

Search for skilled workers in B.C. to continue in next decade, study finds

Retiring workforce remains primary driver of job openings until 2025

08/03/2016 (Vancouver) – New labour market information released today shows nearly 110,000 jobs will need to be filled in 52 transportation and construction occupations across British Columbia in the next 10 years.

The projections are from the *Asia Pacific Gateway Labour Market Outlook 2016-2025*, a study that examines the future demand in occupations in the construction, logistics, marine, rail, and trucking sectors. These sectors have been identified as critical to meeting the labour demands of the Asia Pacific Gateway. The study also includes managers across all five sectors.

The study has been conducted regularly since 2011. The data validates the considerable economic change that has occurred in western Canada in the last 12 months, and the potential shift in long-term expectations for 22 occupations within the construction and managers sectors. Though the numbers do show a growing economy and growing sectors over the duration of the forecast, for the first time fewer jobs appear in multiple years and in multiple sectors.

“In-depth information on potential labour market shortfalls and challenges in the future position employers to plan ahead and avoid difficulties to fill the critical job positions identified,” said Krista Bax, Executive Director, Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table. “The Asia Pacific Gateway continues to be an economic driver for the province and part of our ability to capitalize on this opportunity is to have the labour in place to support it.”

The study summarized overall hiring conditions in B.C. and compared province-wide data to Northern B.C. and the Lower Mainland, using a *Hiring Difficulty Index* that aggregated metrics on labour market tightness, immigration, mobility, worker experience and labour supply. Each metric was created by the Skills Table based on proprietary data, and all reports contain breakdowns of each metric.

“Labour Market Information is critical data for employers, and decision makers who recognize its value can gain a competitive edge,” said Robert Stromdahl, North Coast Area Manager, Western Canada Marine Response Corporation. “For employers in Northern B.C., having information on our region’s distinctive labour outlook is a big asset.”

A retiring workforce is noted as the primary cause of job openings in B.C., and the resulting loss of experienced and seasoned workers will challenge employers. From a regional perspective, the index shows the Lower Mainland is poised to experience the most difficulty filling job openings overall from 2019 to 2023. Boom and bust cycles forecasted for Northern B.C. reinforce some challenges hiring workers over the next 10 years, with declines of the total number of jobs in some years.

For new labour supply, there will be a greater reliance on workers from other occupations than on immigrants. Most immigrants will continue to arrive in the Lower Mainland first before moving

elsewhere in the province for work. Distinctive to this year's findings includes greater labour mobility from other provinces which can be linked to the economic downturn in Alberta.

Individual reports will be available for the 52 occupations, and five sectors in Northern B.C., the Lower Mainland, and B.C. as a whole, providing a uniquely high level of detail on these occupations. The project was funded by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program, which aims to address current and future skills shortages.

The forecast is developed based on quantitative and qualitative information from industry and government, and is a valuable tool for employers to assist with their staffing and resource planning. Low, moderate and high economic scenarios were examined and the moderate scenario was used as the base case for the forecast.

The forecasts are available on lmionline.ca, a central portal for data and studies about the current and future labour market in B.C. and western Canada.

Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table

The Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table is a non-profit, regional partnership between labour, business and education/training institutions. Our mission is to ensure the Asia Pacific Gateway has enough people with the right skills and training to meet its needs.

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