

For Immediate Release

December 9, 2015

## **INDUSTRY TRAINING AUTHORITY DEVELOPS SKILLS TRAINING PLAN TO ADDRESS EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN BC**

*Strategic plan created to remove barriers and increase the number of Aboriginal People in the skilled trades*

**Vancouver, B.C.** – The [Industry Training Authority \(ITA\)](#) announced today the development of a comprehensive plan to engage Aboriginal People in skilled trades careers and to introduce support programs that will increase accessibility to training and assist with achieving success in the trade industry.

B.C. labour market projections identify significant employment opportunities in the skilled trades due to the impending retirements in the workforce, as well as new opportunities generated from current and proposed projects. The new skills training plan will increase job readiness in B.C. and further enable the province to respond appropriately to the incoming demand for skilled tradespeople.

The [Aboriginal Initiatives Skills Training Plan 2015-18](#) is built on extensive research and encompasses recommendations and input from various stakeholders and influencers connected to the Aboriginal community. The strategic plan directly aligns with the goals set out in the provincial government's [B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint](#), more specifically to increase the number of Aboriginal People in the skilled trades by 15,000 over the next 10 years.

The plan was developed in consultation with a full range of stakeholders and support agencies, and focuses on specific activities under two key categories:

- **Relationships:** Build awareness and understanding in the Aboriginal community, and strengthen connections amongst the Aboriginal community, industry, ITA, and the province.
- **Services:** Provide the tools and resources to enable Aboriginal People to become certified tradespersons through programs funded by the Canada Jobs Fund (CJF), the Enhanced Construction Craft Worker (E-CCW) program, and enhanced data collection and insights on Aboriginal apprentices.

### **Quotes**

#### **Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour –**

“We have been working with Aboriginal communities to ensure they have the education, training and support they need for in demand jobs. This includes the new Enhanced Construction Craft Worker program in our northern interior and northwest regions which represents an innovative partnership with the Tl'azt'en Nation and Gitxaala Nation.



One of the key goals in *B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint* is to invest in initiatives that support Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal Initiatives Skills Training Plan lays out a comprehensive approach demonstrating how we can achieve that. By working alongside our Aboriginal partners, educators and industry stakeholders, we can provide resources that will allow Aboriginal people to gain the skills they need to become full participants in the workforce.”

**John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation –**

“There is an incredible opportunity in trades for all British Columbians and for Aboriginal people we have to ensure that access to training is not hindered by geography or other barriers. The Aboriginal Initiatives Skills Training Plan 2015-2018 is a strategy that can strengthen the community-based skills training programs that the Province and industry are supporting.”

**Gary McDermott, Director, Aboriginal Initiatives, ITA –**

“This plan will help continue the momentum that ITA’s Aboriginal Initiatives has gained since its inception in 2007. ITA looks forward to building and strengthening new and existing relationships and providing services that will grow future opportunities for Aboriginal communities across the province.”

**About Aboriginal Initiatives Trade Training**

The Industry Training Authority’s (ITA) Aboriginal Initiatives supports and promotes careers in the skilled trades for Aboriginal People across British Columbia. The initiatives assure an industry training system that services Aboriginal People with unobstructed access to opportunities and success in apprenticeships and the skilled trades.

Aboriginal Initiatives helps fund Aboriginal trades training programs for unemployed or low-skilled Aboriginal People so that they can break through barriers to employment in the trades. For more information on Aboriginal Initiatives visit [www.itabc.ca/aift](http://www.itabc.ca/aift).

**About the Industry Training Authority**

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia’s skilled trades system. ITA works with employers, employees, industry, labour, training providers and government to issue credentials, manage apprenticeships, set program standards and increase opportunities in the trades. ITA is also a key collaborator in *B.C.’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint*, which sets out a plan for re-engineering our education and training system to support our growing and changing economy, and to help British Columbians take full advantage of the opportunities presented by these changes. [www.itabc.ca](http://www.itabc.ca)

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For interviews, photos, or more information please contact:

**Susan Kirk**  
Director of Communications, ITA

**Kyla Way**  
Edelman

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Cell: 604-315-9959  
Email: [skirk@itabc.ca](mailto:skirk@itabc.ca)

Cell: 604-613-6413  
Email: [kyla.way@edelman.com](mailto:kyla.way@edelman.com)

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