



June 2025

# Community Impact Report 2025

The Skills Centre is a leader in fostering inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities.

Trail, BC

[skillscentre.ca](https://skillscentre.ca)



#### **Our Vision**

*The Skills Centre is a leader in fostering inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities.*

#### **Our Mission**

*The Skills Centre strengthens rural and industrial communities and workplaces in BC through workforce skills development, training services, social development and poverty reduction programming.*

#### **Our Values**

*Diversity, Collaboration, Innovation, Advocacy, Accountability*



## We're here in your community

It's been a big year for us—we finally moved into our new building in July 2024! After 14 months of renovations and more than two years of planning, fundraising, designing and anticipation, the building was ready for us and for you, our clients and colleagues.

At our grand opening event in October, we were able to show off the greenest, most accessible and sustainable building in the city. And you came out in force to help us celebrate!

Our vision for this building was simple. We wanted to invest in Trail. We wanted to create a space to share with other non-profits and community groups.

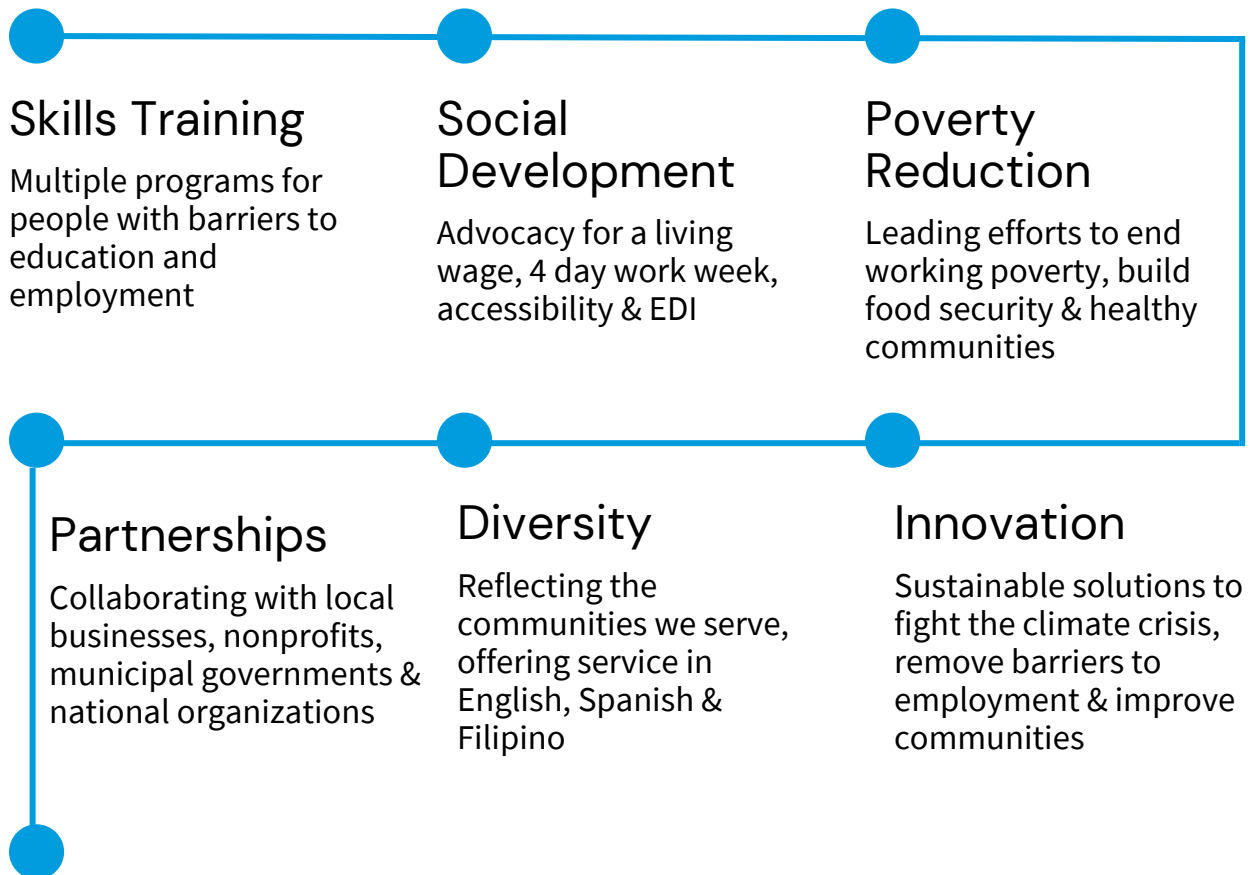
We wanted to show that retrofitting these old community buildings was possible and that rehabilitating them would add value to community as well as increase the life of the buildings. We wanted to ensure that the money that we raised to support the work stayed in community and supported local businesses.

