

For Immediate Release

October 24, 2014

LEVELING THE FIELD FOR TRADESWOMEN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

ITA Best Practices Guide to Employing Women in the Trades aims to increase B.C.'s skilled labour pool

Vancouver, B.C. -- The Industry Training Authority (ITA) has introduced a first of its kind resource in B.C. for trades employers. *Leveling The Field – A Best Practices Guide to Employing Women in the Trades* has been developed to help employers with their overall hiring practices by creating a positive work environment for new apprentices, and also serve as a tool for employers who are increasingly adding tradeswomen to their teams.

By 2022, B.C. is expecting over one million job openings, 43 per cent of which will be in trades and technical occupations. Employers who want to hire British Columbians first are looking to expand their pool of candidates, and more and more women are considering the trades as a valid and dynamic career choice.

“To ensure British Columbians are first in line for the jobs that will come in our growing economy, we need more women to choose non-traditional careers,” says Premier Christy Clark. “Resources like ITA’s Women in Trades Best Practices Guide help to provide the encouragement and support for women to seize opportunities in the skilled trades, while helping employers develop the best strategies to recruit, hire, and retain women on the job site.”

The Best Practices Guide is produced through the ITA Women in Trades Training Initiative and is a direct result of in-depth, province-wide consultation with over 800 employers and apprentices, and with special input from 15 employers/industry associations. “In our conversations with employers and women working in the trades, we heard that a best practices guide would be a welcome tool to help improve employment practices for all apprentices and tradespeople,” says Erin Johnston, director of Training Delivery, ITA. “We hope this will help employers look at their overall employment, remove barriers to the workplace, and find and keep skilled people in the workforce across the board.”

To help employers assess their workplace policies and practices, the Guide focuses on a number of areas, including recruitment and hiring, orientation, developing and maintaining a safe and welcoming workplace, and retention. The Electrical Joint Training Committee helped participate in its development.

“This Guide is a valuable and much needed resource for employers in the electrical field, as well as all other trades in B.C.,” says Andy Cleven, training director for the Electrical Joint Training Committee. “We are committed to seeing more tradeswomen enter the field and increasing the province’s skilled labour pool. This guide is a very helpful starting point for re-examining hiring practices. I strongly encourage all employers to pick up a copy.”



Currently 10 per cent of BC's trades apprentices are women, but for apprentices under the age of 19, the number rises to 26 per cent. As more women successfully find work in the trades, others will continue to see trades as a viable career option. Louisa Robinson is an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer at WestJet in Vancouver.

"In my 15 years working in the trades, I have often been the only woman on the job, so carving out a place for myself in a male dominated trade has been both challenging and rewarding," says Robinson. "The next generation of apprentices and employers will create the shop culture of tomorrow, and I believe with education and increasing awareness using tools like the Best Practices Guide, a career in the trades can be a positive and empowering experience for both women and men. I believe everyone should be able to succeed in a career/trade they love regardless of gender and perceived roadblocks or stereotypes."

[Leveling The Field – A Best Practices Guide to Employing Women in the Trades](#) is being rolled out through local employer and labour champions, ITA Apprenticeship Advisors, customer service supports, and targeted communications such as newsletters, employer outreach and social media. Funding for the Guide was provided through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

To obtain a copy of the Guide, contact ITA Customer Service at 1-866-660-6011 or customerservice@itabc.ca. The Guide can be viewed online and downloaded at: <http://www.itabc.ca/managing-apprentices/best-practices-guides>.

-30-

About Industry Training Authority (ITA)

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 the provincial government's 10 year skills training plan, the B.C. 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 help British Columbians take full advantage of the opportunities presented by these changes.

About ITA Women in Trades Training (WITT) initiative

The Women in Trades Training (WITT) initiative is overseen by ITA, the provincial crown agency responsible for managing BC's industry training and apprenticeship system. The Initiative helps women that are unemployed or employed but lacking formal certification become skilled and in-demand tradespeople by offering tuition for training programs, and financial assistance for tools, books and childcare subsidies. It also provides women with general skills upgrading, career counselling, on-the-job training and introductions to potential employers.

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of a grid of colored squares in shades of orange, light blue, and white, arranged in a pattern that tapers to the right.

NEWS RELEASE

For interviews, photos, or more information, please contact:

Tom Leslie, Edelman Vancouver

604-648-3430 Email: tom.leslie@edelman.com