



**Contract # CA90109004**  
**STEP – STEP Job Match Services**

## **Final Report**

**April 2013 – March 2014**

Prepared for the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training by  
The British Columbia Construction Association

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
1. Introduction .....	9
2. Overview .....	9
3. The Pathway to Trade Qualification – Why the Job Matters .....	10
3.1 Sources of Labour in BC – the unemployed or under-employed.....	11
3.2 The Job Connection.....	12
3.3 Sponsorship.....	13
3.4 Training .....	13
3.5 Trade Qualification.....	13
4. STEP/JobMatch Program Delivery .....	14
4.1 Provincial Footprint.....	14
4.2 Connector Model .....	14
4.3 Innovation Fund .....	15
4.4 Data Collection .....	17
5. Participants .....	19
5.1 Participant Profile .....	19
6. Employers .....	21
6.1 Employer Profile.....	21
7. Regional Perspectives .....	23
7.1 The North .....	23
7.2 The Southern Interior.....	23
7.3 Vancouver Island.....	24
7.4 The Lower Mainland .....	25
8. Outcomes.....	25
8.1 Statistical Achievements - STEP .....	25
8.2 Statistical Achievements – Job Match .....	27
9. Deliverables Summary .....	27
10. Learnings and Recommendations .....	29
10.1 Learnings.....	29
10.2 Recommendations to Enhance/Improve STEP .....	31
11. Conclusion.....	32

ATTACHMENTS .....	33
Attachment 1 – Self Assessment Tool .....	34
Attachment 2 – STEP Website ( <a href="http://www.stepbc.ca">www.stepbc.ca</a> ) .....	36
Attachment 3 – Client Success Stories .....	37
Attachment 4 – Employer Success Stories .....	42

## **Executive Summary**

The Skilled Trades Employment Program combined with the Job Match Program have facilitated the placement of 2,093 individual participants into construction jobs over the course of the past year. With the inclusion of EI attached eligibility, thanks to the contribution of LMDA funds with the Job Match Program, more British Columbians from more labour sources, received supports and assistance towards a rewarding career in the construction trades. The results were significant and the deliverables for the contracts were met or exceeded.

Skill shortages were reported across all regions of BC, with low-skilled labourers also becoming scarce in parts of Northern BC. Small to medium sized companies, who make up the bulk of the employers in the construction industry, are struggling to find workers to meet their needs as traditional sources dry up. These smaller companies have no HR departments and often need help in finding workers and subsequently sponsoring them into apprenticeship.

As the supply of skilled workers disappear, the need to take on more labourers and train them on site becomes greater. This is hampered in some cases by the lack of journey persons to do the training, but also by the sheer lack of demand side supports for small companies. At the same time, the supply side supports that exist for high school students, the unemployed, the income assisted and underemployed, while they do a good job of providing soft skills and job readiness supports, have little or no connection to actual jobs in the construction industry.

Enabling demand-side driven programs such as STEP/JobMatch helps to close the gaps that exist between pre-employment supports and training, and connection to a job. STEP/JobMatch begins with the job and then links to the supply and their supporting agencies to assess and fill that job opportunity. STEP/JobMatch also facilitates the sponsorship of that worker into apprenticeship wherever possible. Once registered into the system, the apprentice is guided by the Industry Training Authority through to completion and trade qualification. It is important to always remember, however, that there will be no future trades people if we cannot find new entrants for that initial job in the industry, and support them into apprenticeship.

Most placements within the programs were to small/medium sized construction companies with a few opportunities for block placements in the North with the larger companies. Almost all participants needed to access innovation funds for support into the job. Such support included short term safety training, clothing, and tools. However many also participated in trades training agreements with the employer, enabling worksite training that led to first year apprenticeship training.

### **Learnings from the Programs Over the Past Year:**

1. The type of employer most likely to participate in the STEP/JobMatch program is the small to medium employer, and will often be a trade contractor.
2. Trade contractors are most likely to sponsor an apprentice.

3. Employers who sponsor apprentices are both union and open shop, but the smaller companies are more likely to be open shop and less likely to have support systems in place for workers and apprentices.
4. Skill shortages are real but not necessarily critical in all trades yet or in all regions at the same time. Boots on the ground are essential to have a solid understanding of where the demand is in BC at any given time, and it will change dramatically if major projects go ahead.
5. The pool of available workers, even low-skilled workers, is shrinking, particularly in the North and the Interior. If the major projects get underway in the North, the impact on the South will be considerable and we will see the pool of remaining skilled workers in the South decreasing dramatically as they migrate to the camp jobs. Therefore, small to medium employers across the province are going to be more heavily reliant on youth and entry level workers and they will have to increase their worksite training in order to have skilled workers. This will be challenging as worksite training requires the use of their journey persons to train and their journey persons are getting poached.
6. During times of skill shortages, small/medium size companies without HR departments need help accessing workers as they can no longer fill their positions in the traditional way (advertising and word of mouth).
7. Small/Medium companies who sponsor apprentices generally do not make use of training tax credits on their own either because they don't want to do the paperwork or they perceive it to be too much of a hassle. They often turn to REPS (Regional Employment Placement Specialists) for help.
8. Poaching of trained journey persons to other sectors and regions is increasing.
9. There is no duplication of services between WorkBC ESCs and STEP/JobMatch as the former works with soft skills, whereas the latter assesses for the construction industry and links to the job.
10. More and better relationships need to be forged between STEP REPS and WorkBC ESCs around the Province to support access to the unemployed and provide that essential link into construction jobs.
11. Combining funding sources (LMA and LMDA) and enabling more flexibility around eligibility was very valuable. It allowed us to help more unemployed British Columbians who came through our door and allowed us to provide more candidates to employers. While we recognized the different streams and managed that reality on an administrative level, in the field and with the small employers we deal with, we were able to provide a single source of contact to a broad variety of candidates. Small and medium size companies prefer to deal with one person who can help not only with the hire but also with getting

the candidate streamed into apprenticeship. Trust is built and more opportunities are created for hires.

12. Most participants in the program are male between the ages of 20 and 35. Of the more underutilized labour pools, where they chose to self-declare, the highest number of placements were made from the aboriginal community followed by women and finally by new Canadians.
13. Access to the innovation fund is critically important for enabling participants. The financial contribution not only enables the initial hire through providing tools, work boots, short term training; it also encourages smaller companies to take on worksite apprenticeship training through training agreements.
14. As with apprenticeship tax credits, small and medium sized companies will not access financial support on their own. They require the assistance of the REPS to assess, determine what is needed and provide the paperwork assistance to accomplish the supports for participants.
15. Mobilization is needed. The skill shortage in B.C. is increasing due to the amplified economic activity in both the construction and the energy sector. Employers need highly skilled trades people but the local labour pool is drying up as people leave B.C. for higher paying jobs in Alberta which leaves fewer trades people available to employers in B.C. The ability to mobilize participants to the areas of greatest demand is a challenge that all our regions face. If there is a shortage of one type of tradesperson in the north, STEP does not have the financial ability to mobilize or relocate a good candidate from another area to meet the need. The limitations of the LMDA funding parameters (\$175/week for transportation and accommodations combined) nowhere near meet the actual costs faced for a person needing a place to stay short term in Fort St. John or Dawson Creek, for example. The increasing demand from north employers equals the increase in cost to lodge/house new hires in these areas. Vacancy rates in some northern towns are at zero, so low cost, available accommodation is almost non-existent. As the local labour pool dries up, clients live a greater distance from job opportunities and the cost to transport and house these people in the areas of greatest demand is high.
16. The current LMA eligibility criteria which exclude employed people who have some post-secondary education is challenging. There are people working in low paying, out of sector jobs such as retail or the hospitality industry who have Bachelor's degrees but little ability or support to get into good paying trades jobs without support.
17. High school graduates are not being linked into jobs that lead to apprenticeship. More should be done to connect with career counselors and apprenticeship coordinators.
18. The inclusion of working with E.I. attached (LMDA) clients added a variety of new processes that were somewhat cumbersome to work within in the early days, but our teams received good training and support so we were able to navigate the systems and

privacy protection requirements with positive outcomes. We have not, to date, received much feedback from the Ministry of Social Development with regard to their processes and our participation in it, so with no complaints received, we continued with the systems we were given. Going forward, more communication from M.S.D. is welcome along with a more partnered approach to forms and process revisions.

### **Recommendations to Enhance/Improve STEP:**

1. REPS should work more closely with High School graduates, linking them into work and apprenticeship. This will be a more critical source of labour for small/medium companies in the next few years and the source of our future apprentices.
2. REPS should work more closely with WorkBC ESCs to maximize benefits to participants.
3. Continue to enable access to innovation funds to support both job placement and sponsorship into apprenticeship. Financial support is critically important for both the typical participants and the small/medium companies in the construction industry, keeping in mind that such funds will only be accessed if there are warm bodies assisting the parties through the process.
4. Enable supports for mobilization of workers from one region to another.
5. Remove restraints to working with college educated, underemployed workers where their education has no relevance to the trades.
6. STEP should focus some effort on compiling more data. Given the level of connection to employers across the province, STEP is well positioned to collect information that could assist policy makers in a number of areas, particularly labour market and industry training.
7. The Program must continue to develop relationships with industry, unions, training providers, employment agencies, aboriginal communities and high schools as it will be those relationships that will create the level of commitment and partnership needed to provide good jobs and relieve skill shortages for BC.
8. Combine funding sources to include the broadest eligibility for participants but, where possible, manage the Program under one Ministry to avoid duplications and maintain efficiencies.

Demand driven employment services are a new way of approaching the unemployed, and the Province of BC has proven to be a leader in developing and supporting this model for the construction industry. It has paid off by enabling thousands of unemployed British Columbians to get solid jobs that lead to rewarding careers in the construction trades. The STEP and Job Match Programs are an example to other regions and sectors of what can be accomplished if we connect the dots between supply and demand in a sensible and workable manner.

Going forward, with the Canada Jobs Grant on the horizon, we trust that the Province will be equally astute in recognizing the need for flexibility in the parameters of that funding. The construction

industry, with its small companies and traditional apprenticeship training model will not be looking for other training that requires cash infusion from them even if it is matched by government funds. They will not be able to identify what such training would be; they will not have the HR resources to manage the process if there was some sort of training they were interested in and; they will not have the resources to pay more money than they already contribute towards the 85% work-site training of their apprentices.

We do see opportunity in the Canada Jobs Grant, if the program can be flexible enough to allow more training agreements such as those created through our STEP/JobMatch Innovation Funds, recognizing the cash contribution made by the employer through wages and journey person training/supervision time. However, the reality is that those employers **will still need to rely on STEP REPS** to facilitate and maximize the opportunities.

We look forward to continued success working with the Province and we thank the staff of both the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training, and the Ministry of Social Development for their continual assistance and support throughout the contract term.



## **1. Introduction**

In 2009, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) was contracted by the Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development to deliver a program to strengthen and grow B.C.'s skilled trades sector by enhancing the opportunities of eligible participants to enter and advance in meaningful, well-paying construction trades related careers, assisting businesses to manage workforce fluctuations by creating and highly skilled workforce, and enhancing the labour market information knowledge for B.C. trades related businesses and education/training institutions.

Over the past five years there have been several refocus points and changes to Ministries.

The 2009 Small Business contract targeted companies who had 50 or fewer employees to strengthen the small business sector in all trades. The next phases, STEP "P2", "3.0" and the past year of "4.0" was contracted by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, focused on enhancing the opportunities for entry and advancement in construction trades working with large and small companies.

The addition of the Job Match Services contract to BCCA's portfolio in 2013 augmented the current delivery by focusing on the placement of unemployed participants into immediate job openings in the construction sector, along with supporting employers with the connection to these individuals. These positions included labourers, flaggers, camp cooks to project managers, bookkeepers, and security guards.

Through a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, the Job Match Services contract allowed the inclusion of Labour Market Development Agreement (Employment Insurance attached) eligible participants into the program for the first time.

The programs were delivered within the current delivery footprint established with STEP throughout the Province. Over the course of the contract year, BCCA was tasked with enabling a merge of the two programs.

## **2. Overview**

The BC Construction Association (BCCA) is a not-for-profit society registered in the province of British Columbia, and represents over 2,000 non-union and union contractors and suppliers, active in all sectors of the industry. The membership consists of general contractors, trade contractors and suppliers, large and small, from all regions of BC. BCCA members hire and train over 75% of the apprentices registered in the construction sector.

