



Toronto **Community**  
**Benefits** Network

# CAREER TRACK IN CONSTRUCTION: Identifying Skilled Workers

Through a Standardized Apprenticeship  
Readiness Curriculum and Transparent  
Employment and Apprenticeship  
Tracking System

West Park  
HEALTHCARE CENTRE

WEST PARK HEALTHCARE CENTRE

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# BACKGROUND







**C**ommunity Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are increasingly being utilized in government procurement to facilitate inclusion of all residents in the economic benefits of publicly funded infrastructure investments. For example, CBAs now in progress in Toronto — Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Finch West LRT, Casino Woodbine and Westpark Healthcare Centre — all have a requirement for ten percent of all trade or craft working hours to be performed by apprentices or journey persons from historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups. These and other CBAs across Ontario are supported by policies at all levels of government.

The Province of Ontario's Bill 6, *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015* laid the foundation for community benefits on major infrastructure projects. In view of developing regulations for this policy, the Province announced in November 2017, the Building Better Lives: Ontario's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan which confirmed five community benefits pilots: Finch West LRT, West Park Healthcare Centre, Macdonald Block Reconstruction, Halton Region Consolidated Courthouse, and Thunder Bay Correctional Complex.

The City of Toronto's Community Benefits Framework, adopted in 2019 with further amendments in 2021, aimed at supporting access for Black,

Indigenous and equity seeking groups. The city will strive to achieve a ten percent equity target in construction projects procured by Purchasing and Materials Management Division over \$50 million, and Housing Now projects. The 2021 Federal Budget passed on June 14 has a \$102.4 billion growth plan that includes \$960 million over three years to help train and reskill people to help the workforce grow and meet demand, ensuring that "forty percent of supported workers are from underrepresented groups, including women, persons with disabilities and Indigenous people."

**Despite these policies, regulations on how to implement each policy have yet to be developed. The City of Toronto's efforts are notable in this regard. In 2021, City Council approved funding to hire internal staff expertise to develop implementation guidelines for its Community Benefits Framework. The province is expected to follow suit in developing recommendations pending review of the five community benefits pilots they have established.**



# 2 RATIONALE





While the agreements already signed for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Finch West LRT, Casino Woodbine, and Westpark Healthcare Centre have required that targeted hiring occur, in 2020, reports on progress in hiring were below target, signaling the need for a reliable pathway for well-prepared candidates that is acknowledged and validated by contractors, subcontractors, unions and community.

In fulfilling its role to negotiate and support the implementation of these agreements, Toronto Community Benefits Network and its stakeholders encountered numerous obstacles that hindered the development of such a pathway. Anticipating more construction projects with CBAs, TCBN partnered with Ontario Construction Secretariat, Metrolinx, contractors with signed CBAs, unions and pre-apprenticeship training centres to draw attention to these obstacles and create a reliable pathway, through a community-led, collaborative action research project,

**Career Track in Construction: Identifying Skilled Workers through a Standardized Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum and a Transparent Employment and Tracking System.**

The Career Track in Construction Project addressed the need for research, development, and testing at a very local level of the key components that comprise the

workforce-to-contractor recruitment pathway. This pathway was described as essential to the success of Community Benefits Agreements in Atkinson Foundations' report - *Community Benefits in Practice and in Policy: Lessons from The United States and United Kingdom*.

**The 2016 study indicated that a “workforce development pathway is in development for Metrolinx which could have wider applicability for all construction projects” but the design of this pathway did not take into consideration the complexities of all the key stakeholders that would continue to impede access for historically underrepresented groups to well-paid jobs in unionized construction.**

The Career Track in Construction project faced these complexities by engaging a broad range of stakeholders to investigate best practices, make recommendations, and propose solutions that can benefit future projects with community benefits agreements in GTA and Ontario. The complexities that TCBN and the stakeholders took on and addressed are described on page 11, the first page of the System Issues section.

# 3 DESCRIPTION







## GOALS

### Research, design and test workforce development strategies that:

- Support construction employers with Community Benefits Agreements to find, hire and retain workers from underrepresented groups with the skills they need
- Ensure underrepresented groups participating in pre-apprenticeship programs for construction trades are work ready and follow pathways to employment that support progress in employment and the timely completion of their apprenticeships.

