)



Participant follow-up communications

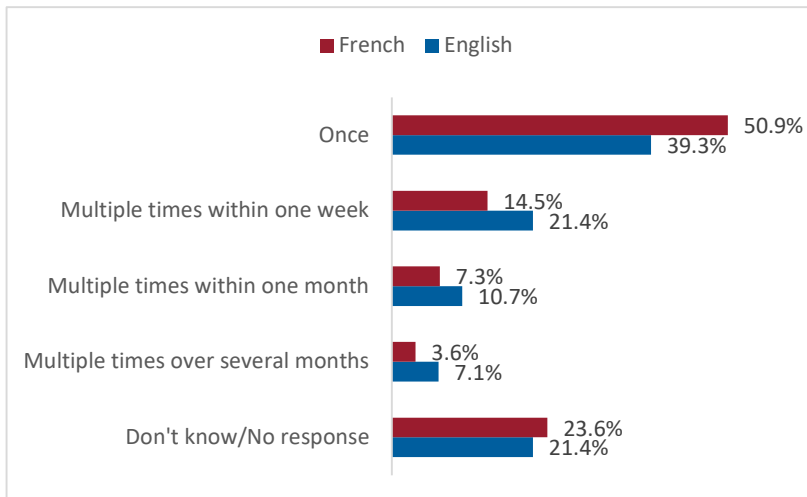
Both French and English participants were asked whether they received any follow-up communication and support from SkillPlan, a union and/or a provincial building trades council (depending on the form they completed), or from another source (See Table 14). Approximately 40 per cent of English and 21 per cent of French participants indicated receiving a follow-up email. Somewhat fewer, 27 per cent of English and 10 per cent of French participants received a phone call or voice message, and almost 10 per cent of English and seven per cent of French participants received support from a friend, family member or someone in their community. Forty-nine per cent of French and 36.5 per cent of English participants indicated that they had not received or found any support. These differences in follow-up connection rates may be due to the process that participants were contacted. The SkillPlan Apprenticeship Liaison staff member or a provincial council staff member attempted to contact the English participants across Canada, while Quebec participants were funneled from the Quebec building trade union to affiliated unions, and due to the large volume of users involved it may have been challenging to communicate with every participant.

Table 14 Follow-up with English and French participants

Participant follow-up communications received:	% English	% French
✓ Follow-up email.	40%	21%
✓ Follow-up phone call or voice message.	27%	10%
✓ Support from friend, family member or community member.	10%	7%
✓ Did not receive nor find any support.	36.5%	49%

Source: English and French Participant surveys

Participants who received follow-up communication were also asked about the frequency of the communication with a provincial building trade, SkillPlan or union (see Figure 32). As the goals of participants were unique, the level of follow-up engagement would vary depending on participants' needs. Approximately 39 per cent of English participants received a communication once, 21 per cent multiple times within one week, 11 per cent multiple times within one month, and 7 per cent multiple times over several months, while 21 per cent did not know/respond. For French participants, almost 51 per cent were communicated with once, 14.5 per cent multiple times within one week, 7.3 per cent multiple times within one month, and 3.6 per cent multiple times over several months, while 23.6 per cent did not know/respond.

Figure 32 Follow-up frequency

Participant barriers

Both English and French participants were asked to identify what kinds of barriers they experienced that made it difficult getting a trades job. The most common barriers were; not knowing anyone in the skilled trades (32.7 per cent), not having enough or appropriate skills, experience, training or tickets (28.7 per cent), not having their work experience valued (26.7 per cent), and not knowing where to look for a job in the trades (26.7 per cent) (see Figure 33). Additional barriers faced by respondents included; a lack of finances to pursue training (19.3 per cent), no available jobs in their region (10.4 per cent), a lack of time to pursue trade training (10 per cent), and a noticeable recruitment and hiring bias against people like me (e.g., due to gender, race, age, disability, newcomer or Indigenous peoples)(9 per cent).

Figure 33 Most common barriers for both English and French participants



These barriers were common among underrepresented groups, where individuals lacked appropriate or recognized skills or connections with tradesworker networks. Additionally, individuals often lacked the time or finances to leave their current employment to enroll in trades training. Newcomers in particular faced multiple challenges in not having Canadian trades work experience or networks, negative hiring bias, lack of time/finances for training because they were working in a survival job, as well as potential language and permission to work challenges.

To gain more insight in the barriers that newcomers identified, we analyzed the survey results of newcomers to Canada (see Figure 34). Approximately 46 per cent of the newcomers in Canada five years or less indicated not knowing anyone in the skilled trades, 39 per cent did not have

their work experience valued, and 37 per cent did not have the enough or appropriate skills or experience.

Figure 34 Most frequent barriers for newcomers (n=70)



Participant supports

All participants were asked to identify the types of supports they needed to get started in the trades (see Table 15). The most common supports identified were; help finding a job in the construction trades (41.6 per cent), help finding a pre-apprentice program (32.7 per cent), help finding an apprenticeship (32.7 per cent), and help connecting to a union (26.2 per cent). Participants were also interested in; information on financial supports such as grants and loans (22.8 per cent), help learning about trade requirements such as math and skills courses (21.3 per cent), and information on taking or challenging a Red Seal exam (15.3 per cent).

