



# POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FUTURE SKILLS

**BUILDING A STRONG AND RESILIENT WORKFORCE**

**FALL 2023**

*Building a brighter future with more opportunities, so everyone in B.C. can thrive, is at the heart of every action our government takes.*

*We need to make sure people are ready to seize opportunities and build a good life in British Columbia, and employers are able to find the people who drive our economy forward and deliver the services we all rely on.*

*This spring, we introduced the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan. It's an ambitious \$480 million plan to equip people to succeed in our changing economy and close the skills gap employers are facing.*

*On top of this, Budget 2023 funds more beds for students, doubles student loan maximums, and expands training for health care workers.*

*These investments will give people the skills they need to thrive in our growing economy and build a strong and resilient workforce that is ready for any challenge.*



**HONOURABLE SELINA ROBINSON**  
**MINISTER OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FUTURE SKILLS**

## Key Accomplishments

- » **StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan:** Released this spring, the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan is a cross-government plan that is working to make education and training more accessible, affordable, responsive, and relevant to help prepare the people of B.C. for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- » **Health Career Education:** Government provides more than \$200 million annually for health education programs at public post-secondary institutions throughout B.C. Key investments include expanded doctor, nursing, and allied health seats across the province, and opening a new medical school on Simon Fraser University's Surrey campus.
- » **Building more student housing:** Government is taking action and addressing housing challenges by building thousands of new student beds throughout B.C. Students need access to affordable on-campus housing so they can focus on their studies instead of their finances and reduce the demand for in-community housing by students. As of August 2023, 7,766 new student housing beds are open or being built. Through the Homes for People action plan, we now have an elevated goal - to build 12,000 new student beds throughout the province.
- » **Creating more tech spaces:** As part of the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan, the government is investing \$74.7 million over three years to create 3,000 new tech-relevant spaces so more people can train for good jobs, as well as the clean, innovative economy of the future. This is on top of the 2,900 student spaces created over the past six years, for a total of nearly 6,000 new tech-relevant spaces in B.C. since 2017.
- » **Provincial Tuition Waiver program:** Since the Provincial Tuition Waiver program was launched in September 2017, eligible youth have had access to post-secondary education programs at B.C.'s 25 public post-secondary institutions, the Native Education College, and 10 union trades training institutions – all tuition-free. The program has benefitted approximately 2,300 learners to date, and participation is expected to continue to increase as the StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan expanded the program to all former youth in care, regardless of age, effective fall 2023.

## Workforce Readiness

- » **StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan:** This bold, transformative plan will accelerate talent development and skills training across the province – investing \$480 million over three years to support people and businesses across all sectors of the economy.
- » **Future skills grant:** The new grant will increase access to skills training by reducing financial barriers to British Columbians seeking new skills by providing them with up to \$3,500 to cover the costs of tuition for eligible short-term skills training. These training opportunities will give people the new skills they need to succeed in their existing professions or a new profession. There are over 400 training opportunities available through B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions.
- » **Health Career Education:** Government is training more health care professionals so all British Columbians can access the care they need.
  - » **New nursing seats:** In 2022, our government announced 602 new nursing seats at colleges and universities around B.C. – adding to the approximate 2,000 existing nursing seats in the province.
  - » **More allied health seats:** In July 2022, our government announced 322 new allied health seats in targeted areas. Expanded programs range from medical laboratory technology to pharmacy technician to social work.
  - » **More medical seats:** Training new family doctors in B.C. is a priority for this government. That is why in fall 2022, government announced 40 new undergraduate medical education seats along with 88 new residency seats at the University of British Columbia's faculty of medicine, which will be phased in throughout the province beginning in 2023.
  - » **New medical school in B.C.:** The Ministry is also working in close partnership with the Ministry of Health to launch a new medical school at Simon Fraser University in Surrey as part of our expansion of the health sector workforce.

## Affordability

- » **BC Access Grant:** The BC Access Grant helps those who need it most – low and middle-income students. As of September 2023, more than 65,000 students have received over \$105 million in funding through the BC Access Grant.
- » **Increasing student financial aid:** Interest-free student loans have saved British Columbians millions of dollars since 2019. Effective August 2023, the government is increasing financial assistance available to students from \$110 to \$220 per week for single students and from \$140 to \$280 per week for students with dependents – the first increase to weekly student loan maximums since 2006.



## Trades Training

- » **Skilled Trades Certification:** We are working with SkilledTradesBC to implement Skilled Trades Certification that will support better paying, steadier work to attract more people to the trades, and help employers find the workers they need to build a stronger B.C. Certification is underway for seven electrical and mechanical trades, with three additional automotive trades beginning in 2024.
- » **Trades Education:** SkilledTradesBC manages more than 100 trades programs in B.C., 49 of which are Red Seal programs.
  - » SkilledTradesBC expects to fund about 27,000 apprenticeship and foundation training seats this year at public, non-public, and Indigenous institutions.
- » **SkilledTradesBC pre-apprenticeship trades training:** Since 2019, government has invested \$10 million annually to prepare Indigenous people, women, persons with disabilities, and other equity-seeking groups for jobs and apprenticeships in trades.