## OBJECTIVES

### Research, design, and pilot three following systems:

- Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum
- Marketing, Intake and Referral Partnership
- Employment Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation System

## ACTIVITIES

### Phase 1: Preliminary Research and Model Development

Research conducted from April to September 2020 by Prism Economics and Analysis consisted of a literature review and environmental scan, and consultation with stakeholders that involved twenty-six interviews and six focus groups. Based on the research, prototypes were designed

and validated for the apprenticeship readiness curriculum, marketing, intake and referral partnership pathway and the employment tracking, monitoring and evaluation system. Relevant references to other jurisdictions' approaches to the key themes of curriculum, marketing and tracking are to be found in the Literature Review prepared for this project by Prism Economics & Analysis.

### Phase 2: Action Research Pilot and Evaluation

Prototypes for the three systems were piloted between October 2020 and June 2021.

The Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum consists of an outline for 199 hours of instruction, and 60-80 hours of online instruction with lesson plans, presentation materials, a facilitators guide, guest speaker guide and learner's portfolio and handbook. It was reviewed by 11 organizations providing pre-apprenticeship programs, piloted by five organizations - Humber College, Labour Education Centre, TNO, Building UP, and Redwood HVAC for Women, and tested with thirty-two participants.

The Marketing, Intake and Referral Partnership Pilot incorporated findings from the Phase 1 Literature Review and Environmental Scan and TCBN's outreach, intake and referral systems and tools. The pilot included refining and promoting TCBN's Employer Portal, a database driven, password protected website that hosts a Ready





to Hire List of work ready candidates. It also included an assessment and snapshot analysis of 48 candidates that became employed during the pilot phase to determine effective marketing, intake and referral strategies.

The Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation System Pilot consisted of 29 candidates recruited as research participants who completed a monthly survey and phone follow-up

regarding their employment status and experiences on the job and in apprenticeship. They also participated in bi-monthly focus groups to discuss success stories, common challenges, solutions, and recommendations for all stakeholders — government, contractors, unions and community. Twenty-six participants completed the full term of their engagement with the Tracking Pilot.





# 4 FINDINGS





The existing literature on community benefits refers to various recruitment and employment systems developed for community benefits agreements in other jurisdictions. However, at present in the complex environment of the unionized Construction industry in Ontario there is no robust employment and apprenticeship completion pathway for underrepresented groups. While the Community Benefits Agreements in GTA have required that targeted hiring occur, a reliable, standardized pathway for skilled candidates that is acknowledged and validated by contractors, subcontractors, unions and community remains to be built.

## 1. SYSTEM ISSUES

Further complicating the environment,

- Both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathways are under review by governments as recent studies have shown that results for employers hiring new apprentices, the numbers of registered apprentices and apprenticeship completions are lower than desired.
- Unions are not included in Community Benefits Agreements although they have a major role in who gets hired and who becomes a registered apprentice.
- Only some unions and contractors are implementing best practices that result in increased hiring of underrepresented groups, welcoming work environments and increased diversity and inclusion within apprenticeships and their workplaces.
- Current CBA implementation plans do not provide a mechanism for tracking individuals who have been referred and hired for employment opportunities provided through CBAs. Reports from contractors on hiring outcomes from CBAs do not provide information on direct referral sources, demographics, and retention of specific underrepresented groups.
- The most recent consultations on improving the apprenticeship system — Auditor General's Report on EO and the 2018 "A Stronger Apprenticeship System in Ontario" — made recommendations that would tweak problematic components of the existing systems, but never touched on how well the systems of major stakeholders worked together: contractors, sub-contractors, unions and community-based pre-apprenticeship providers.
- This project brought these issues to the attention of the major stakeholders. TCBN worked closely with them to conduct the research and develop prototypes for the systems necessary to achieve a skilled workforce from our local, diverse population.



