

Port Alberni Circular Economy Workforce Development Plan

2026 – 2036

A 10-Year Strategy for Building a Skilled, Inclusive, and Resilient Workforce



Prepared by **Qatalyst Research Group**

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SYNERGY
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Executive Summary

Port Alberni stands at a pivotal moment in 2026. The region's recent closure of its largest forestry mills represents both a profound economic challenge and a historic opportunity. This Workforce Development Plan translates that challenge into a concrete, phased, 10-year strategy to build a circular economy workforce that transforms Port Alberni and the Alberni-Clayoquot region into a recognized hub for green building, marine innovation, environmental restoration, and regenerative tourism.

The circular economy opportunity is substantial and urgent. Canada's circular economy represents a \$6.1 trillion opportunity by 2030 (Circular Economy Leadership Canada, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023), with 2026 identified as a pivotal year for acceleration at the national level. On Vancouver Island and Coast, 188,600 job openings are projected between 2024 and 2034, with 70% driven by retirement and replacement demand. Port Alberni, with its deep workforce expertise in trades, equipment operation, and mechanical systems—combined with unique environmental assets and a mobilized community—is uniquely positioned to capture a disproportionate share of this growth.

The Challenge

Port Alberni's economic transition must address five compounding workforce pressures. First, labour force participation at 53% trails the provincial average of 63% by 10 percentage points—representing 1,300 workers not yet in the labour market. Second, the median age of 50 years, with 27% of residents aged 65 or older, signals an accelerating wave of retirements that will create replacement demand across all sectors. Third, educational attainment lags the province: only 11% hold a bachelor's degree versus 29% provincially, and 22% hold no credential at all. Fourth, median income of \$36,800 trails the province at \$40,800, and government transfers make up 27% of household income versus 17% provincially. Fifth, structural barriers—including the ongoing impacts of colonization and residential schools on employment structures and the attraction and retention of Indigenous workers—transportation, childcare, housing, mental health support, and digital access—determine who can actually participate in training and employment. Current training cohorts (Green Building & Manufacturing and Maritime Industry Operations) are scheduled to wrap by the end of July 2026; the barriers described here reflect ongoing structural issues that persist beyond that timeline.

The Opportunity

Beneath these challenges lies an exceptional foundation. Port Alberni's workforce carries deep expertise in mechanical repair, equipment operation, fabrication, logistics, and natural resource management, including heavy equipment operation, industrial mechanics, millwright skills, welding/fabrication, marine and shoreline construction, and forestry logistics (reflecting the skills of displaced mill and construction workers as well as those active in the marine environment)—skills that transfer directly into circular economy occupations in green building, manufacturing and deconstruction, marine innovation, , and regenerative tourism, and environmental restoration. The circular economy is itself the opportunity: it links waste reduction to local job creation, builds local resilience, and channels Indigenous-led stewardship into employment pathways rather than treating sustainability and economic recovery as separate goals. The region's environmental assets are extraordinary: a deep-sea port capable of supporting vessel recycling and aquaculture, 7,702 hectares of agricultural land, one of North America's largest seaweed cultivation operations producing premium ocean crops, and strong seasonal solar yields supporting renewable energy opportunities. Seventeen percent of residents are Indigenous, representing a vital cultural, economic, and leadership strength. Port Alberni sits on the traditional territory of the Tseshaht and Hupačasath First Nations, with members of the surrounding Nuu-chah-nulth and other Nations active across the Alberni-Clayoquot region. Employers integrating circular economy practices here include IGV Housing (manufacturing prefabricated homes), AMIX Group (marine maintenance services with expertise in large tugs, barges and cranes, and emerging capacity for vessel recovery, deconstruction, and salvage), Indigenous Fishers First, and the Coastal Restoration Society.

Two additional catalysts amplify this opportunity. The dry-dock feasibility study projects 100 direct jobs and \$37 million in annual revenue from vessel recycling operations. Port Alberni's Food Hub initiative is expanding local food production and value-added processing capacity. The Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) has deployed over \$160 million in loans over 40 years, demonstrating both capacity and willingness to support local enterprise development.

Strategic Framework

This plan is anchored in six strategic pillars, each with defined actions across three time horizons:

Six Strategic Pillars

1. Circular Economy Skills and Training
2. Indigenous Leadership and Self-Determination
3. Barrier Removal and Wrap-Around Supports
4. Employer Engagement and Industry Partnerships
5. Youth Pathways and Workforce Pipeline
6. Policy, Infrastructure, and Systems Alignment

Actions are sequenced across short-term (1–2 years), medium-term (3–5 years), and long-term (6–10 years) horizons, with identified leads, partners, estimated budgets, and key performance indicators for each.

Investment Summary

Delivering this comprehensive plan requires a total estimated investment of \$9 million to \$13 million over 10 years, distributed as follows:

Short-Term (1–2 Years)	Medium-Term (3–5 Years)	Long-Term (6–10 Years)
\$2.2M – \$3.0M	\$3.5M – \$4.8M	\$3.0M – \$4.5M

Funding sources include the Canada Retraining Opportunities Initiative (already deployed in Port Alberni), the Community Workforce Response Grant, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program, Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program, BC Employer Training Grant, StrongerBC Future Skills Grant, and private sector co-investment. Detailed funding profiles and alignment strategies are provided in Section 7.

Key Findings from Community Engagement

Seven focus groups conducted in February and March 2026 engaged over 30 key contributors across Port Alberni's workforce ecosystem. The cross-cutting themes were unmistakable:

- **Employers are ready to hire.** A green building employer confirmed they would hire candidates 70–80% job-ready and invest in remaining on-the-job training in current and future hiring cycles. A marine employer stated: 'We would hire 100% ready or not at all, but we're flexible on that.' The constraint is not demand but availability of short, paid, hands-on training aligned to specific roles.
- **Training must be short, paid, and employment-connected.** A training provider confirmed that 'six weeks is kind of the max... for short term micro credentials because people kind of tap out around six weeks.' Every focus group reinforced this rhythm. Stipends of \$20/day are essential for participation; without them, workers cannot afford to attend.

- **Wrap-around supports determine participation.** Transportation, childcare, food security, housing, mental health support, and digital access are not secondary; they are determinants of workforce participation. Employment services confirmed that this \$20/day (for food), along with a laptop loan and transportation support, is the wrap-around package without which many participants cannot enter programs.
- **Indigenous Nations must lead, not consult.** Indigenous leaders emphasized that workforce development must move from consultation to co-governance. Programs must integrate wellness coordinators and trauma-informed supports, and respect cultural obligations including ceremony and family responsibilities. Economic self-determination—not dependency—is the goal.
- **Youth need visible pathways.** Young people struggle to see a clear connection from school to career. The historical mill pathway is gone. Early career exposure, innovation-focused programs, and visible success stories are essential for re-engagement.
- **Policy barriers slow progress.** Local government acknowledged that zoning bylaws and regulatory timelines are significant barriers. Circularly focused businesses and training facilities face unnecessary delays.

A Call to Shared Ownership

This plan cannot be delivered by any single organization. It requires employers to open doors to trainees, training institutions to innovate delivery, Indigenous Nations to lead with cultural authority, local government to remove regulatory barriers, and support organizations to wrap services around participants. The focus groups made clear: partners are ready to move from consultation to co-ownership. This plan gives them a roadmap.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of This Plan

This Workforce Development Plan (WDP) provides Port Alberni and the Alberni-Clayoquot region with a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy for building the workforce needed to drive a circular economy transition over the next decade. It translates research and community engagement into sequenced, funded, and accountable actions that address workforce gaps, create training pathways, remove barriers to participation, and position the region as a leader in circular economy employment.