Since our primary business, and our reputation, is built on helping Kootenay and Boundary residents find their purpose and build their careers, we needed to ensure that the renovation of this great building helped to build local skills and local careers.

We achieved all of our goals. Read on to learn more.

# What we do

The Skills Centre is an inclusive, accessible, safe and welcoming place for people of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, ethnicities and lived experiences. We're here to help you succeed. We buy local, we include our pronouns in our email signatures, we create a welcoming place for everyone because we are proudly Canadian.



## Accountability

We achieved our second 3-year CARF accreditation (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), demonstrating our commitment to efficient operations that help ensure we're providing the best service for our clients and the best workplace for our staff.

We are grateful to live and work on the unsundered traditional territories of the Sinixt, Ktunaxa, Syilx and Secwepemc First Nations. We honour our relationships with these First Nations and all other First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who reside in these territories.



# Skills Training Highlights

**Our skills training programs** help clients get the training they need for the job they want. We help build soft skills, resume writing and interview skills, and offer financial supports for specialized gear, safety equipment or a laptop if that's what the client needs.

## Emerging Tech

Connecting participants with the skills they'll need for jobs into the future, this program for 17-29 year olds explored a wide range of subjects. 100% of participants this past year completed their training with us and either started a job or began an external training program. Emerging Tech wrapped up in March 2025 after two years.



## IFIT

We launched Inclusive Futures in Industry & Trades in July 2024. This 3 year program helps young women and gender-diverse people explore trades jobs through job shadowing and presentations, identify the barriers they face, and suggest changes to policies and practices for employers to tap into this huge market of potential employees.



"It's a great way to help afford further schooling and to learn important skills for any job, I would absolutely recommend it." – Jace, Emerging Tech client

Our employment programs provide skill development and training for an equitable workforce. We offer employers a wage subsidy to help clients get into a job. We network and collaborate with other service providers to create the best training plans and employment opportunities for our clients.

"The program specialist was very supportive, encouraging and helped me believe in myself and my abilities." – youth client

## Rise

RISE (Renew. Inspire. Support. Engage.) supports people who are job ready and are experiencing barriers to employment. RISE offers employment counselling, skills training, financial supports and wage subsidies. Personalized services for participants are also available to improve their mental and emotional well-being.



## Sparking Opportunities

Sparking Opportunities helps people with a physical or mental barrier or disability find home-based self-employment options. Clients are getting training and personalized business advice, including help with business plans, marketing and financial management. It is available to clients throughout the Kootenays and runs until 2026.



"Keep up the excellent work. Thanks for letting me be part of the program and helping me get back on my feet." – Emerging Tech client

# National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

A day of learning each year for staff and board members

Our staff and board members take part in an in-depth day of learning each year for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This is a full day dedicated to learning activities.

In 2024, we participated in The Canadian Library's art installation project: we wrapped donated books in Indigenous fabrics and put the name of one of the murdered or missing Indigenous women on the spine. It's a way to share the names and stories of these women who have disappeared.

