

# **SOCIAL SERVICES LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH PROJECT AGGREGATED DATA**



Funding provided through the Canada-British Columbia  
Labour Market Development Agreement.



**THE FEDERATION**  
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC



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## DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of its author(s) and not the official policy or position of the Government of British Columbia.

# 1. OVERVIEW

This Social Service Sector Labour Market Research Project seeks to highlight and explain the recruitment and retention challenges facing BC's community social services sector. This report discusses those issues and presents solutions that involve all of the various stakeholders within the sector—the community social services organizations themselves, government funders, post-secondary institutions, unions, as well as foundations and other funding bodies. This project was guided by the following research questions:

- ▶ What is the current state of employment in BC's community social services sector?
- ▶ What labour market data is needed to fill in the gaps of what we know about the community social services sector in BC?
- ▶ What are the recruitment and retention issues within the community social services sector in BC?

To answer these questions, this project employed a mixed-methods approach (a literature review, statistical profiles, surveys, interviews, and workshops) to collect meaningful data from diverse groups of individuals working in the sector (including both Strategic Leaders and Frontline Workers). The project involved participants and community social services organizations from across the province, inclusive of large and small employers, non-profit and private structures, union and non-union workers, and within northern, rural, remote, and urban communities.

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

To gain insights into organizational capacity, education and training needs, and the recruitment and retention of both paid employees and volunteers, the project team conducted Key Informant interviews with leaders in the community social services sector. These Key Informants included, but were not limited to, Executive Directors, Chief Executive Officers, and other designated leaders from service-providing organizations.

These individuals were selected from member organizations of the Federation of Community Social Services of BC. Federation member organizations were chosen as the sample because of their existing relationships with project staff and readily available data about their organizational size, geographic location, and the scope of their programs and service delivery. From this pre-existing data, the project team was able to verify that the Key Informants interviewed represented a wide range of organizations from different subsectors, geographic regions, and with different organizational structures and sizes.

Invitations to participate in the interview process were sent to 100 social service organizations across the province in April of 2019. A total of 54 organizations responded to the interview requests. Interviews were conducted over the phone with

Key Informants or their designated representatives. The Key Informant data collection ended on May 31, 2019. The questions used in the interviews are included in the appendices of this report.

## **STRATEGIC LEADERS WORKSHOPS**

To learn more about organizational capacity, education and training needs, the recruitment and retention of staff and employees, as well as investment priorities and labour market needs of the community social services sector, the project team facilitated eight workshops with Strategic Leaders from the sector.

The goal of these workshops was to enhance and contextualize the information collected through the Strategic Leaders Survey through group dialogue. Hosting these workshops also allowed us to incorporate the views of sector leaders whose roles were not necessarily running service-providing organizations (e.g., leaders of umbrella organizations or post-secondary institutions). The same approach was not taken with Frontline Workers due to the difficulty of having direct service workers take time away from their positions (e.g., many programs require a certain amount of face-to-face time, backfilling for staff is challenging).

The Strategic Leaders Workshops were based around a facilitation guide of four open-ended questions. Strategic Leaders participating in the workshops included the following.

- Executive Directors
- Chief Executive Officers
- Other designated leaders from service-providing organizations
- Leaders of provincial umbrella organizations representing service providers
- Other sector leaders such as volunteer board members and “Key Informants” that participated in the interviews discussed above
- Representatives from post-secondary institutes and research organizations
- Individuals with a long history in BC’s social services sector

In the spring of 2019, invitations to participate in the workshops were sent to over 160 organizations throughout the province using The Federation’s network and communication channels. It was requested that recipients circulate the invitations as widely as possible. Since the invitations to participate in the Strategic Leaders Workshops were distributed using both direct outreach and snowball methods, it is not possible to discern the exact number of invitations that were received.

In response to these outreach efforts, 82 people registered and a total of 51 people participated in the eight workshops. The organizations that participated in the process represented various geographic regions and ranged in size, populations served, and industry subsectors. Workshops were held in eight different communities across the province: Kelowna (4 participants), Nelson (8 participants), Terrace (3 participants), Fort St. John (6 participants), Prince George (9 participants), Nanaimo (6 participants), Surrey (4 participants) and Richmond (11 participants). In some instances,

the participants represented service delivery organizations from surrounding or neighbouring communities. The workshop data collection ended on May 31, 2019.

## **STRATEGIC LEADERS SURVEY**

In April and May of 2019, the project team circulated an online survey to the member organizations of The Federation of Community Social Services of BC and other social services organizations (including umbrella organizations, advocacy groups, research bodies, and post-secondary institutions). The survey was specifically designed for the Strategic Leaders, defined as individuals with titles such as Executive Directors, Chief Executive Officers, and other designated leaders from service-providing organizations.

This survey consisted of mainly closed-ended questions with an option to provide additional comments. To generate a higher response rate, the project team utilized a snowballing technique and asked survey recipients to share the survey links with their colleagues in other organizations. The Federation also sent out reminders promoting the survey as part of their weekly updates to members. A total of 90 Strategic Leaders responded to this survey. The data collection ended on May 31, 2019.

## **FRONTLINE WORKERS SURVEY**

In addition to the Strategic Leaders survey, the project team also conducted an online survey of Frontline Workers to better understand their experiences and needs. This survey was also distributed to the member organizations of The Federation of Community Social Services of BC and other social services organizations (including umbrella organizations, advocacy groups, research bodies, and post-secondary institutions). Organizations were asked to share the survey with all of their paid employees.

This survey consisted of mainly closed-ended questions with an option to provide additional comments. To generate a higher response rate, the project team utilized a snowballing technique and asked survey recipients to share the survey links with their colleagues in other organizations. The Federation also sent out reminders promoting the survey as part of their weekly updates to members. A total of 774 Frontline Workers responded to this survey. The data collection ended on May 31, 2019.

## 2. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

*Please note: The questions below begin with Question 2 because the first question was confirmation that the Interviewee agreed to participate. Responses listed for open-ended questions are paraphrased samples that represent common sentiments.*

### 2. What is the name of your organization and your position within the organization?

*Please note: we asked for organization names for follow-up only; participants were assured that information would only be presented in aggregate to ensure anonymity.*

#### Positions:

- ▶ CEO managing, services, programming)
- ▶ ED ▶ Quality assurance and privacy officer
- ▶ Director (financial, strategic projects,

### 3. Which region, city or community does your organization serve in BC?

Mainland/Southwest region	26 (36.6%)
Vancouver Island/Coast	12 (16.9%)
Kootenay	9 (12.7%)
Thompson-Okanagan	9 (12.7%)
Northeast	9 (12.7%)
Cariboo	4 (5.6%)
North Coast & Nechako	2 (2.8%)

### 4. What types of programs and services does your organization offer? (Please select all that apply.)

Counselling and life skills programs	39 (72.2%)
Mental health services	30 (55.6%)
Employability programs and community integration services	26 (48.1%)
Residential care facilities	25 (46.3%)
Residential and day support programs for persons with disabilities	23 (42.6%)
Child care and early childhood development programs	23 (42.6%)
Emotional behaviour therapy	22 (40.7%)
Counselling for sexually-abused persons and their families	21 (38.9%)
Programs and services for Indigenous youth and their families	20 (37.0%)
Housing	20 (37.0%)
Crisis intervention programs	16 (29.6%)

Support groups for persons with addictions and substance abuse	14 (25.9%)
Literacy and language skills programs	12 (22.2%)
Transition houses	12 (22.2%)
Respite care homes for persons with developmental disabilities	10 (18.5%)
Emergency shelters for homeless families, men, women, or youth	10 (18.5%)
Immigrant settlement support programs	6 (11.1%)

**Other (Please specify):**

- ▶ Early intervention
- ▶ Youth justice
- ▶ Senior services
- ▶ School readiness for youth program
- ▶ Transition to independence for youth
- ▶ Community action program for young children
- ▶ Restorative justice
- ▶ Home support services
- ▶ Recreation and leisure services for people with intellectual disabilities
- ▶ Services for people with acquired brain injuries
- ▶ Therapeutic recreation programming
- ▶ Social enterprises
- ▶ Adult guardianship programs
- ▶ Benefits and pension administration
- ▶ Rapid rehousing settlement counsellors
- ▶ Hospice and palliative care/end of life care
- ▶ Transitional shelter programs for Indigenous people
- ▶ Alternative school education support
- ▶ Youth transition homes
- ▶ Non-emergency food security
- ▶ Foster parent support
- ▶ FASD-Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder- key worker
- ▶ Insured living
- ▶ Homelessness prevention
- ▶ Support group for families with non-status
- ▶ Community gardens
- ▶ Supporting temporary foreign workers

**5. Which population groups are served by your organization? (Select all that apply.)**

Adults	44 (81.5%)
Youth	44 (81.5%)
Men	41 (75.9%)
Women	41 (75.9%)
Children	41 (75.9%)
Family	37 (68.5%)
LGBTQ	36 (66.7%)
First Nations	35 (64.8%)
People with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities	34 (63.0%)
Métis	32 (59.3%)
Seniors	31 (57.4%)
Immigrants and refugees	21 (38.9%)
Inuit	19 (35.2%)



**6. Which of the following industry sub-sectors does your organization belong?  
(Please select all that apply.)**

Individual and family services	34 (63.0%)
Other residential care facilities	22 (40.7%)
Residential developmental handicap, mental health & substance use facilities	21 (38.9%)
Vocational rehabilitation services	20 (37.0%)
Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services	15 (27.8%)
Child day-care services	7 (13.0%)
Home health care	3 (5.6%)
Community care facilities for the elderly	2 (3.7%)
Nursing care	1 (1.9%)

**Other (Please specify):**

- ▶ Non-medical home care
- ▶ Community integration
- ▶ Supported independent living
- ▶ Counselling and support services
- ▶ Women's shelter
- ▶ Child and youth mental health services
- ▶ Community inclusion support
- ▶ Home share
- ▶ Parenting programs, foster care programs, support for other caregivers

**7. What is the type of your organization?**

Registered charity/non-profit	47 (87.0%)
Private company	7 (13.0%)
Don't know	0 (0%)

**8. Is your organization a unionized workplace?**

Fully unionized	23 (42.6%)
Partially unionized	8 (14.8%)
Not at all unionized	23 (42.6%)
Don't know	0 (0%)

**9. In your view, how has the level of demand for the services of your organization changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
18 (33.3%)	29 (53.7%)	6 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Overall population growth and the reduced stigma around issues like mental health, addiction, and intimate partner violence
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Needs of their clients becoming more complex with more and more people experiencing multiple, interconnected challenges (e.g., mental illness, addictions, food insecurity, precarious housing).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Organizations are increasingly playing a role as community “anchors” in their community (both in urban) where an extended family may not be accessible and in rural communities where those resettling, searching for employment, or working temporarily may not have roots or social connections
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Been keeping pace with demand through continuous and intentional efforts to grow and expansion of the services they provide.

