

SKILLED**TRADES**<sup>BC</sup>

2024-2027

Accessibility Plan

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# Territorial Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that our head office is located on the traditional unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. As a provincial crown corporation, we are grateful to have the opportunity to operate across a diverse province of 203 communities and 35 nations.

SkilledTradesBC is committed to supporting and working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to establish a clear and sustainable path to lasting reconciliation.

Learn more about our commitment to [Truth and Reconciliation](#).



*Tea Creek Farm | Gitxsan Territory | Kitwanga, B.C.*

# A Message from CEO, Shelley Gray

As a leader in the skilled trades, we are committed to building an inclusive workforce that reflects the vibrant diversity of people across the province and meets the needs of British Columbians. To do this, we must ensure equal access to and opportunities for training and apprenticeship for everyone.

At SkilledTradesBC, we believe in the power of accessibility to improve the lives of people with disabilities and to strengthen our communities on the whole. Skilled trades offer secure, well-paying and meaningful careers, and we are working to make it easier for people to participate.

This Accessibility Plan marks an important milestone in our ongoing journey of identifying, removing and preventing barriers to access for people with disabilities – both within our organization and the greater skilled trades system – to better serve our customers and partners.

I thank our Accessibility Committee for developing this plan, as well as our employees, industry partners and the government for their thoughtful contributions. Their diverse perspectives and collaborative efforts have been instrumental in shaping this plan to keep inclusion at the forefront of everything we do and stay accountable.

I invite you to join us in this important conversation. Your feedback and participation are invaluable as we continue learning and supporting B.C.'s apprenticeship community to help people unlock their potential – one career journey at a time.

Shelley Gray  
CEO at SkilledTradesBC

# About SkilledTradesBC

SkilledTradesBC is a provincial crown corporation that advances the trades training system in British Columbia. We work together with employers and industry partners to uphold the highest standards for training, issue credentials, support apprentices, fund programs and promote a wide range of rewarding careers in the trades.

We are working to build the most diverse and sustainable workforce in Canada by supporting equitable access to skilled trades and helping British Columbians unlock their potential—creating a world-class workforce, one career journey at a time.

For more information, visit our website: [SkilledTradesBC.ca](https://www.SkilledTradesBC.ca).

## OUR VISION

An inclusive, world-class skilled trades workforce that meets the needs of British Columbians.

## OUR VALUES

Our values define who we are as an organization and what our team commits to in support of our vision. They reflect how we do our work as a people-centric organization to support our colleagues, customers and the skilled trades community.

**Inclusion:** We value, recognize and support the right of all individuals to be accepted, feel like they belong and have their differences celebrated.

**Respect:** We value relationships that build trust, safety, and well-being amongst the communities we serve and our colleagues. We have deep regard for the feelings, wishes, rights and traditions of all people.

**Excellence:** We strive for excellence through innovation, teamwork, superior service and continuous improvement to deliver the best experience to our customers, partners and communities.

**Innovation:** We learn new skills and implement new ideas. We work with partners to lead and grow the skilled trades in B.C.

**Collaboration:** We are purposeful in actively listening to and working with our partners through open and transparent engagement to achieve our goals and vision.

## Key Definitions

**Accessibility** – Through programs, services and environments, accessibility is about creating inclusion where everyone, including people with disabilities, can participate, benefit equally and reach their full potential.

**Diversity** – Refers to the variety of differences in experiences, backgrounds, characteristics, thoughts and beliefs. A variety of perspectives can lead to a wider range of ideas and solutions where everyone feels more included, valued and understood.

**Equity** – Fairness in process and outcomes, according to individual needs. It recognizes that people may require different levels of support and resources to have equal opportunities. This includes identifying and removing any barriers.

**Inclusion** – The practice of creating a welcoming and supportive environment empowering everyone to feel like they belong. An inclusive environment values the unique qualities and experiences of each person.

For a full list of definitions, view [Appendix](#).



# Our Guiding Framework

The following legislation, guidelines and policies inform our accessibility work and provide direction for developing our Accessibility Plan.

## THE ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT

Our Accessibility Plan is a response to the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#). The legislation aims to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in B.C., with the goal of becoming an accessible province for all.