## 1. SYSTEM ISSUES

The Ministry will not be able to solve these systemic and pervasive issues on its own. There needs to be a whole of government approach. The recommendations this report provides are important steps requiring policies and practices to fulfill the promise of community benefits. At its core, Community Benefits Agreements are about ensuring more equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workforce of an industry that has historically excluded Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

While the Ministry does not have control of the collective bargaining process between employers and unions, it does have a mandate to ensure safe, fair, and harmonious workplace practices that are essential to the social and economic well-being of the people of Ontario. There are already a variety of government policies which require employers, associations and other stakeholders to acknowledge and uphold workplaces free of sexual or racial harassment, human rights legislation, and addressing substance abuse. Those policies are often reinforced in tender documents and contract language that binds clients, contractors and subcontractors to meet certain expectations.

The Ministry for its part, for example, can set the tone during collective agreement negotiations by providing neutral collective bargaining data,

research and analysis, or in its calls for proposals when funding third party organizations through a number of grant programs.

Experience has shown that simply having a CBA with a general contractor or consortium does not guarantee that either the letter or the spirit of the policy is implemented by the many subcontractors on a project, whereas if everyone involved signs on to a common framework there is greater commitment by decision-makers at all levels of the project.

The literature review emphasized the importance of early and continued involvement of the local community in the entire life cycle of community benefits agreements. Several reasons were cited for this such as building relationships and gaining knowledge of the community where recruiting will occur, as well, having important concerns raised on possible negative impacts of the build on local communities.

TCBN's members have experienced both positive and negative impacts of building projects in their local communities but because they have been informed and involved early in the various stages of the local CBAs, contractors are aware of the challenges and are open to resolving them.

Community organizations and equity seeking groups do not always have



## 1. SYSTEM ISSUES

an accurate perspective regarding the procurement and negotiation of major public infrastructure projects. That is because the traditional way of procurement and negotiation of major projects excluded the community entirely, often leaving those most vulnerable at the greatest risk from the consequences of developments. Even recently, despite the implementation of a CBA for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, no thought or provision was considered within the agreement for the Black-owned businesses and livelihoods displaced or destroyed by this project.

Research on best practices (CARDUS Report on Community Benefits Agreements) identifies “community consultation and consensus as a defining key element of CBAs.”

A Mowat Centre report states: “For community benefits to be successful, communities can and must be meaningfully engaged and involved in all stages of the process.” (Mowat Centre Engage & Empower: Defining and engaging community in Ontario’s community benefits initiatives).

Academics are producing models describing community engagement. For example, Life Cycle of Community Benefits, (Fausto Naterelli, York University) illustrates the timelines and outcomes to be obtained through community engagement at each phase of a building project.

Foundations such as Atkinson Foundation, Metcalf Foundation and United Way Greater Toronto, along with top level contractors such as AECON and EllisDon, and unions, are accelerating opportunities for local citizens to learn about, participate in and benefit from building inclusive local economies. They are doing so because they understand the benefit of transparency and the power of informed citizens to build a better economy for all.

Researchers and academics reviewing the literature on community benefits both in Canada and other jurisdictions, have emphasized that there are different models for implementing CBAs such as top down, with the impetus coming from government and foundation leaders, bottom up through community-organizing coalitions, and a hybrid approach which is most common in Ontario and Toronto.

In Toronto, a coalition of community, labour and foundations’ organizing and local advocacy preceded and then, through further advocacy, achieved provincial and municipal supports.

Toronto’s model is a citizens’ response to decades of child poverty and polarization of incomes disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities. It was intended to create access to employment opportunities in a growth sector of an economy

## 1. SYSTEM ISSUES

where those most vulnerable to poverty became even more vulnerable following the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the economic damage, gentrification and displacement of Little Jamaica business district was not prevented, there is now a high level of awareness and education among

community members who are ready to revitalize the area.

There is also greater interest and focus among Torontonians about procurement and negotiation in public infrastructure projects in communities where the next round of projects with CBAs are expected — such as Scarborough and Downsview.



## 2. APPRENTICESHIP READINESS

Careers in trades are in significant demand. Jobs are available now and retirement is looming for many.