**10. In your view, how has the level of your organization’s capacity changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
6 (11.1%)	22 (40.7%)	14 (25.9%)	11 (20.3%)	1 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Purposeful recruitment of more highly qualified staff, the fostering of strong partnerships with post-secondary institutions (to facilitate increased numbers of practicum students), and the recruitment of additional supervisors to support internal organizational development
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Highlighted the importance of things like creative community development projects, increasing the range of services they provide, and actively pursuing funding through grant writing and proposal submissions. However, these respondents acknowledged that such activities required significant administrative support and staff time.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) While some areas of their organization have seen growth, other areas (mainly administration) have been outpaced by both the demand for their services and increased governmental reporting and accountability requirements.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Limited financial compensation their organizations can offer and the short-term nature of many contracts.

**11. In your view, how has the level of difficulty for planning for the future changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
16 (29.6%)	17 (31.5%)	13 (24.1%)	3 (5.1%)	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.4%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* Increase to changing government priorities, philosophies, and procurement practices which combine to create uncertainty within the sector.
- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* Organizations experience periods of fluctuating and unpredictable demand as well as short-term contracts and funding which combine to keep them in a position of relative scarcity; makes it difficult to plan or strategize and to recruit and retain staff.
- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* Those from non-unionized organizations also reported a high level of uncertainty around their ability to recruit and retain staff in the future as a result of the recent low wage redress (which may cause workers to leave their non-unionized positions for jobs at unionized organizations).
- ▶ *(Response: About the Same)* Because their focus was on planning and consulting with the service user community and keeping services grounded in the expressed needs of the people who will be accessing them.
- ▶ *(Response: About the Same)* Noted was the value of resources that have allowed them to focus on developing their infrastructure.
- ▶ *(Response: Lower/Much Lower)* Recently completed strategic planning, infrastructure and programming reviews

**12. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to obtain funding from the government or other organizations changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
11 (20.3%)	24 (44.4%)	16 (29.6%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* The process of applying for funding is a barrier for many organizations: smaller, grassroots service providers often lose contracts to for-profit companies or larger province-wide non-profits due to their relative lack of administrative or structural capacity—even when those smaller organizations are well-positioned to respond to client need
- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* This exacerbated when new reporting and accreditation requirements are not covered or acknowledged by the funding.

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Some participants have also observed a trend where multiple contracts are awarded to single large providers
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Lack of flexibility in funding structures once contracts are obtained: little if any ability to be innovative or adjust to meet the changing needs and complexities of their clients; most contracts have no funding for ancillary costs (e.g., additional training, creative recruitment efforts, information technology)
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Less funding was available from other organizations: attributed to general economic conditions (i.e., businesses that were able to support services in the past are no longer able to do so)
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) While continue to receive funding, those funding levels have not responded to the increased cost of living and the growing demand for services in their communities
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Diversified their organizations' income through advertising and/or the creation of social enterprises (both of which require substantial resources to implement).

### 13. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to obtain funding from individual donors changed compared to 3 years ago?

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
5 (9.3%)	7 (12.9%)	24 (44.4%)	2 (3.7%)	1 (1.9%)	7 (12.9%)

#### Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Great community relations, however doing so requires high level of effort including staff and promotion methods, shifting priority areas of potential donors.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Cost of living, people have less money to donate.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) So many funding cuts, we are all competing for same money.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Regular sponsors but not sure will last long.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Don't specifically solicit donations: resource intensive.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Challenging with changing demographics.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Staff resources dedicated to fundraising, social enterprise, and getting better at "telling our story,"

#### 14. What share of your organization's total revenues are derived from the following sources:

	FEDERAL GOVT	PROVINCIAL GOVT	LOCAL GOVT	FIRST NATIONS	OTHER ORGS	PRIVATE GIFTS	EARNED INCOME	OTHER
# OF ORGS	24	53	14	3	21	26	19	8
% OF ORGS	44.4%	98.1%	25.9%	5.6%	38.9%	48.1%	35.2%	14.8%
81-100%	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0
61-80%	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
41-60%	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	0
21-40%	1	6	3	1	3	0	1	0
1-20%	20	1	11	2	18	26	16	8
0%	30	1	40	51	33	28	35	46

#### 15. In your view, how has the level of difficulty in the recruitment of paid employees changed compared to 3 years ago?

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
23 (42.6%)	20 (37.0%)	10 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.9%)

#### Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Low wages, the lack of benefits, and limited retirement packages (compared to for-profit organizations or other sectors like health or education) were most commonly cited factors.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Many young people are no longer entering the sector because they have made significant investments into their education and are looking for long-term career prospects and a reasonable work-life balance (including dependable schedules).
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Fewer people are willing to work odd hours, overnights, and weekends in increasingly complex and demanding service environments without proportionate compensation or job stability.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Short-term nature of many contracts, stress levels, and the (at times) unsafe nature of the work were other factors cited as making recruitment and retention increasingly difficult in the social services sector.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Those in non-unionized organizations also explained that they expect to experience further increases in difficulty with recruitment since they will be unable to offer competitive wages. Many spoke to the flexibility afforded by non-unionization in terms of other benefits like organization-specific flex hours and asserted that the failure to acknowledge the equal nature of their staff's capacity (to union workers) is discriminatory and divisive.

- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) It has always been a challenge (poorly qualified candidates).
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Same as three years ago but still extremely difficult.

**16. In your view, how has the level of difficulty in the retention of paid employees changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
23 (42.6%)	20 (37.0%)	10 (18.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.9%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Workers may stay for a few years and then move on to other positions with more competitive wages, benefits, and job stability (especially the more highly qualified staff). Employees don't see the sector as offering long-term career opportunities because they cannot raise a family and keep pace with the rising cost of living on the wages offered (especially in the Metro Vancouver area)
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Due to a shortage of those with the necessary qualifications and experience, organizations sometimes have to recruit people who are not sufficiently familiar with the type of work they are hired to do. These employees are more likely to leave if the demands of the job deviate significantly from their expectations and/or if resources for additional support are not available. Participants reiterated that social service work can be incredibly taxing and that burnout is a serious issue in the sector.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Another issue relates to wage increases for unionized professionals in the social service sector. Non-unionized and partially-unionized agencies are experiencing changes in their retention capacity because their staff, despite demonstrated competency in the field, anticipate a relative decline in their earnings if they remain where they are. This is especially striking in partially-unionized organizations because staff who are working together receive different compensation. In some agencies, this has led to an increase in workers opting for part-time hours so as to engage in private practice or other for-profit sector work.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Attributed creating an environment that supports and nourishes the growth and development of employees. Examples of this included robust mentoring programs, attractive extended benefits packages, mental health support, and a focus on transparency and communication across the organization so that workers feel they are involved and valued.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) The one person who indicated lower noted that they struggle to keep staff after training them because they move to government.

**17. In your view, how effective has the existing external education and training programs been in fulfilling your organization's needs?**

VERY EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	INEFFECTIVE	VERY INEFFECTIVE	UNSURE / NO OPINION
2 (3.7%)	14 (25.9%)	20 (37.0%)	10 (18.5%)	6 (11.1%)	2 (3.7%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ *(Response: Effective/Very Effective)* More Key Informants rated external education and training programs as effective if their organizations had close geographic proximity to and/or strong relationships with post-secondary institutions. Participants whose organizations had these collaborative relationships especially benefited from practicum student programs.
- ▶ *(Response: Effective/Very Effective)* Participants whose organizations did not have these relationships were more likely to have new graduates enter the field with good theoretical understanding but without preparation for the practicalities of working in the social services sector.
- ▶ *(Response: Effective/Very Effective)* Several Key Informants also stressed that orienting and training new employees will always require a certain amount of time and that all workers need to gain experience in the sector, even if their educational programs included practicums.
- ▶ *(Response: Neutral)* Depends on where you are located, what programs organizations offer, and many interviewees would.
- ▶ *(Response: Neutral)* Still require on the job training.
- ▶ *(Response: Neutral)* Have programs but people not taking because of low sector wages.
- ▶ *(Response: Ineffective/Very Ineffective)* Local post-secondary cancelled undergraduate program and now only offer post-graduate.
- ▶ *(Response: Ineffective/Very Ineffective)* Not enough so do in-house train-the-trainer.
- ▶ *(Response: Ineffective/Very Ineffective)* Not enough time to liaise with post-secondary institutions (on either side).
- ▶ *(Response: Ineffective/Very Ineffective)* Not enough Indigenous knowledge included.
- ▶ *(Response: Ineffective/Very Ineffective)* Courses don't always match needs, graduates could use more interpersonal skills.

**18. Are there, if any, positions in your organization where external existing education and training programs have been insufficient? If yes, which occupations have insufficient existing external education and training programs?**

- ▶ Behavioural consultants that work with children with special needs
- ▶ Mental health clinicians
- ▶ Early childhood educators
- ▶ Specialized residential care



- ▶ Counsellors
- ▶ Employment specialists
- ▶ Children and people with autism
- ▶ Social workers

*Several participants reported that while they could not specify a position where education and training programs have been insufficient, many incoming employees demonstrate general unpreparedness in terms of job expectations, resilience, and workload management.*

**19. Does your organization offer education and training for your staff? If yes, what types of education and internal training programs are offered?**

Child and adolescent development	Motivational interviewing
Diversity and cultural competence	Clinical record-keeping
Non-violent crisis intervention	Specific mental health interventions
Lateral violence and bullying	Trauma-informed practice
Positive behaviour support and self-determination	Safety measures and emergency protocols
Outcomes management	Personal life planning
Administration of medication	Naloxone
First Aid	Art therapy
Clinical consults	Managing vicarious trauma
Workshops on grief and grieving, and strategies for working with loss	Other workshops specific to program areas

*A majority of Key Informants reported that their organizations offer education and training to their staff, though many noted that the degree to which they are able to do so is dependent upon available funds. Most respondents said their organizations offer standard orientation to all new staff during a probationary period. Several organizations contract out such training, while others have a professional development budget for each staff member or for staff members collectively (between \$400 to \$1200 per staff member per year). The training methods used by organizations varied but included face-to-face, webinars, groups, external facilitators, and self-directed learning.*

**20. In your view, which occupations have been growing in demand in your organization compared to 3 years ago? (Please select all that apply.)**

Social and community services workers	34 (63.0%)
Managers in social, community, and correctional services	22 (40.7%)
Family marriage, and other related counsellors	19 (35.2%)
Social workers	16 (29.6%)
Senior managers	15 (27.8%)
House keepers and other related occupations	14 (25.9%)



Early childhood educators and assistants	14 (25.9%)
Home support workers	13 (24.1%)
Employment counsellors	12 (22.2%)
Instructors of persons with disabilities	9 (16.7%)

**Others:**

- ▶ Family resources staff
- ▶ Board members
- ▶ Registered nurses and licenced practical nurses
- ▶ Clinical supervisors
- ▶ Those with social enterprise and/or business skills
- ▶ Accountants
- ▶ Human resource personnel
- ▶ Speech-language pathologists
- ▶ Occupational therapists
- ▶ Child and youth mental health and addictions counsellors

**21. In your view, how has the level of skill and education required for positions in your organization changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
5 (9.3%)	24 (44.4%)	22 (40.7%)	1 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.7%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can (e.g., what positions had an increase or decrease in the skill and education requirements; the types of education and skills requirements that have increased demand).**

- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* Two main reasons for this change— funders requiring higher levels of worker qualifications and the increasing complexity of the work being done. Participants explained that Frontline Workers must provide services to clients who are often grappling with multiple, compounding issues. In some subsectors (particularly in residential care and multi-service community-based care) staff are increasingly serving clients with specific health support needs which require additional and specialized skills and training.
- ▶ *(Response: Higher/Much Higher)* Need to continually improve assessment, intervention and case management skills in response to the compounding issues facing service users
- ▶ *(Response: About the Same)* Those Key Informants who thought the level of skill and education required has remained about the same as three years ago asserted that the service landscape has always been relatively demanding. Several Key Informants also emphasized the importance of having workers with both educational credentials and hands-on experience in the communities they serve.