Most construction firms have fewer than 10 employees, making the recruitment and retention of workers a challenge for the industry particularly when the Province is experiencing skill shortages in the trades. This hiring challenge has serious impacts, not only on the company's ability to bid for work, but also on the company's ability to take on new apprentices. Apprenticeship is the only training delivery model that produces new journey person trades for the industry. Unlike most careers where individuals go to school to learn their skills and then get a job, in the trades the job

comes first. Most construction apprentices are hired by trade contractors who, themselves, went through the apprenticeship system and believe in its training culture. These contractors need to have journey persons on-site to help train new apprentices and they need to find new workers, capable of handling the rigours of the job site that can later be sponsored into apprenticeship. Unfortunately in times of skill shortages, just when we need new trades people the most; these small firms are unable to keep up with their HR requirements. Recognizing this challenge, the BCCA set out to develop HR initiatives designed to assist the industry, particularly those smaller firms, address the skill shortages. The skill shortages also created new opportunities to work with previously underutilized labour pools, such as women, new Canadians, persons with disabilities and the Aboriginal community. In times of need employers are more accepting of non-traditional recruits – if they have some help to manage barriers to employment. The STEP/JobMatch contracts are the cornerstones of this approach, and they differ from all other employment service providers because they originate from the demand rather than the supply. For STEP and Job Match, the job opportunity comes first.

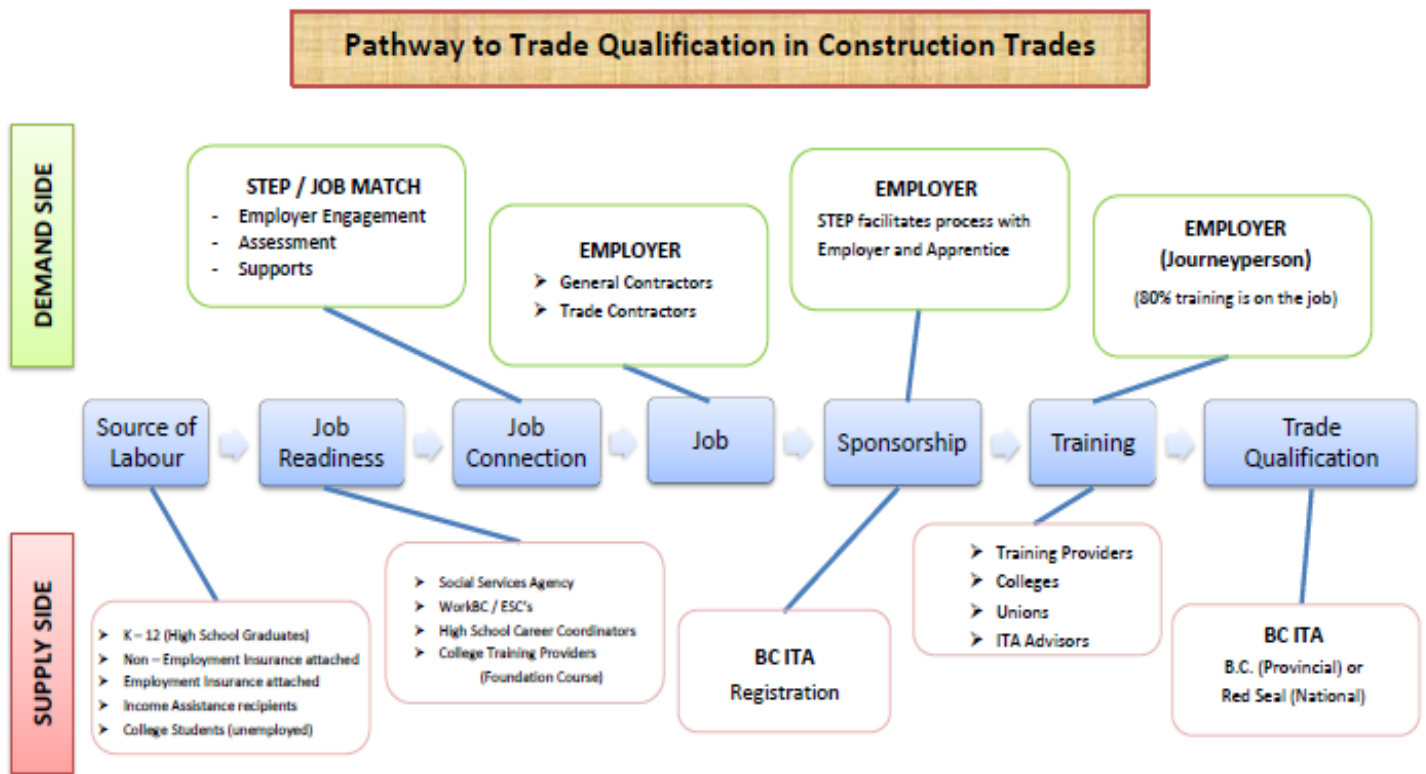
BCCA is currently operating a variety of Skilled Trades Employment Programs (STEP). The success of these programs has been largely attributable to the delivery model created by the BCCA which is called the “Connector” model. This demand side model utilizes “Regional Employment Placement Specialists” (REPS) who are the field representatives that create and build on relationships with employers. The REPS’s provide the employers with eligible and employable candidates who have been properly assessed for the construction trades using our own Self-Assessment Tool. The REPS have a background in the trades enabling them to not only connect with the employer and understand their particular needs; they are also able to properly assess each individual and ensure the likelihood of their success on the job site. The objective of the Programs is to help workers not only get a job, but get a job that will lead to apprenticeship and ultimately trade qualification.

### **3. The Pathway to Trade Qualification – Why the Job Matters**

Roughly half of all trades listed through the BC Industry Training Authority are construction trades and are trained by construction employers. All of these traditional trades require registration and completion of apprenticeship training. About 85% of construction employers have fewer than 10 employees. Most construction apprentices are trained by trade contractors; some are union companies and some are non-union. The trade unions actively support apprentices once they are hired by companies subject to their collective agreements. Companies that are non-union must manage their own apprentices. All apprentices must be hired and on the job before they can be registered.

Apprenticeship begins after an individual is hired and only when the employer is satisfied that they are ready to advance from labourer to apprentice. The employer agrees to sponsor the worker into apprenticeship and the worker is then registered with the ITA. 80 – 85% of the training for a trade qualification occurs on the worksite through a journey person. The balance of the training is received off-site, generally through a block release of a number of weeks, at a college or other training provider facility.

While there are construction and trades foundation courses offered through colleges or other training providers, the construction employer is only actively involved in training through apprenticeship. Financial contribution by construction employers, therefore, will only happen on the worksite after the individual is hired. That contribution will come through wages and allocating journey person time towards apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training for the construction trades is completely relevant to the work that is done on the job. Therefore, construction employers, in general, will not need or be interested in paying for any type of additional training for their employees after they are hired.



### 3.1 Sources of Labour in BC – the unemployed or under-employed

1. High school graduates, while a popular traditional source of labour in the industry, are now generally lacking in knowledge about the opportunities in the trades. Shop Class training has been ignored and marginalized by many school districts. Those that have programs, such as ACE-IT and Secondary School Apprenticeship, provide good entry level training for the trades but they have **little or no connection to jobs in the construction industry**. They receive counseling and training from Career Co-ordinators, Shop teachers, and in some cases Apprenticeship Co-ordinators (supply-side support), who also have **little or no connection to jobs in the industry**. In order to get that first job they may also need some supports such as tools and boots.
2. Non EI eligible unemployed/under-employed – generally include labour pools that are underutilized and non-traditional for the construction industry; i.e. women, new Canadians, persons with disabilities and the aboriginal community. **Generally they have little or no**

**connection to jobs in the construction industry.** Some of them will receive job readiness and soft skills supports from employment and other social agencies (supply-side support), who also generally **have little or no connection to jobs in the industry.** In order to get a job they will likely need some short term training, such as safety programs, supports, tools.

3. Youth who have gone to college and either dropped out or who cannot find work in their chosen field are, like high school students, a traditional source of labour for the industry – if they are male. Like everyone else, however, unless they have family connections to the industry, they generally have **little or no connection to jobs.** They also won't have access to any employment supports to assist them in getting into the trades. However, in order to get that first job they may need some short term training, supports, tools.
4. Unemployed with attachment to EI – these are workers with experience and can be skilled and qualified already. If they have qualifications and experience **in construction** they are the most likely source to find a job on their own but they can receive pre-employment and services from WorkBC Employment Service Centres (supply-side support). If they cannot find a job, however, the ESCs have **little or no connection to jobs in the construction industry.**
5. Unemployed on Income Assistance – these potential workers will likely have barriers to employment and will be receiving services from the WorkBC ESCs (supply-side support) to get them job-ready. They will **have little or no connection to construction jobs.** Once they are ready for a job, in order to be hired in the construction trades they will need some short term training, supports, and tools.

### 3.2 The Job Connection

The greatest barrier to becoming an apprentice and proceeding down the path to Trade Qualification in the construction trades is finding the initial job. Historically, job seekers and employers were on their own, particularly in the non-union environment, connecting through word of mouth and job advertisements. Often, apprentices would have a family member or family friend active in the industry and that would be their ticket into the trades. Jobs primarily went to young men. In times of skill shortages, the traditional forms of recruiting cease to be effective as the pool of traditional recruits is no longer big enough. The small to medium sized companies, in particular, flounder with no HR departments to assist in recruitment.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, for supply-side supports to match a client with a job in construction as they have little or no connection to the actual employers. Colleges and training providers can teach foundation courses and promote their value but they cannot provide the jobs upon graduation.

For the construction industry, thanks to the STEP/JobMatch programs, there is now a **demand-side** support that the supply side and the job seekers can link up with. Whatever labour source the job-seeker emerges from, STEP/JobMatch can help make the match to that all important job, without which there will be no apprenticeship. The only way to potentially increase apprenticeship numbers in the trades is to get more people hired.

### **3.3 Sponsorship**

Actual apprenticeship begins with the employer agreeing to sponsor the worker through the BC Industry Training Authority. This is the next barrier to Trades Qualification. Many employers, particularly small ones, are reluctant to take on apprentices. They fear committing resources to the worksite training, only to have the finished product poached by other companies, other sectors, and other regions. They are also restricted by the lack of journey persons in the labour force; a requirement to actually do the training. They also have no HR department to manage the apprentice as they proceed down the pathway. Companies signatory to collective agreements have the support of the trade unions that collectively pool employer money to manage apprenticeship. However, the majority of small/medium sized companies in the construction industry in BC are non-union. STEP/JobMatch assist those small companies, working with the participant and the employer to facilitate the sponsorship process. Once registered, the BC ITA also becomes involved, regulating and providing oversight during the apprenticeship.

### **3.4 Training**

80-85% of the training that a construction apprentice receives each year leading up to his/her qualification takes place on the work-site under the tutelage and supervision of a journey person. Most apprentices also take block training each year, off-site, with approved training providers. Managing the coordination of that off-site training has primarily been left to the employers and apprentices for the past decade. This has resulted in some challenges around wait lists for colleges, and non-completion by apprentices. Recently the BC ITA has begun re-introducing field advisors into the system, whose job it will be to assist with the management of apprentices. Employers have consistently stated that having field counselors will be very helpful with regard to getting off-site training set up and this supply-side service will link in well with STEP services, which end at the point of sponsorship. Colleges and training providers are the other supply side links to this portion of the pathway. Unions also provide training and manage the apprentices effectively. Their model has consistently proven most effective in supporting completions of apprentices.

### **3.5 Trade Qualification**

Ultimately, after achieving their required time in the trade and their off-site training, the apprentice will be able to write their exam for trade qualification and the Red Seal designation (where available). While this is the desired conclusion, providing them with journey person status, it also opens the door to opportunities across Canada. More often than not the employer who trains the journey person is not the long term employer, especially in times of skill shortages. The fairly small percentage of employers who train, take on that responsibility for the majority who hire trades people, not just in the construction sector but in many other sectors as well. Consequently, while efforts must always be undertaken to increase the participation of more employers and sectors in apprenticeship training, it is just as important to assist those employers who are training now. STEP/JobMatch and the innovation funding that aligns with those programs has proven to be a demand side support that not

only assist thousands of unemployed get jobs, but that can also assist those small/medium size companies taking on the necessary training for the trades.

## **4. STEP/JobMatch Program Delivery**

### **4.1 Provincial Footprint**

STEP/JobMatch operates out of five regional offices housed within local Construction Association facilities in Vancouver (Lower Mainland), Kelowna, Prince George, and Victoria along with the new addition of the Terrace office located in a privately leased office. Each STEP regional office houses a Regional Manager and Regional Coordinators/Support Staff to facilitate the program delivery along with the reporting requirements to the provincial home office located in Victoria. Each region also houses Regional Employment Placement Specialists (REPS), as well as operates extended REPS satellite offices based on geographic and demographic requirements to properly allow STEP REPS to travel to the most remote areas to provide services. This provincial footprint allows access to individuals in remote areas that would not normally have access to training and employment support services available to them, along with allowing a cost effective delivery of the programs.

The STEP/JobMatch team consists of 54 dedicated individuals who each share a passion for the program and the participants that STEP/JobMatch helps each year.

