

Overview: Labour Market Challenges and Solutions Study for BC's Non-Profit Housing Sector

Purpose of the Study

The Labour Market Challenges and Solutions Study for BC's Non-Profit Housing Sector (LMCS) is funded by the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills' Sector Labour Market Partnerships Division. This research study aims to understand the availability and accessibility of professional development programs and training that meet the needs of the non-profit housing sector in BC. The study will explore challenges with both recruiting and retaining qualified staff to meet the evolving labour needs of the non-profit housing sector in BC. The research will help inform recommendations about how to ensure the professional development and training programs can better address the skills gaps and labour needs of the non-profit housing sector in BC, as well as how the non-profit housing sector can better recruit and retain qualified staff.

BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) will lead and conduct the research, with guidance from a Governance Committee. The study will involve broad consultations with non-profit housing knowledge holders in BC, as well as knowledge holders from various professional development and training programs in the province. The consultations supported by a literature review, environmental scan of available programs, and a labour market analysis and projections report. A prioritization session will also be conducted to determine sector support for the recommendations and strategies to address the sector's labour challenges identified through the research and consultations.

The final report will include a road map to addressing the non-profit housing sector's labour challenges. The road map will include key focus areas on ensuring there are Indigenous-led training programs, as well as on specific needs and solutions to address the training, recruitment, and retention challenges in rural and remote areas of the province.

Background

A key issue constraining the non-profit housing sector in BC is a shortage of qualified and skilled workers to operate non-market housing across a range of disciplines that are critical to sustaining and growing the sector. There is also need for more Indigenous-led professional training programs and curriculum. Housing societies operating in rural and remote areas of BC also experience challenges in recruiting and retaining professionals to work in their areas, despite need for housing and support services being high across the province.

Non-profit housing providers are facing many ongoing and emerging challenges that are impacting their ability to recruit and retain staff, with examples including:

- Increasingly complex needs of tenants, requiring more specialized training for staff
- An aging workforce, particularly at the executive and board levels, resulting in the loss of institutional knowledge for the housing societies
- Aging buildings and the need for energy efficiency upgrades to the buildings, requiring staff to have more specialized knowledge about asset management, capital planning, and portfolio planning
- Staffing shortages, leading to burnout

- Non-profit housing is being developed outside of population centres and it can be difficult to incentivize trained professionals to work in these areas, thereby impacting recruitment and retention issues for the sector
- There is a lack of access to Indigenous-led training programs for potential and existing staff in the non-profit housing sector to get training around cultural-safety
- There is a potential to professionalize the housing-related career paths, which may require accreditation

Data Collection

- Literature review
- Environmental scan
- In-person and virtual consultations with housing providers, training programs, and other knowledge holders
- Statistical overview of the non-profit housing sector workforce in BC and projections
- Employee survey
- Key informant interviews with knowledge holders in other jurisdictions
- Prioritization workshop to determine recommendations

Outputs

- Analysis of workforce development challenges including recruitment and retention issues/barriers and skills gaps impacting the sector
- Statistical overview of the non-profit housing sector's workforce in BC and projections
- Aggregated results of the employee survey
- Recommendations to increase training opportunities for potential and existing staff in areas such as social work, nursing, building science and engineering, etc., and specialized training around Indigenous cultural safety, self-care, non-violent de-escalation, mental health first aid
 - Including specific recommendations focused on a) increasing Indigenous-led professional training programs and curriculum specific to the non-profit housing sector in BC and b) strategies for recruitment and retention of professionals to housing societies in rural and remote areas of BC
- Recommendations to identify the skills and professional training needed to meet the emerging needs of the non-profit housing sector in BC

Intended Outcomes

- Increase the supply of potential and existing staff with the training and skills needed
- Improve recruitment and retention strategies for housing societies in BC
- Develop partnerships with training institutions to ensure training programs for professions needed by the sector are offering training that is specific to the non-profit housing sector
- Improve accessibility of professional training programs for potential staff and ongoing training opportunities for existing staff
- Improved service delivery for tenants
- Improved building maintenance and reduced energy costs