**22. Approximately, how many volunteers does your organization currently have?**

Number of volunteers	Number of organizations
0	13
1 – 9	15
20 – 39	10
40 – 59	5
60 – 79	2
80 – 99	1
100+	8

**23. In your view, how has the number of volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
3 (7.5%)	8 (20.0%)	22 (55.0%)	7 (17.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) "Knowledge philanthropists" as volunteers who are not service specific volunteers (lost because of lack of ability to supervise volunteers).
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Part of national or regional volunteer programs, or have volunteer program support including coordinators.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Organization doesn't require more than current number of volunteers.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Lack management capacity to supervise volunteers.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Cost of volunteer insurance prohibits adding additional volunteers.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) Recruiting and retaining volunteers is more challenging than it used to be.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) Increased economic pressures make volunteering less plausible for many.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) Existing volunteers are aging and fewer younger people want to volunteer.

**24. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to retain volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
1 (2.3%)	6 (13.6%)	30 (68.2%)	2 (4.5%)	1 (2.3%)	3 (6.8%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) People “aging out” (been happening longer than three years, been an ongoing issue), people busy and need paid employment.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Harder to find skill sets that match placement needs
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Just as difficult as it was three years ago.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Ongoing issue with people being busy.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) No problem with board members but services require skill requirements increasing (eg. higher medical related now so only board roles or because programs are unionized).
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) We have staff resources for volunteers.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) Work with educational organizations for recruitment and working parameters of students, paid staffing to coordinate/support volunteers.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) The capacity to administer and coordinate volunteer programs is a critical factor in the recruitment of volunteers.

**25. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to recruit volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
3 (7.5%)	9 (22.5%)	21 (52.5%)	2 (5.0%)	2 (5.0%)	4 (10.0%)

**Why do you think this? Please be as specific as you can.**

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Fewer people to draw from, people too busy, safety processes deter people from volunteerings.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Need volunteer position.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Grappling with regulatory restrictions vital to client safety can make running volunteer programs more demanding than beneficial.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Always been difficult to recruit board members.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Not actively recruiting due to lack of resources.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Have dedicated staff, keep volunteers engaged, good community relationships.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) People too busy, aging pool and younger not replacing them.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) The ability to maintain constant volunteer numbers or recruit additional volunteers is directly linked to the existence of dedicated staff for volunteer coordination and supervision.
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) A lack of sufficiently skilled volunteers, particularly for clients with complex issues, was cited as a factor in volunteer retention.

**26. Do you have any other comments that you would like to share with me today?**

Many comments about low compensation and related inequities increasing with recent low wage redress, including union/non-union disparities.

### 3. STRATEGIC LEADER WORKSHOPS

*Please note: The background information on participants is based on the research team's knowledge of participants as well as information arising during the discussions. The presentation of the workshops data aligns with the four questions used to guide the workshop discussions. The data is presented according to themes emerging. Responses listed for open-ended questions are paraphrased samples that represent common sentiments.*

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### Workshop Participant Titles

- ▶ Executive Directors
- ▶ Chief Executive Officers
- ▶ Other Designated Leaders
- ▶ Other designated senior staff

##### Participant Organization Types

- ▶ Community Social Service Providers
- ▶ Research Organizations
- ▶ Provincial Umbrella Organizations
- ▶ Post-secondary Institutions
- ▶ Other (e.g. individuals with a history of working within the community social services sector of BC)

*A total of 51 participants attended workshops held in eight communities in May 2019.*

##### Workshops Locations

51 Strategic Leaders in 8 workshops: Kelowna (4), Nelson (8), Terrace (3), Fort St. John (6), Prince George (9), Nanaimo (6), Surrey (4) and Richmond (11).

##### Regional Participation

North Coast & Nechako	3 participants	3 communities
Northeast	6 participants	2 communities
Cariboo	9 participants	4 communities
Thompson-Okanagan	4 participants	2 communities
Kootenay	8 participants	3 communities
Vancouver Island/Coast	6 participants	3 communities
Mainland/Southwest	15 participants	8+ communities

*Seven umbrella organizations were represented in the workshop.*

## Population Groups Served

- ▶ Children, youth and families
- ▶ Indigenous people
- ▶ Seniors
- ▶ People with diverse abilities
- ▶ LGBTQ2 communities
- ▶ Newcomers

## Industry Sub-Sectors Served

- ▶ Friendship centres
- ▶ Community development
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Criminal justice
- ▶ Adults
- ▶ Gender-based
- ▶ Mental health and substance use
- ▶ Post-secondary institutes
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Family resource programs
- ▶ Community living
- ▶ Neighbourhood houses
- ▶ Volunteer centres
- ▶ Delegated aboriginal agencies
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ School districts
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Training

## WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

### 1. How does external education and training that are currently offered address your organizational needs?

#### Topic: Access to Education and Training

- ▶ Not all communities offer post-secondary education; particularly challenging for northern, rural and remote communities: travel distances, climate/weather, insufficient resources to cover costs.
- ▶ Courses needed not always offered (lack of applicants).
- ▶ Lack of computer access for online studies; unreliable internet connectivity for online courses in northern, rural and remote communities.
- ▶ Satellite campuses don't always offer training matching needs of communities served.
- ▶ Not enough courses applicants: sometimes courses offered do not meet communities' needs.
- ▶ Lack of graduates: low wages, lack of benefits, cost and personal investment required for credentials, generational shift in working expectations (need for organizational consistency among staff and younger people wanting opportunities to have extended times away from work) coupled with a seeming lack of interest in the sector.

#### Topic: Quality of Learning

- ▶ Some graduates entering field have been excellently prepared from post-secondary institutions and many job applicants and new staff have certification but not actual skills required.

- ▶ Questions about level of training and qualifications of teachers within private-sector institutions and alignment between accreditation and standards.
- ▶ Online learning was welcomed but question how to meet needs of “practical” experience.
- ▶ Desire for more training and education (professional development) through non-post-secondary institutions (e.g. issues specific conferences, workshops).
- ▶ Invest time and resources into training staff who often leave for better wages (training ground for others).

**Topic:** Areas where more training needed

- ▶ Specific training for Indigenous staff (e.g., Indigenous staff running Indigenous programs); also acknowledge and to increase understanding of Indigenous knowledge as a credential (“organic knowledge”).
- ▶ Leadership: need more sector-based leadership training.
- ▶ Specialized clinical skills.
- ▶ More interpersonal and person-centred skills development including for those in management (including administrative), information technology and financial roles.
- ▶ Language skills for newcomers (more opportunities needed).
- ▶ Indigenous knowledge training should be mandatory within education and training programs.
- ▶ Increasing complexity of work creating disconnect between the education or training available and the skills or knowledge required to do the work; prefer to hire people with direct community service experience than new graduates (e.g., how to respond to the complex challenges faced by people accessing services—autism, fetal alcohol syndrome, mental health and substance use).
- ▶ Information Technology.
- ▶ Presentation Skills and Audio Visual Tools.
- ▶ Administration and financial management.

**Topic:** Organizational Capacity

- ▶ Main barriers to accessing any education, training and ongoing professional development offered due to financial limitations (main barrier): difficulty backfilling positions; heavy workloads and lack of time to resource training; some cannot take advantage of free training due to other related costs.
- ▶ Travel and accommodation costs especially for those travelling from northern, rural and remote communities.
- ▶ Must find funds from budget savings or find extra funding; some communities try to collaborative organize but must do it “off the sides of our desks”.
- ▶ Some are able to provide training through online or train-the-trainer programs however, still requires additional funding.
- ▶ Sector-developed programs are considered valuable opportunities and yet few organizations have resources to access.
- ▶ Affects ability to hire new graduates who require additional or specific training.

### **Ideas Arising:**

- A common theme was to have opportunities to build on and develop relationships with post-secondary institutions: positive experiences with graduates was noted when institutions consult with social services organizations on curriculum development (one example involved the creation of programming about Indigenous knowledge).
- Create competency assessment for those employees who have years of experience in the sector but who do not have traditionally recognized credentials.
- Multi-program organizations: perhaps better to be able to provide their own tailor-made training than expect post-secondary institutions to be able to meet the complexity of needs.
- Maintain a base-line competencies learning in post-secondary institutions and strengthen those skills with longer practicums and hands-on experience emphasizing relationship-building.

## **2. What are the key issues surrounding recruitment and retention of paid employees in the community social services sector in BC?**

### **Topic: Compensation**

- Low wages, wage inequity, lack of benefits, lack of retirement plans.
- Competition for qualified workers with government, health authorities, larger organizations, post-secondary institutions, for-profit sector, social service organizations in other provinces, and (especially in the interior and northern communities) the trades/resource sectors.
- Wage disparity between sectors and within organizations exacerbated by recent low wage redress: different funding levels by different governments and ministries (e.g. early years, transition house workers, anti-violence counsellors, and community living workers).
- Some workers' classifications receiving higher compensation than their managers; also hinders ability to recruit, retain, orient, supervise, and support other workers.

### **Topic: Generational Shifts**

- Disconnect between young/newer and older/experienced workers in transfer of knowledge.
- Younger staff prefer short-term work or request absences (ie., leaving the job and then returning).
- Younger staff don't stay long; once fully trained move to higher paying jobs.
- Need to research resources to address changing demographics, e.g. support for older workers who wish to remain working in the sector and understand apparent "generational shift."

### **Topic: Geography and Diversity**

- Difficulty recruiting staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.



- Pay equity issues for First Nation organizations, e.g. federal contracts often lower paying than provincial or health authorities.
- Qualified newcomers to Canada face issues with credentialing.
- Low wages vs. high cost of living.
- Need for language skill supports for otherwise qualified newcomers.
- Lack of community infrastructure and/or housing in northern, rural and remote communities (examples: lack of quality education, public transportation, social services (e.g., support for those living with diverse abilities, health and medical services (including specialists)).

**Topic:** Organizational Capacity

- Lack of Human Resources supports.
- Internal succession planning is often hindered by leadership administrative responsibilities.
- Snowball effect of high staff turnovers leads to staff burnout.
- Workload volume and financial costs often prohibit organizations from sending staff for external succession planning training.
- Urgent need for more clinical and administrative supervision resources especially with increasing complexity of delivering social care services.

**Topic:** Procurement System (Process)

- Unintentional negative consequences (e.g., one-year contracts) lead to job insecurity.
- Rigidity of funding parameters.
- Lack of consistency among funders including different government ministries—results in some contracts having higher wages than others.
- Concerns with current bidding and tendering processes e.g. one-year contracts, emerging monopolies foster competition within the sector; inability to compete with the private, for-profit sector.