Points of access throughout B.C. are located in 14 STEP offices in:

- Victoria
- Nanaimo
- Vancouver
- Abbotsford
- Kelowna
- Kamloops
- Penticton
- Nelson
- Prince George
- Fort St. John
- Dawson Creek
- Terrace
- Kitimat
- Prince Rupert

### **4.2 Connector Model**

Since the inception of STEP over six years ago, the overarching goal has been to assist with strengthening and growing BC's skilled trades sector by enhancing the employment opportunities for British Columbians. STEP creates innovative approaches to partnering between industry, service organizations, and educational institutions to allow eligible participants enter into and progress through trades related career paths. The Program has highlighted underutilized labour supplies such as women, new Canadians, and Aboriginal communities.

The methodology behind the demand driven initiative is the "Connector Model". This model utilizes the specialized skills of the REPS (a certified trades person, whenever possible), who assists with identifying individuals who are interested in pursuing careers in the skilled trades. Their direct experience with the construction industry is essential for establishing and maintaining credibility with employers and clients, and for the assessment and job matching process. The direct relationship with

the construction associations and their experience in the construction industry, give them access and credibility with employers, not afforded to other agencies. STEP is truly demand driven.

**Unemployed or Underemployed with Skills and Interest Suitable for Work in Construction**



The REPS use an interactive employability assessment tool (see Attachment 1) specifically tailored to the trades sector to help identify skill levels. This aids the REPS in recommending the proper employment path for each individual and allow the REPS to identify any barriers that could prevent the individual from moving forward. The REPS then generates an individualized action plan for the removal of these barriers to increase each individual’s employment potential. Support can also be provided by using the Innovation Fund to address these barriers. The REPS then works closely with each individual along their advancement path until they are ready for employment placement and a sustainable career.

A critical component of the “Connector Model” is the direct connection the REPS have with trade employers. This requires the REPS to have a full understanding of industry needs, and a true representation of current and future trades employment demand. The REPS are continually cultivating relationships with potential employers to connect them with new job-ready employees. It is this relationship that is the foundation to the success of the demand side initiative. Once the connection has been made, the REPS continue to follow up and act as a liaison between the employer and new employee to assure a successful match through the employment transition period.

STEP/JobMatch has done considerable internal work to streamline delivery processes to ensure all staff have the knowledge, not only of the construction sector, but the ITA apprenticeship system, along with a clear understanding of the nuances of each program in order to be well-rounded employment specialists.

#### **4.3 Innovation Fund**

The primary purpose of the innovation fund is to address immediate barriers to direct employment. The fund is accessed by the REPS in the field via a review and approval system that is screened and signed off on by the Regional Managers to assure that funds are used within the eligibility criteria of

the program. The implementation and utilization of this fund has provided results that have exceeded our expectations and have proven to be a true catalyst to providing career opportunities to participants. The innovation fund increases job readiness, boosts client confidence and makes a significant impact on whether the client gets the job and, down the line, gets sponsored into an apprenticeship.

This success led to the creation of training agreements, in which a REPS would enter into an agreement with an employer and participant to provide on-the-job training following the specific trade Level 1 profiles from the ITA website, or basic requirements for safety and site orientation for entry level positions. Post agreement visits are scheduled by the REPS to follow up on the training by the employer, and the participation of the employee, to assure a successful match had been completed and sustainable employment had been achieved.

The primary training vehicle for the trades is apprenticeship, which means a job first with most of the training happening on the work site over the course of several years. The employer must allocate a journey person to conduct and supervise that training, thereby significantly reducing the productivity of that journey person, particularly in the first years. Small and medium size companies are already struggling to find enough journey persons to get work done. Convincing them to take on a new apprentice, when the reality is that they will likely get poached by a bigger company in the energy and resource sectors down the road, can be challenging. Apprentice sponsorship is a big commitment, particularly for the smaller contractor who does not have a lot of journey persons available to train. The training agreement opens the door to conversations surrounding the perceived risk of investing in an inexperienced worker, and with funding provided to offset the cost of taking a highly skilled journeyman off their duties to train and mentor entry level apprentices/hires.

The trades training agreement has significantly increased the participation of employers who simply cannot afford the lost time related to training. The success of the apprenticeship system is obviously connected to employers who have skilled trades people on-site and available to train entry level hires who need a sponsor to log their apprentice based hours. Most of those employers are small to medium sized trade contractor firms and they train because it is their culture to do so. In reality they train trades, not just for the construction industry, but ultimately for all sectors. Having access to funds that assist and match their wage contribution towards apprenticeship training has proven to be a solid tool to further their commitment.

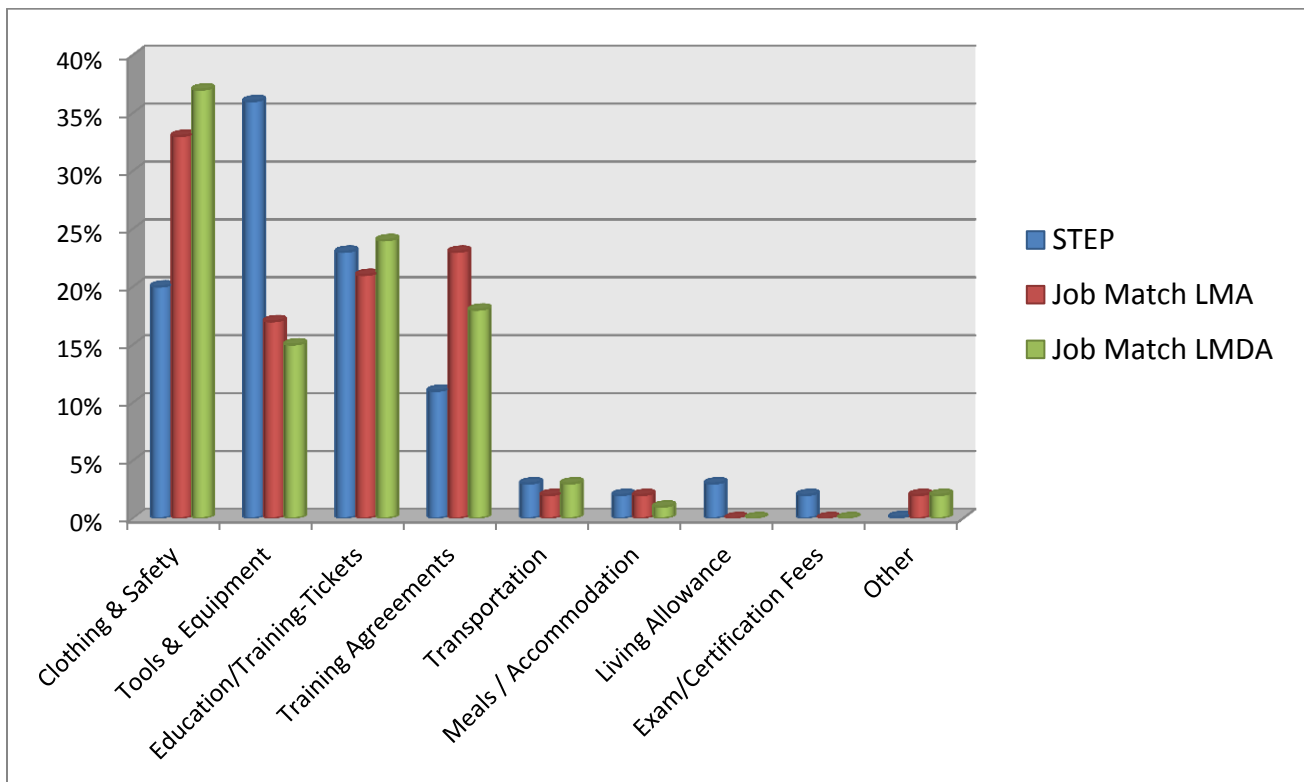
The requirements for accessing innovation (support) funds by STEP or Job Match have not been the same even though support categories were similar between the two programs.

Job Match focused on immediate job placements, mainly for non-skilled positions such a labourer, helper and flagger along with entry level apprentices. The employment barriers for these positions were, lack of appropriate work clothing, safety tickets such as first aid, CSTS (Construction Safety Training Systems), H2S Alive (Hydrogen Sulphide training), or Fall Protection and appropriate on-the-job training. Overall, 27% of Job Match participants received training/tickets in order to make them more employable.



STEP’s mandate was to focus on entry level apprentice positions, therefore, the client barriers were typically tools which many employers require employees to bring to the job. Education included the same type of safety tickets as noted for Job Match clients along with Essential Skills upgrading, Refresher Courses, Foundation or Level training, or specific upgrading at training facilities such as the Finishing Trades Institute which offers courses focused on Lathing, Drywall Finishing, Glazing or Painting Decorating. 39% of STEP clients required some educational enhancements (tickets, level training, refresher course). Clothing and safety gear is needed by many clients which may include cold weather garments (long underwear, parkas), work boots, safety vests and glasses, rain gear, etc.

**Innovation Fund Summary  
(Percentage of Total Innovation Fund by Category)**



While the two programs each had their own requirements and focus, both relied on their innovation fund consistently. We feel that those funds were very beneficial in achieving placement success for both programs. The additional funds, when pooled with the financial contribution of the employers through wages and journey person hours for training, created many more opportunities for the unemployed to progress not only into a job, but into apprenticeship and ultimately a career in the industry.

#### 4.4 Data Collection

Over the past three years, STEP has developed a robust database of client information which has increased reporting capability significantly. Not only can we run statistical data on participants based on the information collected from the Intake forms, STEP now submits the Ministry required Monthly Activity Reports from our database rather than hand filling each document.

Program: STEP

Region: SICA

Reporting Month August 2013

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Start Date (D/M/Y)	Expected Completion Date (D/M/Y)	PER PARTICIPANT: CHECK ONE OF THE FOUR ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES (See Definitions on bottom of form)				Non-Eligible BCEA (IA) Recipient
					EMPLOYED PARTICIPANT			UNEMPLOYED PARTICIPANT	
					Has High School Education but lacks recognized certification	Has High School Education but lacks essential skills	Has not completed High School	Unemployed and not an EI client	

### STEP

### SICA

Arnold	Daniel	R	14/08/2013	14/01/2014				X	
Genge	Turner	J	28/08/2013	28/01/2014				X	
Kraushar	Tyler	W	30/08/2013	30/01/2014	X				
Kretowicz	Peter	E	14/08/2013	14/01/2014	X				
Lewis	Brett	A	12/08/2013	12/01/2014				X	
Morran	Tyler	D	01/08/2013	01/01/2014	X				
Spilchuk	Devin	J	28/08/2013	28/01/2014	X				
Suitor	Darrell	T	15/08/2013	15/01/2014				X	
Vencillo	Chris	D	02/08/2013	02/01/2014				X	
Webb	Sean		01/08/2013	01/01/2014	X				
Wilson	Crane		01/08/2013	01/01/2014	X				
Womacks	Donald	L	13/08/2013	13/01/2014				X	

The information contained on the Intake form provides key data on the demographic of participants such as gender, employment status, age, location, etc. This has proven extremely valuable when determining target groups for delivery focus and as well as providing key data for reporting purposes, i.e. number of women, immigrants or aboriginals entering the trades (outside of the ITA programs specific to this demographic), number of participants with declared disabilities accessing STEP, unemployed versus employed participants, or participants who enter STEP while on Income Assistance. We are able to add to the database structure to accommodate new data requests as they are needed.

With additional funding allocations, we look to increase our database capacity along with moving to internet based software in order to ensure no data can be compromised through limitations on the current system.

We have been exploring new options in technology to move some of our paper systems online with the goal of REPS using tablets to collect needed information with digital client signatures, and exporting this to our regional offices for processing. Our field staff is always mobile so moving

forward with technological advances is the most logical next step in streamlining processes. We hope that the Ministry will explore these options with us, most notably with an online secure Exit form that clients can fill out and submit from their own computers/tablets/phones therefore saving paper, time and being a more palatable option to get needed exit data.

Both STEP and Job Match are demand driven models with over 6,000 employer contacts a year. With that level of grass roots interaction with industry, we believe that a great deal more information could be mined across the Province. We would be interested in consulting with the Ministry on this potential going forward.

## **5. Participants**

STEP has been successful in acquiring candidates from numerous sources. We arrange and present info sessions for potential participants to learn about the program and the opportunities available in the trades. There are growing numbers of word-of-mouth referrals coming from past candidates that have gone through the program and have been offered support, services to employment and or training opportunities from STEP. Social media including Facebook and Twitter have proven to be an effective communications piece along with updating the STEP website ([www.stepbc.ca](http://www.stepbc.ca)) in past contracts. (See Attachment 2) A strong network of agency and service providers across the province also accounts for a number of candidate referrals to STEP and Job Match.