We all felt it was very meaningful to participate. Our contribution to this national art installation will be in our lobby until TCL gathers all of the books. Drop by to have a look. You can learn more about the project on TCL's site:

<https://www.thecanadianlibrary.ca/>



*Our EDI committee engages staff with learning activities year-round. We discuss actions we can implement for the Skills Centre and our clients to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in our communities.*



# Poverty Reduction

## Community belonging, food security, living wage

Our mission is to reduce poverty and build a community in which everyone is thriving and feels included. We're working with community partners to improve food security, social, health and community services, housing, learning and economic development.

**The Common Access Card** provides equal access to recreational amenities in Trail, Rossland, Warfield, Montrose and Fruitvale. And this spring, the Charles Bailey Theatre joined the Common Access Card to add a cultural event experience to the program.

**The Skills Centre and the City of Trail** have been collaborating on a project to end working poverty in Trail for the past 3 years. The goal is to enhance supports and services by updating existing community plans, including the city's poverty reduction plan and healthy communities plan from 2017.

- They created a leadership table of community members from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including individuals with lived experience of working poverty.
- More than 140 people gave input through public engagement events, collective problem-solving, surveys or leadership tables.
- The report is called *Thriving for All: A Plan for Healthy Communities in Our Rural City*, and it focuses on reducing or eliminating poverty as the key to a healthy community.

**Our food security programs** come under one umbrella called **Roots to Table**. It includes:

- Community Kitchens
- Our garden box project
- Food preservation (helping people learn to can, dehydrate and freeze dry food)

Ecclesiastical Insurance, through their Community Impact Grant, is the main funder of our food security programming.

Other funders include:

- United Way
- Gore Mutual
- Coldest Night of the Year, Safeway, and individuals who donate to Community Kitchens



# Celebrating our new home!

July 18, 2024 will forever go down in Skills Centre history as moving day--the day we set up our offices in our new building. Even though it was only a move across the street, everyone pitched in to make the move go smoothly.

Only a few days later we had our first room rentals happening, and our tenants moved in not long after. Our vision of a bustling community hub became a reality!



Settled in to our new offices, we held our big grand opening celebration on October 17, 2024. More than 200 people, friends, colleagues, former coworkers and board members, current and past clients, and donors joined us for an afternoon to celebrate and show off our new space. The purchase, planning and renovation took 3 years, but the vision for the Skills Centre to own its own home was more than 20 years in the making. That was something worth celebrating!





# Donors & Supporters

## Partnerships help us deliver our programs

This past year, we have been working with CBAL, Trail FAIR Society, Selkirk College, Summit Truck & Equipment Repair, Oorthuis Custom Cabinets, CMAW (Construction Maintenance & Allied Workers), Forte Projects, along with local municipal governments and other organizations and businesses. We also manage the web presence for the Lower Columbia affordable housing listings on our website.

### Our funding partners


Our program funding partners include: Teck, First Presbyterian Church, United Way BC, F.K. Morrow Foundation, AGD Foundation, Canadian Tire, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, WAGE, ESDC, Taylor Legacy Fund, George Hutchison Family Foundation, Le Roi Foundation, Across Generations Across Nations Fund, Ecclesiastical Insurance, Province of BC, Tamarack Institute, Coldest Night of the Year.

Our building funders this past year were Columbia Basin Trust, Le Roi Foundation, Fortis, and Small Business BC.

### Support for business

We help employers as well as employees. We offer human resources expertise, succession planning, wage subsidies & staff training — in fact, we'll customize our approach for your business or organization's needs.

Our best example of our success is the Teck Wellness & Learning Centre. We work with Teck Metals Ltd. to organize short courses, sports and fitness activities, and health and wellness awareness campaigns.



**The Skills Centre had a** \$2 million operating budget last year. We get our funding from a variety of sources, including the federal and provincial governments, municipalities, charitable foundations, businesses, donors, community members, and fund-raising events.