**Topic:** Procurement System (Content)

- Growing trend to fund part-time rather than full-time positions.
- Some people may want part-time jobs, many do not.
- Described as an “administrative nightmare”, requires cobbling together funds from multiple contracts to create one full-time position.
- Northern, rural, and remote communities: recruiting and retaining clinicians and other professionals for one-day per week or casual positions is particularly difficult.
- Some contracts do not account for travel costs or meeting space to meet with clients in rural or remote communities.
- Lack of overhead funding puts added strain on organizational capacity, e.g. no administrative funding yet increased paperwork requirements.
- Described as “exhausting” and damaging to overall health.



- Disconnect between procurement policy and implementation (can often take months to begin) often due to delays with centralized screening hub and criminal records check processes.
- Transportation and vehicle requirements barriers to employment for those who do not have a vehicle or license.

**Topic:** Community Social Services Sector Image

- Perception that Community Social Services Sector is valued less than other sectors like education or health affects recruitment and retention.
- Misperception that Social Services is “charity work” (i.e. done for free).
- Disappearing notion of “social good.”
- Compensation inequities between Community Social Services Sector and other sectors.
- Lack of capacity to promote or increase awareness of the sector.

**Ideas Arising**

- New procurement policies or required training should come with additional financial resources attached.
- Need for government support to enhance and promote public knowledge of the sector (e.g., forestry’s Value Added campaign).
- Implement living allowances for northern, rural and remote communities such as those provided for physicians, nurses, etc.
- Research should be conducted on topics such as cost analysis of rural retention, the number of workers in the sector working multiple jobs, clinical supervision needs, and capacity and (financial) resource comparison with other sectors.
- Need to share the history of the sector, convey the sector’s value to society, and articulate why social service work is a worthwhile occupation.

**3. What are the key issues surrounding recruitment and retention of volunteers in the community social services sector in BC?**

**Topic:** Roles of Volunteers and Volunteerism

- Engage volunteers for seniors’ programs.
- Street Outreach program uses volunteers to do extra activities.
- Fundraising and special events.
- Don’t use for day-to-day operations as much due to increasing complexity of work.
- Crisis lines (usually post-secondary students).
- Boards of Directors.
- Programs that follow a community development model.
- Promotes feelings of connection and value when connecting to community.

**Topic:** Experiences with Volunteers

- Many experiencing dwindling volunteer pool, creates competition between organizations.

- Volunteers need to prioritize paid employment; some community members have to work multiple jobs just to get by (low wages and cost of living)- no time or energy.
- Burnout and volunteer fatigue, particularly in smaller communities, can lead to long-time volunteers ending their commitments.
- Conflict of interest or confidentiality issues can arise when volunteers are shared between multiple organizations, especially in small communities.
- Challenges to volunteer responsibilities and liability (e.g. time to complete criminal records check).
- Generational dynamics, fewer young people volunteering and when do, like short-term, immediate gratification with quick results (action-oriented).
- Some older volunteers now only available seasonally and others described as aging out” (older populations).
- Organizational capacity to support volunteers.
- More volunteers overall preferring one-time events and are less likely to commit to long-term positions.
- School-based volunteer requirements beneficial but reported that students are often too busy for more involved or long-term commitments.
- Corporate volunteers also appreciated; however, organizations have no say over where that portion of the volunteer pool chooses to go or what they want to do; also corporate volunteering is often only for one-time events.
- Matching potential and existing volunteers’ skills and interests with needs of organizations is challenging: some want to contribute to tasks for which they do not have required training or certification, or for positions that require higher degree of supervision than organization is resourced to provide.
- Complexity of the work is increasing and so organizations need to apply any supervision or training resources to paid staff.
- Very few reported no problem with recruiting.
- Some rely on volunteers and have a really solid base of volunteers (have dedicated funding, e.g. Better at Home Programs).
- Some noted only easy for one-time events.

**Topic:** Recruitment of Board Members

- Most describe as extremely challenging especially in smaller communities with no resources for formal recruitment, takes the form of shoulder tapping.”
- No resources for formal recruitment processes.
- Fiduciary responsibilities deter some prospective volunteers.
- Matching skills and interests with organizational needs (certain level of leadership skills and sector knowledge).
- Increasing complexity of issues and increasingly complex organizational structures, a lot more is required of volunteer board members than has been in the past.
- Limited capacity to provide orientation and training for new board members.
- Complex social issues, various service delivery areas, and changing organizational structures all make training for incoming board members increasingly important

(e.g. board governance, relationships between boards, executive directors, and staff, changing social trends).

- Larger organizations with even more complex business decisions.
- Few donors wanting to invest in board development.

#### **Topic: Organizational Capacity**

- Volunteer recruitment is directly linked to overall organizational capacity.
- Organizations with fully funded volunteer support report successful recruitment and volunteer programs.
- Few contracts include resources for volunteer staff.
- Volunteer management requires unique skills and abilities and was described as “resource-intensive.”
- Require resources for recruitment screening, orientation, training, supervision and support (e.g. transportation costs for volunteers especially in northern, rural and remote communities, honorariums).
- Volunteers need to be managed and that requires a staff position and there is no funding for it – we often can’t take on practicum students for the same reason.
- Some post-secondary institutes have difficulty finding placements for students.

#### **Topic: Sector Image**

- Volunteering in the social services sector is not given the same priority as it was with previous generations.
- Discussions about whether the notion of “giving back to the community” has eroded over time.
- The reputation of the sector as a whole as well as the reputation of the individual organization plays a factor in the ability to recruit board members.
- Hard to promote your organization or the sector when have little time and few financial resources.

#### **Ideas Arising**

- Investment from government to increase volunteer capacity (i.e. volunteer management and support).
- Government investment to promote public information about the sector.

### **4. What are top investment priorities for the social services sector that will address the issues around recruitment and retention, and training of staff?**

#### **Topic: Organizational Capacity**

- Funding for administrative functions was identified as a key priority (including to cover the costs of new government initiatives (e.g., Employers Health Tax), escalating administrative costs (e.g., liability insurance).
- Supervision (clinical and practical) was identified as an another investment priority.
- Funding for ongoing learning and professional development.

- ▶ Increased funding for volunteer program management and supports- including for practicums.

**Topic:** Education and Training

- ▶ Need to improve relationship between the community social services sector and post-secondary institutions to ensure better alignment of curricula with the needs of the sector.
- ▶ Forgivable student loans in return for guaranteed practice commitment in designated communities- particularly northern, rural and remote and to include existing residents (i.e., a recruitment strategy similar to physician recruitment).
- ▶ Funding to allow collaborative research between post-secondary institutions and the sector on social issues e.g., mental health and substance use, domestic violence, leadership development).
- ▶ Resources to enable training similar to that of union members as well as colleges and universities and government. Participants from small, rural, and remote communities recommended creating more local and/or regional training opportunities.

**Topic:** Compensation

- ▶ Strongly recommended Investments to remedy compensation inequities within the sector (wages, benefits and retirement plans).
- ▶ Cross-sectoral provincial planning was suggested in many of the workshops as a potential way to resolve wage and benefits disparities between sectors.
- ▶ Create a sector-wide compensation strategy with 2 main goals: look at government's legislated responsibility and financially support organizations interested in conducting own research.

**Topic:** Procurement Process

- ▶ Service quality and recruitment and retention could be improved if organizations were given more autonomy for financial resources (while still acknowledging a need for accountability).
- ▶ Create and fund a labour market research group to look at compensation and procurement.
- ▶ Representation from: community social services sector, senior levels of government (e.g., Assistant Deputy Ministers, Treasury), post-secondary institutions, unions, and WorkSafeBC.
- ▶ Current competitive bidding processes need to be addressed.
- ▶ Any strategies adopted have regional analysis with a focus on pay equity and (especially those from northern communities) look to address disparities between union and non-union wages.

**Topic:** Understanding and Promoting the Community Social Services Sector

- ▶ Provincial awareness campaign discussed to foster better understanding of the community social services sector, challenges, and its value to society—to the

general public, among government staff, and within the sector itself; many feel that even with government the work of the sector not understood or valued; address negative perceptions of the sector (e.g., the belief that social services work is limited to child protection and income assistance provision).

- ▶ History of the sector and roots in social justice needs to be more known: counter impression that as charities, all work should be done for free; perhaps begin early in peoples' lives, in educational system as early as kindergarten, curricula could include stories and information about social services so that people grow up knowing as much about social work as they do about nursing and teaching (and see social work as a viable and valuable career path).
- ▶ Adequate compensation would be excellent way to elevate and promote the value of this work.

**Topic:** Social Conditions

- ▶ Need to address cost of living (especially housing) as a barrier to recruitment and retention.
- ▶ More equitable compensation strategies need to include both a regional and gender lens- include current or co-occurring research and voices of people served in all planning or strategizing.
- ▶ Provide living allowances for northern, rural and remote communities as recruitment incentives (for existing residents as well as potential new ones so that young stay).
- ▶ Dedicated funding towards the research and analysis needs of the sector: aging population, potential federal devolution of programming, resources to organizations to allow them to monitor shifting demographics with eye to knowing when and how respond, better communicate about the value of social services, and more intentional response to diverse and changing needs of communities.

## 4. STRATEGIC LEADERS SURVEY

*Please note: This survey report begins with question #2 because question #1 was to confirm their agreement to participate before continuing. Responses listed for open-ended questions are paraphrased samples that represent common sentiments.*

### 2. What is your current position title within your organization?

Executive director, CEO, director (operations, program, HR, administration, finance), associate director, board member, regional manager, consultant,

### 3. Which region does your organization serve in BC? (Please select all that apply.)

Mainland/Southwest	37 (41.1%)
Vancouver Island/Coast	30 (33.3%)
North Coast & Nechako	16 (17.8%)
Kootenay	14 (15.6%)
Thompson-Okanagan	12 (13.3%)
Cariboo	9 (10.0%)
Northeast	6 (6.7%)

### 4. Which population groups are served by your organization? (Please select all that apply.)

*The percentages provided here indicate the share of organizations that served a particular population group. Many organizations indicated that they served multiple populations which resulted in the high percentages across the categories.*

Adults	76 (84.4%)
Youth	71 (78.9%)
Children	68 (75.6%)
Women	66 (73.3%)
Men	65 (72.2%)
Family	65 (72.2%)
People with physical, mental and developmental disabilities	64 (71.1%)
First Nations	60 (66.7%)
LGBTQ	54 (60.0%)
Seniors	48 (53.3%)
Immigrants and refugees	42 (46.7%)
Métis	39 (43.3%)
Inuit	16 (17.8%)
Other (please specify)	13 (14.4%)

## 5. Which of the following industry sub-sectors does your organization belong to? (Please select all that apply.)

*Please note: We understand that definitions below, which are derived from Statistics Canada, may not be specific and reflective of the language used in the community social services sector. The following categories of industry sub-sectors are based on Statistics Canada's North American Industry Classification System (2012) codes. If your organization does not belong to any of the categories below, please provide your sub-sector in the "Other" option. **See Appendix A for definitions of industry subsectors.***