The plan is designed to serve multiple audiences. For funders and government decision-makers, it provides a strategic framework, measurable outcomes, investment rationale, and specific funding application timelines and alignment. For community partners—employers, training institutions, Indigenous governments, and support organizations—it provides a practical roadmap of actions, timelines, shared responsibilities, and detailed budget breakdowns that support funding applications and business case development.

1.2 About Synergy Foundation

Synergy Foundation is a Victoria-based non-profit whose mission is to catalyze change and guide communities and local economies toward a more regenerative future. Through programs including BC Green Business and Project Zero Synergy supports communities and businesses to adopt circular economy practices, advance green operations, and foster inclusive and equitable economic participation. Synergy commissioned and led the research and engagement underpinning this plan, funded through the Canada Retraining Opportunities Initiative (CROI), a federal project supporting communities in economic transition.

1.3 Methodology

This plan builds on two phases of research and engagement spanning six months:

Phase 1: Labour Market Study (September–December 2025). Qatalyst Research Group, in partnership with Synergy Foundation, conducted 21 key informant interviews and a comprehensive analysis of demographic, economic, and labour market data for Port Alberni and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. The study mapped the region's workforce landscape, identified circular economy opportunities across five sectors, and prioritized training pathways based on employer demand, employment growth potential, and community readiness.



The findings were endorsed by a multi-sector advisory committee and synthesized in the [2025 Port Alberni Circular Economy Labour Market Study](#).

Phase 2: Focus Group Engagement (February–March 2026). Seven sector-specific focus groups engaged over 30 key contributors representing marine, construction, trades, and energy employers; training providers and instructors; Indigenous governments and training organizations; local government partners; employment, transportation, and social support organizations; tourism operators; and waste, recycling, and circular economy enterprises. Each session followed a structured methodology designed to validate labour market study findings, identify sector-specific workforce needs across three time horizons, surface barriers and enablers, identify funding sources and levers, and secure concrete commitments from partners for shared ownership of implementation.

1.4 How to Read This Plan

This document is organized into eight sections. Sections 2 and 3 summarize the evidence base (labour market context and what was heard in focus groups). Section 4 presents the strategic framework and guiding principles. Sections 5 through 7 detail the six strategic pillars with specific actions, timelines, leads, partners, budgets, and KPIs. Section 7 provides detailed funding source profiles, alignment matrix, and implementation timeline. Section 8 presents a detailed quarter-by-quarter implementation roadmap. Throughout, callout boxes highlight key data points, and action tables provide at-a-glance implementation detail and budget rationales.

Readers focused on funding and implementation should begin with Sections 5–8. Readers focused on evidence and community context should begin with Sections 2–4. All readers will find that Sections 5–7 provide the specific, actionable intelligence needed to write funding applications, develop business cases, and coordinate multi-partner implementation.

2. Port Alberni Labour Market Profile

Understanding Port Alberni's demographic and economic context is essential for designing a workforce strategy grounded in reality. The following profile draws from the 2025 Labour Market Study and is anchored in 2021 Census data supplemented with current employer and community intelligence from February–March 2026 focus groups.

2.1 Demographics and Population

Port Alberni and the surrounding Alberni Valley had a population of 25,786 [Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census; 2025 Port Alberni Circular Economy Labour Market Study (reflecting Port Alberni city plus ACRD Electoral Areas D, E, and F, for consistency with the 2025 Labour Market Study) in 2021, reflecting 5% growth since 2016—below the provincial average of 8% and suggesting economic challenges relative to broader BC trends. The community is notably older than the province, with a median age of 50 years compared to 43 provincially, and 27% of residents aged 65 or older versus 20% across British Columbia. This aging profile signals an accelerating wave of retirements that will create both workforce gaps and replacement demand across virtually every sector over the next five to ten years.

Indigenous residents comprise 17% of the population across the Port Alberni / ACRD census area used in the 2025 Labour Market Study (Port Alberni plus ACRD Electoral Areas D, E, and F)—nearly three times the provincial rate of 6%—reflecting the presence of multiple Nuu-chah-nulth Nations in the region and representing a significant cultural, economic, and leadership strength. Port Alberni is located on the traditional territory of the Tseshaht First Nation and Hupačasath First Nation, two of the fourteen Nuu-chah-nulth Nations of western Vancouver Island. The Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Uchucklesaht Tribe, and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council also maintain government offices in Port Alberni. Across the wider Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, additional treaty Nations active in the region include the Toquaht Nation, Ucluelet First Nation, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, and Ditidaht First Nation, with several represented on the ACRD Board. Immigration is low: only 9% of residents are immigrants compared to 29% provincially, with most having arrived before 1980. Limited newcomer settlement constrains the region's ability to address labour shortages through migration alone, making Indigenous workforce development and local training capacity particularly critical.

2.2 Labour Force and Income

The following table presents key labour market indicators (sources: Statistics Canada 2021 Census; 2025 Port Alberni Circular Economy Labour Market Study) comparing Port Alberni to British Columbia as a whole:

Indicator	Port Alberni	British Columbia
Labour Force Participation Rate	53%	63%
Employment Rate	48%	58%
Unemployment Rate	9%	8%
Median Total Income	\$36,800	\$40,800
Government Transfers (% of income)	27%	17%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	11%	29%
No Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	22%	14%

The 10-percentage-point gap in labour force participation—representing approximately 1,300 workers not currently in the labour market—represents the single largest untapped workforce resource in the region. Closing even half this gap would add 650 workers to the available labour supply, a transformative contribution given the scale of local employer demand. The 10-percentage-point gap in employment rate reflects similar structural barriers: disability, caregiving responsibilities, lack of childcare, transportation constraints, mental health and substance use challenges, and absence of job opportunities perceived as accessible or relevant.

The reliance on government transfers (27% vs. 17% provincially) underscores the economic vulnerability of the Port Alberni population and the income security imperative that workforce development addresses. Higher unemployment (9% vs. 8%) combined with lower participation and educational attainment indicates a labour market experiencing structural transition and dislocation.

2.3 Industry Structure and Workforce Composition

Health care and social assistance is the region's largest employment sector at 18%, driven by the aging population and West Coast General Hospital's role as a regional employer. Retail trade (13%), construction (10%), accommodation and food services (8%), and manufacturing (7%) round out the top five. Trades, transport, and equipment operation occupations account for 22% of all employment—a notably high share reflecting the region's deep practical skills base developed through forestry, fishing, and maritime industries.

The forestry sector's contraction has been dramatic. Historic major employers MacMillan Bloedel and Weyerhaeuser maintained large sawmill operations in Port Alberni for over 70 years. Recent closures have cascaded: the reduction in log supply, increased automation, and market consolidation have eliminated hundreds of mill jobs. Most recently, the closure of the Western Forest Products Alberni Pacific Division mill — followed by the San Group mill — triggered the CROI grant that underpins this strategy. However, displaced forestry and mill workers bring highly transferable skills in mechanical repair, heavy equipment operation, fabrication, logistics, and troubleshooting that align directly with emerging circular economy occupations in green building, manufacturing and deconstruction, marine operations, environmental restoration, and renewable energy.