Table 15 Most frequent participant supports requested (English and French)

Goal when filling in the online form:	%
✓ Help finding a job in the construction trades.	41.6%
✓ Help finding a pre-apprentice program.	32.7%
✓ Help finding an apprenticeship.	26.2%
✓ Help connecting to a union.	22.8%
✓ Information on financial supports such as grants or loans.	21.3%
✓ Information on taking or challenging a Red Seal exam	15.3%

All participants were also asked whether additional online course supports would be useful in improving their apprenticeship journey. Forty-six per cent of respondents indicated that an online course on how apprenticeship works would be helpful, 34.2 per cent stated an online course on the benefits and responsibilities of being a union member would be beneficial, and 33.2 per cent indicated that an online course outlining key steps on how to connect with a union would be useful. While there is already an abundance of online resources available on the regional Trades Hubs and the Learning Hub, it seems that many participants would appreciate additional online ‘courses’ or videos.

IMPLEMENTING PILOT STUDIES

IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE AND RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE

During this phase we aimed to design, launch and recruit participants for two pilot studies that would examine two different provincial approaches that support individuals initiating steps towards becoming an apprentice and joining the unionized construction trades sector. While the project did not fully implement the pilot studies (due to the 6-month project timelines, including the two summer months which are traditionally slower for recruitment and training activities), we did conduct a more thorough exploration of two ongoing initiatives and investigated the provincial needs in order to further refine the system. The two ongoing initiatives are the Ontario Apprenticeship Navigator tool (an online application system designed to screen and connect applicants to local unions) and the Apprenticeship Liaison (a ‘live’ person who connects with prospective apprentices to support their transition to apprenticeship opportunities).

The reasons for the lack of pilots were that most regions could not provide the resources needed to implement a full-scale pilot project of a new initiative within the timeframe of this project phase because of capacity constraints. Without additional resources, it is difficult to participate in full-scale pilot study activities especially if they could not meaningfully support recruitment capacity. Provincial partners require more direct financial support to implement pilot studies and/or increase their recruitment capacity.

Both the Apprenticeship Liaison and Ontario Apprenticeship Navigator tool seek to help people who are interested in learning more about and applying for a trade; however, they do so in different ways. The Navigator provides an example of an automated technological solution while the Apprenticeship Liaison is individualized support.

Ontario Navigator Tool

As shown in Figure 35 below, The Ontario Apprenticeship Navigator website (<https://www.ctaontario.ca/navigator/>) allows interested individuals the ability to enter their preferred trade and location to find unions that are accepting applications. Once they check 'apply now' the system will guide them to check the prerequisites, enter all of the required information and to upload any necessary supporting documentation.

Figure 35 Ontario Apprenticeship Navigator website visual

Ready to apply for your apprenticeship?

Exploration
You've done your research, you have your documents and qualifications ready, and now you're ready to apply. Use the Navigator below to apply for apprenticeship opportunities in your area.

Selection
Select your Trade, location, and radius to see available opportunities. If you do not see the specific Trade available in your search, note that demands change daily. Be sure to check back for updates.

Attention
Due to the nature of construction work and demand in each sector, contact times may vary. If you do not receive an immediate response, don't worry. If your experience meets the entrance requirements, a union representative will contact you directly.

Update - May 2024

Our Apprenticeship Navigator has undergone a massive update! We want to ensure potential candidates are screened properly and that any union local can properly access relevant information in regards to your application. We are very excited to debut the revised Nav Tool to you all!

If you encounter any errors for the tool, please make use of the "Contact Us" form and let us know!

Thank you for your continued support of CTAQ.

Apprenticeship Navigator

Trade: General Carpenter City/Town or Postal Code: Toronto Search Radius (km): 250 **Search**

Carpenters Local 1030 Toronto 222 Rowntree Dairy Road Woodbridge	Apply Now
Carpenters Local 1072 Toronto 222 Rowntree Dairy Road Woodbridge	Apply Now
Carpenters Local 1256 Sarnia 100 Business Park Drive Sarnia	Apply Now
Carpenters Local 18, Hamilton	

Map Satellite

Map showing locations of unions in Ontario, including Toronto, Sarnia, and Hamilton.

The Ontario Provincial Council noted that they had minimal contact with applicants since their Navigator tool was automated and now directs applicants to unions and training organizations in their area, where they can then apply for different local opportunities. This enabled them to direct a larger number of applicants towards the appropriate unions and training centres in their respective regions. However, applicants using the Navigator tool were often unaware of the set intake periods established by unions and training centres and could face long waits after submitting their applications. In response, the Ontario Provincial Council tried to advertise union intake periods on their social media to encourage applications during certain times of the year, but the unions and training centres continued to receive applications year-round through the Navigator tool. Further, the Ontario Provincial Council did not have the capacity and resources to respond to the individual questions of applicants using the Navigator Tool, particularly applicants who still exploring the trades.