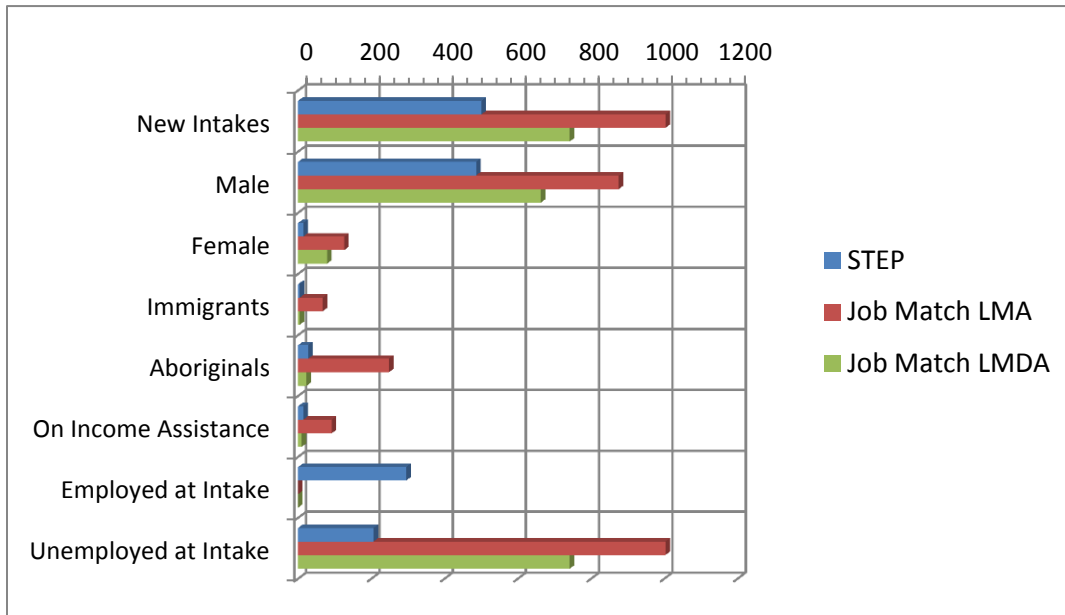
The largest form of referrals now being generated is from satisfied employers. They are recommending applicants visit STEP at initial stages of employment discovery and screening. We also actively collaborate with training facilities and institutions to create on demand training courses, as well as reviewing pre-employment training options to expand the potential participants. In addition, we review potential group initiatives based on specific employer needs across the Province.

One area that has not been a focus for the Programs is the secondary schools. Going forward, the REPS will endeavor to make better connections with career co-ordinators and shop teachers across the Province to enable job opportunities for graduates. Currently there is a large gap between high school graduation and apprenticeship training. The average age of a British Columbian apprentice is 27; it should be 18 to 20. If we hope to provide access for our youth to the career opportunities opening up in the trades over the next decade, linking youth to jobs is a critical piece of the puzzle.

### **5.1 Participant Profile**

The typical STEP or Job Match client is young, between 20 to 35 years old and mostly male. The average skill level is low with limited experience in the trades, clients who have recently completed Foundation courses, along with older people with barriers to employment.

## Participant Intake by Program



As the graph above indicates, there were 501 new client intakes in STEP, with 1003 Job Match LMA client intakes and 742 for Job Match LMDA. We were surprised that the LMA content of the Job Match program was much higher than the EI attached LMDA clients. This was not what we expected, but could be caused by a variety of factors:

- EI clients are better able to find their own jobs;
- the relative youth of the Job Match program required developing new relationships with employment service agencies and supply chains, resulting in fewer clients than LMA sources;
- the construction trades are experiencing very low unemployment resulting in fewer experienced workers being on EI.

The 2014 contract will provide additional data in this area for comparison.

As BCCA operates several ITA funded STEP programs as well, the number of Women, Immigrants and Aboriginals is lower in STEP/Job Match than if these other initiatives were not in play. Clients who did not clearly fit into the STEP or ITA program mandate were referred to the Job Match program to fill pure labourer or non-trades positions such as flagger, faller, bookkeeper, project manager.

The construction industry is very cyclical, dependent on the vagaries of weather, bidding opportunities, and project timing. As a result, any successful HR program must be flexible. Therefore, having the full range of options through LMA/LMDA funding was extremely advantageous, and allowed STEP/JobMatch to provide broadest range of services to significantly more British Columbians.

## **6. Employers**

The key to success of any employment program is the ability to connect people with jobs. With the construction industry, however, it is critical. Achieving qualifications in the trades requires a job first. Therefore, approaching from the demand side with jobs in hand ensures the best possible success for the most clients. We are able to target barriers to real positions and provide the right short-term training and supports to enable advancement for the client. There is no training for the sake of training but rather focused assistance that will lead clients not only into the job but potentially into apprenticeship and a satisfying career in the trades.

In the present Provincial system, service providers offer a suite of services to those seeking work. It is essentially a passive system and generally involves a series of interventions that can serve to hold the individual in a closed loop of offerings such as job search techniques, better interviewing skills, and resume writing workshops. At the appropriate time, the service provider will release the participant to search for work but they will not be in a position to actually link the participant to a job. STEP/JobMatch can provide that link. Much as with the secondary school graduates, STEP /JobMatch is the employer/job link that is missing in most jurisdictions across Canada, even though it is arguably the most important link in the career chain.

STEP/JobMatch continues to engage employers with the “Connector Model” on a daily basis. For many employers STEP/JobMatch has become the resource to all their employment needs as they arise. Trust has been built on the premise they are being referred employees that have been pre-screened, and have the appropriate attitude and ability to become a productive worker for their company. STEP/JobMatch then continues to support both parties after employment commences to assure a successful employment event. This trust has resulted in continued and referral support. We are now experiencing employers recommending STEP/JobMatch to other employers for their labour needs based on their positive experiences with the program.

### **6.1 Employer Profile**

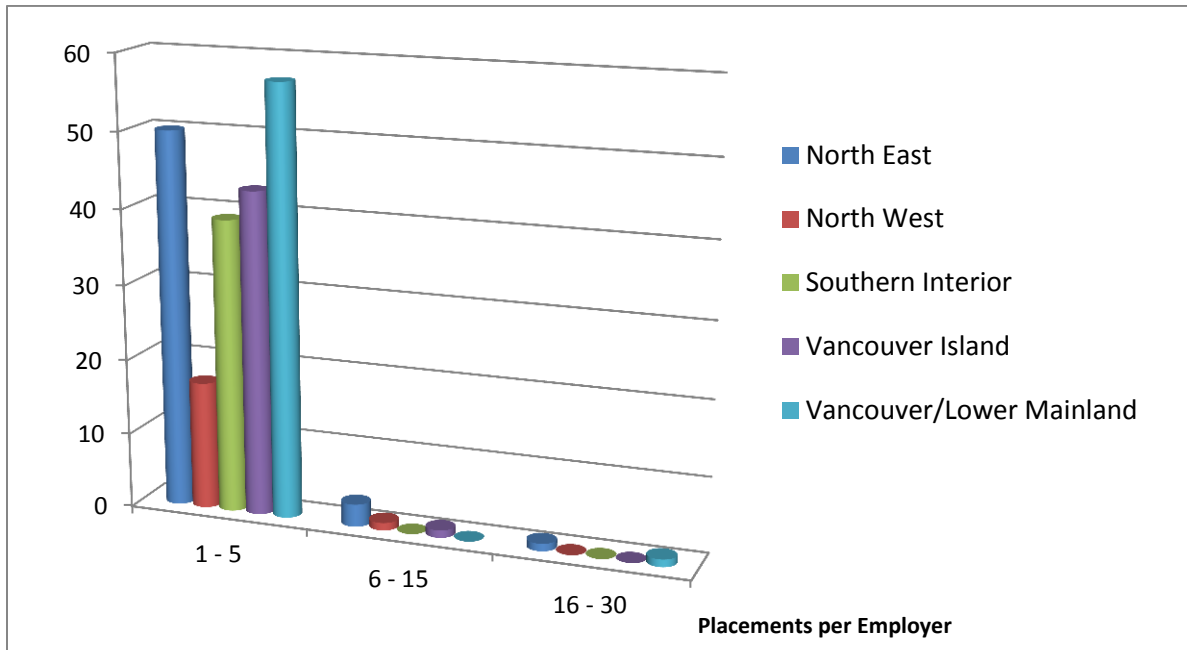
The typical employer that hires STEP/JobMatch clients are the small to mid-size business, with the exception of targeted areas in the north where more big companies are in play. These employers mainly specialize in residential and commercial construction, both horizontal and vertical. In targeted areas in the north, industrial and resource activity is ramping up creating opportunities with larger companies seeking block placements. Despite these major project anomalies, the small/mid-size businesses continue to be the base of STEP’s mandate and success. These companies do not have HR departments or dedicated people focused on hiring new staff. They are more involved with the day to day operations of the business therefore rely on STEP/JobMatch to work with them to find appropriate hires to meet their staffing needs. They are also the companies who are most likely to take on new apprentices and enter into training agreements.

In the past contract term 517 individual employers (41%) hired Job Match clients and 206 in STEP (39%). Considering the statistical achievements of the past contract term (1574 placements in Job

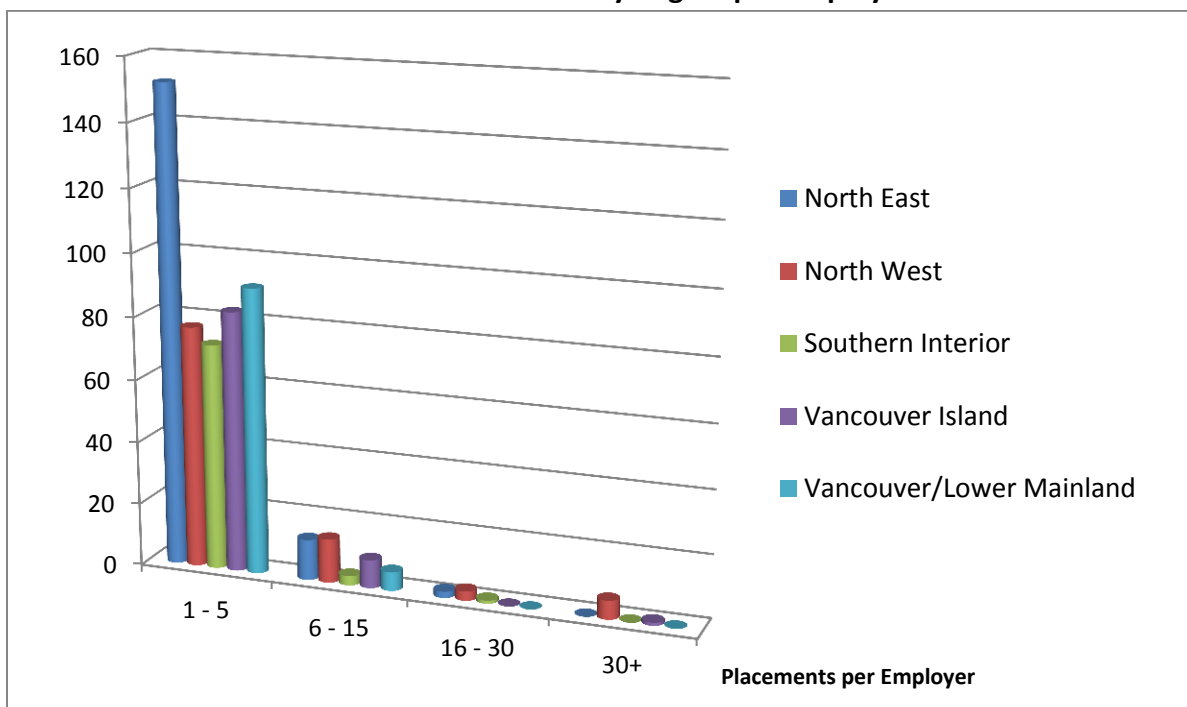
Match, 519 in STEP), this indicates a significant “repeat business” whereby employers are hiring from our program repeatedly.

Both STEP and Job Match primarily access small to medium sized companies that typically take one to five placements over the course of the year. Large companies, taking on block placements are rare, but do occur, particularly in the North. We would anticipate seeing more of those block placements going forward if the major projects in the planning stages begin construction.

**STEP Placements by Region per Employer**



**Job Match Placements by Region per Employer**



## 7. Regional Perspectives

### 7.1 The North

The employer profile in the North includes both small and extremely large companies, however the backbone of the STEP/JobMatch programs remains the Mom and Pop businesses, typically trade related. Most companies do a mixture of residential, commercial and heavy industry work. The energy sector dominates in some areas. Employers in the North, whether big or small, are struggling to find workers, especially workers who are **not** seeking camp jobs. Most of the demand is for skilled workers.