As a provincial crown corporation, we are guided to do the following:

- **Establish an Accessibility Committee**

The Committee will include people with lived experience of diverse disabilities and reflect the diverse population of British Columbia, including Indigenous representation.

- **Develop and publish an Accessibility Plan**

The plan will detail how we will identify and work towards removing and preventing barriers for people living with disabilities moving forward.

- **Create a feedback mechanism**

The feedback mechanism will support individuals interacting with our organization to report any accessibility barriers they may encounter.

## “NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US”

The principle of “*Nothing About Us, Without Us*” ensures that people with lived experience are involved in shaping our plan. By valuing the voices and experiences of people with disabilities, we create efforts that are inclusive and reflect the needs of our employees and customers. This approach focuses on full participation and equal opportunities, ensuring decisions impacting a community are made in collaboration with those directly affected.



## OTHER GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AND CONTEXT

### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The [\*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities\*](#) promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, ensuring respect for their dignity.

### Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The [\*Canadian Human Rights Act\*](#) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on several grounds, including race, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, disability and more. It ensures that all individuals have equal opportunities and are treated fairly in employment, and the provision of goods, services, facilities or accommodations available to the public.

### B.C. Human Rights Code

The [\*B.C. Human Rights Code\*](#) is a law that protects people in British Columbia from discrimination. It ensures everyone has equal opportunities and access in areas like jobs, housing, and services, based on characteristics like race, gender, disability and more. The Code aims to create a fair and respectful society for everyone.

### B.C. Standards of Conduct

Under the Public Service, the [\*B.C. Standards of Conduct\*](#) outline how public service employees should act. These guidelines emphasize integrity, respect, accountability and professionalism. They ensure public service employees exhibit the highest standards of conduct while delivering services and ensuring public trust.

## SKILLEDTRADESBC INTERNAL POLICIES

### **Code of Conduct Policy**

The Code sets out what is expected of every SkilledTradesBC employee and helps us act in a way that reflects [Our Values](#).

### **Respectful Workplace Policy**

The purpose of the Respectful Workplace Policy is to assist all employees in understanding what is a respectful workplace and actions individuals need to take to create and maintain a respectful workplace for all.

### **SkilledTradesBC Employee Handbook**

The Employee Handbook outlines our organization's policies, procedures, expectations and benefits. It serves as a key resource for understanding our workplace rules, company culture, and the rights and responsibilities we uphold.

# Our Accessibility Committee

Our Accessibility Committee is made up of eight employees from diverse backgrounds and various roles at SkilledTradesBC. Our committee was formed through an open invitation process for employees.

Each member brings lived experiences with disabilities, both visible and invisible. This helps us better understand and address the needs of our employees, customers and other members of the skilled trades community who live with disabilities.

Our committee played an instrumental role in developing our first Accessibility Plan and will help SkilledTradesBC become a more inclusive and accessible organization.

## **A special thank you to our members:**

Camille Mc Millan Rambharat  
Charlene Chaillou  
Erin Jones  
Francesca Flores  
Jason Leber

Julia Zanatta  
Kathleen Scott  
Sneha Satheendran  
Tara Ao, Committee Chair

We also extend our gratitude to Emily de Medeiros for her support in reviewing our plan.

## OTHER EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee**

The EDI Committee executes strategies aimed at promoting accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as Truth and Reconciliation within SkilledTradesBC. The committee identifies and implements initiatives that foster an inclusive and accessible working environment for all employees, ensuring fair opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### **Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOSH)**

The JOSH Committee identifies, reviews and recommends health and safety matters in support of the planned occupational health and safety program at SkilledTradesBC.

### **Employee Engagement Committee (EEC)**

The EEC Committee serves as a resource to identify, review and enhance employee engagement at SkilledTradesBC. The committee receives and facilitates actionable items from employee feedback to enhance our workplace culture.

# Our Accessibility Plan

Over the next three years, we will focus on four priorities to strengthen accessibility and inclusion within our organizational culture and practices.