Apprenticeship Liaison

The Apprenticeship Liaison at SkillPlan has been contacting individuals who fill out a website form on the provincial sites indicating that they want to either connect to a union or to apprenticeship training. The first iteration of the ‘speak to an advisor’ form provided SkillPlan with limited information about the users and their interests. The form was modified so that users would provide contact information (name, email, phone number) and select which kinds of information they were interested in receiving among two options: connecting to available construction job opportunities with a local union, or receiving information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school. The SkillPlan liaison noted that most users selected both options, often because they were uncertain of which trade and career path best suited their needs.

When the apprenticeship liaison received the contact information from users, he would first contact the users by phone and follow up by email and phone again as needed. The liaison would then introduce himself and explain that he worked for SkillPlan, his link to the provincial construction councils’ websites, and his role in helping connect them to union and training opportunities in the trades. In the beginning, the liaison found that the phone calls to users were very long and it was hard to get through all the requests for information. He found that asking users what they were looking for and getting more information about their career goals and experiences made discussions more efficient and effective and he could customize their experience.

Once the liaison knew what the user was looking for, he tailored his approach to the users’ needs and sent them an email with the appropriate information, including links to union websites and videos where users could learn more about the trade they were interested in. After the apprenticeship liaison provided users with the appropriate information, it was up to the user to

follow through with contacting the union or proceeding with an application to a training program. Similar to the experiences of the provincial council staff, the liaison found that several users were eager to start working immediately and were unaware of the lengthy application and training processes needed to enter the unionized construction trades.

Further, many users were newcomers interested in working in the trades and the liaison had to confirm that they could work in Canada before providing them with information on union jobs and training opportunities. Other newcomers needed information on work permits, in which case, the liaison could only provide links to government websites, given that these questions were outside of his scope of knowledge. For newcomers with prior experience in the trades, the advisor could help them find information on how to get their experience and qualifications recognized.

The apprenticeship liaison reported that he tracked user information and outcomes using a spreadsheet that included users' names, contact information, and whether they've contacted the union or training centre they were referred to and to what effect. However, he did not track his engagement with users, such as the number of times they were contacted. He reasoned that this information was less useful to his work because each user had unique career goals and timelines varied between initial contact, any follow-ups and when they applied to unions or training institutions. Further, the liaison didn't ask users for demographic information such as race or gender but did refer women to resources aimed at supporting women in trades when they asked.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES (PMIS)

As noted previously, in interviews with provincial councils, one limitation is the lack of their ability to reliably track what happens once people express an interest in connecting to a union. While there are many barriers to fully tracking, one improvement would be for all provinces to attempt to track the same key metrics as much as possible. These would include:

- Work readiness, including:
 - Ability to work in Canada
 - Previous experience working in the trades
 - Experience in Canada
 - Experience abroad
- Demographic information

- gender
 - race
 - citizenship/residency status
 - Indigenous identity
- Union/training institution applicant was referred to
- Type of engagement with applicant (e.g. phone call, email, in-person) and frequency

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 3 of the Virtual Recruitment project was intended to identify how recruitment and learning tools could be further refined so potential recruits can more easily find and apply to skilled trades employment or training opportunities. Evaluation data suggests that:

- Social media has been successful in attracting a wide range of individuals, including underrepresented groups (i.e., youth, women, newcomers and Indigenous peoples), to visit the regional Construction Trades Hubs and Build Your Skills Learning Hub to learn more about the skilled trades. In particular, a large proportion of potential new recruits are newcomers, who have responded to surveys indicating their desire to learn more about trades employment and training opportunities.
- Potential new recruits visiting the regional Construction Trades Hubs and Build Your Skills Learning Hub have a wide range of readiness levels to enter a career in the skilled trades from those starting to explore what the trades and unions entail to those who have chosen a trade are ready to start work or training. The process of becoming job-ready includes learning about different trades and the role of unions, choosing a trade and ensuring that users have the required skills and working permission, and finding available job or training openings in their area.
- Provincial Building Trades Councils have varying capacity levels to engage with and/or direct potential new recruits to local unions and training centres and capture user data, primarily due to the volume of people seeking opportunities in their regions and staffing availability. Those regions with the staffing capacity to engage with new recruits, who also have close connections with local unions, were better able to align their virtual recruitment efforts with industry needs.
- Users are engaging with the Learning Hub at varying levels and for varying purposes, from exploring the trades to completing multiple online courses on trades math, science and preparing for apprenticeships and/or Red Seal exams. Feedback collected from learners using the Learning Hub has been very positive, and learners have found the resources helpful in supporting their progress in preparing for and working in the trades.
- The process of new recruits coming through the project's recruitment channels to successfully enter employment or training can take long periods of time and is challenging to track due to multiple factors, including inherent bottlenecks in hiring needs in the construction industry, varying degrees of readiness levels of job seekers, and the capacity of building trade councils and local unions to engage with and gather data on potential new recruits. Additional barriers all job seekers face, underrepresented groups to a higher degree, are not knowing anyone in the skilled trades and not having their work experience valued.