Participants are getting harder to find locally. Those still unemployed generally have significant barriers to employment (addictions, no driver's licence, low skill, no education or little or no experience, lack of funds – moving to a community, can't afford rent or low vacancy, no money for cell phones, no money until first paycheck, gear and tools, and relocation costs). Participants are generally very young with no experience, or older with significant barriers.

Therefore, connecting with new participants can be challenging. The most successful recruitment is **word of mouth** both with employers and participants. Relationship building is extremely important with employers. In addition, REPS talk to graduating classes in college, attend career fairs, post flyers and posters in the community, social media, and some come in due to referrals from Employment Service Centres. 99% of participants access support through the Innovation Fund. Supports have been extremely valuable and generally mean the difference between getting hired or rejected.

The biggest challenge for the North is finding job-ready participants - there are plenty of jobs. REPS have to work hard to “sell” the participant with less experience than desired to the employer. Sometimes it doesn't work, but at least 80% of the time it does. Unfortunately for the employer, once the participant has gained some experience on the job, he or she will get likely poached by another employer. Many employers are doing everything they can think of to retain workers but employees still jump ship for bigger companies in other sectors who can offer more compensation. This is one of the barriers to employers taking on new apprentices.

### 7.2 The Southern Interior

In the Southern Interior of the Province, both STEP and Job Match were again dealing with primarily small to medium sized companies without HR departments. Over the year, skill shortages began to be more widespread in the region resulting in a few larger companies coming to the table. Residential construction is the bulk of the demographic in the Kootenays. In Kamloops, there are more industrial opportunities and Kelowna is starting to have some industrial work. In this region, there is a strong migration to Alberta for higher dollars, camp opportunities—jobs that also pay for relocation. At this point, there are more employers than job seekers. This is the first time since STEP started that this shift has taken place for the region. Word of mouth is a primary source for accessing new employers and new participants. The smaller employers are now contacting us rather than us going after them. It requires a different skill set in REPS, however, to go after larger companies.

Working with HR departments can be a challenge and requires significant relationship building. However, the pay-off is high once trust is established as these companies can often hire larger blocks of entry level participants enabling lower skilled workers to get their first leg up in the industry.

The average participant is young and entry level. They will have minimal experience and this lack of experience often prevents employers from being willing to take a chance on them. The pool of available workers is drying up so employers are being forced to take on younger workers, rather than not having anyone at all.

REPS do presentations to all the Foundation course participants at the colleges just before they graduate. They are usually motivated and have what we are looking for in participants, with their biggest barrier being lack of hands-on experience. REPS also work closely with WorkBC Employment Service Centres. The REPS have forged really good relationships with the ESC's which have led to some good referrals. Most participants require basic supports which have proven to be essential to being job ready the first day and boosts self- confidence and retention.

The biggest challenge going forward will be the lack of available workers due to the draw of higher paying jobs in the North and in Alberta.

### **7.3 Vancouver Island**

The majority of employers are mid/small businesses - 60% residential, and 40% commercial/Industrial. The most common trades in demand are carpentry, plumbers, electricians, and experienced welders. Employers on the island are generally looking for journey persons yet they tend to pay less than provincial average than Alberta/Prairies. As a result, the skilled workforce is migrating from the Island to more lucrative pay areas making it difficult for employers to compete with other provinces and Northern BC. Island employers are readjusting to the fact that they will have to take less skilled workers – Foundation and Level 1-2 apprentices - and train. Feedback from employers consistently reinforces the widespread concern among small and medium sized companies that they invest a lot of time and training into level entry guys only to see the employee being poached by other sectors and regions.

The average age of a participant on the Island is between 20-35 years of age. A large majority of participants do have some type of foundation training or level entry labour construction experience. A smaller number have very limited experience or training, Consistent barriers for the lower skilled workers is the lack of driver's license, limited finances that impact on ability to job search and lack of gear, tools and basic necessities. 100% of the participants use supports; either tools or clothing purchases or Training Agreements. Having the tools and clothes allows clients to be ready for the job. Employers report that they hire those with their own tools, so not having the proper equipment for the job is a real deterrent for participants obtaining employment.

Referrals from WorkBC ESCs have been a source of participants, but REPS have to screen them carefully to ensure that they are appropriate for the trade. There is also a fair amount of website



traffic. **Word of mouth** remains the biggest recruitment tool for both participants and new employers. Island REPS also participate in hiring/career fairs and Info sessions at colleges.

#### **7.4 The Lower Mainland**

In the Vancouver area, the small to medium sized companies, from three to 20 people, are the typical employers accessing the program. Abbotsford tends to have a few larger employers (30+). Generally the employers do both residential and commercial work. The biggest challenge for the employers is finding highly skilled employees with a good attitude. Even unskilled workers have very high wage expectations. Attracting and keeping talent is problematic for employers. They are having a hard time competing with the North, especially for some trades like millwrights and heavy duty mechanics. They can get paid twice as much in camp situations, and lower mainland employers can't match those salaries.

The typical participants are males between the ages of 20-35 - Less than 10% are female. The average skill level is low with very little work experience. Most have taken foundation courses. The biggest challenge has been getting participants to be realistic about the job market and the wages.

**Word of mouth** is king for attracting both employers and participants. Referrals from other participants or employers produce the highest quality candidates. Talking to colleges is becoming more successful, especially in Abbotsford. Craig's List has also been useful however REPS have to weed out a lot of people who are not appropriate for the trades. 84% of participants placed used personal supports and access to the supports makes a significant difference to getting the job or advancing in the job. Almost every participant needs a pair of boots and some tools at least.

### **8. Outcomes**

In the 2013-14 contract term, an integrated delivery system was created between the existing STEP mandate and the entry of the Job Match profile. This combined delivery system has had a strong impact on addressing the skilled labour shortage in B.C. which now includes the additional partnership with the Ministry of Social Development allowing us to fully engage with participants who had an Employment Insurance attachment.

Job placements continue to be the significant outcome under both programs, followed by apprentice sponsorships. Assisting unemployed British Columbians find employment that can lead to trade qualifications and lifelong careers in a vibrant industry will feed the long term collateral objective of more skilled trades people for the industry.

#### **8.1 Statistical Achievements - STEP**

In the last three terms of the STEP contract, reportable placements included:

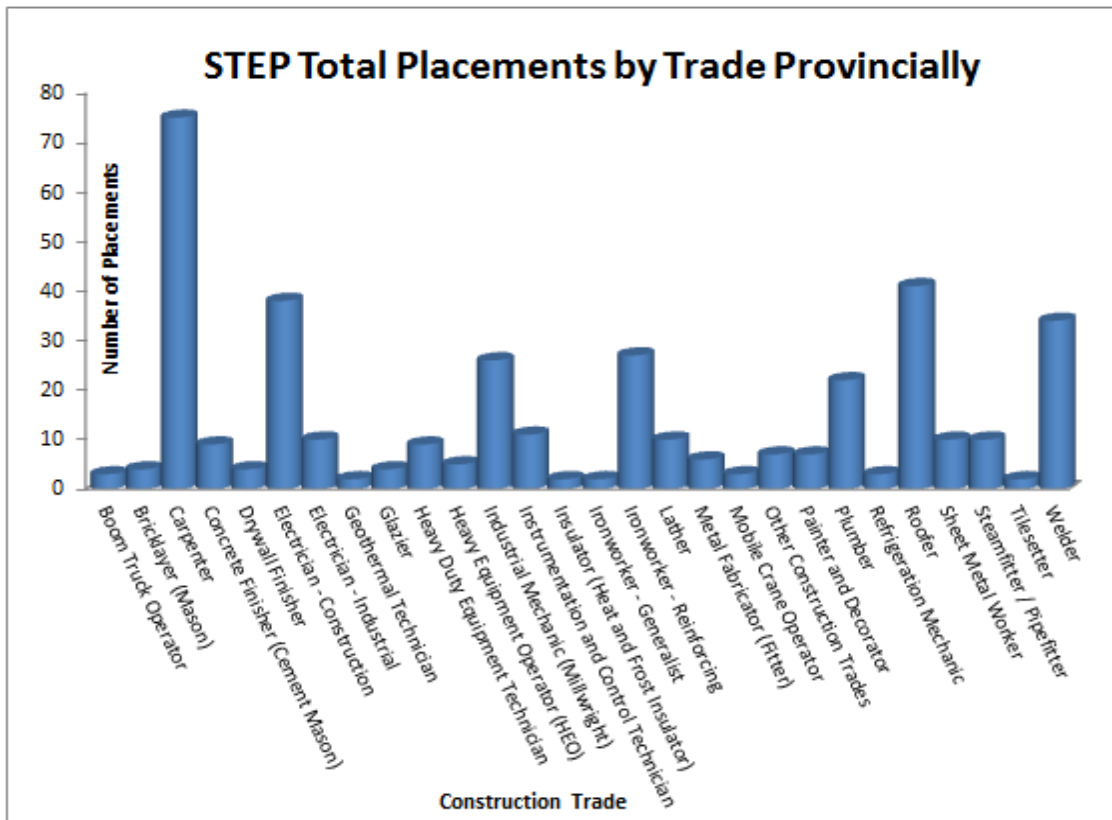
- placing a client into ITA Certified Training such as ITA CORE, ITA approved Essential Skills, training that is approved as per the ITA website;
- placing a client into a skilled trades employment position (in a construction related trade);

- when a client attains an ITA Certificate of Qualification (Journeyman, Red Seal Certificate, or Supervision and Sign-Off Authority) through support obtained via STEP;
- placing and registering a client into an ITA approved Foundation course i.e. painters, lathers, etc. or into Level 1- 4 College/Technical Training through support obtained via STEP.

The continuum of support that these placement types allowed encouraged a longer term engagement with the clients and therefore more likelihood of success through the apprenticeship path. In the 2013-14 contract term alone, 25% of the clients placed into employment achieved apprentice registration through the support of STEP REPS. This could only be achieved through the education that REPS provide both to employers and clients who are considering a trade’s career.

The most common concern that employers bring up about sponsoring an apprentice is the perceived “ownership/responsibility” to an employee they sponsor. The old terminology of “indentured” conjures visions of being stuck with an apprentice for four years. In fact, the life cycle of a typical apprentice will generally mean a change of employers several times due to projects ending and new opportunities, which often means moving to a new location. REPS assist employers with the sponsorship paperwork, which may feel daunting for a busy, small business owner who is not familiar with the process. A full picture of what is required by a sponsor, including the tax benefits to employers, is part of the education provided by our REPS during the relationships built over time.

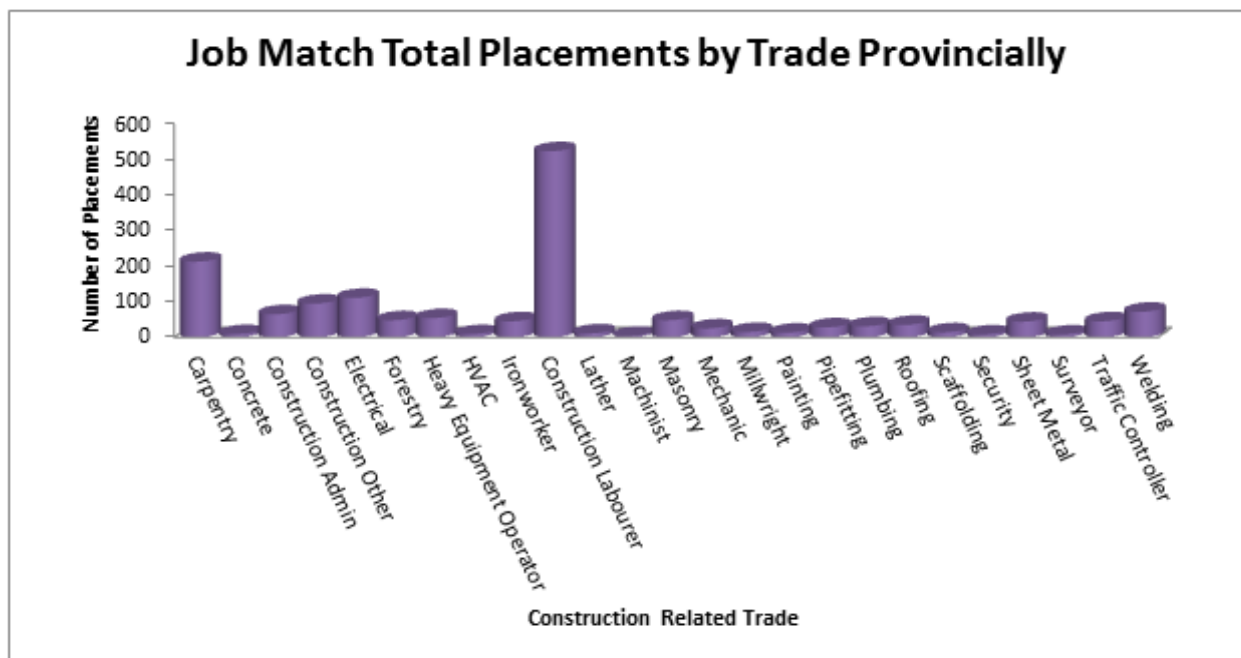
The most common trades that STEP clients were placed in this term were Carpentry, Roofing and Welding.