Individual and family services	60 (68.2%)
Residential developmental handicap, mental health and substance abuse facilities	30 (34.1%)
Other (please specify)	26 (29.6%)
Other residential care facilities	23 (26.1%)
Vocational rehabilitation services	20 (22.7%)
Child day-care services	18 (20.5%)
Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services	17 (19.3%)
Community care facilities for the elderly	5 (5.7%)
Home health care services	3 (3.4%)
Nursing care facilities	2 (2.3%)

### Other:

- ▶ Hospice
- ▶ Respite care
- ▶ Criminal justice
- ▶ Assisted living care for elderly and disabled
- ▶ Support for children and youth with special needs, including autism
- ▶ Home share for adults with disabilities
- ▶ Services for refugee families
- ▶ Social assistance
- ▶ Affordable housing services
- ▶ Legal support services
- ▶ Homes for homeless people
- ▶ Meals on wheels program
- ▶ Research and youth engagement
- ▶ Seniors programs (e.g., Better at home)
- ▶ Child and family therapy
- ▶ Victim services
- ▶ Pediatric physiotherapy/occupational therapy
- ▶ Infant development
- ▶ Child care resource and referral program
- ▶ Harm reduction and health services
- ▶ Youth services/youth in transition services (e.g., suicide prevention)
- ▶ Elder abuse prevention
- ▶ Services that address domestic violence
- ▶ Support for income tax preparation
- ▶ Clinical counselling services
- ▶ Day services for adults with developmental and physical disabilities
- ▶ Volunteer centre/volunteer programs
- ▶ Behavioural consultation
- ▶ Employment services
- ▶ Counselling for substance use
- ▶ Other child and family services (e.g., children with anxiety, pregnant and parenting teens)

## 7. What is the type of your organization?

Registered charity/non-profit	71 (78.9%)
Private company	19 (21.1%)
Don't know	0 (0.0%)

## 8. Is your organization a unionized workplace?

Fully unionized	26 (28.9%)
Partially unionized	15 (16.7%)
Not at all unionized	49 (54.4%)
Don't know	0 (0.0%)

## 9. How many paid employees does your organization have who are issued T4 slips for income tax purposes?

Number of Paid Employees Who Are Issued T4 Slips	Number of Organizations
1 – 19	28
20 – 39	13
40 – 199	28
200+	15

\*Minimum number of paid employees who are issued T4 slips: 1

\*\*Maximum number of paid employees who are issued T4 slips: 1100

## 10. How many employees who work 30 hours or more are permanent employees who have no set termination date?

Number of Permanent Employees (30 Hours or More)	Number of Organizations
0	5
1 – 9	18
10 – 19	18
20 – 39	10
40 – 99	12
100+	16

\*Minimum number of permanent employees who work 30 hours or more: 0

\*\*Maximum number of permanent employees who work 30 hours or more: 600



**11. How many employees who work 30 hours or more are temporary employees who have a set termination date?**

Number of Temporary Employees (30 Hours or More)	Number of Organizations
0	55
1 – 4	13
5+	7

*\*Minimum number of temporary employees who work 30 hours or more: 0*

*\*\*Maximum number of temporary employees who work 30 hours or more: 32*

**12. How many employees who work less than 30 hours are permanent employees who have no set termination date?**

Number of Permanent Employees (Less than 30 Hours)	Number of Organizations
0	13
1 – 9	29
10 – 19	9
20 – 39	9
40 – 99	5
100+	8

*\*Minimum number of permanent employees who work less than 30 hours: 0*

*\*\*Maximum number of permanent employees who work less than 30 hours: 315*

**13. How many employees who work less than 30 hours are temporary employees who have a set termination date?**

Number of Temporary Employees (Less than 30 Hours)	Number of Organizations
0	46
1 – 4	17
5 – 24	8
25+	2

*\*Minimum number of temporary employees who work less than 30 hours: 0*

*\*\*Maximum number of temporary employees who work less than 30 hours: 29*

14. Among employees who work less than 30 hours or more per week, what is the average number of hours worked per week?

Average Number of Hours Worked Per Week*	Number of Organizations
0 – 4	1
5 – 9	4
10 – 14	9
15 – 19	15
20 – 24	30
25 – 30	5

*\*For Employees Who Work Less than 30 Hours Per Week*

15. In your view, how has the number of paid employees in your organization changed compared to 3 years ago? If there has been a change, please indicate the number it has increased or decreased by in the comment box.

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
8 (9.3%)	37 (43.0%)	28 (32.6%)	8 (9.3%)	5 (5.8%)	0 (0.0%)

#### Summary of Comments:

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Increased funding and/or new programs
- ▶ (Response: Lower/Much Lower) Unqualified candidates, decrease in number of clients, loss of contracts/funding, employees leaving for higher-paying positions, and casual employees leaving for permanent positions in other organizations.

16. In your view, how has the level of difficulty in the recruitment of paid employees changed compared to 3 years ago?

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
44 (50.0%)	24 (27.3%)	17 (19.3%)	2 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.1%)

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Management because wages lower than for frontline.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Non-competitive wages in the sector compared to the education and health sectors.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Lack of qualified workers available to do difficult work.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Increasing minimum qualifications of workers required by the government.

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) High Cost of living in both Vancouver and northern communities does not match wages.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Many expect recent wage increases for unionized workers to exacerbate.

**17. In your view, how has the level of difficulty in the retention of paid employees changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
25 (28.7%)	35 (40.2%)	24 (27.6%)	2 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.1%)

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Higher-paying jobs with better benefits in the government or the education or health sectors.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Younger staff are leaving to further their education (e.g., obtaining a graduate degree).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Cuts to program funding, irregular or minimal working hours, short-term contracts (can hire staff when new contracts are awarded, but lose workers who move on to better support themselves financially).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) High cost of living in urban areas.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Rural and remote areas, staff moving away due to a downturn in the economy.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Consistent low wages, always compete with oil and gas sector.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Lose people to other sectors, been a problem for 15 years.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Once find them, through probation period, tend to keep them.
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Tend to stay with us but expect that to change with recent wage differences - unionized workplaces getting increase.

**18. In your view, how effective has the existing external education and training programs been in fulfilling your organization's needs?**

VERY EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	INEFFECTIVE	VERY INEFFECTIVE	UNSURE / NO OPINION
0 (0%)	20 (22.7%)	30 (37.0%)	23 (26.1%)	11 (12.5%)	4 (4.6%)

- ▶ (Response: *Effective*) Work with post-secondary institutes and build relationships, get great placements (who often choose to work in other sectors when finish their courses).
- ▶ (Response: *Effective*) Enhanced at certificate level.
- ▶ (Response: *Neutral*) For some programming good, not for others.
- ▶ (Response: *Ineffective*) Not able to address the complex issues that workers face.

- ▶ (Response: *Ineffective*) Lack offerings in key service areas (e.g., supporting people with developmental disabilities and/or mental health issues, behavioural intervention, early childhood education, victim support services).
- ▶ (Response: *Ineffective*) Need to enhance certificate level.
- ▶ (Response: *Ineffective*) There aren't enough graduates with the necessary training to meet the needs of their organizations.

**19. Are there, if any, positions in your organization where external existing education and training programs have been insufficient?**

Yes	52 (59.1%)
No	21 (23.9%)
Don't know	15 (17.1%)

**20. If yes, which occupations have insufficient existing external education and training programs? (Please select all that apply.) See Appendix A for definitions of occupations provided.**

Senior managers*	21 (41.2%)
Social and community service workers	20 (39.2%)
Early childhood educators and assistants	18 (35.3%)
Other (please specify)	14 (27.5%)
Managers in social, community and correctional services	14 (27.5%)
Instructors of persons with disabilities	13 (25.9%)
Family, marriage and other related counsellors	10 (19.6%)
Social workers	10 (19.6%)
Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations	8 (15.7%)
Employment counsellors	8 (15.7%)
Home child care providers	4 (7.8%)

\* Health, education, social and community services and membership organizations

**Other responses:**

- ▶ Behavioural consultants for children with special needs
- ▶ Victim services staff
- ▶ Therapists (e.g., especially with paediatric training)
- ▶ Youth workers
- ▶ Behaviour interventionist
- ▶ Clinical supervisors
- ▶ Senior management (e.g., Executive director, Finance manager)
- ▶ Program managers
- ▶ Staff working with children with autism and/or complex medical needs
- ▶ Volunteer managers
- ▶ Quantitative research and data management
- ▶ Indigenous staff (e.g., Indigenous staff running Indigenous programs)
- ▶ Handyman (e.g., for Better at Home Program)

**21. Can you describe how the existing external education and training programs for the occupations you selected above are insufficient? Please give examples where necessary.**

- Lack of program availability.
- Lack of in-depth training on various topics (e.g., cultural competency, leadership, Indigenous worldviews, non-profit governance/ management).
- Difficulty accessing training and education programs.
- Existing programs do not prepare students for the complexities of the work their organizations undertake.
- Programs are too short to gain enough practical experience or apply learning before entering the profession (e.g., early childhood education).

**22. Do you have any suggestions in terms of how these education and training programs can be improved to meet your organizational needs?**

- Working with children with challenging behaviour
- Indigenous client-focused training
- Working with individuals with disabilities (e.g., ECE, special education, behaviour interventionist)
- Infant development
- Working with individuals/children with developmental disabilities (e.g., autism)
- Violence against women programming
- Post-graduate certificates in clinical supervision
- Data management
- LGBTQ
- Financial management of contracts
- Programs for victim service workers
- Advocacy training
- Indigenous needs
- History of community living
- Supervision and management theory
- Racism, stigma and colonization practices
- Skill development
- Supporting community integration of supported individuals
- Sectoral training
- Understanding trauma and its impact on cultural competency, cognition and physiology
- Gender
- Leadership training from Indigenous worldview and governance
- Poverty
- Senior management training on leadership and collective bargaining process
- Working with municipal, provincial and federal governments
- Basic competency training (e.g., boundaries, confidentiality, de-escalation, etc.)

**Other suggestions:**

- ▶ Increase the number of spaces for specific social service programs (e.g., therapy programs, Community and Classroom Support Diplomas, Leisure-Recreation Aide Program, youth workers).
- ▶ Address the wage issue to attract more people to careers in the community social services sector.

**23. Does your organization have volunteers?**

Yes	55 (63.9%)
No	31 (36.1%)
Don't know	0 (0.0%)

**24. If yes, approximately how many volunteers does your organization currently have?**

Number of Volunteers	Number of Respondents*
0	31
1 – 9	18
10 – 19	10
20 – 99	14
100+	9

\*A total of 51 respondents provided the number of volunteers for their organizations.

**25. In your view, how has the number of volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago? If there has been a change, please indicate the number it has increased or decreased by in the comment box.**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
0 (0.0%)	9 (16.7%)	33 (61.1%)	10 (18.5%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)

**Comments:**

- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Internal efforts by all staff and board members.
- ▶ (Response: Higher/Much Higher) Dedicated program with staffing and other necessary supports.
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Higher numbers: connected to a federal program or have volunteers in other regions; others have resources dedicated to volunteer programming (e.g., Better at Home programs).
- ▶ (Response: About the Same) Have enough volunteers already, feel lucky (they know many other organizations that do not have enough volunteers), have as many as their resources can handle (recruit, supervise or otherwise support more volunteers).

- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Able to support them.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Young people less time and no longer is volunteering an entry criteria for programs.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Most are elders and depends on health.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Lost volunteer program or must coordinate "off sides of our desks" so unable to focus on recruitment and retention of volunteers.

**26. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to recruit volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
10 (18.9%)	13 (24.5%)	28 (52.8%)	1 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)

**Comments:**

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Most commented that the biggest challenge is recruiting board members (responsibilities increasing).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) People have less time ( working longer hours), seem to not be interested, burned out.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Most want one-time events, hard to match interests and expectations of volunteers with positions and organizational needs (standards, etc.).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Cannot afford to cover their costs (e.g., transportation).
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Types of and length of time for screening (e.g., Criminal Records Check).
- ▶ (Response: *About the Same*) Volunteers tend to stay and are a necessary part of the work being done.
- ▶ (Response: *Lower/Much Lower*) Unable to get organizational resources to support.

**27. In your view, how has the level of difficulty to retain volunteers changed compared to 3 years ago?**

MUCH HIGHER	HIGHER	ABOUT THE SAME	LOWER	MUCH LOWER	UNSURE / NO OPINION
11 (21.2%)	11 (21.2%)	26 (50.0%)	3 (5.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)

**Comments:**

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Younger move on more often; older stay.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Limited staff time to train and supervise, been a challenge for over 10 years.

- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) Move on for paid work; younger people often working two jobs to pay student debt.
- ▶ (Response: *Higher/Much Higher*) High expectations of volunteers.

## **28. Please share any other comments.**

Summary of recurring themes:

- ▶ Desire that action arises from this and other surveys participated in, look forward to seeing final report.
- ▶ Most echoed comments covered in other questions regarding capacity needs of organizations.



## 5. FRONTLINE WORKERS SURVEY

*Please note: this survey report begins with the second question because the first question was to confirm their agreement to participate before continuing. Responses listed for open-ended questions are paraphrased samples that represent common sentiments.*

### 2. What is your current position title within your organization?

740 people responded to this question. The range of positions identified is extensive and is consistent with the scope of programs (ranging from child care provider, shelter worker, outreach worker, mental health worker, social worker, health care aid, settlement worker, intake worker, etc.) provided and populations served (across the lifespan) by the community social services sector.

### 3. What is your current occupation? (Please select one.)

*Please note: We understand that job titles may vary for different organizations in the community social services sector. The following categories of broad occupation types are based on Statistics Canada's National Occupation Classification (2016) codes. If your occupation does not belong to the categories below, please provide your occupation in the "Other" option. **See Appendix A for definitions of the occupations provided.***

Social and community service workers	330 (42.8%)
Other (please specify)	105 (13.6%)
Social workers	59 (7.7%)
Family, marriage and other related counsellors	59 (7.7%)
Early childhood educators and assistants	59 (7.7%)
Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations	57 (7.4%)
Managers in social, community and correctional services	32 (4.2%)
Instructors of persons with disabilities	22 (2.9%)
Employment counsellors	21 (2.7%)
Home child care providers	17 (2.2%)
Senior managers*	10 (1.3%)

*\*Health, education, social and community services and membership organizations*

#### Other options:

- ▶ Program coordinator/supervisor/manager
- ▶ Youth worker
- ▶ Facilitator (e.g., family; youth; network; group)
- ▶ Navigator (e.g., community resources; student support)
- ▶ Community support worker
- ▶ Residential care worker (e.g., child; youth)

- ▶ Support worker (e.g., residential; family; child; youth; youth in transition; women; integration; foster)
- ▶ Outreach worker (e.g., youth; literacy)
- ▶ Intake worker
- ▶ Relief worker
- ▶ Youth justice worker
- ▶ Settlement/integration worker
- ▶ Mental health worker
- ▶ Case manager
- ▶ Job developer
- ▶ Secretary/administrative assistant
- ▶ Advocate (e.g., women; child)
- ▶ Early childcare educator
- ▶ Community worker (e.g., life skills; foster parents)
- ▶ Counsellor (e.g., clinical; behaviour intervention; community living; mental health; employment; vocational; adult; youth; youth justice; child; women; family; alcohol/drugs/addictions)
- ▶ Occupational therapist
- ▶ Speech language pathologist
- ▶ Clinical practice
- ▶ Consultant (e.g., infant development; childcare resource and referral; supported child development)
- ▶ Advisor (e.g., employment resource; workplace; parent service)
- ▶ Manager/assistant manager (e.g., department; finance/operations, service delivery; community programs; facility; group home)
- ▶ Office coordinator
- ▶ Owner (e.g., childcare provider)
- ▶ Volunteer coordinator
- ▶ Victim service worker
- ▶ Shelter worker
- ▶ Rapid response worker
- ▶ Social worker (e.g., child protection; special needs; family support)
- ▶ Health care aid

#### 4. What is the type of your organization?

Registered charity/non-profit	598 (78.2%)
Private company	132 (17.3%)
Don't know	35 (4.6%)

#### 5. Is your current position unionized?

Yes	466 (60.3%)
No	299 (38.7%)
Don't know	8 (1.0%)

#### 6. Which region does your organization serve in BC? (Please select all that apply.)

Mainland/Southwest	402 (52.3%)
Vancouver Island/Coast	142 (18.5%)
Thompson-Okanagan	130 (16.9%)
Kootenay	75 (9.8%)
Northeast	55 (7.26%)
North Coast & Nechako	32 (4.2%)
Cariboo	21 (2.7%)

Please note: Multiple regions could be selected resulting in 857 responses.  
Percentages are based on the number of respondents.

## 7. Which of the following industry sub-sectors does your organization belong? (Please select all that apply.)

Please note: We understand that definitions below, which are derived from Statistics Canada, may not be specific and reflective of the language used in the community social services sector. The following categories of industry sub-sectors are based on Statistics Canada's North American Industry Classification System (2012) codes. If your organization does not belong to any of the categories below, please provide your sub-sector in the "Other" option. **See Appendix A for definitions of industry subsectors.**

Individual and family services	327 (42.6%)
Residential developmental handicap, mental health & substance abuse facilities	232 (30.2%)
Other residential care facilities	198 (25.8%)
Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services	126 (16.4%)
Child day-care services	107 (13.9%)
Other (please specify)	106 (13.8%)
Vocational rehabilitation services	79 (10.3%)
Community care facilities for the elderly	50 (6.5%)
Home health care services	47 (6.1%)
Nursing care facilities	10 (1.3%)

Please note: Survey respondents could report multiple industry sub-sectors thus resulting in a total of 1282 responses. Shares are calculated based on the number of respondents.

**If your organization does not belong to any of the categories below, please provide your sub-sector in the "Other" option.**

- ▶ Day program (e.g., for people with intellectual disabilities)
- ▶ Family and youth services
- ▶ Early intervention services
- ▶ Child care
- ▶ Early childhood care and learning
- ▶ Counselling programs
- ▶ Supported employment programs
- ▶ Homeless shelter
- ▶ Victim services
- ▶ Home services
- ▶ Home-sharing services
- ▶ Supported apartment
- ▶ Assisted living
- ▶ Street youth drop-in centre
- ▶ Food security
- ▶ Detox
- ▶ Immigrant/settlement services
- ▶ Child care resource & referral
- ▶ Seniors network/services (e.g., Better at home)
- ▶ Social housing/low-income housing
- ▶ Community inclusion and outreach services
- ▶ Community social and recreational program
- ▶ Resource
- ▶ Art and play therapy (e.g., for non-

- residential women and children who have experienced violence)
  - ▶ Employment services
  - ▶ Anti-violence services
  - ▶ Clubhouse (e.g., for people with lived experience)
  - ▶ Delegated Aboriginal agency
  - ▶ Child protection
- ▶ Parenting and pregnancy
- ▶ Education (e.g., school district; public community schools; post-secondary; alternate school)
- ▶ Gender-based violence
- ▶ Sexual assault response
- ▶ Court support
- ▶ Safety planning

## 8. What is your current age?

A total of 720 respondents reported their age. The table below provides a distribution of Frontline Workers by age group.

Age	Number of Frontline Workers
20 – 29	129
30 – 39	169
40 – 49	170
50 – 59	176
60 – 69	70
70+	6

## 9. Which groups do you identify with? (Please select all that apply.)

Women	621 (80.0%)
Men	128 (16.6%)
People with disabilities	76 (9.9%)
Visible Minority	70 (9.1%)
Senior	65 (8.4%)
Indigenous	63 (8.2%)
LGBTQ	62 (8.1%)
Immigrant/Refugee: immigrant/refugee	56 (7.3%)
Métis	53 (6.7%)
Prefer not to say	24 (3.1%)
Non-binary	14 (1.8%)
Inuit	11 (1.4%)

Please note: Many Frontline Workers identified with more than one group resulting in a total of 1242 responses. Shares are calculated based on the number of respondents.

## 10. What is your highest education level completed?

Bachelor's degree	258 (33.5%)
Some college or university with no degree	200 (25.9%)
College degree	151 (19.6%)
Graduate degree or above	107 (13.9%)
High school diploma or equivalent	39 (5.1%)
Prefer not to say	11 (1.4%)
No certificate, diploma or degree	5 (0.7%)

## 11. Is your current position permanent, that is, ongoing without an end date?

Yes	87.3%
No	10.9%
Don't Know	1.8%

## 12. In your current position, what is the average number of hours worked per week?

Average Number of Hours Worked Per Week	Number of Frontline Workers
0 – 9	22
10 – 19	45
20 – 29	122
30 – 39	362
40 – 49	159
50 – 59	26
60 – 69	8
70 – 79	11
80+	3

**13. In your current organization, what is the number of years worked in the same organization?**

Average Number of Hours Worked Per Week	Number of Frontline Workers
Less than 1 year	60
1 – 3	280
4 – 6	109
7 – 9	59
10 – 12	79
13 – 15	55
16 – 18	25
19 – 21	28
22 – 24	16
25+	41

**14. Is your education and training sufficient for your current position?**

Yes	678 (88.1%)
No	64 (8.3%)
Don't know	28 (3.6%)

**Please tell us more about your experience or other reasons that are not mentioned above.**

I need to learn new skills to continue working in my position	32 (56.1%)
I need to update my knowledge of the sector to continue working in my position	32 (56.1%)
I need to upgrade my skills to continue working in my position	20 (35.1%)
My education and training are not relevant to my position	14 (24.6%)
I need to obtain licenses or certifications in order to work in my position at a full capacity	11 (19.3%)

**15. If no, why is your current level of education and training insufficient? Please tell us more about your experience or other reasons that are not mentioned above.**

A number of respondents (including with degree level education) offered additional comments with many stating that they would benefit from a combination of education, hands-on training and supervision (including clinical). Many also reported (including with a postgraduate degree) they would like more ongoing training and education on specific topics (e.g., victim services, mental health, children and youth with special needs, Indigenous traditions, working with marginalized populations, family-centred practices).

## 16. In your view, do you feel you need more education and training to advance your career in the social services sector?