Overall, the evaluation of Phase 3 of this project has highlighted the complexities inherent in the recruitment process of the construction sector. Virtual recruitment has allowed Provincial Building Trades Councils, project partners and other stakeholders to reach a wide and varied population, including underrepresented groups, through numerous social media platforms, and directed users to online platforms to inform and educate them about the types of trades and skills needed to succeed. In addition, online registration and/or application forms have been provided for individuals to connect with local unions for employment and/or training opportunities. However, the process of translating individuals' interest in the skilled trades to actual jobs and training opportunities has numerous steps with multiple bottlenecks that can be challenging for both seekers and local unions and employers in the construction sector to navigate.

Recommendations going forward include to explore and expand the promising practices discovered in this project and leverage them to further align the virtual recruitment process with construction industry needs. An important consideration is to recognize that people new to the construction industry lack networks with people in the skilled trades and will need resources, time and guidance to learn about the variety of trades and jobs available, what skills are needed within these trades, and what types of training and employment structures exist in their region (e.g., union and non-union).

These expanded recruitment activities could include:

- Supporting Provincial Building Trades Councils and/or local unions to further enhance their capacity to engage personally with new recruits, particularly those from underrepresented groups, coming through the virtual recruitment channels.
- Continuing to provide potential new recruits with easily accessible online resources through the Build Your Skills Learning Hub to educate and optimize their readiness to begin trades employment or formal training.
- Establishing a common set of key metrics for regions and/or unions to better track potential new recruits in terms of their location, demographics, level of trades experience and job readiness.

Building up a system of effectively connecting with and tracking individuals ready to join the construction workforce has the potential to better support the construction sector's fluctuating labour needs.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

ENGLISH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

“Connect with a Union” survey

We would like to learn about the supports you've used or want to find for:

- Joining a trades union
- Finding a construction job
- Learning about different trades

You are receiving this survey because you completed a form on a regional Construction Trades Hub or the “Build Your Skills” Learning Hub requesting more information on connecting with a construction trade union.

This survey will take about 7 – 10 minutes to complete.

To thank you for your time, we'd like to offer you a \$20 Amazon e-gift card for completing the survey. Once you complete the survey, we will email you the gift card within one week.

The information you share is kept confidential:

- Only SkillPlan and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) – the research partner of the project – will have access to your survey answers. To learn more about SRDC please visit www.srdc.org.
- The information you provide will be used to help improve services and supports, as well as compile reports on online trades resources. You will never be personally identified in these reports.
- If you have questions about the survey, contact apullman@srdc.org. If you have questions about the Learning Hub contact learn@skillplan.ca

Answering the survey is voluntary:

- Participating does not affect your apprenticeship application or access to any SkillPlan services.
- You can opt out at any time and skip any question you do not want to answer.

CONSENT

Do you want to proceed with the survey?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

To send you the \$20 e-gift card and follow up on further supports, please tell us your name and the email you used to get this survey.

Please enter your first name _____

Please enter your last name _____

Please provide the email address where you received this survey _____

* The e-gift card will be sent via email usually within 5 business days.

In which province or territory do you currently live?

- ☐ Newfoundland
☐ PEI
☐ Nova Scotia
☐ New Brunswick

	<input type="checkbox"/> Quebec <input type="checkbox"/> Ontario <input type="checkbox"/> Manitoba <input type="checkbox"/> Saskatchewan <input type="checkbox"/> Alberta <input type="checkbox"/> British Columbia <input type="checkbox"/> Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
--	--

Experiences with the connect to union outreach

The first set of questions are about what happened after you signed up to receive more information about trades training and union opportunities. You completed a form similar to this to indicate that you would like to connect to available construction jobs at a local union and/or get more information on apprenticeship at a union training school.

Connect to a local union

Learn how joining a union can support you in your successful career!

Your Name *

Your Email *

Your phone number *

I would like to:

☐ Connect to available construction job opportunities with a local union

☐ Receive information about getting into an apprenticeship at a union training school

Submit

Question	Response
<p>1. Thinking back to when you filled in the online form, which of the following were true for you at that time?</p> <p>(You may have found this link on a provincial building trades union website, Build Your Skills website, or another website.)</p> <p><i>Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I was exploring different career options in the trades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I knew which trade I was interested in, and I was considering looking for a unionized construction job</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wanted to learn more about the benefits and responsibilities of trades union membership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I was looking for better pay and working conditions through a trades union</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had no previous trades experience and wanted to start my trades career with a union</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I needed help navigating the process of joining a trades union</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I previously applied to join a trades union but didn't get in and would like to try again</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I already applied to a trades union, and I was waiting to hear back</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response</p>

Question	Response
<p>2. Since you signed up to get more information on trades training and union opportunities, have you taken any of the following steps towards your goals? <i>Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Learned more about specific trades and narrowed down my interests <input type="checkbox"/> Connected with a local trades union for further information <input type="checkbox"/> Got on the waiting list to join a trades union <input type="checkbox"/> Started pre-apprenticeship training with a union <input type="checkbox"/> Started pre-apprenticeship training with a non-union training organization <input type="checkbox"/> Started apprenticeship training with a union <input type="checkbox"/> Started apprenticeship training with a non-union workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Secured a unionized construction job in the trades <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't taken any of these steps yet <input type="checkbox"/> I'm no longer interested in a career in the trades <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
<p>3. Have you done any of the following since you signed up to receive more information? <i>Please select all that apply</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in a training program not related to the construction trades <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a non-unionized construction job <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a trades job outside of construction (e.g., manufacturing) <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a job not related to construction nor the trades <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
<p>4. What is your current apprentice level? <i>If indicated "started apprenticeship training with a union" or "started apprenticeship training with a non-union workplace" in question 2</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 4 or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

Next, we would like to know about follow-up and support you received after you filled out the online "Connect to a Union" form. You may have received a follow-up email or phone call from SkillPlan, a union, or a provincial trades council (depending on which form you completed). You may also have received support from another source.