## 8.2 Statistical Achievements – Job Match

The focus of the Job Match contract was immediate job placements, mainly into non-skilled positions. The placement target was singular - put job ready unemployed British Columbians into sustainable construction related employment. Placement targets were exceeded by 43% in Job Match LMA and by 7% in the LMDA stream. The largest number of placements were into labourer/helper positions with the main trades being Carpentry, Electrical, Sheet Metal Work and Welding.

In Job Match, there was a timeline allocated to the Intake, Placement and Exit of clients which added a sense of urgency to the process. STEP staff who were more accustomed to the longer relationships built with clients, adjusted their delivery in response to having only eight weeks to place a client, and then eight weeks to Exit them after placement, with fewer follow ups possible.



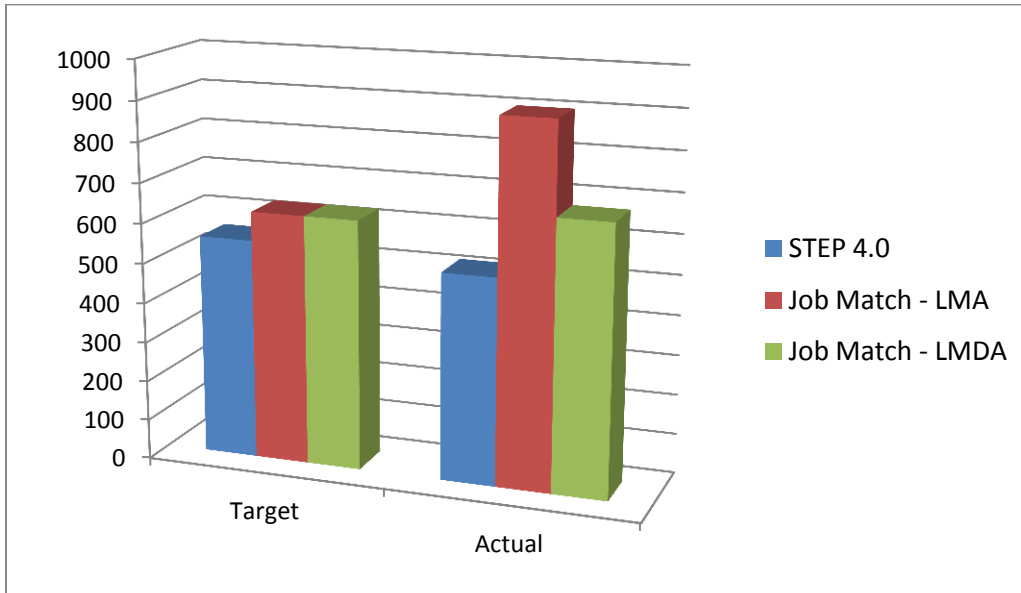
Labourers were placed into most construction trades in Job Match but were noted as an individual position in placement reporting. All entry level job placements in the construction trades begin as labourers. This graph indicates that the participants in Job Match were mainly low skilled.

## 9. Deliverables Summary

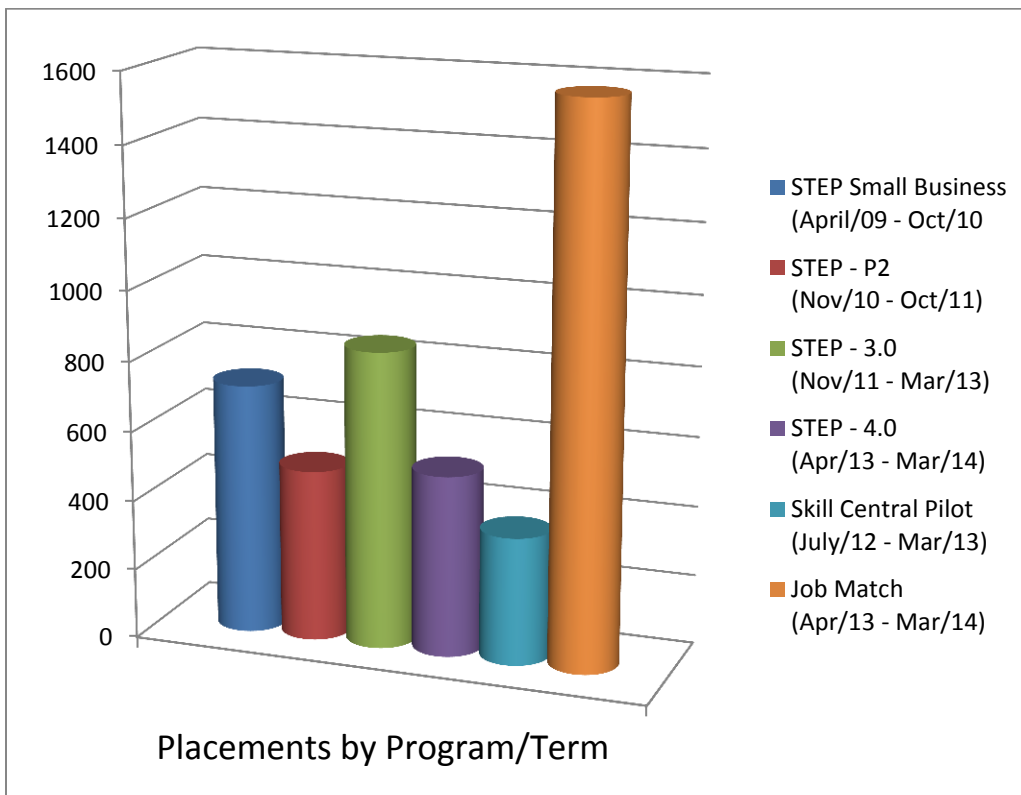
Funding for the STEP and the Job Match programs came through LMA and LMDA funding.

STEP was steady in placements throughout the term but with the new integrated delivery model, the actual placements were slightly less than expected. This was more than made up for by the exceptional achievements in the Job Match stream. Although the Job Match targets were evenly distributed between LMA and LMDA clients, there were fewer placements in the LMDA side, most likely due to the fact that the experience level of many people who access EI is greater and therefore they have somewhat better ability to find their own jobs.

### Placement Target vs. Actual



We now see the bigger picture, after 5+ years of delivering employment programs, and the statistical achievements are impressive. The graph below represents the statistical achievements of STEP over the past five years, and Job Match from the Pilot in 2012 to the end of the last contract term.



Just as the construction industry is cyclical with regional variations so too are the job opportunities and the ease with which participants will be accepted and hired. Consequently, identifying a cost for individual placement is best done by averaging results across the Province. Based on the year's

placement results the average amount of support/innovation funds expended per participant was \$1,191.94. The average cost per participant including program operational costs was \$3,595.45.

In January 2014, an amendment was agreed upon to return approximately \$2.1 million from the Job Match contract in support funds. This reduction in the contract was due to the fact that the anticipated cost per participant, taking into account the addition of the LMDA clients to the program, would be higher in order to facilitate the relocation of program participants to the areas of demand in the North. The initial budget was based on the findings from the Skill Central Pilot, which was funded through Treasury, and provided maximum flexibility around acceptable supports. Unfortunately, after the Job Match contract was signed, it was made apparent by the Ministry of Social Development that there would be more limitations around relocation. Based on their requirements, the value of supports initially budgeted for each participant was too high and simply could not be expended.

## **10. Learnings and Recommendations**

### **10.1 Learnings**

Learning's from the STEP/JobMatch programs are based on information gathered by REPS and Regional Managers as a result of over 6,000 annual points of contact with construction employers, both union and open-shop, and participating workers.

1. The type of employer that is most likely to participate in the STEP/JobMatch program is the small to medium employer, and will often be a trade contractor.
2. Trade contractors are most likely to sponsor an apprentice.
3. Employers who sponsor apprentices are both union and open shop, but the smaller companies are more likely to be open shop and less likely to have support systems in place for workers and apprentices.
4. Skill shortages are real but not necessarily critical in all trades yet or in all regions at the same time. Boots on the ground are essential to have a solid understanding of where the demand is in BC at any given time, and it will change dramatically if major projects go ahead.
5. The pool of available workers, even low-skilled workers, is shrinking, particularly in the North and the Interior. If the major projects get underway in the North, the impact on the South will be considerable and we will see the pool of remaining skilled workers in the South decreasing dramatically as they migrate to the camp jobs. Therefore, small to medium employers across the province are going to be more heavily reliant on youth and entry level workers and they will have to increase their worksite training in order to have skilled workers. This will be challenging as worksite training requires the use of their journey persons to train and their journey persons are getting poached.

6. During times of skill shortages, small/medium size companies without HR departments need help accessing workers as they can no longer fill their positions in the traditional way (advertising and word of mouth).
7. Small/Medium companies who sponsor apprentices generally do not make use of training tax credits on their own either because they don't want to do the paperwork or they perceive it to be too much of a hassle. They often turn to REPS for help.
8. Poaching of trained journey persons to other sectors and regions is increasing.
9. There is no duplication of services between WorkBC ESCs and STEP/JobMatch as the former works with soft skills, whereas the latter assesses for the construction industry and links to the job.
10. More and better relationships need to be forged between STEP REPS and WorkBC ESCs around the Province to support access to the unemployed and provide that essential link into construction jobs.
11. Combining funding sources (LMA and LMDA) and enabling more flexibility around eligibility was very valuable. It allowed us to help more unemployed British Columbians who came through our door and allowed us to provide more candidates to employers. While we recognized the different streams and managed that reality on an administrative level, in the field and with the small employers we deal with, we were able to provide a single source of contact to a broad variety of candidates. Small and medium size companies prefer to deal with one person who can help not only with the hire but also with getting the candidate streamed into apprenticeship. Trust is built and more opportunities are created for hires.
12. Most participants in the program are male between the ages of 20 and 35. Of the more underutilized labour pools, where they chose to self-declare, the highest number of placements were made from the aboriginal community followed by women and finally by new Canadians.
13. Access to the innovation fund is critically important for enabling participants. The financial contribution not only enables the initial hire through providing tools, work boots, short term training; it also encourages smaller companies to take on worksite apprenticeship training through training agreements.
14. As with apprenticeship tax credits, small and medium sized companies will not access financial support on their own. They require the assistance of the REPS to assess, determine what is needed and provide the paperwork assistance to accomplish the supports for participants.
15. Mobilization is needed. The skill shortage in B.C. is increasing due to the amplified economic activity in both the construction and the energy sector. Employers need highly skilled trades people but the local labour pool is drying up as people leave B.C. for higher

paying jobs in Alberta which leaves fewer trades people available to employers in B.C. The ability to mobilize participants to the areas of greatest demand is a challenge that all our regions face. If there is a shortage of one type of tradesperson in the north, STEP does not have the financial ability to mobilize or relocate a good candidate from another area to meet the need. The limitations of the LMDA funding parameters (\$175/week for transportation and accommodations combined) nowhere near meet the actual costs faced for a person needing a place to stay short term in Fort St. John or Dawson Creek, for example. The increasing demand from north employers equals the increase in cost to lodge/house new hires in these areas. Vacancy rates in some northern towns are at zero, so low cost, available accommodation is almost non-existent. As the local labour pool dries up, clients live a greater distance from job opportunities and the cost to transport and house these people in the areas of greatest demand is high.

16. The current LMA eligibility criteria which exclude employed people who have some post-secondary education is challenging. There are people working in low paying, out of sector jobs such as retail or the hospitality industry who have Bachelor's degrees but little ability or support to get into good paying trades jobs without support.
17. High school graduates are not being linked into jobs that lead to apprenticeship. More should be done to connect with career counselors and apprenticeship coordinators.
18. The inclusion of working with E.I. attached (LMDA) clients added a variety of new processes that were somewhat cumbersome to work within in the early days, but our teams received good training and support so we were able to navigate the systems and privacy protection requirements with positive outcomes. We have not, to date, received much feedback from the Ministry of Social Development with regard to their processes and our participation in it, so with no complaints received, we continued with the systems we were given. Going forward, more communication from M.S.D. is welcome along with a more partnered approach to forms and process revisions.

## **10.2 Recommendations to Enhance/Improve STEP**

1. REPS should work more closely with High School graduates, linking them into work and apprenticeship. This will be a more critical source of labour for small/medium companies in the next few years and the source of our future apprentices.
2. REPS should work more closely with WorkBC ESCs to maximize benefits to participants.
3. Continue to enable access to innovation funds to support both job placement and sponsorship into apprenticeship. Financial support is critically important for both the typical participants and the small/medium companies in the construction industry, keeping in mind that such funds will only be accessed if there are warm bodies assisting the parties through the process.
4. Enable supports for mobilization of workers from one region to another.