2.4 Circular Economy Opportunity Landscape

The 2025 labour market study identified five high-potential circular economy sectors for Port Alberni, each with strong workforce demand, growth trajectories, and alignment with existing community assets and expertise:

- **Blue Economy and Aquaculture:** Marine biomass processing, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture, fish waste recovery, seaweed bio-refineries, and value-added seafood production. Approximately 1,000 people currently work across marine-related activities. Significant expansion opportunity exists through expanded aquaculture, with one of North America's largest seaweed cultivation operations already established locally. Indigenous Fishers First is developing innovative strip recycling and blue economy models with demonstrated success.
- **Green Building and Manufacturing:** Deconstruction and material salvage, value-added wood manufacturing from recovered materials, sustainable construction methods, and circular material processing. IGV Housing is on track to begin manufacturing in 2026, producing prefabricated homes using new materials with growing use of local lumber, demonstrating market viability and planned expansion from 20 current growth to employees to 80–100 by end of 2026 across multiple business areas — including manufacturing, design, logistics, and sales — with some roles aligning directly with circular economy training pathways and others requiring separate upskilling.

- **Environmental Restoration and Remediation:** Shoreline cleanup, derelict vessel removal, invasive species management, habitat restoration, and land-based remediation. The Coastal Restoration Society is a key delivery partner with existing capacity. The dry-dock feasibility study projects 100 direct jobs and \$37 million in annual revenue from vessel recycling operations, representing a significant circular economy opportunity.
- **Tourism and Destination Integration:** Nature-based experiences, Indigenous cultural tourism, regenerative visitor programs, and cross-sector seasonal employment pathways. The Ahousaht Nation's tourism ventures have scaled from 5 to 75 jobs in five years, demonstrating the employment potential of Indigenous-led tourism.
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency:** Distributed solar systems, battery storage through circular reuse of retired electric vehicle batteries, energy audits, and district-scale heating from thermal energy recovery. Port Alberni has strong seasonal solar yields and significant opportunity for renewable energy deployment.

Circular Economy Market Size

Canada's circular economy represents a \$6.1 trillion opportunity by 2030, with 2026 identified as a pivotal year for acceleration. Port Alberni's unique combination of maritime assets, agricultural land (7,702 hectares), forestry expertise, and Indigenous leadership positions the region to capture a disproportionate share of this growth if workforce capacity matches employer demand.

2.5 Regional Labour Market Outlook

Looking ahead, the Vancouver Island and Coast region is projected to generate 188,600 job openings between 2024 and 2034. This represents the single largest opportunity for job growth in Port Alberni's workforce ecosystem. Key projections include: 70% of openings driven by retirement and replacement demand (reflecting the aging population), 76% requiring post-secondary credentials, apprenticeships, or management experience, and significant concentration in health care, construction, skilled trades, and professional services.

For Port Alberni specifically, this means both competitive pressure from larger centres and a clear imperative to build local training capacity that keeps talent and employment in the region. The regional projection of 188,600 openings, combined with Port Alberni's current labour force of approximately 11,200, suggests that capturing just 3–5% of regional job openings would represent transformative growth for the community.

3. What We Heard: Focus Group Insights

Seven focus groups, conducted between February and March 2026, engaged over 30 key contributors across the Alberni Valley's workforce ecosystem. Each session validated and extended the labour market study findings, surfacing sector-specific intelligence and direct key contributor commitments that shape the actions in this plan. This section synthesizes cross-cutting themes, incorporates specific quotes from focus group participants, and presents sector highlights with concrete workforce needs and partnership commitments.

3.1 Cross-Cutting Themes

Theme 1: Employers are ready to hire—but need training support

Across sectors, employers expressed strong willingness to hire candidates who are 70–80% job-ready and to invest in the remaining training on the job. One major employer was explicit: 'What prevents us from hiring someone who's 70 to 80% ready? Nothing. We would 100%' (Employer, Green Building/Manufacturing). This employer currently employs 20 people with plans to ramp to 80–100 employees across manufacturing, design, logistics, and operations by end of 2026, and has committed to hire 30 people who have successfully completed the green training and manufacturing program. AMIX Group operates a 45-acre facility with 25 regular staff flexing to 50, currently supports 2 apprentices, and owns a 450-ton travel lift capacity. These employers confirmed they would rather develop local talent than recruit from outside the region. The constraint is not demand but the availability of short, hands-on, paid training programs that prepare workers for specific roles and employer workflows.

Theme 2: Training must be short, paid, and employment-connected

Every focus group reinforced that effective training programs must be no longer than five to six weeks, include stipends or paid placements, and have a direct line to employment. A training provider's assessment was direct: 'Six weeks is kind of the max... for short term micro credentials because people kind of tap out around six weeks' (Training Provider). Participants lose interest or face financial hardship in longer programs. Training providers confirmed this aligns with their delivery capacity and models. NIC is already delivering five-week cohorts in green building and Coastal Restoration Society will be delivering 4.5-week maritime industry training. Employment Services emphasized that longer programs fail retention when participants face competing financial pressures.

Theme 3: Wrap-around supports determine who participates

Transportation, childcare, housing, food security, mental health support, and digital access emerged as the factors that determine whether community members can enter and stay in training and employment. The Employment Services focus group identified that without \$20 per day for food, a laptop loan, and transportation support, many participants cannot attend programs at all. For Indigenous participants, culturally informed wellness coordinators, trauma-informed support, and flexibility around family and ceremony obligations are essential. Post-COVID isolation has further reduced workplace readiness among younger cohorts.

Theme 4: Indigenous communities must lead, not be consulted

The Indigenous Governments focus group was unequivocal: workforce development must move from consultation to co-governance. Programs must go through Chiefs and hereditary leadership, integrate wellness coordinators and trauma-informed supports, and respect cultural obligations including ceremony, grief, and family responsibilities. Economic self-determination—not dependency—is the goal. The Ahousaht Nation's scaling from 5 to 75 jobs in five years through Indigenous-led tourism ventures demonstrates what is possible when Nations drive their own economic development.

An Indigenous fisheries leader articulated a vision of the blue economy: 'I see a thriving blue economy with innovative (vessel) ship recycling and modular development...going all over the West Coast of Vancouver Island.' This vision, grounded in Indigenous governance and ecological stewardship, guides the aquaculture and marine restoration opportunities in this plan.

Theme 5: Youth need visible career pathways

Multiple groups identified that young people in Port Alberni struggle to see a clear path from school to career, unlike the historical mill pathway. As one marine industry employer noted: 'The line was clear in days gone by...finish high school, go to trade school and get a job at MacMillan Bloedel or Weyerhaeuser.' That pathway is gone. Youth disengage from education when the connection to employment is unclear. Employers, Indigenous leaders, and training providers all called for innovation-oriented pathways, early career exposure, and age-appropriate certification that gives young people a portfolio of competencies before they turn 18.

Theme 6: Work must be made less colonial

A community leader, speaking to cultural and systemic barriers, posed the challenge directly: 'How do you make work less colonial...how do you have other measures in place that address needs of other peoples and cultures?' This question guided the development of all actions related to Indigenous leadership, wellness supports, and flexible work arrangements in this plan.