Question	Response
<p>5. Did you receive any of the following support? <i>Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received a follow-up email <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received a follow-up phone call or voice message <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received support from a friend, family member, or someone in my community <input type="checkbox"/> No, I did not receive or find any support <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

Question	Response
6. How often did you communicate with the person who contacted you? This could be via phone, text or email. See if selected 1 or 2 in question 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Once <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times with a week or two <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times within a month <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times over several months <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

7. Since filling out the "Connect to a Union" form, have you done the following to learn more about the trades?

	Yes	No	NA	No response
Explored trades-related websites				
Talked with friends, family and/or teachers about working in the trades				
Talked with someone who is currently working or has worked in the trades				
Talked with a building trades council representative to learn general information about the trades				
Talked with a local union representative				
Talked with a trades training centre or trades college representative				
Visited a trades jobsite board				
Visited a website(s) to learn about apprenticeship grants and other financial supports				
Contacted an organization supporting equity-seeking groups such as women, Newcomers, Indigenous persons, racialized people, persons with disabilities				
Started working on my skills in the Build Your Skills Learning Hub				
Other, please specify: _____				

Question	Response
8. Have you ever had any paid work in the construction trades? (Either in Canada or outside of Canada)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
9. What construction trade are you interested in?	<input type="checkbox"/> I haven't chosen a trade <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Boilermaker <input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter <input type="checkbox"/> Cement Mason <input type="checkbox"/> Crane Operator <input type="checkbox"/> Electrician <input type="checkbox"/> Finish Trades Worker <input type="checkbox"/> Glazier <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Equipment Operator <input type="checkbox"/> Insulator <input type="checkbox"/> Ironworker <input type="checkbox"/> Labourer / Construction Craft Worker <input type="checkbox"/> Millwright <input type="checkbox"/> Plumber and/or Pipefitter <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal

	<input type="checkbox"/> Sprinkler fitting <input type="checkbox"/> Welder <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
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Barriers and challenges

10. Did you experience any of the following barriers when seeking a job in the construction trades? Select all that applied.

I experienced difficulty getting a trades job because of...

- ☐ not knowing anyone in the skilled trades
- ☐ not knowing where to look for a job in the trades
- ☐ not having my work experience valued
- ☐ not having enough or appropriate skills, experience, training, or tickets for working in the trades
- ☐ no available trades jobs in my region
- ☐ being unable to travel to jobs (e.g. family commitments, no car)
- ☐ an injury or condition that makes it hard to do physical labour
- ☐ not knowing what the right work visa/permission is to work in Canada
- ☐ noticeable recruitment and hiring bias against people like me (e.g. due to gender, race, age, disability, newcomers/immigrants, Indigenous Peoples)
- ☐ a lack of time to pursue trades training (e.g. have to work in a non-trade job)
- ☐ a lack of finances to pursue trades training (e.g. haven't saved up enough to pay for technical training)
- ☐ other, please specify: _____

Supports and networks

Question	Response
11. What types of supports do you need to get started in the trades? <i>Please select all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Help to find a pre-apprenticeship program <input type="checkbox"/> Help to find an apprenticeship program <input type="checkbox"/> Help to connect to a union <input type="checkbox"/> Help to find a job in a construction trade <input type="checkbox"/> Help to learn about trade requirements (e.g., math courses, training prerequisites, skills and/or experience) <input type="checkbox"/> Information on Canadian work visas and <input type="checkbox"/> Information on having my international trades experience recognized <input type="checkbox"/> Information on financial support (e.g., grants, loans, tax credits for apprentices) <input type="checkbox"/> Information on support groups for women, youth, older adults, racialized groups, Indigenous Persons, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada interested in the trades

Question	Response
	<input type="checkbox"/> Red Seal/exam information (including how to challenge an exam) <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

Demographics

Question	Response
12. What is your gender identity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to self-describe: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
13. What is your age?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 or above <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
14. Do you self-identify as an Indigenous person?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
15. Were you born in Canada?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
16. How long have you been living in Canada? Show if "no" in previous question	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
17. Do you identify as part of a racialized group (i.e., someone who may be treated differently because of their race or ethnicity)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
18. Do you have any of the following conditions? Select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses) <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty hearing (even when using a hearing aid) <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty walking, using stairs, using your hands or fingers, or doing other physical activities <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional, psychological or mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, anorexia)

Question	Response
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other health problem or long-term condition that has lasted six months or more <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
19. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma (or equivalent) <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="checkbox"/> A master's degree or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

20. **Do you want to be contacted by a SkillPlan or a union staff member to receive more information about the construction trades?**

- ☐ Yes, please use this email address or phone number: _____
☐ No, not at this time

21. **Would the following supports be useful to improve your apprenticeship journey?** Please select all that apply.

