



Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget

Submitted by:

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S LONG-TERM SUCCESS IN THE SKILLED TRADES WORKFORCE

Recommendation 1:

Increase funding for clearly defined pre-apprenticeship training that builds awareness and readiness among Canadian women to pursue and succeed in careers in the skilled trades.

Recommendation 2:

Pursue ongoing coordination of organizational funding, training tax credits and EI benefits to maximize options for women looking to upgrade their skills and explore career paths.

Recommendation 3:

Strengthen opportunities for inclusive organizations that are not classified as Indigenous organizations but that directly serve FNMI communities and students through foundational learning and skills training to access funding that supports economic prosperity for Indigenous people.

INTRODUCTION

Women Building Futures (WBF) is pleased to participate in the Government's 2019 pre-budget consultation process and is adding our perspective and voice to this important national dialogue. Budget 2019 will build on the initiatives and policies that were presented and implemented in Budget 2018, and just like the women we serve, we are looking to create a future that provides choice and opportunity. We believe we can all build our own future, and that is exactly what WBF is working towards.

ABOUT WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES

Women Building Futures (WBF) is a not-for-profit and social purpose enterprise headquartered in Edmonton, Alberta that is valued for empowering women to enter and succeed in careers where they have been under-represented, inspiring positive economic change for women and forever transforming the face of industry in Canada. We have worked with women pursuing trades careers and occupations for 20 years, with close to 1,500 women trained since inception.

WBF's 2017 Key Metrics

- 35% of students identify as Indigenous
- 95% of graduates employed in industry within six months of graduating
- 77 employers hired WBF graduates
- 157% average increase in earned income on first day of hire
- 48 Indigenous communities actively engaged

WOMEN IN THE SKILLED TRADES

The State of Women in Industry

Canada's construction and maintenance industry is facing an anticipated loss of close to 250,000 skilled workers, 21% of its current labour force, by 2026.¹ Yet, projects continue and the need for ongoing maintenance will only increase as these projects are completed.

The approximately 6.2 million women in Canada between 20 and 44 years of age² represent a significant working-age population. Despite representing an estimated 47% of the Canadian labour force,³ women make up less than 4% of the onsite construction and maintenance trades workforce across Canada, an industry known for its well-paid careers.

¹ BuildForce Canada, Construction & Maintenance Looking Forward National Summary 2017-2026. (Ottawa: BuildForce Canada, 2017), 1 & 9.

² Statistics Canada. Population by sex and age group, 2017. (Table 051-0001). Last updated 2017-09-27. www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo10a-eng.htm (accessed January 29, 2018).

³ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey estimates (LFS) by sex and detailed age group, unadjusted for seasonality, monthly. (Table 282-0001). www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?id=2820001 (accessed August 28, 2017).

If industry were to attract just 1% of women between 20 and 44, they would bring in 62,000 new workers and address 25% of the forecasted workforce shortage. The positive economic impact would benefit both industry and women. Attracting and retaining women in the trades enables industry to build its future workforce; one that is local, skilled and inclusive. The opportunity for in-demand employment in the trades and the ability to increase income significantly increases a woman's economic prosperity and ability to provide for herself and her family.

“Simply put, women are Canada’s largest untapped labour resource.”

– Kathy Kimpton, President & CEO, Women Building Futures

Gender Differences in the Trades

The experiences women and men have in the trades are distinctly different, and this impacts the level of career success they may achieve. One important distinction is in apprenticeship completion. WBF is working with the Government of Alberta to track our graduates' completion rates, but anecdotally, we know our graduates have a high rate of completion. In general, however, women are much more likely to discontinue their apprenticeship program due to personal or family issues, with 20.5% of female discontinuers citing this as their main reason, compared to 9% of male discontinuers.⁴ This highlights the need for accessible and affordable child care and greater supports that accommodate the demanding schedules often required in the trades.

The issue of the wage gap also exists in the skilled trades. Women earn on average 82.5% of what men earn in the trades,⁵ which sits just below the general national average of 87%.⁶ This is likely due to the lack of awareness of other opportunities in the skilled trades and other related professions.

INCREASING WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN THE SKILLED TRADES

With two decades of experience and consistently strong outcomes, WBF has developed a proven model for pre-apprenticeship training, which is a critical aspect of engaging more women and preparing them to enter into and succeed in the trades. We were invited to participate in the Employment and Social Development Canada consultation on Women in Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship funding in the Spring of 2018 to share our successful approach and highlight the importance of connecting women to employment and apprenticeship completion support directly through pre-apprenticeship training, with policies and funding mechanisms aligned to reflect the importance of this foundational step.

WBF’s Proven Model

Workforce Attraction – informing women of the opportunities in construction and maintenance and positioning skilled trades as a first-choice career and lifestyle option.

⁴ Frank, Kristyn and Jovic, Emily. National Apprenticeship Survey: Canada Overview Report 2015. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2017), 48.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Employment Income Statistics in 2010. 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-014-X2011042. (Income compared across 25 construction occupations.)

⁶ Moyser, Melissa. Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2017), 26.

Assessment – determining fit and level of readiness by assessing essential skills and attitude and conducting drug and alcohol testing.