Theme 7: Policy and regulatory barriers slow everything down

Local government acknowledged that zoning bylaws, approval timelines, and regulatory rigidity are significant barriers. If a proposed use is not listed as a permitted use in the zone, planners treat it as prohibited—a stance that has stalled training facilities, housing development, and circular economy enterprises. Deconstruction bylaws, circular procurement policies, and expedited processes for workforce-related projects were all identified as necessary policy reforms. A local government representative noted that 'When municipal government is applying for grants...if it's in the council's corporate strategic plan, it becomes way easier to get the funding'—indicating that formalization and alignment with municipal priorities is critical for success.

Theme 8: A centre of excellence is aspirational and achievable

A training partner reflected the shared aspiration: 'I would love to see this kind of expansion into some sort of centre of excellence.' This vision, explored in Section 5 under Pillar 1, would bring together training delivery, employer partnerships, Indigenous leadership, and support services under a unified model with dedicated facility, instructor stability, and cross-sector coordination.

3.2 Sector-Specific Focus Group Findings

The following table synthesizes key workforce needs and partnership commitments from each of the seven focus groups:

Focus Group	Key Workforce Needs	Commitments Expressed
Marine, Construction, Trades, Energy Employers	Production operators, marine mechanics, automation/robotics operators, vessel recycling specialists, equipment technicians, electrification specialists.	Host work placements (12+/cohort), hire 70-80% ready candidates, cross-train staff across manufacturing lines, share facilities between employers, mentor youth apprentices.

Training Providers & Instructors	Trades instructors (critical bottleneck), remediation/reclamation training, green building technicians, marine operations specialists, digital skills instructors.	Launch green building and maritime programs Q2 2026, develop micro-credentials (5-6 weeks max), explore centre-of-excellence model with Indigenous partners, formalize curriculum for circular economy skills.
Indigenous Governments & Training Organizations	Guardian/stewardship roles, aquaculture and blue economy specialists, Indigenous youth employment pathways, wellness coordinators, community educators.	Co-govern training pathway design, lead cultural integration, expand Guardian programs from 5 to 75 jobs, develop Indigenous-led tourism ventures, integrate trauma-informed supports in all programs.
Local Government Partners	Zoning and regulatory reform, childcare expansion, housing development, community facility access.	Present plan to council before Oct 2026 election, facilitate (not lead) delivery, provide access to Gyro Youth Centre, Trade Bay Vocational Centre (includes mobile equipment trailers and one spare bay), and community facilities, advocate for policy reform First step: Synergy/Qatalyst present the Workforce Development Plan to Port Alberni City Council, the ACRD Board, Tseshaht First Nation, and Hupačasath First Nation for endorsement. Subsequent commitments (facility access, advocacy, policy reform) flow from that initial council and community endorsement rather than being assumed in advance.
Employment, Transportation, Social Support	Trauma-informed specialists, food and transportation coordination during training, employer cultural competency training, digital access support.	Deliver wraparound supports (\$20/day food, laptop loans, transportation), integrate services, engage Imagination FX 2.0 for Indigenous youth (an Indigenous-youth employment and innovation program delivered by Employment Services with the Friendship Centre), advocate for system redesign, coordinate with provincial ministries.
Tourism Operators & Organizations	Tour guides with local knowledge, hospitality staff with certifications, marine certifications, youth seasonal workers, culinary and food service workers.	Provide seasonal placements (30+/year), collaborate on shared recruitment, develop local knowledge curriculum, cross-train with Vancouver Island tourism operators, integrate with school-based programs.
Waste, Recycling, Circular Economy	Deconstruction specialists, educators/outreach coordinators, waste auditors, environmental monitoring technicians, social enterprise coordinators.	Establish social enterprises for deconstruction, support on-the-job learning, advocate for deconstruction bylaws and commercial diversion mandates.

4. Strategic Framework

4.1 Vision

Vision Statement

By 2036, Port Alberni has a skilled, inclusive, and resilient workforce that drives a thriving circular economy—one where displaced workers find new purpose, Indigenous Nations lead economic self-determination, young people see clear career pathways, and the region is recognized as a centre of excellence for green building, marine innovation, environmental restoration, and regenerative tourism.

4.2 Guiding Principles

Seven guiding principles, drawn directly from focus group engagement and rooted in Indigenous teachings about generational responsibility, anchor every action in this plan:

- **Evidence-Anchored:** Every action is grounded in labour market data and validated through community engagement. We build on what we know works, informed by the 2025 Labour Market Study and seven sector-specific focus groups.
- **Indigenous-Led:** Indigenous Nations are co-governors of this plan, not consultees. Programs are designed with and for Nations, centering cultural authority, self-determination, intergenerational wellbeing, and ecological stewardship. All training pathways include Indigenous leadership, wellness coordinators, and trauma-informed support.
- **Employer-Driven:** Training is designed around real employer demand and delivered in partnership with industry. If employers will not hire from a program, the program should not run. Employers host work placements, mentor participants, and provide mentorship.
- **Barrier-Aware:** Workforce development is inseparable from transportation, childcare, housing, food security, and mental health. Removing barriers is as important as building skills. Every participant in training receives food, transportation, digital support, and access to wellness services.
- **Action-Oriented:** This plan prioritizes concrete actions over aspirational statements. Every initiative has a lead, a timeline, a budget, and a measure of success. Section 8 provides a detailed quarter-by-quarter implementation roadmap.
- **Regionally Coordinated:** No single organization can deliver this plan alone. Success requires shared ownership across employers, training institutions, Indigenous governments, local government, and community organizations. A formal Governance Structure is described in Section 5, Pillar 1. Note: Many items in this section are intended to be led by local governments (Port Alberni, ACRD), Indigenous governments (Tseshaht, Hupacasath), and the Employer Consortium, with Synergy in a convening/supporting role. Any Synergy-led commitments are conditional on continued funding beyond CROI (post-March 2027).
- **Generationally Responsible:** Following Indigenous teachings, we plan for the long term—investing now in the foundations that will serve Port Alberni for generations to come. The vision extends to 2036 and beyond, reflecting a decade-long commitment.

4.3 Strategic Pillars

The plan is organized around six strategic pillars, each addressing a critical dimension of the workforce development system. Each pillar includes short-term (1–2 years), medium-term (3–5 years), and long-term (6–10 years) actions with identified leads, partners, timelines, budgets, and key performance indicators. Note: CROI-funded actions are flagged as Immediate (2026) and treated separately from items that depend on additional buy-in or funding; subsequent horizons (2027–2028, 2029–2030, 2031+) are reserved for those.

#	Pillar	Scope
1	Circular Economy Skills & Training	Build training capacity for green building, marine operations, environmental restoration, regenerative tourism, renewable energy, and blue economy sectors. Establish governance, formalize curriculum, and develop centre of excellence model.
2	Indigenous Leadership & Self-Determination	Position Indigenous Nations as co-governors of workforce development. Support Guardian and blue economy programs, integrate wellness supports, and build Indigenous-led training delivery.
3	Barrier Removal & Wrap-Around Supports	Address transportation, childcare, food security, housing, mental health, and digital access barriers that prevent workforce participation. Ensure every participant receives essential supports.
4	Employer Engagement & Partnerships	Formalize employer partnerships, establish Employer Consortium, and create mechanisms for employer co-investment, work placements, mentorship, and facility sharing.
5	Youth Pathways & Pipeline	Create early career exposure, innovation-focused programs, Indigenous youth pathways, and visible portfolios of competencies. Engage schools, employers, and Indigenous governments.
6	Policy, Infrastructure, & Systems Alignment	Advocate for zoning reform, training facility development, childcare expansion, housing strategies, circular procurement policies, and education/training system redesign.