- ☐ An online course on how apprenticeship works
☐ An online course on the benefits and responsibilities of being a union member
☐ An online course outlining key steps on how to connect with a union
☐ Other, please specify: _____
☐ Don't know/No response

Final comments

Finally, please provide us with any comments that you have about the survey or the connect to a union process overall (optional): _____

Thank you for completing the survey!

FRENCH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

“Connect with a Union” Quebec survey

We would like to learn about the supports you've used or want to find for:

- Joining a trades union
- Finding a construction job

- Learning about different trades

You are receiving this survey because you completed a form on Travaile ren construction, the Quebec Construction Trades Hub, or the “Build Your Skills” Learning Hub requesting more information on connecting with a construction trade union.

This survey will take about 7 – 10 minutes to complete.

To thank you for your time, we'd like to offer a \$20 Amazon e-gift card to the first 100 people who complete the survey. Once you complete the survey, we will email you the gift card within one week.

The information you share is kept confidential:

- Only SkillPlan and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) – the research partner of the project – will have access to your survey answers. To learn more about SRDC please visit www.srdc.org.
- The information you provide will be used to help improve services and supports, as well as compile reports on online trades resources. You will never be personally identified in these reports.
- If you have questions about the survey, contact apullman@srdc.org. If you have questions about the Learning Hub contact learn@skillplan.ca

Answering the survey is voluntary:

- Participating does not affect your apprenticeship application or access to any SkillPlan services.
- You can opt out at any time and skip any question you do not want to answer.

CONSENT

Do you want to proceed with the survey?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

To send you the \$20 e-gift card and follow up on further supports, please tell us your name and the email you used to get this survey.

Please enter your first name _____

Please enter your last name _____

Please provide the email address where you received this survey _____

** The e-gift card will be sent via email usually within 5 business days.*

<p>In which province or territory do you currently live?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Newfoundland</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PEI</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nova Scotia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New Brunswick</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quebec</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ontario</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Manitoba</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Saskatchewan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Alberta</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British Columbia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response</p>
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Experiences with the connect to union outreach

The first set of questions are about what happened after you signed up to receive more information about trades training opportunities. You completed a form similar to this to indicate that you would like to connect to available construction jobs at a local union.

INSCRIPTION EN LIGNE

TON PROFIL

Remplis ce formulaire si tu veux rejoindre la construction.
Un représentant prendra en charge ton dossier et t'accompagnera après ton inscription.

Ton nom *

Prénom

Nom de famille

Ton courriel *

Ton téléphone *

Question	Response
<p>22. Thinking back to when you filled in the online form, which of the following were true for you at that time? (You may have found this link on a provincial building trades union website, Build Your Skills website, or another website.) <i>Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I was exploring different career options in the trades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I knew which trade I was interested in, and I was considering looking for a construction job</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wanted to learn more about the benefits and responsibilities of trades union membership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I was looking for better pay and working conditions through a trades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had no previous trades experience and wanted to start my trades career</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I previously applied to join a trade but didn't get in and would like to try again</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I already applied to a trade, and I was waiting to hear back</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response</p>
<p>23. Since you signed up to get more information on trades industry opportunities, have you taken any of the following steps towards your goals? <i>Please select all that apply.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learned more about specific trades and narrowed down my interests</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Connected with a local trades union for further information</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Got on the waiting list to join a trades union</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Secured a construction job in the trades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I haven't taken any of these steps yet</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm no longer interested in a career in the trades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p>

Question	Response
	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
24. Have you done any of the following since you signed up to receive more information? <i>Please select all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in a training program not related to the construction trades <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a non-unionized construction job <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a trades job outside of construction (e.g., manufacturing) <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a job not related to construction nor the trades <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
25. What is your current apprentice level? <i>If indicated "started apprenticeship training with a union" or "started apprenticeship training with a non-union workplace" in question 2</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Registered apprentice: Level 4 or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

Next, we would like to know about follow-up and support you received after you filled out the online "Connect to a Union" form. You may have received a follow-up email or phone call from SkillPlan, a union, or a provincial trades council (depending on which form you completed). You may also have received support from another source.

Question	Response
26. Did you receive any of the following support? <i>Please select all that apply.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received a follow-up email <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received a follow-up phone call or voice message <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I received support from a friend, family member, or someone in my community <input type="checkbox"/> No, I did not receive or find any support <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
27. How often did you communicate with the person who contacted you? This could be via phone, text or email. <i>See if selected 1 or 2 in question 5</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Once <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times with a week or two <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times within a month <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple times over several months <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

28. **Since filling out the "Connect to a Union" form, have you done the following to learn more about the trades?**