5. Remove restraints to working with college educated, underemployed workers where their education has no relevance to the trades.
6. STEP should focus some effort on compiling more data. Given the level of connection to employers across the province, STEP is well positioned to collect information that could assist policy makers in a number of areas, particularly labour market and industry training.
7. The Program must continue to develop relationships with industry, unions, training providers, employment agencies, aboriginal communities and high schools as it will be those relationships that will create the level of commitment and partnership needed to provide good jobs and relieve skill shortages for BC.
8. Combine funding sources to include the broadest eligibility for participants but, where possible, manage the Program under one Ministry to avoid duplications and maintain efficiencies.

## **11. Conclusion**

STEP/JobMatch, as delivered by the B.C. Construction Association has met or exceeded all of its objectives and deliverables over the past five years. There have been several incarnations of the program delivery but the continued goal is to address skill shortages and increase construction employment for British Columbians. STEP has developed process and staff knowledge over this time that is invaluable in the next stages of employment programming, which will include the Canada Job Grant. The demand side position that BCCA holds through its membership can play a key role in the success of the Canada Job Grant if the parameters of that funding stream are flexible enough to allow employers to access it in a manner that is aligned with the realities of the construction industry in British Columbia.



**ATTACHMENTS**



# Skilled Trades Employability Support Chart

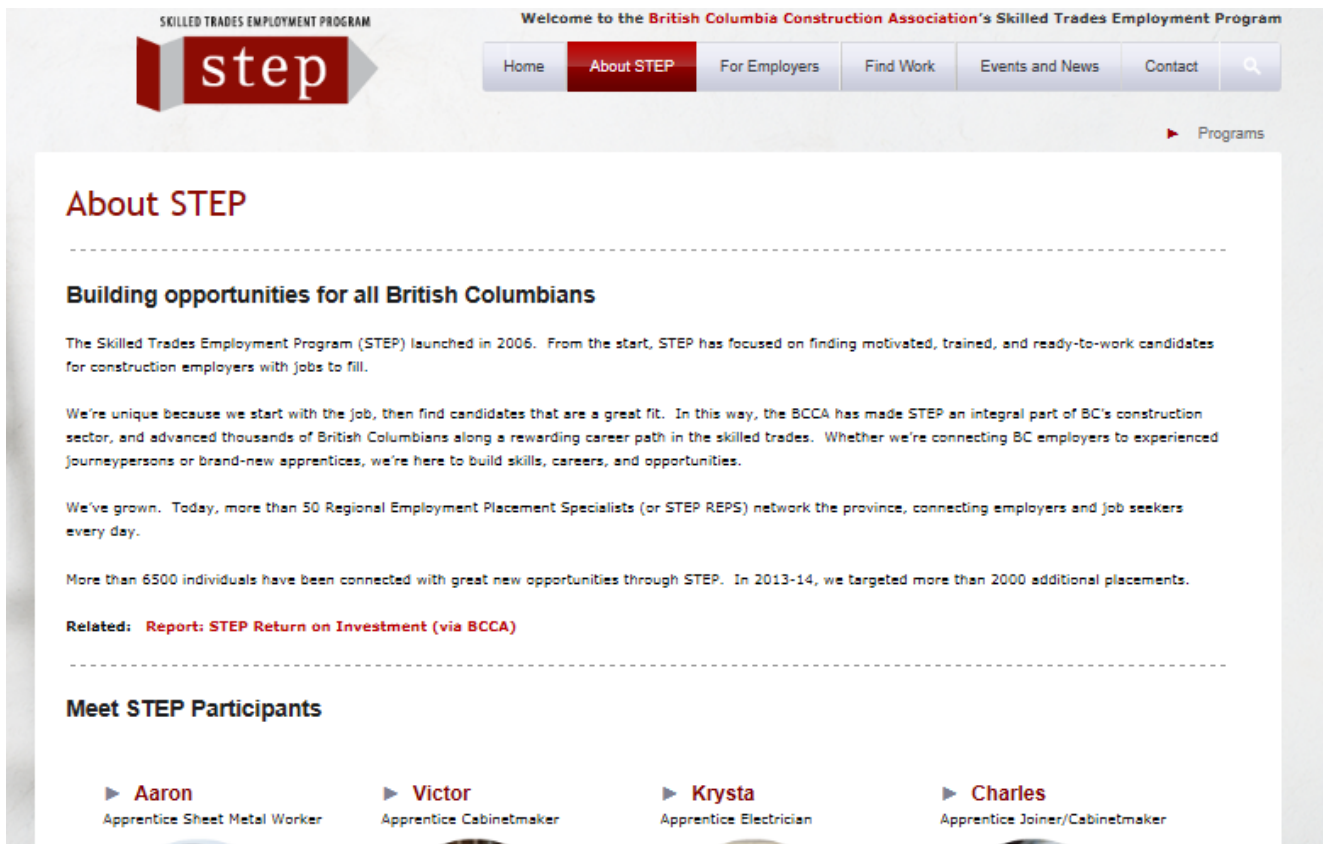
## Types of Employment Supports:

General Employment Supports			Personal Attributes				Gauge:
Associations Mentor Employers Volunteer Work			Education		Personality		Potential of Getting a Skilled Trades Job ©
			Resume		Certificates		
Union Co-workers Employment Agencies Assessments			Work Experience		Aptitude		
					Age		
Family Friends			Appearance		Health		
			Attitude		Ability to Relocate		
Transportation Tools			Job Search Techniques				
			Telephone				

## Characteristics of Skilled Trades Employability Supports

Refer to the support characteristics below and start shading. Add a block of colour to indicate the quality of supports that already exist, and cross-hatch how much you want to improve their quality.

Ability to Relocate	is the willingness and ability to go where a job is located.
Address	is the place an employer can communicate with a potential employee. An address is one of the basic supports and it can be a barrier if it is out-of-town, hard to find, has no parking available, or if it's a post office box. Address can also include the internet.
Age	determines certain qualities of a person. Each age brings different benefits and drawbacks.
Appearance	is the look of a person when compared to the look of people working in the position.
Aptitude	is the natural ability or talent for a specific job.
Assessments	are the evaluation of a person's employment attributes.
Associations	related to employment are organizations of employers, professionals, or other organizations of people connected by employment.
Attitude	to employment is the mental and emotional feelings about a specific job.
Certificates	are documents verifying a person has completed certain skills to qualify for a specific employment task.
Co-workers	are past, present or possibly future employed people willing and able to advocate for the job seeker.
Education	is the knowledge a person requires to do a specific job.
Employers	are the organizations and people hiring and signing the pay cheques.
Employment Agencies	find employees for employers or help people develop their employment supports.
Family	is any group of people willing to support, does not necessarily refer to relatives.
Friends	are people who are attached to each other by respect and affection.
Health	is the ability to do the functions of a specific job.
Job Search Techniques	are the customary ways of looking for a job.
Mentors	are trusted counsellors or guides.
Personality	is the spectrum of characteristics that are relevant to a specific job.
Resumes	are short accounts of a person's work history and qualifications.
Telephone	is the employer's primary method of contacting a potential employee. Includes internet.
Tools	are the tools required for the job.
Transportation	is the means of getting to a job or a job coming to the person.
Unions	are organizations of employees.
Volunteer Work	is unpaid work relative to the work requirements of the job.
Work Experience	is the amount of time observing or practicing the skills required for a specific job.



## AARON SMITH – STEP



After some good-natured heckling from his co-workers about ‘getting ready for his close-up’, we set off to talk with Aaron, to find out more about his experience with STEP and his new career path.

It’s clear from the warm smile on his face and his positive energy that Aaron likes his work as a first year apprentice sheet metal worker. “It’s interesting. And it’s challenging, which I really enjoy. Each day seems to bring something different – I like it, and I think it’s going to be a good career move.”

Aaron is part of a six-person crew, arriving on site at 7 am to begin each day. He says he is pleasantly surprised by how much of his work requires close collaboration with the other trades on the job site, he nevertheless is happy to be in the sheet metal trade.

“I like working with my hands, being able to build things. Before I started here, I was working with a small construction company as a general labourer. Before that, I was installing office furniture in government buildings. I wanted to get into the trades and onto a better career path, and sheet metal worker was high up on my list... so I’m really happy to be doing this.”

Pausing for a minute to brush some site dirt off his pant leg, Aaron reflects on the role STEP has played for him.

I was at the point where I knew I wasn’t going to go any further at my other jobs. STEP made it possible for me to give it a shot, to try to improve my situation. STEP is there to help and it’s absolutely a tool that you can use to help you achieve your goals.

Aaron is a husband and father with two young daughters at home. He says that responsibility continues to be a big part of his motivation for developing his skills and improving his earning potential.

Aaron has a plan and knows what’s in front of him. Aaron isn’t the only family member pleased with the change. He tells us his wife is very supportive, though the first year has put some financial strains on their household. “She can see that I enjoy my job, and that in the long run it’s definitely going to pay off.”

“I think it’s going to provide a much better life for both of my girls. That’s something I’m really excited about as well.”

“My ultimate goal is to become a journeyman, which should take me approximately four years,” explains Aaron. “At that point I’ll be able to make a good living doing this, and I already know I enjoy the job.”

The ultimate test of how much you really like something is whether you’re willing to recommend it to others, and when we ask Aaron if he’s comfortable recommending STEP he doesn’t hesitate.

“Yes. I’ve already recommended STEP to a friend of mine. It’s a great program. It’s been a tremendous experience and I would highly recommend it to anyone wanting to make a change and improve their life,” says Aaron.

When asked if he has any special advice, Aaron doesn’t sugar coat.

“It’s so tough to take that first step, to just really put yourself out there,” he admits. “So my advice is to give it a shot. It’s gonna be hard. But it’s totally worth it. STEP is here to help and it’s something I’m very grateful for.”

We had to let Aaron get back to work. Watching him enter the job site and crunch over a hill of gravel in his steel-toed boots, more than one of us – preparing to head back to our office cubicles – was wondering if maybe the trades might be right for us too.

## EDMONDS, CHARLES - STEP



“One of the best things about this job is that every day is completely different. It’s everything from pulling out windows to scraping and sanding a teak deck to repairing a priceless piece of art,” says Charles Edmonds, an apprentice joiner at Philbrook’s Boatyard on Vancouver Island.

Charles connected with his apprenticeship through STEP.

“The work is weeks of planning and preparation, making templates and milling timber – and then all of a sudden it’s all done and in place – and it looks glorious. That feeling is what drives me to be a tradesman. It’s seeing something all the way through to completion; a wonderful feeling to use your hands and bring something into the world.”

After running his own business doing woodworking and carpentry for several years, Charles found himself losing interest. “I was working for myself and that’s a hard go; you need to find a niche,” notes Charles. “I wasn’t enjoying it too much anymore. I was starting to resent the work because of the administrative stresses.”

Charles chose to move on from his business and found himself in the midst of a frustrating job hunt, not sure where to go next. His existing abilities set him apart from the pack, and some lucky timing presented an opportunity. STEP was contacted by Philbrook’s Boatyard: they were seeking a woodworker with a high level of skill and training who lived in the area. Charles’ name came up when STEP reached out to Camosun College as part of their search.

“It was the perfect thing at the perfect moment,” says Charles, with the smile on his face saying a great deal. “Someone came and said ‘There’s a job... are you interested?’ And yes, I was.”

Charles describes the process as seamless.

STEP was able to connect Charles with the job opportunity, arranging an interview at Philbrooks. When he was hired, STEP supplied work boots and a set of tools which Charles (then unemployed) would have had a hard time purchasing. It was no strings attached. That was the

greatest thing. It's such a relief, too. When you are looking for a job or a career, it's a nervous time. You're not quite sure; it's all very uncertain. Then suddenly – something is available.”



“This didn't cost me anything. It put things into my pocket, which was great.”

Charles is about halfway through his apprenticeship, and has set his eye on a Red Seal ticket, which he hopes to complete entirely through Philbrook's boatyard.

“First and foremost is to finish the apprenticeship. I really want to see that through to the end. Philbrook's gets a few more years of high-quality work at the very least, and if things go well I could be here for the rest of my life. And if not? I've taken a big step forward towards what I want to do, and there are lots of other options for someone with a ticket.”

## **LEWIS, BRETT - STEP**

**Trade:** Millwright

**Pre-STEP status:** Unemployed, with no government assistance

**STEP Supports:** Assist with resume/interview skills, Contact employers/schools, Register as an apprentice with the ITA/sign-off authority for employer

**Training Received:** CORE, safety, refresher course, ITA training and Brett participated in the foundations Millwright program, the Kamloops STEP office assisted Brett

Brett Lewis a graduate of the Millwright foundations program, who contacted STEP at the Kamloops office. Brett was having difficulty finding employment that would provide him opportunity to acquire field experience and skillsets which would lead into a sponsored apprenticeship

Kamloops Regional Employment Specialists made contact with the Dawson Creek office who in turn identified a local employer that offered Brett the opportunity to work as a labourer and Millwright Helper while being assessed for sponsorship for an apprenticeship. Both the Kamloops and Dawson Creek offices worked together to provide Brett with the supports he would need to mobilize to Dawson Creek as well as locating accommodations. Brett has successfully achieved his goal of obtaining the millwright apprenticeship with All-Peace Industrial Contractors who are very pleased to have such a young talented worker with tremendous upside as part of their organization.