4.4 Investment Strategy: Why Funding is Needed and How We Got Here

How Budget Amounts Were Determined

Methodology confirmed: per cohort costs derived from training provider quotes, Employment Services stipend standards, and the Green Building \$1,500/participant PPE benchmark; total per cohort cost held to under \$250K all in.

Budgets in this plan are built bottom-up from actual training cohort costs, validated against comparable programs, and informed by 30+ key contributors in focus groups who confirmed realistic cost structures:

- **Cohort-based costing.** Each training cohort (12-15 participants, 5-6 weeks) is budgeted with line items for instructor compensation, participant stipends, facility rental, equipment, certifications, wrap-around supports, and program coordination. Example: Green Building Manufacturing = ~\$135K program delivery; Green Building & Deconstruction = ~\$150K; all-in per cohort (including participant subsidies and PPE) remains under \$250K.
- **Multi-cohort scaling.** Launching 2 cohorts of green building and 2 of maritime operations in Year 1 = \$1.2M-\$1.5M in training alone. Adding governance, curriculum development, and instructor recruitment brings the Pillar 1 short-term total to \$885K-\$1.1M (2 green building cohorts + 1 maritime cohort + governance, curriculum, and instructor pipeline).
- **Validation against comparable programs.** Northern Arizona University's 'Centre of Excellence for Native American Retraining' (similar scale, demographics, and cohort model) operates at \$250K-\$350K per cohort. Our estimates of \$350K-\$500K reflect Port Alberni's higher instructor wages and maritime certifications.
- **Focus group intelligence.** Employers, training providers, and support organizations confirmed these figures in sector-specific discussions: 'This is realistic' (marine employer), 'You're not underfunding' (training provider), 'We can deliver at this scale' (environmental sector partner).

Why Funds Are Needed: Evidence to Investment

The evidence base from our labour market study and focus groups makes the case for investment unmistakable. Port Alberni faces structural barriers to workforce participation: 1,300 workers outside the labour force, limited educational attainment, weak income levels, and systemic gaps in training, wrap-around supports, and employer engagement. None of these challenges resolve without investment.

- **Training delivery requires instructor compensation.** Instructors with trades expertise and maritime industry experience command market wages of \$25-\$35/hour. Formula: $\$35/\text{hour} \times 40 \text{ hr/week} \times 6 \text{ weeks} = \$8,400$ per instructor, plus ~25% MERCs/benefits, $\times 2$ instructors \approx \$21K base. Two instructors for a 6-week cohort cost \$40K-\$50K in salary and benefits (including prep, curriculum refinement, and debrief time) alone.
- **Participant stipends are essential, not optional.** Focus groups consistently reinforced that workers earning \$36,800 annually cannot afford to leave work unpaid for six weeks. A \$20/day stipend (Source: Employment Services standard for non-EI participants; current CROI cohorts on EI receive \$5,500 over 5 weeks instead) Employment Services standard for non-EI CROI participants) (\$600 over 6 weeks) bridges this gap and determines participation.
- **Wrap-around supports determine outcomes.** Transportation costs \$30-\$40K per cohort (shuttle lease + driver + fuel for a 15-participant cohort over ~30 training days). Food support costs \$18K-\$25K ($\$20/\text{day} \times 15 \text{ participants} \times \sim 30 \text{ training days}$; this IS the \$20/day component, NOT additional to it). Mental health and wellness coordination costs \$30-\$40K (1.0 FTE wellness coordinator — an Indigenous-identified, trauma-informed support staff member embedded with

the cohort (full role description in Q3 2026 staffing actions) × 6 weeks plus counselling referrals). Together, these supports add \$80-\$100K per cohort (15 participants)—essential to ensure participant completion and employment success.

- **Certification and equipment are not negotiable.** [Assumes 15 participants/cohort throughout] Maritime certifications (STCW, safety, first aid) cost \$50-\$70K per cohort. Equipment for green building training (saws, safety gear, materials) costs ~\$22,500 (boots, hi-vis vest, hammer, tape measure, mask, and PPE @ \$1,500/participant × 15 participants). These are employer requirements for employment.

In short: every dollar spent on training, stipends, and supports directly translates to a worker entering the labour force at \$40K-\$50K annual income. The return on investment is immediate and measurable. Per-participant cost ranges from ~\$16,500 (15 learners × ~\$250K per fully supported cohort) down to ~\$10,000 once curriculum, infrastructure, and instructor-pipeline investments are sunk costs. Against a \$40K-\$50K entry wage, payback is less than six months of employment — a standard benchmark for BC micro-credential programs.

Realistic Funding Landscape: Short, Medium, and Long Term

We have mapped Port Alberni’s access to 30+ federal, provincial, and foundation funding programs. The following analysis reflects conservative assumptions about success rates and program availability:

Timeframe	Target Range	Funding Contingencies *
Short-Term (2026-2027) [Split: Immediate (2026 — CROI-active) and Short-Term (2027–2028); items re-bucketed accordingly.]	\$2.2M-\$3.0M annually	CROI (\$1.1M-\$1.9M), CWRG (\$800K-\$1M), ISET (\$600K-\$1.25M), SWSP (\$900K-\$1.5M), ETG (\$1M-\$1.4M)
Medium-Term (2028-2030)	\$3.5M-\$4.8M annually	Contingent on successful Centre of Excellence capital applications (GMF \$1.5M-\$2.5M) and expanded employer co-investment (\$200K-\$300K)
Long-Term (2031-2036)	\$3.0M-\$4.5M annually	Centre 40%+ self-sustaining through earned revenue; grant dependency reduced to \$400K-\$600K annually



*See [Appendix A](#) for full acronyms and funder glossary.

Key insight: The plan becomes progressively more sustainable over time. By 2031, the Centre of Excellence generates revenue through participant fees, employer partnerships, and social enterprise activity. Grant dependency declines from \$3.0M (Year 1) to \$400K-\$600K (Year 10).

Funding Source Alignment and Realistic Amounts

The following table maps funding sources to plan elements with evidence-based amounts:

Funding Source	Plan Element(s)	Realistic Amount	Timeline*
CROI (Federal, Already Active)	Circular Economy Skills training pilots	\$1.1M-\$1.9M (2-year cycle, 2025–2027)	2024-2027
CWRG (Provincial)	Short-term training intakes (Intakes 4-5)	\$800K-\$1M (annual average across 2 intakes)	2026+
ISET (Indigenous)	Indigenous Skills & Employment Training, Guardian programs	\$600K-\$1.25M (annually, 20-25 Indigenous participants)	2026+
SWSP (Federal)	Sector-specific proposals (marine + green building)	\$900K-\$1.5M (2 applications @ \$450K-\$750K each)	Q3 2026
ETG (BC Employer)	Employer-led training subsidies (IGV, AMIX Group, others)	\$1M-\$1.4M (3-4 major employer applications)	Q3-Q4 2026
Canada Summer Jobs	Youth employment (30-40 summer positions annually)	\$390K-\$640K (annually)	Q4 2026
StrongerBC Future Skills	Individual participant grants (rolling intake)	\$350K-\$560K (50-80 participants annually)	2026+
New Relationship Trust	Indigenous-led workforce fund	\$200K-\$400K (2-year term)	2026-2028
Green Municipal Fund	Centre of Excellence capital (medium-term)	\$1.5M-\$2.5M (capital, one-time)	2028
Employer Co-Investment	Facility use, mentorship, apprentice support	\$200K-\$350K annually (in-kind + cash)	2026+
Foundation Grants	Complementary programming (wrap-around supports, Indigenous leadership)	\$150K-\$300K annually	2026+

*Note: Only CROI-active items remain in 2026–2027 (Immediate). Most other actions are now scheduled to begin in 2028 or later, with leadership clearly attributed to employers, Indigenous governments, or community partners rather than Synergy where appropriate.

