



# LET'S GET YOUTH TO WORK!

Homebuilder Initiative  
Guide for Employers



Homebuilders  
Initiative



CANADIAN  
HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Homebuilders  
Initiative

[careerintrades.org](http://careerintrades.org)

## WHY

Work Experience programs are beneficial to both the students and the employers. For the employer, in a trend of declining interest in the trades, it provides leads to students who are passionate to learn more about the industry. It also can help shape the future of the company. For the student, it provides exciting hands-on experience working with a growing and positive company. The students work at different sites, with different team members at different levels of experience, which can guide the student into what avenue of employment they would like to pursue after finishing their education. This is a great opportunity to provide an opportunity for mentorship and supporting the next generation of tradespeople!

Many of us came up through apprenticeship or helping in our family business. Outreach to our local high schools and supporting students adds to a diverse and healthy workforce!



# BENEFITS

As an employer interested in building a work-experience program, the benefits include:

- Give back to the community.
- Elevate and invest in your company's future.
- Create a platform for other companies to follow.
- Teach, grow and mentor future team members to work to your standards.
- Give students help in finding their passion for the trades.
- Reduced training costs by accessing grants and subsidies.

The important details and schedule that you implement will ensure success for both the employer and student.

The goal is to get youth excited about the trades, and for them to consider the construction industry as a viable career path, preferably staying with your company. The time you spend planning and then executing will pay off tenfold.

## HOW

We suggest talking to your team in the summer about goals for staffing for the following year. Many subsidies and grants come out in the Fall to access summer student subsidies. Talk to your team and focus on the benefits of building the next generation of team members for your company!

- Match your strategy to your core values and beliefs – what is important to you?
- Keep safe work and mandatory site orientations top of mind – check out WorkSafeBC for great information on working with students or young workers. [Training and orienting young](#) and new workers is a regulatory requirement and is part of your overall health and safety program.
- Ensure you follow the BC laws around hiring young people – typically, they need to be at least 16 years old to work in construction.
  - [Hiring young people.](#)
  - [Hazardous work for youth rules.](#)
- If you are hiring a student through Youth Work in Trades or Work Experience program through the school, they are excluded from the age requirement:
  - (1)[The Act](#) does not apply to any of the following:
    - (a) a student who is employed, by a board as defined in the *School Act* or by an authority as defined in the *Independent School Act*, to work at the secondary school where the student is enrolled;
    - (b) a student enrolled at a secondary school under the supervision of a board as defined in the *School Act* or an authority as defined in the *Independent School Act* in a work study, work experience or occupational study class;
- Approach the work experience program with purpose. Recognizing a student shadowing onsite will require resources, and with a pre-determined plan, has the potential to yield better results for everyone. It's a great idea to talk to the whole team about bringing on a young worker and get everyone on board with mentoring and supporting the new team member. If this is done through the school, this is part of the school's requirement for work experience and Youth Work in Trades. The career teacher can be a support to the employer through the development of a training plan (even if it's just a week!)



- Expose youth to as many different work sites and projects as possible while ensuring safe work practices are noted for any changing hazards.
- Mix fun into the work week to show a work life balance. Engage your new workers in social events that bring the whole team together!
- Engage in tangible, results-driven tasks in addition to site cleaning or packing.
- Consider connecting with the young workers' parents/guardians if appropriate – ensure the new worker knows their parents/guardians are welcome to reach out with any questions or concerns.
- Ensure your employee manual, safety manual and other documentation is up to date and notes orientations and safe work practices.
  - Consider adopting HR policies and procedures that are best practices in construction like [Builder Code](#).
  - Get your welcome package ready for your student including manuals, logins to your time keeping software and more – this may be the student's first experience with a role in a company, so give some time to help them onboard successfully.
  - Consider an extended onboarding day to cover safety including the right to refuse unsafe work, young worker orientation, visiting different sites and covering any questions that may come up. Cover items like hours of work, pay day schedule, upcoming social events, Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee meetings, vacation time, how to request time off, expectations and phone list. Encourage your new team member to ask questions – especially around issues of safety.
- Provide a thank you package for the student including some company swag as well as reaching out to local suppliers to partner with you to provide some small tools. Give the young worker some direction on how to list their experience with your crew when updating their resume.
- If your young worker is still in school, check in throughout the year – bring them up to date on any projects they worked on, let them know how Georgie awards season went and answer any questions.
  - Reach out around tax time with information on grants and more.
  - [Tax subsidy for employment expenses](#) for employed tradespeople.
- Support your new worker by pairing them with another team member.
  - Take the time to introduce the two of them and cover some basic check in questions – we suggest pairing them with a team member that they do not directly report to.
  - Set reminders to ask the team member to check in with the new worker with some standard questions like:
    - How are things going?
    - Anything you see you have questions about?
    - Any suggestions or input?
    - Are you feeling safe physically and emotionally?
    - Any issues you would like to bring up?
    - Any good news?
  - Start off the first week right! Give your new worker a personal phone call at the end of their first week or consider taking them for lunch to connect directly.
  - Connect the new worker with their regional Skilled Trades BC Apprenticeship Advisor – they can support your new worker in registering for their apprenticeship and connecting with school.
  - If your new worker will be staying with the team, help connect them with [schooling options](#).