	Yes	No	NA	No response
Explored trades-related websites				
Talked with friends, family and/or teachers about working in the trades				
Talked with someone who is currently working or has worked in the trades				
Talked with a building trades council representative to learn general information about the trades				
Talked with a local union representative				
Talked with a trades training centre or trades college representative				
Visited a website(s) to learn about apprenticeship grants and other financial supports				
Contacted an organization supporting equity-seeking groups such as women, Newcomers, Indigenous persons, racialized people, persons with disabilities				
Started working on my skills in the Build Your Skills Learning Hub				
Other, please specify: _____				

Question	Response
29. Have you ever had any paid work in the construction trades? (Either in Canada or outside of Canada)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
30. Are you part of any of these unions? Show if "yes" in previous question	<input type="checkbox"/> Conseil provincial International <input type="checkbox"/> FTQ-Construction <input type="checkbox"/> CSD-Construction <input type="checkbox"/> CSN-Construction <input type="checkbox"/> SQC
31. What construction trade are you interested or currently working in?	<input type="checkbox"/> I haven't chosen a trade <input type="checkbox"/> Arpenteur / Arpenteuse <input type="checkbox"/> Boutefeu-foreur / Boutefeu-foreuse <input type="checkbox"/> Briqueteur-maçon / Briqueteuse-maçonnerie <input type="checkbox"/> Calorifugeur / Calorifugeuse <input type="checkbox"/> Carreleur / Carreleuse <input type="checkbox"/> Charpentier-menuisier / Charpentière-menuisière <input type="checkbox"/> Chaudronnier / Chaudronnière <input type="checkbox"/> Cimentier-applicateur / Cimentière-applicatrice <input type="checkbox"/> Couvreur / Couvreuse <input type="checkbox"/> Électricien / Électricienne <input type="checkbox"/> Ferblantier / Ferblantière <input type="checkbox"/> Ferrailleur / Ferrailleuse <input type="checkbox"/> Frigoriste <input type="checkbox"/> Grutier / Grutière <input type="checkbox"/> Installateur / installatrice de de systèmes de sécurité <input type="checkbox"/> Manoeuvre <input type="checkbox"/> Mécanicien / Mécanicienne d'ascenseur <input type="checkbox"/> Mécanicien / Mécanicienne de machines lourdes <input type="checkbox"/> Mécanicien / Mécanicienne en protection-incendie <input type="checkbox"/> Mécanicien industriel / Mécanicienne industrielle de chantier

	<input type="checkbox"/> Monteur / Monteuse de ligne <input type="checkbox"/> Monteur-assembleur / Monteuse-assembleuse <input type="checkbox"/> Monteur-mécanicien (vitrier) / Monteuse-mécanicienne (vitrière) <input type="checkbox"/> Opérateur / Opératrice d'équipement lourd <input type="checkbox"/> Opérateur / Opératrice de pelles mécaniques <input type="checkbox"/> Peintre <input type="checkbox"/> Plâtrier / plâtrière <input type="checkbox"/> Poseur / Poseuse de revêtements souples <input type="checkbox"/> Poseur / Poseuse de systèmes intérieurs <input type="checkbox"/> Scaphandrier / Scaphandrière <input type="checkbox"/> Soudeur / Soudeuse <input type="checkbox"/> Soudeur / Soudeuse de tuyauterie <input type="checkbox"/> Tuyauteur / Tuyauteuse <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
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Barriers and challenges

32. Did you experience any of the following barriers when seeking a job in the construction trades? Select all that applied.

I experienced difficulty getting a trades job because of...

- ☐ not knowing anyone in the skilled trades
- ☐ not knowing where to look for a job in the trades
- ☐ not having my work experience valued
- ☐ not having enough or appropriate skills, experience, training, or tickets for working in the trades
- ☐ no available trades jobs in my region
- ☐ being unable to travel to jobs (e.g. family commitments, no car)
- ☐ an injury or condition that makes it hard to do physical labour
- ☐ not knowing what the right work visa/permission is to work in Canada
- ☐ noticeable recruitment and hiring bias against people like me (e.g. due to gender, race, age, disability, newcomers/immigrants, Indigenous Peoples)
- ☐ a lack of time to pursue trades training (e.g. have to work in a non-trade job)
- ☐ a lack of finances to pursue trades training (e.g. haven't saved up enough to pay for technical training)
- ☐ other, please specify: _____

Supports and networks

Question	Response
33. What types of supports do you need to get started in the trades? Please select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Help to find an apprenticeship program <input type="checkbox"/> Help to connect to a union <input type="checkbox"/> Help to find a job in a construction trade

Question	Response
	<input type="checkbox"/> Help to learn about trade requirements (e.g., math courses, training prerequisites, skills and/or experience) <input type="checkbox"/> Information on Canadian work visas <input type="checkbox"/> Information on having my international trades experience recognized <input type="checkbox"/> Information on financial support (e.g., grants, loans, tax credits for apprentices) <input type="checkbox"/> Information on support groups for women, youth, older adults, racialized groups, Indigenous Persons, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada interested in the trades <input type="checkbox"/> Red Seal/exam information (including how to challenge an exam) <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

Demographics

Question	Response
34. What is your gender identity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to self-describe: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
35. What is your age?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 or above <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
36. Do you self-identify as an Indigenous person?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
37. Were you born in Canada?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
38. How long have you been living in Canada? Show if "no" in previous question	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response
39. Do you identify as part of a racialized group (i.e., someone who may be treated differently because of their race or ethnicity)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