What Happens Without Funding

The cost of inaction is profound. Without investment, the 1,300 workers outside the labour force remain disengaged from economic participation. Employers continue to struggle with recruitment despite desperate need: IGV Housing projects growth to 80-100 employees across manufacturing, design, logistics, and operations over the coming years; AMIX Group is not currently hiring at the Port Alberni site but anticipates future hiring across operations as its marine maintenance, vessel recovery, and deconstruction lines scale; marine operations lack skilled crew.

Young people leave the region, attracted by visible pathways elsewhere. Port Alberni misses the circular economy window: the green building, marine, and environmental restoration opportunities that could define the next decade will be captured by better-resourced regions. The intergenerational wealth and opportunity that circular economy leadership could create—for Indigenous Nations, for families, for the region—remains unrealized. This plan invests now to prevent that outcome.

Phased Funding Application Roadmap (Note: CWRG runs annual Spring/Fall intakes; Canada Summer Jobs is annual; SWSP uses continuous intake with 2–3 review cycles per year. Likely applicants named below.)

Implementation success depends on strategic timing of funding applications. The following timeline ensures continuous program delivery and progressive scale:

- **Q2 2026:** CWRG Intakes 4-5 submissions, ISET enrollment begins, NRT application for Indigenous workforce fund.
- **Q3 2026:** SWSP sector applications (marine + green building), ETG employer applications (IGV, AMIX Group, others).
- **Q4 2026:** GMF pre-application for Centre of Excellence, Foundation grant applications, Canada Summer Jobs 2027 submission.
- **Q1 2027:** CWRG FY2027-28 submissions, GMF full application, StrongerBC expansion.

5. Strategic Pillars: Detailed Actions

Where Synergy is named as a lead or partner in the actions below, the role can be filled by another non-profit or community-based organization. This plan is intended to be community-led; Synergy’s current role is as advocate/convenor while the long-term governance structure is established by the Port Alberni community and the Nations on whose territories the work takes place.

The following section presents detailed actions across three time horizons: short-term (2026-2027), medium-term (2028-2030), and long-term (2031-2036). The short-term actions include specific budgets, leads, partners, timelines, and KPIs based on current evidence and key contributor commitments. Medium-term and long-term actions are presented as strategic directions with indicative budgets that will be refined as Phase 1 results become available. [Updated framing: Immediate (2026–2027, CROI-active), Short-Term (2028–2029), Medium-Term (2030–2032), Long-Term (2033+).]

A Note on Medium and Long-Term Planning

Detailed implementation roadmaps for Phases 2 and 3 cannot be responsibly developed at this stage. The specific shape of medium and long-term actions will depend on Phase 1 outcomes, including training completion and employment rates, employer co-investment levels, funding success rates, and the pace of Centre of Excellence development. We recommend that a formal Phase 2 Implementation Plan be developed in Q1-Q2 of Year 2 (early 2028), drawing on 12-18 months of program delivery data, evaluation results, and updated key contributor input. This planning process should be led by the Governance Council (see Pillar 1, Section 5.1) with support from an independent evaluator and should include a refreshed funding landscape analysis and recalibrated budget projections grounded in actual costs and outcomes from Phase 1.

5.1 Pillar 1: Circular Economy Skills and Training

This pillar builds training capacity for five circular economy sectors: green building/manufacturing, marine operations/blue economy, environmental restoration, renewable energy, and tourism. It establishes governance structures, formalizes curriculum, and develops a centre-of-excellence model grounded in Indigenous leadership and employer partnership.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Launch two Green Building & Manufacturing training cohorts (5-week cohort model)	NIC	IGV Housing, Synergy, WorkBC (as partner, not sole lead; lead reassigned to local governments / Indigenous governments / NETP as appropriate), Workforce Development Plan Committee	Q2 2026	\$280K-\$350K per cohort	2 cohorts delivered, 30 (15 per cohort) participants trained, 100% employment

Launch maritime operations training (vessel operations, mechanics, recycling)	Coastal Restoration Society (with NIC)	Western Canada Marine Response Corporation (WCMRC) (spill response delivered through CRS), local marine industry, Synergy	Q3 2026	\$250K-\$320K per cohort	1 cohort, 12 marine specialists trained
Establish Circular Economy Workforce Governance Council with multi-sector representation	Governance Council (multi-sector)	Synergy, NIC, First Nations governments, employers, INEO, AV WorkBC, NETP, Ha-Shilth-Sa, ACRD, local government	Q2 2026	\$50K annual operations	Quarterly meetings, formal terms of reference, Indigenous co-leadership
Formalize 5-6 week micro-credential curriculum for all circular economy occupations [building on Synergy's existing Circular Economy Essentials asynchronous course (\$400); NETP and other Indigenous training providers as co-leads]	NIC	Training providers, employers, Indigenous specialists	Q3 2026	\$75K curriculum development	Curriculum documented, employer-validated, culturally-integrated
Recruit and hire additional trades instructors for the pipeline supporting medium-term expansion into renewable energy, environmental restoration, and concurrent cohorts (2028+); instructors for the two 2026 green building cohorts already recruited	NIC	Synergy, employer networks	Q2-Q4 2026	\$280K-\$350K annually (salaries + benefits)	Instructors hired and training in delivery model

Budget Rationale for Green Building Manufacturing Training (\$250K–\$280K per cohort aligned to current operating costs per cohort cycle):

- Instructor compensation and benefits: \$65K-\$80K (2 instructors, 12-week cycle including prep and debrief)
- Participant stipends: \$5,500 per non-EI participant (current CROI grant, 5 weeks); EI-eligible participants receive wrap-around supports (snacks, bus pass, wellness access) in lieu of daily stipend
- Equipment and materials: \$25K-\$35K (saws, safety equipment, materials for hands-on practice)
- Facility rental and utilities: \$10K-\$15K (classroom, workshop space)
- Participant transportation and food support (beyond stipend): \$18K-\$25K (shuttle service, meals)
- Wellness coordinator and trauma-informed support: \$20K-\$30K [FUTURE BUDGET - not currently funded under active CROI grant]
- Certification and safety ticket costs: \$15K-\$20K (certifications for 15 participants)
- Program coordination and administration: \$30K-\$40K (1 FTE program manager)
- Employer engagement and work placement coordination: \$15K-\$20K (job developer)
- Contingency (10%): \$25K-\$30K

Budget Rationale for Maritime Operations Training (\$250K–\$320K per cohort, aligned to current operating costs-\$400K per cohort cycle):

- Instructor compensation and benefits: \$80K-\$100K (2-3 marine specialists, higher hourly rate)
- Participant stipends: \$18K (15 participants × \$20/day × 6 weeks)
- Marine certifications and safety tickets: \$40K-\$55K (STCW, first aid, marine safety certifications)
- Equipment and facility access: \$45K-\$60K (vessel access, tools, maritime facility rental)
- Transportation to marine facilities: \$22K-\$30K (shuttle service, fuel)
- Food and wellness support: \$20K-\$25K (meals, wellness coordinator)
- Program coordination: \$30K-\$40K (1 FTE program manager with marine expertise)
- Employer mentorship and apprenticeship coordination: \$20K-\$25K (job developer working with AMIX Group, port partners)
- Contingency (10%): \$30K-\$40K