However, there is a shortage of qualified workers that hints at two specific problem areas: the supply of potential workers and the retention of qualified apprentices. Many barriers and challenges exist that 1) prevent potential workers from getting into a construction-related pathway and 2) may cause them to drop off at any point of their journey.

These barriers are exacerbated for members of equity-seeking groups and people experiencing economic disadvantage. Pre-apprenticeship programs were created to mitigate some of these issues and to expand access to apprenticeship training. However, it is estimated that only 25 to 30 percent of participants who complete a pre-apprenticeship program go on to become registered apprentices. The above is especially relevant in the context of Community Benefits Agreements and hints at a broken funnel from community engagement to on-site work.

Throughout our consultation, the industry stakeholders, both contractors and trades unions, emphasized that their industry needs people who are prepared for a complex and demanding workplace, have excellent essentials skills, and are reliable workers.

Apprenticeship training is meant for people with no prior training in the trades. It is in fact marketed as a viable post-secondary stream to learn and develop skills. It's promoted as an earn while you learn option.

Up until recently the industry has populated itself through a tightly regulated system of family and personal referrals.

Supplying the industry with workers from underrepresented groups after generations of exclusion requires not only presenting the opportunity but exposing and preparing those interested to the conditions and expectations of the workplace.

TCBN made an extraordinary effort in partnership with its community and labour members to reach out to the community to inform them of the opportunities resulting from the newly announced negotiated agreements. This took the form of our Ready to Build program that offered: bus tours of construction projects and union training centres; information sessions about trades that took place in the communities where the building projects were in progress; a Women in Trades conference and tour of trades training facilities, to view the shops and engage in hands on with tools. These efforts continued until the Covid-19 pandemic and were transformed to online training that despite restrictions, allowed people to prepare and be hired.



### 3. MARKETING, INTAKE AND REFERRAL

**F**rom a historical perspective, the challenges of implementing CBAs are like the issues the industry has addressed over past decades around safety, building codes or quality assurance.

In each of these areas there was resistance to embracing measures which today are seen as standard practice. It is a journey in which different industry champions stepped up at different points on the way.

At present, there is similar resistance with industry concerns that there is additional risk transfer to the private sector, added responsibilities for Project Co, additional requirements or costs on bidding, and delays in completions. While there may be a fear of this happening, there is no incidence of a contractor citing that community benefits have led to delays in completions or increased project costs.

Dina Grazier in her 2018 research report on Community Benefits for York Region indicated that costs for implementing community benefits should be considered “as a cost of doing business, much like any other technical specification in a tender”. These costs are shared by a cross section of stakeholders that include government, procurers, and groups participating in a coordinated workforce pathway, as well as

contractors. Any new policy requires a change management process, which can take some time, human resources and money to implement initially. To minimize costs, it is essential for the government to provide a clear blueprint with necessary tools for the general contractor, subcontractors, unions and community partners who are the key stakeholders tasked with implementing the policy.

CBA’s do not change apprenticeship ratios or work processes — they simply ensure that there is a fair opportunity for historically underrepresented groups to access job opportunities.

As in the past, today many associations and some unions are now understanding that the future workforce they hire will be diverse, and industry leaders are seeing that the requirements for equity hiring targets in the present Toronto-based CBAs are the steps that help to address systemic racism.

Similarly, it is becoming clear to the industry that the current way of doing business has a cost in the negative impression that has occurred about jobs in construction trades, and the acknowledged racism in the sector.

There is already a cost in the reputational risk to the sector with continued appearance of nooses on job sites, as exposed in the media



### 3. MARKETING, INTAKE AND REFERRAL

during 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While there are some additional costs to contractors in learning about and supporting a community benefits agreement, they should be considered 1) alongside the cost savings to industry from historical practices of recruiting from personal and family networks, which are now drying up, and 2) along with the current cost savings to industry that are absorbed by taxpayers through the financial support provided by several Ontario government ministries and even federal departments for pre-apprenticeship programs. They are providing funding for workforce development initiatives that attract, engage, and prepare members of groups underrepresented for jobs in unionized trades to enter an apprenticeship. This funding is directed to community groups, social enterprises, colleges and construction union training centres that are providing apprenticeship awareness and pre-apprenticeship programs, along with hands-on and experiential learning opportunities that produce workers who meet contractors' needs.