- If the young worker is not a good fit for your team, connect them with other options:
  - Other CHBA BC member companies who are hiring.
  - STEP BC – [Skilled Trades Employment Placement](#).
  - [Skills Ready](#).
  - [SkilledTradesBC](#) Apprenticeship Advisors.

## How to find your next amazing team member

Students start looking for summer opportunities in January/February. Consider bringing on students for Spring break to see if they would be a good fit for Summer.

### Tips for finding summer students

- Start early – January and February is a great time of year to reach out!
  - Call your local high school and talk to the career counsellor, work experience coordinator or shop teacher – let the school know you are looking for your next great team member and often you get referrals directly.
  - Reach out to [SkilledTradesBC - Connect with a School](#) to see a list of the schools around you and the person at the school to contact.
  - Offer to speak to a trades class at the school.
  - Attend job fairs, opportunity fairs or other events – they typically happen in the Fall and Spring.
  - Ask to post your open job at the counselling office – email a PDF and they will post it.
  - Ask for resumes for the applications – if you don't hire a student, give them other resources like STEP-BC to continue their trades career exploration.
- Senior High School students, recommendations of those that participated in the Spring Break program enrolled in vocational program.
- If you have a successful summer student funding application, ensure to post the job per the agreement with the Federal government.
- Let your local school know you are looking for summer students – be clear if you have expectations like requiring a driver's license or other things of that nature – please remember all young workers in construction need to be at least 16 years of age.
  - If you are hiring students through Youth Work in Trades or school Work Experience programs, they do not need to be 16.
- Network! Do you have friends with teenage students? Do your kids have friends who may be interested? Get the word out!

### Timing

- Outreach to schools: March 2025, post spring break. Work Period: July – August.
- Students will probably want to take some time for a holiday, so plan for a 6-week work period.

### Wages/grants

- Summer work is a paid position usually starting around \$20.00 per hour.
- Grants are available to help cover student costs, giving the opportunity to expose them to a variety of jobs, without ramification to your clients.

# NEXT STEPS

Are you looking to help build the next generation of tradespeople? The great news is that there is a lot of support of your company to foster the next skilled trades team member!

1. Discuss the plan with your team in detail – get the team on board mentoring your next great tradesperson!
2. Consider welcoming students for Spring break (refer to other document?)
3. Look at the timeline for grants and subsidies for training.
  - a. The most significant funding source for supporting a summer student is the [Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy](#) – this typically opens in November and closes in mid-January. This form goes to local MP office for approval, you can see your [local priorities](#).
  - b. Sign up for [BC Employer Training Grant](#) – this grant will support your new team member as well as your whole team with grants for apprenticeship and other training including safety, business management and more.
4. Sign up for Skilled Trades BC and grant platforms – this process can be tedious and may take more time than expected so it's great to take this step well in advance of any funding dates.
  - a. SkilledTradesBC – [sign up to be a sponsor](#) if you are not already.
  - b. Sign up under [MyCRA for business](#) for business for access to your account to sign up for accessing the Grants and Contributions Online Services.
  - c. [Create BCeID account](#) in order to access BC Employer Training Grant.
5. [Access tax credits](#) for registering apprentices and completion of schooling levels – Apprenticeship job creation tax credit. Let your accountant know about this tax credit and you can download the report requirements from the SkilledTradesBC online portal.



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