Training for Safety and Productivity – modules and programs that may include: hands-on skills training, safety certifications, WBF Best Practices for Success in Construction, essential skills, financial literacy and physical fitness readiness. Deliver foundational learning through training partnerships to increase access to employment opportunities that have pre-requisites.

Employment and Workforce Retention – preparing women for job search, interviews and earned employment referrals as well as ongoing coaching and assistance with registering for, pursuing and completing an apprenticeship.

Addressing Barriers for Indigenous Women

Our approach is informed by the Indigenous women we serve, who teach us about the barriers they encounter, such as:

- Financial stability and ability to cover living expenses while in training
- Healthy coping mechanisms and conflict resolution
- Transportation
- Child care
- Family violence
- Lack of confidence
- Academics

Collaborating with Partners

WBF collaborates with our partners to support attraction and retention of skilled workers, shift attitudes towards the trades, support apprenticeship registration/completion, increase workplace diversity, bring training into Indigenous communities and address barriers to participation.

- **Organizations** – construction, maintenance, oil and gas, mining and transportation.
- **Industry Associations** – labour unions and national associations such as BuildForce Canada and the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum.
- **Indigenous Communities and Organizations** – FNMI communities and service providers.
- **Government** – federal, provincial and municipal.
- **Post-Secondary** – technical, safety and essential skills training providers.

Outcomes from WBF's Approach

- Increased awareness of opportunities in the trades and labour market demand.
- Shifting attitudes towards the trades and the opportunities they have to offer.
- Increasing essential skills, hands-on skills and soft skills.
- Increase in workforce participation and economic prosperity.
- Increased likelihood of success in registering for and completing apprenticeship.
- Decreased reliance on social supports and programs.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR WOMEN

As of 2016, a Canadian woman's average employment income was just \$36,000.⁷ Many of the women we work with aren't necessarily unemployed but underemployed, working hard at multiple jobs, accessing social programs and still barely making ends meet.

The economic impact of our pre-apprenticeship training is significant and immediate. Graduates of WBF's programs experience a 90% or better employment rate within six months of graduating and a 157% increase in income on first day of hire. For the 190 women who graduated from a WBF program in 2017, that economic opportunity and prosperity has been life-changing, improving their lives, their families' lives, their communities and the economy as a whole.

Completing apprenticeship continues this upward trend in income, reducing or eliminating reliance on social supports and increasing taxes paid provincially and federally. 83% of women who graduate from a WBF pre-apprenticeship program register as apprentices. WBF is a funnel into the apprenticeship system that increases likelihood for apprenticeship completion over those who enter apprenticeship directly. By the time a woman has completed her 4th year apprenticeship, there is a 356% return on investment of her average cost of WBF tuition.

"I'm able to do the things I've always wanted to do, like donate to rescue societies, start up an RRSP and create a plan for my future. I love my job. This is an amazing place to work with lots of opportunities. I'll be retiring here!"

–Tracy, WBF Graduate

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR INDUSTRY

Addressing Workforce Needs

The business case for employers to work with WBF is accessing a skilled labour pool with an unrivalled level of preparedness. Hiring and retaining a local workforce of skilled workers is a business case every organization understands and is something that WBF helps to address. A WBF graduate walks onto the job site ready to work and with the skills to succeed, such as work ethic, drive, determination and resiliency.

Workforce Diversity

As women enter the workforce in industries where they are under-represented, the need for building workplaces that are inclusive and respectful increases in equal measure. Because, despite any training and preparation she may receive, her experience and opportunity for success is impacted by her co-workers, her direct supervisor, and indeed by the culture of the entire organization. The effect of a workplace that doesn't support inclusivity is turnover, and that hurts both the woman's career and the organization that employed her. In Alberta, the estimated cost of processing employee turnover is \$25,480.⁸

⁷ Statistics Canada. Distribution of employment income by individuals by sex and work activity, 2016. (Table 11-10-0240-01). Last updated 2018-06-13. www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110024001 (accessed June 13, 2018).

⁸ CPHR, Western Canada HR Trends Report (Calgary: CPHR Alberta, Spring 2018), page 12 & 13.

Success happens when women enter workplaces where every individual is set up for success and industry partners have workforces that provide stability, excellence and profitability. WBF addresses this need by delivering our WORK PROUD workshops – based on 18 months of extensive research - that teach supervisors and boots on the ground employees about their role in creating a respectful and inclusive workplace. This approach sets the stage for workplace transformation to welcome diversity and be a place where everyone is able to thrive.

“Hiring skilled workers is one element for making your business successful. Retaining those employees is an even bigger challenge. Creating a workplace where everyone is empowered to succeed is not only the right thing to do, it is the best business decision you can make.”

–Alan DeLeon, Manager Operations, KBR Wabi

CONCLUSION

The government’s investment in pre-apprenticeship training is essential to ensuring women and Indigenous women can not only enter and thrive as part of the middle class, but our economy will be supported with the skilled workforce Canada requires to meet the needs of the next generation.

Our recommendations will significantly enhance the industry’s ability to deliver more training and supports to women and increase their participation in the trades. When women actively participate in the workforce, we not only support their economic and social well-being, we impact the lives of their families, their communities and our economy on a grand scale.

We want to thank the Government of Canada for its ongoing support through many programs and departments. Our organization looks forward to continuing our work to bring pre-apprenticeship training to this critical demographic as we create a diverse, skilled labour force.