## OUR PRIORITIES

1. Empower employees to build an accessible and inclusive workplace culture through continuous learning.
2. Create and review policies, guidelines and procedures regarding accessibility and accommodations.
3. Ensure equal access to information by delivering clear communications and improving digital tools.
4. Improve recruitment and employment processes by reducing barriers for candidates.

**Priority 1:**

Empower employees to build an accessible and inclusive workplace culture through continuous learning.

**Actions to date:**

- All new employees receive mandatory diversity and inclusion training to support a respectful and welcoming workplace for everyone. This training includes:
  - Words Matter: This training supports BC Public Service employees by providing guidelines for using inclusive language in the workplace.
  - Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+): Implemented by the Government of Canada, this training helps develop responsive and inclusive policies, programs, and other initiatives, involving a gender and diversity-sensitive approach.
- We host regular lunch and learn sessions to provide learning opportunities for employees. Topics include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, neurodivergence and Adult Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- We developed mandatory Indigenous inclusion and cultural competency training for employees. 100 per cent of employees completed this training to better serve Indigenous apprentices and partners.
- We partnered with an equity, inclusion and anti-racism consulting company to deliver an expanded learning series for employees. Employees participated in five mandatory learning sessions to date.
- We conducted a diversity and inclusion audit through a third party to better understand the organization's demographics, diversity and accessibility needs.

**Next steps:**

- Create an organizational learning plan that includes targeted inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility topics to increase accessibility awareness and understanding.
- Conduct a survey to assess employees' knowledge, perceptions and behaviours as it relates to accessibility.

**Priority 2:**

Create and review policies, guidelines and procedures regarding accessibility and accommodations.

**Actions to date:**

- We review and update our Employee Handbook every year to ensure the policies, processes and guidelines are current and relevant. All employees must review and sign the updated handbooks and are encouraged to provide feedback on the updates to foster continuous improvement.
- We offer a hybrid work model to provide employees with the flexibility to work remotely up to three days per week. This empowers employees to decide where and how they work, ensuring they can achieve a better work-life balance that meets their individual needs and preferences. It also supports employees with mobility challenges or other accessibility needs by reducing commuting stress.
- We have dedicated teams and streamlined processes to provide robust supports that guide apprentices and tradespeople throughout their skilled



trades journey. This includes:

—**Regional Supports**

We have dedicated Apprenticeship Advisors and Certification Advisors located across the province to provide hands-on, direct support to apprentices, employers and sponsors, helping them navigate the skilled trades training environment.

—**Programs for Underrepresented Groups**

We work with Indigenous communities, school districts, training partners, industry and government to fund a range of programs that support the participation and retention of youth, Indigenous peoples, women, newcomers and other equity-deserving groups in skilled trades apprenticeships and careers.

—View trades training programs available to [Equity-Deserving Groups and Indigenous Peoples](#).

—**Completions Supports**

We provide personalized one-on-one guidance for apprentices and tradespeople facing barriers to certification. This includes providing tailored accommodation and support solutions that cater to individual needs and learning styles.

—**Exam Preparation and Study Tips**

We offer exam preparation and study tips to support for apprentices to review important information and share best practices to help them succeed. This includes after-hours sessions so that individuals with work or other commitments can participate.

—View [Exam Preparation and Study Tips](#).

### —Exam Accommodations

We offer exam accommodations tailored to individual needs to create a fair and inclusive testing environment that ensures everyone has the supports they need to successfully complete their exam.

Tradespeople can apply for these accommodations online, through the customer Portal, and/or by contacting our customer service team.

We also streamlined our process for requesting accommodations, eliminating the need for a medical note. Accommodations include but are not limited to:

- Assistive technology and readers
- Translators and interpreters
- Additional exam time
- View a list of [Exam Accommodations and learn how to apply](#).

### Next steps:

- Create an Accessibility Policy that outlines our principles and practices for ensuring equal access to information, services and opportunities at SkilledTradesBC. This policy will be in accordance with applicable laws and regulations including [Accessible B.C. Act](#), [B.C. Human Rights Code](#) and [Accessible Canada Act](#).
- Create a Workplace Accommodations Policy that outlines our process for providing reasonable accommodations for all employees with considerations for accessibility requirements.

**Priority 3:**

Ensure equal access to information by delivering clear communications and improving digital tools.