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	UNSURE / NO OPINION
170 (22.4%)	314 (41.4%)	153 (20.2%)	72 (9.5%)	34 (4.5%)	15 (2.0%)

### Comments:

Of the 198 people who provided comments, a large share (39%) explained that ongoing training and education are important for the work of social caring but only a small minority (5%) believed that it would help advance their careers.

Ongoing training topics identified for that training included leadership and management, trauma-informed practice, mental health and substance use, domestic violence, working with specific populations, understanding Indigenous traditions, and a wide range of child and youth-related topics.

## 17. What types of external education and training programs would you like to take?

### Education and Training Related to Leadership

- ▶ Leadership courses (e.g., Leadership 2020)
- ▶ Management skills (e.g., team dynamics and managing challenging employees)
- ▶ Business
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Strategic thinking
- ▶ HR (e.g., recruiting and retaining staff)
- ▶ Policy
- ▶ Public speaking
- ▶ Grant writing
- ▶ Delegation training
- ▶ Supervision (e.g., clinical supervision)
- ▶ Accounting
- ▶ Social enterprise planning
- ▶ Coaching
- ▶ Non-profit management
- ▶ Finance/administration
- ▶ Budgeting

### Education and Training Related to Social Service Practice

- ▶ Critical incident stress debriefing
- ▶ Response based practice
- ▶ Trauma-informed training
- ▶ Therapeutic crisis intervention
- ▶ Art therapy
- ▶ Life skills
- ▶ Self-care/burnout
- ▶ Counselling
- ▶ Anti-oppressive practice
- ▶ Indigenous studies (e.g., reconciliation, culturally sensitive practices)
- ▶ Motivational interviewing
- ▶ Assertiveness
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Safe injection
- ▶ Criminal justice-based training (e.g., violence against women)
- ▶ Understanding of how to reach families of diverse cultures and values
- ▶ Debriefing
- ▶ Appliance repair
- ▶ Mediation

- ▶ Grief and loss
- ▶ First aid/CPR
- ▶ Medication management
- ▶ Conflict resolution/management
- ▶ Child, Family and Community Service Act
- ▶ Community engagement/Inclusion
- ▶ American sign language
- ▶ Changing attitudes towards clients (e.g., person-centred programming)
- ▶ Grounding techniques
- ▶ Advocacy
- ▶ Vulnerable assessment tool training (e.g., for housing)
- ▶ Supportive listening
- ▶ Diversity
- ▶ Cultural safety
- ▶ Customer service
- ▶ Hygiene care
- ▶ Quality assurance
- ▶ Mindfulness
- ▶ Cultural training
- ▶ Coaching and engaging families in early intervention, including developing relationships with families
- ▶ Navigating government services with clients (e.g., income assistance, employment insurance, etc.)
- ▶ Non-violent crisis intervention/communication
- ▶ Anger management
- ▶ De-escalation
- ▶ Documentation/Case notes managements
- ▶ First aid
- ▶ Self-defence
- ▶ Indigenous language
- ▶ Negotiation
- ▶ Mobility devices training
- ▶ Cultural competency
- ▶ Foster care

#### Education and Training – Other

- ▶ English
- ▶ Office filing
- ▶ Information/Privacy
- ▶ Courses offered by Justice Institute
- ▶ BC Housing
- ▶ Legal Services Society (LSS) training
- ▶ Math
- ▶ Computer
- ▶ MS Office (e.g., Word, Excel, Access and Project Management)
- ▶ Technology (e.g., adaptive equipment)
- ▶ Report writing
- ▶ Training provided by CLBC (Community Living BC)
- ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ Multimedia promotion/advertising

Respondents added that they would like more opportunities to stay up-to-date with the latest research, best practices, and training applicable to their practice. Many expressed that they would like more hands-on training, and training that focuses on specific client needs or specialized population groups. Their preferred methods of training included workshops, webinars, online or web-based, forums, a structured 2-3month program, or a one-day crash course.



**18. What are the barriers for you to pursue further training? (Please select all that apply.)**

I need financial support to pursue further training	496 (69.9%)
I do not have time to attend classes or training outside of my working hours	378 (53.3%)
My family obligations prevent me from attending classes or training	174 (24.5%)
There are limited opportunities or spots available for courses	152 (21.4%)
No further training is necessary to work in my job	140 (19.8%)
I lack qualifications (e.g., prerequisite courses) required to complete applications for training	48 (6.8%)

**Please tell us more about your experience or other barriers that are not mentioned above.**

Many commented on personal financial limitations and explained that they would benefit from organization-sponsored training and education. Some reported being disinclined to pursue further training because they saw no opportunity for advancement in the field or that low wages in the sector would not compensate for the required investment.

Others explained that they could not take time away from their current workload. Comments related to accessing training often referenced geographical barriers such as distance, time, costs, and timing of available training. Interestingly, both a lack of face-to-face and a lack of online options were reported as obstacles to accessing further training.

**19. What types of education and training is offered by your organization for your position? (Please select all that apply.)**

Workshops, seminars or conferences	515 (70.6%)
On-the-job training	475 (65.1%)
Webinars or online training	411 (56.3%)
Professional development opportunities (e.g., leadership training)	336 (46.0%)
Lunch and learns	121 (16.6%)
Mentoring programs	75 (10.3%)
My organization does not offer education or training for the employees	54 (7.4%)

**Please tell us more about your experience or other types of education and training that are not mentioned above.**

A total of 102 respondents provided more information. Many described the organization-sponsored education and training they received as insufficient; they participated in a minimal number of courses related to meeting basic needs of their job functions or those contained within accreditation standards (e.g., First Aid, Mental

health first aid, Safe Talk, Non-violent crisis intervention, or Foodsafe). Respondents also described the need for greater organizational support for education extending beyond the training required for accreditation; however, they recognized that organizational capacity is often a limiting factor.

## 20. How difficult was it for you to land your current position?

VERY DIFFICULT	DIFFICULT	NEUTRAL	EASY	VERY EASY	UNSURE / NO OPINION
24 (3.2%)	111 (14.9%)	303 (40.7%)	200 (26.9%)	88 (11.8%)	18 (2.4%)

A total of 155 respondents provided additional comments. Most of them were already working in the organization either as a paid employee, volunteer, or practicum student. Others explained that finding their current position was easy because of their past working experience, qualifications, or networking. Some of the challenges they faced landing their current positions included having to work more than one part-time position until a full-time position became available, a lack of available desirable positions, competition for positions, not having the required qualifications, and demographic-related barriers such as age, ethnicity, and gender.

## 21. How long were you actively seeking employment before you landed your current position?

Time Spent Seeking Employment Before Current Position	Number of Frontline Workers
Less than 1 month	271
1 - 3 months	176
4 - 6 months	77
7 - 9 months	25
10 - 12 months	22
Over a year	48
Other	118

Respondents who reported "other" shared various circumstances in which they were able to land their current position. Some were working but not actively seeking employment when the opportunity presented itself either through promotion or referral. Some found their jobs through practicum placements while they were students and transitioned into their role after graduation. Others started in casual, relief, or part-time roles before being offered a full-time position. In addition, some respondents reported themselves to be self-employed and therefore not actively seeking employment.

**22. What types of challenges do you face in your current position? (Please select all that apply.)**

Stress	509 (69.5%)
Low pay	446 (60.9%)
Workload	357 (48.8%)
Lack of organizational resources (e.g., equipment, funding, space, etc)	264 (36.1%)
Lack of recognition at work	225 (30.7%)
Lack of benefits (e.g., drug, vision, life insurance, etc)	189 (25.8%)
Relationships with manager or supervisor	155 (21.2%)
Relationships with coworkers	145 (19.8%)
Lack of pension/RRSP	133 (18.2%)
Lack of job security	106 (14.5%)
I do not have any challenges in my job	56 (7.7%)

**Please tell us more about your experience or other challenges that are not mentioned above.**

A total of 176 respondents provided additional comments. Many respondents described the stress and emotional toll of providing services to people in need. A number also cited their own precarious work environment (due to lack of full-time positions and/or the short-term nature of program funding). Some discussed burnout and noted that the lack of (or insufficient) benefits prevents them from accessing health-promoting activities and services that could improve their wellness. Various organizational challenges were also reported (e.g., a lack of time with colleagues, interpersonal conflicts with co-workers, a lack of supervision opportunities, and large workloads).

**23. What would encourage you to stay longer in your current position? (Please select all that apply.)**

Better pay	560 (80.6%)
More professional development opportunities	316 (45.5%)
Less stress	288 (41.4%)
Benefits (e.g., drug, vision, life insurance, etc)	243 (35.0%)
Manageable workload	232 (33.4%)
Pension/RRSP	182 (26.2%)
Better relationships with manager or supervisor	150 (21.6%)
Job security	144 (20.7%)
Better relationships with coworkers	94 (13.5%)

**Please tell us more about your experience or other reasons that are not mentioned above.**

A total of 131 respondents provided comments. Many suggestions related to job security such as more secure working conditions or more/better hours and shifts. Respondents also described their desire for more full-time positions, opportunities with better wages, ongoing professional development, and access to or improved benefits and pension plans. Additional factors that would encourage them to stay longer included more supervision (including clinical) as well as more opportunities for innovation at work.

**24. Please share any other comments.**

Participants added comments on topics such as: discontentment with wage level, lack of benefits and pensions, having a positive work environment, the impact of stress and their ideas to improve workplace health, wanting more professional development opportunities, and on the need for more organizational resources.

## 6. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: NAICS AND NOC CODE DEFINITIONS

The following table consists of terms and definitions used by Statistics Canada for the 2016 Census.

2012 NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (NAICS) CODES	
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (NAICS 62)	This sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing health care by diagnosis and treatment, providing residential care for medical and social reasons, and providing social assistance, such as counselling, welfare, child protection, community housing and food services, vocational rehabilitation and child care, to those requiring such assistance.
AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE SERVICES (NAICS 621)	This subsector comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing health care services, directly or indirectly, to ambulatory patients. Health practitioners in this subsector provide out-patient services, in which the facilities and equipment are not usually the most significant part of the production process.
HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES (NAICS 6216)	This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing skilled nursing services in the home, combined with a range of other home services, such as personal care services, homemaker and companion services, physical therapy, medical social services, counselling, occupational and vocational therapy, dietary and nutritional services, speech therapy, audiology, medical equipment and supplies, medications and intravenous therapy. Only establishments that provide nursing services in combination with the other services listed are included.
NURSING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES (NAICS 623)	This subsector comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing residential care combined with either nursing, supervisory or other types of care as required by the residents. In this subsector, the facilities are a significant part of the production process and the care provided is a mix of health and social services, with the health component being largely nursing services.
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (NAICS 624)	This subsector comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing a wide variety of assistance services directly to their clients. These services do not include residential or accommodation services, except on a short-stay basis.
INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SERVICES (NAICS 6241)	This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing non-residential social assistance services for individuals and families.
COMMUNITY FOOD AND HOUSING, AND EMERGENCY AND OTHER RELIEF SERVICES (NAICS 6242)	This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in the collection, preparation and delivery of food for the needy; providing short-term emergency shelter; and providing food, shelter, clothing, medical relief, resettlement and counselling to victims of domestic or international disasters or conflicts.