In the midst of the industry struggling to assess the cost benefit analysis of being required to acknowledge the need for change, the industry now acknowledges that new strategies are

required to retool their recruitment processes.

In working to assist the sector to meet hiring targets in CBA projects, a marketing plan and hiring portal was deemed to be useful to non-union and union employers, with a ready-to-hire list of job ready candidates.

Also recommended were two other elements: a Recruitment Resource Guide for Trade Contractors and Unions to understand the purpose and benefits of the CBAs; and collaboration among contractors, sub-contractors and unions to promote community benefits employment opportunities in construction trades to community service providers, and community members through numerous channels including various media and in-person activities.

The marketing strategies piloted in Phase 2 of the project revealed that 87 members of underrepresented groups were hired for major infrastructure and other building projects associated with companies that are signatories to the CBAs.



## 4. TRACKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The CBA literature identifies monitoring progress and publishing the results as essential elements in administering a CBA (Gross, 2002; Van Yerman & Ditta, 2017; Yalnizian, 2017; Graser et al., 2018). However, the literature acknowledges that this is a particular area of weakness for many CBAs. Galley comments that “data quality concerns are a major preoccupation of post-implementation oversight bodies”. Graser et al. observes that “failure to collect the required data — on the contractor’s part or the owner’s part — has been the Achilles’ heel of community benefits approaches in many areas”. Four examples where monitoring and tracking were identified: 1) The Vancouver Olympic Village, 2) Scotland’s “Community Benefits in Public Procurement”, 3) United States, Labour Compliance Programs and 4) the Ontario Government’s Contract Wages Act, enacted but not yet implemented.

While initially there was an attempt to develop a centralized and standardized CBA employment tracking and evaluation system, this never materialized and instead, CBA projects in Ontario have relied on the general contractors of each project to establish their own tracking processes and provide quarterly and annual reports. This has resulted in current practices being siloed and incomplete due to:

- Lack of consensus from one project to the other on the metrics to be tracked and reported
- Gaps in data sharing between unions, subcontractors, general contractors and the client/owner
- Low participation rate in self reporting race-based demographics
- Inconsistent reporting from subcontractors who hire 80 to 100 percent of the construction workforce
- Obscure reporting structures which hinder public transparency and accountability

Despite this, monitoring and tracking has been undertaken with varied but encouraging results from the current projects in Toronto with CBAs. Reports on diverse hiring, social procurement expenditures and neighbourhood/ and environmental improvements are produced quarterly and annually, by the contractors for Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Finch West LRT, West Park Healthcare Centre, and Casino Woodbine. The systems now in place still need improvements: they have yet to capture disaggregated demographic data, and progress of those hired from job to job and through the apprenticeship system, nor do they gather information of individuals’ experiences of welcome and respect on the job.



## 4. TRACKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

With new CBAs underway for transit and other public infrastructure projects, there is an opportunity for the Ministry to lead by dispelling the issues that have arisen and investing in a robust tracking and evaluation system to measure progress of the industry on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Based on this pilot and a recommendation from the literature review, we recognized that the community could play an important role in capturing the desired information to augment the current reporting provided by contractors. There is value in a community intermediary collaborating with contractors and unions to capture information that adds value to what they are already providing, for example, a community intermediary can administer surveys and phone check-ins to capture progress directly from those hired through community referrals.

The issue of compliance from subcontractors was identified by Crosslinx Transit Solutions early on, and Crosslinx has since been working closely with subcontractors to rectify the situation. Once identified, Metrolinx put in place measures to ensure that Project Cos building the Finch West LRT and the Hurontario Line understood that the accountability for compliance with targets extends to subcontractors.