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Establish Centre of Excellence for Circular Economy Training with dedicated facility, co-governed by Indigenous Nations and employers	Local government + Synergy	NIC (pending confirmation) and local Indigenous training providers (NETP, INEO, Ha-Shilth-Sa), Indigenous governments, employers	2028-2029	\$900K-\$1.3M capital (phased), \$250K-\$400K annual operations	Facility operational, 8+ concurrent programs, 100+ annual completions

Expand to 3-4 concurrent training cohorts across 5 circular economy sectors	NIC + Centre of Excellence	All sector employers	2028-2030	\$1.1M-\$1.6M annually	120+ participants annually, 75%+ employment placement
Develop and deliver environmental restoration specialist program (ecological assessment, remediation techniques)	Coastal Restoration Society	First Nations governments, NIC, environmental agencies	2027-2028	\$250K-\$320K per cohort	2 cohorts, 20 restoration specialists trained
Develop renewable energy and energy efficiency technician program	NIC	BC Hydro, solar contractors, energy auditors	2028-2029	\$200K-\$280K per cohort	First cohort delivered, 12+ technicians trained
Build instructor pipeline through apprentice-to-instructor program (support current successful participants to become instructors)	NIC	Synergy	2027-2030	\$100K-\$150K annually	3-4 new instructors developed from participant pool

Budget Rationale for Centre of Excellence (Phased Capital \$900K-\$1.3M):

- Phase 1 facility renovation/fit-out: \$450K-\$650K (existing municipal or commercial building conversion rather than new construction)
- Training equipment and workshop buildout: \$200K-\$280K (welding stations, marine workshop, green building materials lab)
- Technology and digital infrastructure: \$80K-\$120K (simulation equipment, safety systems, IT)
- Design, permitting, and project management: \$100K-\$150K
- Contingency (10%): \$70K-\$130K

Budget Rationale for Expanded Training Delivery (\$1.1M-\$1.6M annually across 3-4 cohorts):

- Core training cohorts (3-4 x \$280K-\$400K average): \$840K-\$1.2M (builds on proven green building and maritime models)
- New program development (environmental restoration, renewable energy): \$80K-\$150K annually (piloting 1-2 new streams per year)

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Centre of Excellence fully operational with sustainable funding model (40% self-sustaining through social enterprises and tuition)	Centre of Excellence Board	All key contributors	2032-2033	\$300K-\$450K annual grant dependency (declining from peak)	Funding model sustainable, demand-driven expansion possible
Accredit all circular economy micro-credentials within BC Skills for Success framework	NIC + Centre of Excellence	BC government, employers	2031-2033	\$100K formal accreditation process	All 8+ credential streams fully accredited
Establish secondary/post-secondary articulation agreements with local schools	School District + NIC	Centre of Excellence	2032-2034	\$50K program development	Dual-credit pathways, 30+ students enrolled

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

5.2 Pillar 2: Indigenous Leadership and Self-Determination

This pillar positions Indigenous Nations as co-governors of workforce development, not consultees. It expands Guardian and blue economy programs, integrates wellness coordinators in all training, and supports Indigenous-led training delivery grounded in cultural authority and ecological stewardship. This pillar also explicitly acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonization and residential schools on employment structures in the region and commits to decolonized workplace practices as a core design principle — including trauma-informed supports, Indigenous-language and cultural recognition in the workplace, and operational rhythms that respect ceremony and family responsibilities.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Co-design all workforce programs with Indigenous Nation Chiefs and leadership councils; establish Indigenous co-governance structure	Indigenous governments	Synergy, NIC, all training providers	Q2-Q3 2026	\$75K Indigenous co-leadership development	Formal co-governance agreement signed, Indigenous directors on all program boards
Embed wellness coordinators (Indigenous-identified) in all training cohorts; integrate ceremony, family flexibility, trauma-informed practice	Friendship Centre + Nations	All training providers, employers	Q2 2026 onward	\$40K-\$55K per cohort (wellness coordination)	All cohorts have dedicated wellness support, 100% participant satisfaction
Expand Indigenous Guardian and blue economy programs from 5 to 25 participants annually	Indigenous Fishers First + Nations	Synergy, environmental agencies	2026-2027	\$150K-\$200K annually	25 Indigenous youth/adults in Guardian roles, \$800K+ blue economy enterprise revenue
Launch Indigenous youth employment pathways with cultural mentorship (15-25 year-olds)	Nations + Friendship Centre (Synergy as supporting partner)	Schools, employers, Friendship Centre	Q3 2026	\$100K-\$150K annually	40 Indigenous youth engaged, 25+ employed in circular economy roles

Budget Rationale for Guardian/Blue Economy Program (\$150K-\$200K annually):

- Guardian wages and benefits: \$90K-\$120K (4-6 Guardians at seasonal positions, \$22K-\$30K each)
- Equipment and vessel access: \$20K-\$30K (specialized marine tools, vessel rental for training/work)
- Training and certification: \$15K-\$20K (marine safety, ecological credentials, Indigenous protocols)
- Program coordination: \$12K-\$15K (1 FTE program manager)
- Elder and knowledge keeper honoraria: \$12K-\$15K (cultural expertise and guidance)

Budget Rationale for Indigenous Youth Employment Pathways (\$100K-\$150K annually):

- Youth wages and stipends: \$55K-\$75K (20 youth at \$2.7K-\$3.7K each in paid employment)
- Cultural programming and mentorship: \$18K-\$25K (cultural events, mentorship coordination, ceremony support)
- Equipment and materials: \$10K-\$15K (tools, technology, training resources)
- Transportation and food: \$10K-\$18K (shuttle service, meals during activities)
- Coordination with Friendship Centre: \$7K-\$17K (partnership administration, cultural liaison)

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Establish Indigenous-led training delivery hub within Centre of Excellence; hire 3-4 Indigenous instructors and program coordinators	Indigenous governments	Centre of Excellence, NIC	2028-2029	\$200K-\$300K annually (salaries + cultural programming)	Indigenous hub operational, 2+ Indigenous-led programs, 50% Indigenous participant baseline
Develop Indigenous sustainable aquaculture and blue economy certification program (6-week micro-credential)	Indigenous Fishers First	Nations, environmental scientists, employers	2027-2028	\$180K-\$240K	Program delivered, 25+ Indigenous aquaculture specialists trained
Scale Ahousaht Nation-style tourism ventures from 75 to 120+ jobs across all Nations	Indigenous governments	Tourism operators, Synergy	2027-2030	\$250K-\$350K investment/coaching	120+ Indigenous tourism employment, \$2.2M+ revenue generation

Budget Rationale for Indigenous Training Delivery Hub (\$200K-\$300K annually):

- Indigenous instructor and coordinator salaries: \$120K-\$180K (3-4 positions)
- Cultural programming, ceremony, and elder engagement: \$30K-\$45K
- Facility costs within Centre of Excellence: \$20K-\$30K (shared space allocation)
- Program materials and equipment: \$15K-\$25K
- Administration and reporting: \$15K-\$20K

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Indigenous Nations lead majority of workforce development programming; all programs deliver in both English and Indigenous languages	Indigenous governments	Centre of Excellence, all providers	2032-2035	\$100K-\$150K annually (translation, cultural programming)	75%+ Indigenous leadership in training delivery, language programming integrated
Establish Indigenous community investment fund generating \$500K+ annually for youth and family supports	Indigenous governments	NEDC, social enterprises, employers	2033-2035	Self-sustaining through fund returns	Fund generating \$500K+ annually, supporting 200+ Indigenous youth/families

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

5.3 Pillar 3: Barrier Removal and Wrap-Around Supports

This pillar ensures that every participant in training and employment has access to transportation, food, childcare, housing support, mental health services, and digital devices. Removing barriers is as important as building skills.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

[Note: expanded supports below are planned for 2027+ training cycles; 2026 cohorts operate on existing CROI funding with lighter-touch wrap-around supports.]

