

Skilled Jobs: Training our Workforce for the Needs of Today and Tomorrow

Western Canada is the place to be for entrepreneurs and innovators. The West is a regional powerhouse, and our Government is keen to support our business leaders to ensure that they realize their full potential.

Access to skilled workers in this competitive setting is critical to sustaining economic success. Currently, labour shortages are being reported across many sectors, and experts predict future growth will outpace the number of available skilled workers. As the global economy evolves, western Canadian industry, governments and post-secondary institutions need to work together to ensure Western Canada continues to grow and adapt.

That's why Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is partnering with industry and post-secondary institutions to expand existing training programs and research centres and increase opportunities in trades and apprenticeship training.

A great example is WD's funding for [Parkland College's Power Engineering Lab](#) in Saskatchewan. Parkland is boosting the number of students learning critical technical skills and connecting them with high-value, in-demand jobs when they graduate. Western colleges are outfitting themselves strategically with more industrial equipment, virtual simulators, and mobile classrooms to offer best-in-class skills development giving more Canadians access to these great training opportunities

WD is also investing in facilities like Winnipeg's [Centre for Education and Work](#) to develop cutting-edge software and digital tools needed to reduce the cost of training skilled workers.



MP Rod Bruinooge tests a welding simulator from the Centre for Education and Work, one of the tools the Winnipeg-based organization is developing with support from WD.

WD is connecting post-secondary institutions with industry to increase innovative training opportunities for Western Canadians. A recent example is WD's partnership with [SAIT Polytechnic](#), allowing students and faculty to work directly with industry partners on projects that give students practical experience and private sector contacts – a valuable advantage as they head into the workforce.

With one eye on the evolving global economy and another on Western Canada's opportunities for growth, WD is positioning the west for continued success by addressing the needs of industry while

preparing Canadians for reliable, good-paying jobs.

Connecting Saskatoon Workers with Skilled Jobs



Hands-on skills training gives STSC students, like Heidi Unruh, an edge with employers.

The Saskatchewan Trades and Skills Centre (STSC) plays a key role in helping local businesses find skilled workers by building training programs around specific industry needs.

STSC starts by partnering with Saskatoon businesses to identify job openings. The Centre then schedules classes to give students hands-on training needed for those jobs. Trainees receive some financial support and employers make a significant investment by providing the training and supervision during the “Work Practicum” that concludes each program.

WD has supported multiple projects at the non-profit STSC.

The latest is an investment in new training equipment, allowing the Centre to run six new construction-related programs from September to December, 2013. Forty of the 48 students found immediate employment after graduating.

“Through the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre, more Canadians can start their careers with the crucial skills businesses are looking for,” said the Honourable Michelle Rempel, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification. “Our government is proud to support the Centre and its contribution to supporting local businesses and the Saskatoon community.”

The STSC has offered 87 programs in its six-year history. Among them are courses in Construction Labour, Concrete Forming, Commercial Flooring, Commercial Roofing, Steel Stud and Drywall, Fire and Flood Restoration, Construction Worker Prep, Fireman/Custodian, Warehouse Worker and Customer Service.

STSC by the Numbers

- Enrollment of 360-plus students in 2013 is more than double what it was in 2008.
- The number of programs has also more than doubled, with 25 classes offered in 2013
- 85% of students are employed within six months of graduation

“WD’s support has provided us with credibility and status that has strengthened the confidence of employers in our ability to provide them with the labour force they are wanting to attract,” said Donavon Elliott, Executive Director of STSC.