### 2012 NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (NAICS) CODES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (NAICS 6243)	This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing vocational rehabilitation or habilitation services, such as job counselling, job training, and work experience, to unemployed and underemployed persons, persons with disabilities, and persons who have a job-market disadvantage because of lack of education, job skill or experience; and training and employment to mentally and physically handicapped persons in sheltered workshops.
CHILD DAY-CARE SERVICES (NAICS 6244)	This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing day-care services for infants or children. These establishments may care for older children when they are not in school and may also offer pre-kindergarten educational programs.

### 2016 NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (NOC) CODES

LEGISLATORS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT (NOC 001)	This minor group includes legislators and senior management occupations in the public and private sectors. They are employed by federal, provincial, territorial and local government legislative bodies, executive councils, band councils and school boards; municipal and regional governments and provincial, territorial and federal departments, boards, agencies and commissions; and throughout the private sector.
SENIOR MANAGERS – HEALTH, EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS (NOC 0014)	Senior managers in this unit group plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate, through middle managers, membership and other organizations or institutions that deliver health, education, social or community services. They formulate policies which establish the direction to be taken by these organizations, either alone or in conjunction with a board of directors. They are employed in health care organizations, educational services, social and community services and membership organizations or they may own and operate their own business.
MANAGERS IN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (NOC 042)	This minor group includes education administrators, school principals and social, community and correctional services managers. They are employed by colleges, universities, vocational training schools, public and private elementary and secondary schools and school boards; social service and community agencies, correctional institutions, counselling departments, labour organizations, professional associations, political parties and non-governmental organizations.
MANAGERS IN SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (NOC 0423)	This unit group includes managers who plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the programs and activities of social service and community agencies, correctional institutions, counselling departments, labour organizations, professional associations, political parties and non-governmental organizations.
SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROFESSIONALS (NOC 415)	This minor group includes psychologists, social workers, counsellors, probation and parole officers and those in professional occupations in religion. They work in private practice; and are employed by mental health, health care and rehabilitation facilities; correctional facilities, community service, social service, and child welfare organizations; schools, school boards, and universities; counselling centres, group homes, family therapy centres; churches, synagogues, temples and other places of worship; employee assistance programs, human resource departments, and employment service organizations; consulting, and other companies; Aboriginal band councils, and federal and provincial governments; and government and private research agencies.

## 2016 NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (NOC) CODES

SOCIAL WORKERS (NOC 4152)	Social workers help individuals, couples, families, groups, communities and organizations develop the skills and resources they need to enhance social functioning and provide counselling, therapy and referral to other supportive social services. Social workers also respond to other social needs and issues such as unemployment, racism and poverty. They are employed by hospitals, school boards, social service agencies, child welfare organizations, correctional facilities, community agencies, employee assistance programs and Aboriginal band councils, or they may work in private practice.
FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND OTHER RELATED COUNSELLORS (NOC 4153)	Family, marriage and other related counsellors assist individuals and groups of clients to identify, understand and overcome personal problems and achieve personal objectives. They are employed by counselling centres, social service agencies, group homes, government agencies, family therapy centres, and health care and rehabilitation facilities, or they may work in private practice.
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS (NOC 4156)	Employment counsellors and career development practitioners provide assistance and information to job seeker clients on all aspects of employment search and career planning. They also provide advice and information to employer clients regarding employment issues and human resources. Employment counsellors and career development practitioners are employed by human resource departments of establishments, employment service organizations, consulting firms, correctional facilities and by federal and provincial governments. Supervisors of employment counsellors are included in this unit group.
PARAPROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS IN LEGAL, SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION SERVICES (NOC 421)	This minor group includes paralegals, notary publics, trademark agents, social and community service workers, early childhood educators and assistants, instructors of persons with disabilities, certain other instructors, and certain religious occupations. They are employed by government, and government agencies; law firms, legal departments, and trademark development and record search companies; social service and mental health agencies, group homes, shelters, and substance abuse centres; schools and school boards; correctional facilities, and prisons; child-care centres, daycare centres, kindergartens, and agencies for exceptional children; rehabilitation centres, and specialized educational institutes; driving schools, fabric retailers, and other commercial establishments; churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship; and hospitals; or they may be self-employed.
SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE WORKERS (NOC 4212)	Social and community service workers administer and implement a variety of social assistance programs and community services, and assist clients to deal with personal and social problems. They are employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, shelters, substance abuse centres, school boards, correctional facilities and other establishments.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND ASSISTANTS (NOC 4214)	Early childhood educators plan, organize and implement programs for children between the ages of infancy and 12 years. Early childhood educator assistants provide care for infants and preschool- to school-age children under the guidance of early childhood educators. Early childhood educators and assistants lead children in activities to stimulate and develop their intellectual, physical and emotional growth and ensure their security and well-being. They are employed in child-care centres, daycare centres, kindergartens, agencies for exceptional children and other settings where early childhood education services are provided. Supervisors of early childhood educators and assistants are included in this unit group.

## 2016 NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (NOC) CODES

INSTRUCTORS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (NOC 4215)	Instructors of persons with disabilities teach children and adults using a variety of techniques to facilitate communication, rehabilitation, social skills and increased independence. They are employed in rehabilitation centres, specialized educational institutes and throughout the school system.
HOME CARE PROVIDERS AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS (NOC 441)	This minor group includes home child care providers, home support workers, housekeepers, and elementary and secondary school teacher assistants. They are employed by private households; child-care, home care, and support agencies; in other non-institutional, residential settings; and public and private elementary, secondary, and special needs schools and treatment centres; or they may be self-employed.
HOME CHILD CARE PROVIDERS (NOC 4411)	Home child care providers care for children on an ongoing or short-term basis. They care for the well-being and physical and social development of children, assist parents with child care and may assist with household duties. They provide care primarily in their own homes or in the children's homes, where they may also reside. They are employed by private households and child-care agencies, or they may be self-employed.
HOME SUPPORT WORKERS, HOUSEKEEPERS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS (NOC 4412)	Home support workers provide personal care and companionship for seniors, persons with disabilities and convalescent clients. Care is provided within the client's residence, in which the home support worker may also reside. They are employed by home care and support agencies, private households, or they may be self-employed. Housekeepers perform housekeeping and other home management duties in private households and other non-institutional, residential settings.



## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations participated in the Strategic Leaders Workshops and Key Informant Interviews. Identifying information was not collected for the Strategic Leaders Survey or for the Frontline Workers Survey.

1UP VICTORIA SINGLE PARENT RESOURCE CENTRE SOCIETY	MOUNT PLEASANT FAMILY CENTRE SOCIETY
ARCHWAY COMMUNITY SERVICES	MSA SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
ACT 2 CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	NANAIMO FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS
ALTERNATE SHELTER SOCIETY	NANAIMO AND AREA RESOURCE SERVICES FOR FAMILIES
ARC PROGRAMS	CONNEXUS COMMUNITY SERVICES
ARCHWAY SOCIETY FOR DOMESTIC PEACE	NELSON CARES SOCIETY
ARROW & SLOCAN LAKES COMMUNITY SERVICES	NELSON COMMUNITY SERVICES
ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES BC	NORTH EAST NATIVE ADVANCING SOCIETY
ASPECT BC	NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE
AXIS FAMILY RESOURCES LTD.	ONESKY COMMUNITY RESOURCES
BC ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS	OPTIONS COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY
BOUNDARY FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY	PACIFIC CENTRE FAMILY SERVICES
CARIBOO ACTION TRAINING SOCIETY	PACIFIC COMMUNITY RESOURCES SOCIETY
CARRIER SEKANI FAMILY SERVICES	PACIFIC YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES – PEAK HOUSE
CHILLIWACK COMMUNITY SERVICES	PLEA COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY
COLUMBIA BASIN FAMILY RESOURCE SOCIETY	POWELL RIVER CHILD, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES
COMMUNITAS SUPPORTIVE CARE SOCIETY	PRINCE GEORGE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
COMMUNITY BRIDGE	QUESNEL & DISTRICT CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
THE CRIDGE CENTRE FOR THE FAMILY	RICHMOND FAMILY PLACE SOCIETY
ENDING VIOLENCE ASSOCIATION OF BC	SEMAHMOO HOUSE SOCIETY
FAMILY SERVICES OF GREATER VANCOUVER	SHARE FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES
FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS	SHUSWAP ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
FORT ST. JOHN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE	SOOKE FAMILY RESOURCE SOCIETY
FRASERSIDE COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY	SOURCES COMMUNITY RESOURCES SOCIETY
FREEDOM QUEST YOUTH SERVICES SOCIETY	SOUTH PEACE COMMUNITY RESOURCES SOCIETY
GREATER VANCOUVER COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY	SOUTH VANCOUVER FAMILY PLACE SOCIETY
HOLLYBURN FAMILY SERVICES	SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITY SERVICES
HULTAN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY	SURROUNDED BY CEDAR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
INCLUSION POWELL RIVER SOCIETY	TERRACE AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY
INTERIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES	THE BLOOM GROUP

INTERSECT YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES	THE BRIDGE YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
KAMLOOPS SOCIETY FOR ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICES	THE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
KELOWNA FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE SOCIETY	THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY
KINDALE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSOCIATION	THOMAS ROBINSON CONSULTING LTD
KOOTENAY BOUNDARY COMMUNITY SERVICES COOP	THOMPSON COMMUNITY SERVICES INC
K'WAK'WALAT'SI CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES	TOUCHSTONE FAMILY ASSOCIATION
MAPLE RIDGE/PITT MEADOWS COMMUNITY SERVICES	VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
MARPOLE OAKRIDGE FAMILY PLACE	VOLUNTEER TERRACE
MCCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY	WATARI YOUTH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
METRO VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	WESTCOAST FAMILY CENTRES SOCIETY
MILIEU FAMILY SERVICES INC	WJS CANADA

## APPENDIX C: REPORT PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

Established in 1982, The Federation of Community Social Services of BC (The Federation) is a registered non-profit organization with over 140 member organizations who provide support to individuals and communities throughout BC. Our member organizations span the entire province and offer a broad range of services to communities, people living with physical and mental challenges, vulnerable children, youth and seniors, new immigrants, people living with addictions/mental health and those living in poverty.

The Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) was established in 1966 and is a leader in applied social research, social policy analysis and community development approaches to social justice. Our mission is to work with communities in building a just and healthy society for all. We are a non-partisan, registered non-profit society and a federally registered charity. We are a provincial organization with over 16,000 members, governed by a Board of Directors that is representative of all regions of British Columbia.

The Community Social Services Employers' Association of BC (CSSEA) provides human resources and labour relations expertise to over 200 member social service organizations (unionized), ranging in size from under 10 to more than 600 employees and collectively employing more than 15,000 people. In addition, CSSEA provides services to more than 100 associate organizations that do not meet the criteria for membership but wish to access its human resources and labour relations services on a fee-for-service basis.

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (AEST) provides leadership and direction for post-secondary education and skills training systems in British Columbia as well as labour market information and programs.