To rectify this issue for future building projects with community benefits agreements, our report recommendations address the need for greater clarity in the agreement language about roles and responsibilities of stakeholders whose activities contribute to achieving the outcomes, specifically that “Owner/Clients, Contractors, Subcontractors and Construction Unions and Community Intermediaries need to be signatories on the CBA and CBA Program Plans.” These recommendations concur with those found in the recent CARDUS Report that states

**“Agreement language and provisions must be clear and predictable to all parties. There should be no doubt as to what will constitute success in outputs, outcomes, and impact. Further, all parties and stakeholders must have their roles and responsibilities well defined and agree to them.”**

There are employers who have always resisted compliance measures going back since the first building codes were adopted, the first Fair Wage policies, the first safety laws, and standards for trades qualifications. It is because of this reality that enforcement measures are necessary. The gradual implementation of the internal responsibility system for construction health and safety was achieved over many years with a



## 4. TRACKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

culture shift that drew from best practices, combined with penalties applied to those who were slow or resistant to embracing this vital shared responsibility.

The Government of Ontario has produced The Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism, also known as Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has similarly approved demographic data collection for both Code and non-Code grounds.

Both provide guidelines to be followed in the collection of demographic data, and with KPMG, have developed a practical guide to collecting demographic data that is designed specifically for use by human resources professionals, human rights and equity advisors, managers and supervisors, unions, and any other people or groups considering a data collection project.

The challenge is that there are presently no levers being exercised to ensure that this data is captured, despite its importance to the overall purpose and goals of community benefits agreements.

Furthermore, the data capture of demographics is only one element of the monitoring and evaluation

framework that was originally proposed to capture job retention, progress towards apprenticeship completion, pay increases and experiences of welcome and respect in the workplace.

What is needed is a tracking and evaluation system that is holistic and allows all the stakeholders to be a part of it — client/owner, contractor, subcontractors, unions and pre-apprenticeship and employment service providers and the individuals who must give their consent to be tracked.

Here is where the Ministry can take leadership and set the tone, while offering financial and technical support to the stakeholders to build consensus on a mutually agreeable tracking and evaluation framework, that all stakeholders can have confidence in, and to develop and implement it. One that is grounded in the Government's accountability to help eliminate systemic racism and promote racial equity.



# 5 OUTCOMES



## PRODUCTS

### PHASE 1:

- Literature Review and Environmental Scan: Best Practices in Community Benefits Agreements and Workforce Development for Under-represented Groups in Construction Industry
- Stakeholder Consultation Report
- Marketing Plan Framework
- Outline and Instruction Resources: Standardized Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum
- CBA Identifier Tracking System - Framework for Monitoring & Evaluation of CBA Goals
- Community Benefits Framework Recommendations

### PHASE 2:

- Report on Pilot of Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum
- Report on Marketing, Intake and Referral Partnership
- Report on Pilot of Employment Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation System
- Template: Participant Intake and Referral System
- Template: Apprenticeship and Employment Tracking Surveys



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SYSTEM CHANGE

- Once a CBA is negotiated, establish a Community Benefits Working Group (CBWG) early on to guide planning, marketing, and implementation of the CBA; design a Community Benefits Program — the agreed upon approach to fully realize the community benefits specified in the Community Benefits Agreement, and select and support an agreed upon Intermediary.
- Enhance Community Benefits Agreements to improve employer access to diverse workers.
- The foundation for successful CBAs to be built into the Union Project Agreements, and Community Benefits Program Plans.
- Owner/Clients, Contractors, Sub-contractors and Construction Unions and Community Intermediaries to be signatories on the CBA and CBA Program Plans.
- The Community Benefits Working Group provides detailed knowledge to stakeholders of jobs required, skills, and supports needed to allow matching jobs to qualified candidates.
- Clear pathways related to the hiring of labour to be determined within the Community Benefits Plan and stakeholders notified as early as possible.