**This was our third year hosting** the Coldest Night of the Year event in Trail.

- We had 61 walkers, 30 volunteers as well as Skills Centre staff & board members participate
- 13 businesses sponsored CNOY with cash and in-kind donations
- Together we raised more than \$22,000 for poverty reduction activities in our community.

**Staff and board members donate each year** to the Teck food drive, to Sanctuary Pre-Teen Centre, Coldest Night of the Year & this year to setting up and outfitting our community kitchen.

# Life long learning & doing

## Professional development, certifications & awards

It's only fitting that our staff believe in life-long learning. Each year, the Skills Centre encourages staff to take training, pursue or maintain their certifications, and bring forward learning opportunities that benefit all of us as an organization. Of course, this also benefits our clients, collaborators and partners as we share our learnings.

In the past year, staff have completed certificates in leadership and management, achieved new financial management designations, taken courses to maintain their industry certifications, collectively taken non-violent communications training, and many more courses. We're in the skills training field, and we want to lead by example.



*Payroll, language courses, psychological safety, psychological health, negotiating skills, and managing conflict are just some of the courses staff have taken in the past year.*

Morag Carter, our executive director, received the King's Coronation Medal from MP Richard Cannings for her contributions to the community, province and nation. Under her leadership, the Skills Centre undertook the purchase and renovation of our new building.

"Our vision for this building was simple and yet profound. We wanted to invest in Trail and to show that a solid local investment could also benefit the region," she says.

Congratulations again, Morag!





## Board changes

After 6 years on our board, 4 as chair, Mary Lawson is stepping down and passing the torch of leadership to Rhys Andrews. We're so grateful for everything Mary has done for us over the years. She was an essential board member when we were rebuilding the Skills Centre and effectively steered us through the acquisition and renovation of the new building. We wish her all the best as she leaves us to focus on her law practice; the staff and board will miss her enormously.

Joining the board this year are Jeanne Kim and Tammie Clarke. We offer you a warm welcome!

## Staff changes

Our new building needed someone to keep it running smoothly. Edward joined our team just in time for moving day and keeps everything and everyone in good working order. We couldn't be happier that Edward chose to join our team!



Emily joined us for the summer in 2024 as an office assistant during a busy summer as we moved into our new building. She's stayed on in a casual role when we need an extra pair of hands. Emily is in the Rural Pre-Medicine Program at Selkirk College, and her enthusiasm to help out at the Skills Centre is, dare we say it, infectious.



For 4 years, Dan has helped us tell our stories, and now he is taking a new opportunity across the country. Above Dan's desk is a small poster, a legacy from one of the many professional development courses he took while at the Skills Centre. It says REMINDER: Embrace Creativity, Lead with Kindness, Seek Balance, Respect Independence, Strive for Reliability. In many, many ways, this small poster reflects the kind of colleague Dan has been. Funny, creative, kind, reliable and with a wicked sense of humor. Good luck in your new role, Dan. Acadia University is lucky to have you!



# Sharing what we do

Local media help us share our stories, and we appreciate their coverage and ongoing support. Our website and social media channels are also important communications tools where we see a lot of support from our peers, clients and community.

This past year we launched a series of 4 videos that showcase the construction process and highlight some of the local businesses we worked with on the building renovation. It is the collective participation of our partners in the renovation and the organizations who are sharing the space with us that makes the investment worthwhile and will determine how successful and important a community asset it will be. [Watch the videos to follow along on our journey.](#)

- **Did you know we have office space for rent for non-profits?**
- **We also have meeting rooms, a multi-purpose room, reception lounge, rooftop patio and a community kitchen available to rent. All rooms are fully accessible.**

Book by the day or hour. Rates for non-profits and small and large businesses.

Contact [events@skillscentre.ca](mailto:events@skillscentre.ca) for all the details.



**Connect with us online. We're on:**

Facebook

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LinkedIn

YouTube

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