The REPS and All-Peace owner Gene Fritzel are very impressed with Brett's positive attitude and his dedication to his work and employer. Brett always stays in communication wanting to know how he is doing and looking for advice on ways to improve. Brett has been working at the Peace River Coal Mine with the All-Peace Maintenance crew either assisting with plant maintenance or on the new water treatment facility in construction.

## NADEAU, FELIX – JOB MATCH LMDA

26/11/2013

To whome it concern

My name is Félix Nadeau,

I am from the province of Québec and I just moved in Dawson Creek (BC) 2 weeks ago, due to a lack of job and a miserable lack of help (back home).

I been amazingly surprised to see how helpfull, reliable and effective is the Employment Office here, it took no time and I got reffered to the Skilled Trades' Employment Program (STEP). I showed up right away on 21/11/2013 and in a split second, Miss Sydney Yaremichuk was already taking care of my file. I took roundly an hour then she said:  
- You will be all set to work not next week, but the week after, cause next week, I'm booking you for your H2S Ticket and First Aid Ticket. You need clothes or anything else?

So this morning, she phoned me, and everything is ALL SET just exactly like Sydney said. Plus, Sydney's workmate saying he's gonna get me my carpenter apprentice Québec transfered to B.-C. one!

Im awared I don't have to write down this, but I am so satisfied of these people works for my case, it is the least I can give back.

Thanx for everything!!!

Félix Nadeau  
Félix Nadeau



## SMITH, JOSH

Submitted by STEP REPS Helen Poss:

Josh Smith has been a ward of the province since he was 16 years old. He was 19 when he started working with STEP. He currently supports his younger brother who is 16 (also a ward of the province). He is employed as an apprentice cabinetmaker with Home Hardware and had no means or family support to be able to afford to attend his first year of technical training in Burnaby with BCIT. Josh was unaware of the process for applying to school, finding accommodation to go to school, how to purchase his books, how to apply through the apprentice online portal for supports, how to apply for EI. STEP was able to assist Josh with all the leg work and some basic supports to get him to school so that the next time he attends school, he will be able to do everything on his own. The confidence and skills he gained from passing his first year technical training was amazing. All the fellow staff members were very proud of him as they all knew how apprehensive he was about leaving for the 6 weeks. Without STEP's intervention, he would not have gone to school and he would not have earned his \$2/hour raise.

Additional stories are available online at [www.stepbc.ca/success-stories](http://www.stepbc.ca/success-stories)

## Attachment 4 – Employer Success Stories

### CLP LTD. PROJECT MANAGEMENT



October 25, 2013

Skilled Trades Employment Program  
5 – 1850 Northfield Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9S 3B3

Attention: Paula Schwartz

We would like to express our gratitude for the programs that we have had the pleasure utilizing through the Skilled Trades Employment Program. We have worked with Doug Haylock, Laurie Schuerbeke and Bill Lucas. All have been phenomenal individuals to work with.

To date, we have employed nine employees that were processed through the Job Match program. We are currently working on placing two more, with the intention that we will have four more employees hired by November 15<sup>th</sup>. We are also starting building homes in Fort St. John in the next month and will definitely employ individuals who are suitable through the Job Match program.

Not only is this service invaluable to our office, it is also greatly appreciated by the individuals that are hired. Each employee hired has been so grateful to have had the opportunity to be trained for a specific position and provided gear and tools in order to do the job correctly and safely.

Again, we really appreciate the assistance and effort your team has provided us in placing individuals with our company.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Projects Ltd.

Per:

Cory Ferris, Office Manager

## FULL THROTTLE REINFORCING

**From:** Jon McNeill [<mailto:jon@fullthrottlesteel.ca>]  
**Sent:** March-27-14 4:03 PM  
**To:** Steve Donahue  
**Subject:** Re: could use a little help from my friends...

To whom it may concern,

Full Throttle Reinforcing Inc. is a rebar-placing firm that services the commercial and residential sectors of the Lower Mainland, as well as the Sunshine Coast and the Sea to Sky Corridor. Throughout our 10 years of success, one of our biggest challenges has been and will remain to be the supply and demand of manpower. With an economy and job market as volatile as the one we find ourselves in, it becomes an intricate balancing act of matching manpower to work volume. This balancing act is easily affected by things like local economy, market, global economy, market trends, seasons etc, and as a result, success is quite often determined by how quickly your company can mobilize from a stand-still to full speed ahead.

One of the very valuable lessons we have learned over the past 10 years, is that you need to have good recruiting resources in order to mobilize man-power rapidly and that's where a program like STEP comes in. STEP takes on a certain amount of leg work that we as a company don't have time to do, and that in turn has a positive affect on our bottom line. In our line of work, our success rate in hiring is somewhere in the area of 1/10. That is to say that for every 10 men we hire, 1 stays. This creates a revolving door of hiring and firing, which in turn ties up and wastes operating capital. With STEP, that same ratio looks more like 8 in 10. It's easy to see how a program like STEP can positively affect the bottom line of a company like ours.

If you look at the demographics of most of the people starting out in our industry, you will see many commonalities, one of those being a lack of resources. Many of these potentially employable individuals don't get the opportunity to even start in a trade because they simply cannot afford to get started. No money, means no money for steel toed boots, hard hat, viz-vest, RAIN GEAR, tools, etc. This is an area where a program like STEP has unique characteristics, and I truly believe that everyone involved with this program should feel very proud. The fact that I can rely on STEP to provide funding for new workers is amazing. Sometimes there's nothing better than the look on a young gentleman's face, who's just trying to turn his life around, and who now has the proper equipment to do his job. His feet are dry and protected, He's warm and prepared and in turn a productive happy worker.

My only complaint regarding STEP is that they are only responsible for 10% of our hiring. In a perfect world, all of our recruiting would be facilitated through this program, and I hope that funding continues and allows for our relationship to become stronger in time.

Just to recap, where implemented, STEP has:

- produced quality recruits, while reducing our screening & selection process.( with no overhead cost!!!)
- turned our hiring success rate from 1/10 to 8/10.(where implemented)
- provided new workers with the proper tools and equipment to do the job.
- provided our company with properly equipped workers

I would recommend any small to medium sized construction firm to take advantage of what STEP has to offer, not only for their services, but also how they treat their clients. Everyone I've dealt with, starting with Steve Donahue has been passionate, assertive, responsive and engaged. I have been treated with unparalleled respect by Mr. Donahue and I will continue to work with the program not only because of positive results, but also because of positive dealings with men like Mr. Donahue.

Sincerely

**Jon McNeill V.P.F.**

[www.fullthrottlesteel.ca](http://www.fullthrottlesteel.ca) | 3634 Franklin Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5K 1Y5 | t: 604.317.0465 | f: 778.330.4616 | e: [jon@fullthrottlesteel.ca](mailto:jon@fullthrottlesteel.ca)

## CHRISCAN CONSTRUCTION

*"Chriscan first learned of the STEP program in August, 2013 and we have had two very successful experiences with them. We will continue to use the resources at STEP when we are looking to hire."*



Thanks!

**KAREN LOUITT**



4201 Spiers Rd. Kelowna, BC V1W 4B5

Office: 250.712.1324

Email: [karenl@chriscan.com](mailto:karenl@chriscan.com)

Website: [chriscan.com](http://chriscan.com)

## DYNAMIC LANDSCAPING AND RENOVATIONS

Tim Taylor // (250) 365 5790 // [dynamic.timtaylor@gmail.com](mailto:dynamic.timtaylor@gmail.com)

**From:** Tim Taylor [<mailto:dynamic.timtaylor@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** March-28-14 5:22 AM  
**To:** Allan Pusey  
**Subject:** Re: Testimonials

Hello

I just got back from vacation. I like the program. It gets younger people to the construction table for more opportunity. We need more money as a company to train these people, so we have a better chance in making it profitable. It cost a lot to train for the four years of an apprenticeship. But I like what you are doing with it. Thx sincerely Tim Taylor

## HOME HARDWARE, KAMLOOPS

**From:** Jim Adams [<mailto:jim.adams@hhkamlloops.ca>]  
**Sent:** March-28-14 10:59 AM  
**To:** Helen Poss  
**Cc:** Tully Journeay  
**Subject:** RE: request from STEP

Hi Helen and Tully,

I would like to take this opportunity to express a very sincere thank you on behalf of myself and Josh to you both for all of your assistance. Your expertise was invaluable as we worked through the process of registering Josh and sending him to BCIT for his first year of the Cabinetmaker (Joiner) Apprenticeship program. The financial assistance that you provided Josh was extremely beneficial to him as well, I doubt that he would have been able to attend school this year without your generous support. As an employer I strongly believe that the aid and support which your program offers people as they enter the trades is critical to the future of the building industry. This is because we will be facing a critical shortage of skilled labour in the future and any programs which will help alleviate this shortage by encouraging and assisting new apprentices is immensely beneficial to the building industry in general.

Sincerely,

Jim Adams | Home Hardware Building Centre | 1325 Joseph Way | Kamloops, BC | V2H-1N6  
Phone 250-852-4199 | Fax: 250-374-1246 | Cell: 250-682-0090



## JAKES ROOFING LTD.



### Jakes Roofing Ltd.

Duroids, Shakes, Metal - Specializing in Re-Roofing  
Licensed and Insured \* Phone: 250-248-8014  
P.O. Box 413, 1077 Bowlby Road, Errington, BC., V0R 1V0

January 20, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I recently took my Roofer, Damp and Waterproof course with the ITA. I wanted to thank you for the opportunity and am happy to have successfully completed the requirements for my Red Seal. I feel it is important to acknowledge Bill Lucas with the Step Program. Bill has been an incredible help and has gone out of his way to make sure all necessary steps have been taken to make my experience smooth and positive. His experience in the trades helped with his communication and understanding with my employees and myself.

As a long time business owner I sincerely appreciate that these kinds of opportunities are available as I feel it is very important to keep new workers interested in the trades and to help them get educated.

We currently have several employees in the apprenticeship program and look forward to getting them certified.

Sincerely,

Jake Mayrhofer  
Owner Jake's Roofing Ltd.

## SURESPAN STRUCTURES

**From:** Sheena Shaw [<mailto:sheena@surespanstructures.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 11, 2013 04:14 PM  
**To:** Reg Gladstone  
**Subject:** quote

I found the personnel involved with STEP to be highly motivating and easy to work with. Everyone experiences the difficulty of managing a program like this when there is other work that desperately needs doing. While keeping the program operating and helping both our workers and our company, Reg & Doug were able to maintain an easy and relaxed relationship, making the process simple and painless. STEP has also been looking for further ways to help our other longer term workers as well as the newer ones. This has been an excellent experience and I thank the BC Construction Association and the STEP programme for their efforts on behalf of our workers and our company.



**SHEENA SHAW**  
**Administrator & Safety Coordinator**  
Surespan Structures Ltd.

3721 Drinkwater Road t. 250 748 8888 ext. 23  
Duncan, BC c. 250 710 0297  
Canada V9L 6P2 f. 250 746 8011

[www.surespanstructures.com](http://www.surespanstructures.com) [sheena@surespanstructures.com](mailto:sheena@surespanstructures.com)

## S&K FORMING LTD.

“By pre-screening applicants, STEP saved us a significant amount of time and money and ensured that a first meeting with a candidate meant that they were truly qualified for the position. In addition, some of these employees have become long term employees and are a part of our core business. We look forward to receiving additional staff through the STEP program this year.”

- Kris Courtorielle, Project Manager  
S&K Forming Ltd, Kelowna

## Additional Employer Videos and Testimonials

Northern Employers (Spring/Summer 2013):

<http://www.stepbc.ca/foremployers> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fvp3UBj0n0I>

- o “The BCCA program was a huge benefit to our company. Take a serious look at it – it’s been totally positive for us.”
  - Dean Beaumeister, Owner, Dalco Instruments & Measurement
  
- o “It’s been very good for us. We’ve hired two people through the program. I have recommended it.”
  - Jason Knutson, Owner, Whitetail Oilfield Rentals
  
- “It helps me. It saves me time. I definitely would recommend the program.”
  - Dale Emberley, District Instrumentation Manager, Techmation Electric & Controls
  
- o “I don’t have to look for a quality employee, STEP finds them for me.”
  - Russell Ransome, Owner, Russcon Contracting