**Actions to date:**

- We offer virtual options for meetings with optional accessibility features such as transcription and closed captioning to ensure that all participants, including those with hearing impairments or other barriers, can fully engage. All meeting rooms are equipped with virtual conferencing tools.
- We consider accessibility in all our internal and external communications. This includes:
  - Writing clear and concise messages; using plain language
  - Using accessible fonts, sizes and colours
  - Developing user-friendly layout and design for our website and resource materials
  - Reflecting the diverse voices and experiences of our employees and customers
- We provide employees with accessibility tools and features through the Microsoft 365 suite to support individual accessibility needs. This includes screen readers, dictation, immersive reader, keyboard shortcuts and writing support. There is also an Accessibility Checker to ensure our work is accessible for everyone.
- We developed an employee accessibility toolkit and accessibility resource page on our intranet to educate employees about the available technology, tools and best practices to support their work.

- We worked with an external web agency to develop a new website built to meet accessibility standards. They regularly perform accessibility testing to ensure all elements of our website meet W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA standards.
- We conducted an accessibility review for our SkilledTradesBC brand to ensure brand components, such as font type, size and colour are in adherence to W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA.

**Next steps:**

- Identify and provide comprehensive digital inclusion and accessibility training for employees to ensure our presentations and digital platforms are easy to navigate and accessible for everyone.
- Implement a process to review our internal communications to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and free from biases.
- Expand our employee accessibility toolkit to offer more information about features, technology and best practices to create a more inclusive experience for everyone.

**Priority 4:**

Improve recruitment and employment processes to reduce barriers for candidates.

**Actions to date:**

- We ensure candidates know about and can request any necessary accommodations during the interview process.

- Our Human Resources Information System for collecting and managing employee information meets W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA standards to make sure people with disabilities using assistive technology can access the platform effectively.
- We emphasize our commitment to diversity and inclusion in our job postings, encouraging all qualified applicants to apply.

**Next steps:**

- Review and update our recruitment and employment processes to be more accessible and attract talent from diverse backgrounds.
- Include accessibility and inclusion statement into our job postings.
- Partner with recruitment organizations that support candidates with disabilities to expand our pool of applicants.
- Follow industry accessibility standards and include assistive technology in implementing our Applicant Tracking System to create a positive experience for all candidates during the recruitment and hiring process.
- To enhance accessibility, we will conduct an in-office assessment based on universal design principles. This evaluation will help us identify and address accessibility barriers throughout our workspace.

# Our Timeline

## September 2024 – September 2026

- We will publish and implement our Accessibility Plan, focusing on our four priorities.
- We will collect and review feedback from our employees, customers and our Accessibility Committee.
- We will continuously update our plan to remain responsive to feedback and reflect on our progress.

## September 2026 – September 2027

- We will publish a report on our progress and remain accountable to our employees and customers.

# Share Your Feedback

Your voice matters! Share your feedback on our Accessibility Plan and tell us about any accessibility challenges you've faced while interacting with us. We value your input and are committed to addressing your needs.

**Send us an email:** [accessibility@skilledtradesbc.ca](mailto:accessibility@skilledtradesbc.ca)

**Give us a call:** 778-328-8700

**Write to:** *Attention HR*

800-8100 Granville Avenue  
Richmond, British Columbia  
V6Y 3T6, Canada



# Appendix

## DEFINITIONS

**Assistive device** – Any device that is designed, made or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task.

**Barrier** – Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with a disability. Barriers may be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

**Disability** – An inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

**Employee resource group** – Employee-led groups whose aim is to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the organization. The groups exist to provide support and help personal or career development and to create a safe space where employees can bring their whole selves to work.

**Impairment** – A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

**Lived experience** – A term used to describe the knowledge and understanding gained from an individual's first-hand involvement or direct experiences.

**Universal design** – The process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics.

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1** – Guidelines on how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility involves a wide range of disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological disabilities.

*Definitions provided by [Disability Alliance BC](#), [BC Accessibility Hub](#) and [W3C](#).*

## REFERENCES

© Disability Alliance BC 2023 • Developing Your First Accessibility Plan: A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations • 2023