Question	Response
40. Do you have any of the following conditions? <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses) <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty hearing (even when using a hearing aid) <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty walking, using stairs, using your hands or fingers, or doing other physical activities <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional, psychological or mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, anorexia) <input type="checkbox"/> Other health problem or long-term condition that has lasted six months or more <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
41. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma (or equivalent) <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="checkbox"/> A master's degree or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No response

42. Would the following supports be useful to improve your apprenticeship journey? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ An online course on how apprenticeship works
☐ An online course on the benefits and responsibilities of being a union member
☐ An online course outlining key steps on how to connect with a union
☐ Other, please specify: _____
☐ Don't know/No response

Final comments

Finally, please provide us with any comments that you have about the survey or the connect to a union process overall (optional): _____

Thank you for completing the survey!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

MEETING WITH PROVINCIAL COUNCIL SAMPLE

The purpose of this conversation is to learn about your experience with online recruitment using the Virtual Recruitment resources. In particular, we want to better understand your role in connecting people to skilled trades training and union opportunities.

- There are no right or wrong answers. Rather, we are just seeking your thoughts and expertise to help refine the recruitment process.

Confidentiality

- This interview will be confidential and will not be shared except as outlined below.
- We would like to treat this session as an expert consultation. What that means is that we would like to use quotes from the interview and mention the name of your organization in the final report (and shorter summaries based on the report).
- We will not attribute these comments to you specifically (i.e., you will not be named in the report), but rather we would attribute your comments to your role and organization (e.g., “staff member at XYZ Building Trades Union”).
- Because your organization would be identified, we cannot ensure full confidentiality. Someone reading our report may be able to identify a particular person as a source of information if they know the organization well.
- Therefore, please think of this interview as “on the record.” If at any time during our conversation you would like me to stop the recording and not include your comments, please let me know.
- Also, you have the right to end this interview at any time and this will in no way affect your involvement with the project.

If you have any questions later about this evaluation, please feel free to contact Ashley Pullman or Kemi Odegbile, Chief Privacy Officer, at SRDC.

- Can we include the name of your organization in the final report? (Y/N)

Recording

We would like to record the interview to help with note taking and use the Zoom closed captioning to generate an automatically generated transcript of our meeting. The recording and transcript will be stored on SRDC’s secure servers and only project staff at SRDC will have access to them. If at any time during the conversation you would like us to stop the recording, please let us know. The recording and transcript will be destroyed once all research related to the project is complete.

- Is it okay if we start the recording? Do you have any questions before we begin? (Y/N)

Introduction and goals

1. Let's start with just a brief introductory question. Can you describe your role at your building trade council?
2. In terms of your role at your organization, how do you support recruitment into skilled trades training and union opportunities?
3. What are your organization's recruitment priorities and goals?

VR-facilitated recruitment

The Virtual Recruitment project allows online users to request more information about skilled trades training and union opportunities through 1) the provincial site form on the union page; 2) the registration form for the Build Your Skills Learning Hub; or 3) through a Learning Hub "Connect with a Union" form. We are interested in learning more about how your organization connects with people who complete these forms and what are the common outcomes from this follow-up.

4. What information do you receive about the people who contact you via these forms and do you follow up with them?
5. When you receive a request for more training or union information from a Virtual Recruitment user, walk me through how your organization follows up.
6. **Information gathering:** Do you have a list of questions, or a template email you use once you contact them? In your interactions with the person, do you collect any screening information (e.g., their education level, math courses they have completed, etc.)?
7. **Information providing:** What kinds of information do you send them? For example, do you refer people to **specific regional resources** based on their location? Do you refer people to **trades-specific resources** depending on their interest?
8. We are interested in learning more about your broader goals in meeting labour demands, and how it influences your recruitment approach. Do you aim to recruit specific demographic groups or increase interest in specific trades?

Recruitment outcomes

Next, we would like to know more about the common outcomes you see from your communication with users interested in learning more about the skilled trades.

9. When you communicate with individuals, what are the typical responses or outcomes you see?
10. How do you track your engagement and outcomes?
11. What are some common challenges you face when helping people connect to training and union opportunities?
12. On your Connection to Unions & Opportunities page on the construction hub, there are 17 locals listed. Users can navigate to their sites to learn more about union opportunities. Have you heard any feedback from them surrounding if people are contacting them through the Construction Trades Hub site? If yes, what type of feedback have they shared on their experience interacting with VR users to date? If no, why do you think VR users are not reaching out directly to them?

Overview and what's next

13. Compared to traditional recruitment methods like traditional advertising, career fairs, and word-of-mouth, what do you think are the benefits and drawbacks of using virtual recruitment tools to connect people to skilled trades training and union opportunities?
14. What tools, resources, and support would be beneficial for you to enhance your recruitment efforts?
15. Are there any future changes to recruitment you are planning to implement (or would like to implement if you had the capacity)?
16. Finally, as one last question: do you have tips and lessons learned you would like to share with people from other provincial councils who are engaged in virtual recruitment?



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