### MARKETING, INTAKE AND REFERRAL

- Pre-determine and define clear pathways and marketing plan in the Community Benefits Program Plans for service providers to refer job seekers, for employers/unions to recruit members of target groups and for members of target groups to access employment opportunities.
- Community Intermediary, Contractor, Sub-contractors, and Construction Unions to collaborate to promote community benefits employment in construction trades to community service providers and community members through numerous channels, including media and in-person activities.
- Create and use a centralized web-based process for each community with CBA Projects to promote the current and projected jobs and contract opportunities available through Community Benefits Agreements, with links to listings of all projects with CBAs across Ontario. Provide information relevant to different stakeholders, for example schedule of the trades, a job board, ready to hire list of workers, business case for diversity, and sources of financial support.
- Ensure welcoming environments and mentorship by coworkers is provided.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### APPRENTICESHIP READINESS

- Service providers have access to a customizable Apprenticeship Readiness program that prepares job seekers to meet common standards for entry level work in construction.
- Invest in continuous improvement with new content and more practical tasks that build confidence and readiness to work in the trades.
- Invest in various ways for delivering the content including self-paced learning supported by a Learning Management System (LMS) platform.
- Hire a training and subject matter expert who can create and deliver a train-the-trainer program to build capacity of facilitators to deliver the program to a common standard.

### TRACKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Within all phases of the procurement process, provide contractors with information about CBAs, including hiring targets.
- Ensure that submissions include commitments to community benefits that reflect the requirements outlined by owner/clients and relevant government policies.
- Ensure that confirmed contractors, sub-contractors and their associated

unions include language within their submissions about recruitment strategies for diverse workers, a skilled trade dispatch process for diverse workers, and tracking, monitoring, and compliance requirements.

- Establish monitoring and tracking plan and system, coordinated by a community intermediary, with input points from all stakeholders.
- Ensure measurement of all signatories' progress in implementing the CBA program and achieving hiring targets. Summarize disaggregated demographic data on individuals hired, based on target groups.
- Capture the socio-economic impact of the CBA on individuals hired, from intake to apprenticeship certification.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY FROM PARTICIPANTS (APPRENTICES/ LABOURERS)

- Minimize gaps in income that occur through jobs ending, block release training, etc.
- Find alternate ways to deliver block release training: as shorter training segments, online, evenings.
- Eliminate toxic workplace behaviour and practices by enacting



## RECOMMENDATIONS

measures that result in positive work environment: train leaders, site managers and supervisors and have enforcement mechanisms.

- Provide more information and support for an online centralized system for apprentices to collect and track their hours of on-the-job training towards completing their apprenticeships.
- Conduct regular check-ins with apprentices to see how they are experiencing welcome, respect and fairness on the job site: what they are learning, how opportunities are being assigned.
- Provide more transparency regarding timing and requirements of union intake process.
- Make sure new apprentices have basic training from their unions.



# 6 CONCLUSION





**F**indings from the Career Track in Construction Research and Pilots suggest that there is opportunity in Ontario for CBAs to achieve their social goals of job creation for diverse and/or underrepresented groups while supporting the Construction sector in addressing labour supply challenges. However, co-creation and shared accountability among government, industry and community are foundational to the success of fulfilling the CBA.

Guided by the research findings, prototypes were designed by TCBN and validated and enhanced by Career Track Stakeholders during the Consultation Phase, leading to the development of an Apprenticeship Readiness Curriculum, a Joint Community Benefits Marketing Strategy and an Employment Monitoring and Tracking System.

Some key recommendations have emerged from this research:

- Brand Integrity — workplaces with DEI practices that create welcoming environments have a better track record with recruitment, placement, and retention.
- Apprenticeship Readiness — curriculum and programs must teach construction site realities, develop

essential skills and intangible skills as well as provide career exploration, job experience and wraparound supports.

- Tracking the Journey — Community based intermediaries like TCBN that have relationships of trust with candidates are integral to CBA monitoring and tracking.

Further, our volunteers in our Tracking Pilot, those with the lived experience as candidates for construction apprenticeships and employment, were direct and pointed regarding the need for employers and unions to do more to eradicate racism and gender discrimination, bullying and harassment in their organizations and on the job site.

This research is not exhaustive and there is a need for further study into systems and tools, like Client Management Systems to help fulfill the recommendations for a Monitoring, Tracking and Evaluation System that can incorporate the relevant metrics of all key stakeholders that measure progress of apprentices. Additional research is also needed to capture the social return on investment of Community Benefits Agreements using current and historical data.

# 7 REFERENCES







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