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Establish training support fund providing \$20/day food stipends, laptop loans, and transportation subsidies for all participants	WorkBC + Synergy	Funders, employment services	Q2 2026	\$120K-\$160K annually	100% of active training participants receive supports, zero dropouts due to barriers
Develop shuttle/transportation plan for training sites not served by transit	Local government	Employers, transit authority, Synergy	Q3 2026	\$35K-\$55K annually	Transportation available for all active programs, 95%+ participant attendance
Embed on-site counselling and trauma-informed support in all workforce programs	Friendship Centre	Mental health services, Nations, Synergy	Q2 2026	\$60K-\$90K annually	All cohorts have dedicated mental health support, 90%+ completion rates
Launch digital skills and workplace readiness module as standard intake for all training cohorts	NIC	Synergy, WorkBC, Friendship Centre	Q3 2026	\$25K-\$40K	Module delivered to all cohorts, 100% digital literacy baseline established

Budget Rationale for Training Support Fund (\$120K-\$160K annually):

- Food stipends: \$60K-\$80K (100 participants × \$20/day × average 30 training days)
- Transportation shuttle service: \$25K-\$35K (vehicle lease, fuel, driver wages)
- Laptop loan program: \$15K-\$20K (30 laptops at \$500-\$650 each)
- Emergency financial supports: \$12K-\$15K (contingency for unforeseen participant hardship)
- Administration: \$8K-\$10K (program coordination, tracking, reporting)

Budget Rationale for On-Site Wellness Support (\$60K-\$90K annually):

- Wellness coordinator salary and benefits: \$40K-\$55K (1 FTE with mental health or social work background)
- Trauma-informed training for all staff: \$8K-\$12K (annual professional development)
- Counselling referral coordination: \$6K-\$10K (liaison with mental health services, follow-up support)
- Cultural support activities: \$6K-\$13K (ceremony, peer support groups, healing practices)

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

[Synergy’s post-March-2027 role is convener and technical partner; leadership transitions to Governance Council and Centre of Excellence]

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Advocate for and support expanded childcare capacity including shift-based care (7am-7pm) aligned with healthcare and industrial work patterns	Local government	School District, childcare providers, Synergy, employers	2029-2030	\$350K-\$500K capital, \$200K+ annual operational	35+ new shift-aligned childcare spaces open
Develop workforce housing strategy aligned with housing needs analysis, prioritizing housing for trainees and essential workers	Local government	IGV Housing, CMHC, BC Housing, Synergy	2029-2031	\$1M-\$1.5M leveraged capital	150+ workforce housing units in pipeline, 20+ units operational for trainees
Establish emergency financial support fund for participants facing unexpected hardship (rent, medical, family crisis)	Community foundations	Employers, local government, Synergy	2027-2028	\$75K-\$100K annually (growing to \$150K by 2030)	Fund deployed to 15+ participants annually with 90%+ return-to-program rate

Budget Rationale for Childcare Expansion (\$350K-\$500K capital):

- Facility renovation for shift-based spaces: \$200K-\$300K
- Equipment, licensing, and startup: \$75K-\$100K
- First-year operating subsidy: \$75K-\$100K (transitioning to provincial childcare funding)

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Integrate wrap-around supports as fully embedded cost of workforce programs; no participant faces barriers to participation or employment	Centre of Excellence	All key contributors	2032-2034	\$25/participant/day (2026 dollars; inflation-adjusted at delivery) embedded in all programs	100% barrier-free participation, 95%+ employment outcomes
Develop affordable housing for 150+ workforce participants and essential workers (partnerships with IGV Housing, BC Housing)	Local government	IGV Housing, CMHC, Synergy	2032-2036	\$500K-\$1M catalytic investment (leveraging provincial/federal housing programs)	150+ housing units available, 100+ occupied by trained workers

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

5.4 Pillar 4: Employer Engagement and Industry Partnerships

This pillar formalizes employer partnerships, establishes an Employer Consortium, and creates mechanisms for co-investment, work placements, mentorship, and facility sharing that embed employers as partners in workforce development.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Establish Port Alberni [Coordinated with AV WorkBC to leverage existing employer-facing services and avoid duplication] Employer Consortium (IGV Housing, AMIX Group, Indigenous Fishers First, tourism operators, environmental orgs) with formal charter	Founding employers (IGV, AMIX Group)	Core employer group, Synergy	Q2 2026 (3–5 founding members by Q2; expand to 10+ and sign charter by Q4)	\$40K startup + coordination	Consortium chartered, 10+ major employers committed, quarterly meetings
Formalize work placement partnerships guaranteeing 12+ placements per training cohort (6-week paid internships leading to hiring)	Employer Consortium	All employers, Synergy, NIC	Q3 2026 (13 IGV placements confirmed; additional placements framed as pipeline-to-hire)	\$120K-\$160K annually (employer co-investment through in-kind)	12+ placements per cohort, 70%+ conversion to employment
Develop employer mentor and coaching program; train employer representatives to mentor participants (7-hour orientation + ongoing support)	Employer Consortium	NIC, Synergy	Q4 2026	\$40K-\$60K annually	20+ trained mentors, 100% participant mentor match
Negotiate facility-sharing agreements with employers (use of equipment, warehouses, workshop space for training)	Employer Consortium	IGV Housing, AMIX Group, port authority, tourism operators, Synergy	Q2-Q4 2026	\$0 cost (in-kind), \$25K coordination	4+ facility-sharing agreements signed, reducing facility costs by 40%

Budget Rationale for Employer Consortium (\$40K startup, \$75K annually):

- Consortium coordinator (part-time): \$25K-\$35K (0.5-0.75 FTE program management)

- Employer engagement events and meetings: \$8K-\$12K (quarterly meetings, networking events)
- Charter development and legal: \$5K-\$8K (one-time legal fees, governance framework)
- Communications and outreach: \$5K-\$8K (newsletters, website, promotional materials)
- Administrative costs: \$5K-\$7K (staff time, materials, coordination)

Budget Rationale for Work Placement Partnerships (\$120K-\$160K annually):

- Placement coordination (1 FTE job developer): \$45K-\$55K (role specialization in employer relations)
- Employer onboarding and mentoring supports: \$20K-\$28K (training materials, mentor coordination)
- Participant workplace equipment and safety gear: \$15K-\$25K (equipment provided to participants)
- Placement insurance and liability: \$12K-\$18K (coverage for work placements)
- Evaluation and reporting: \$8K-\$12K (tracking outcomes, documentation)
- Transportation to work sites: \$20K-\$25K (shuttle service during placement period)

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Scale Employer Consortium to 20+ active member organizations with formal co-investment commitments (\$500K+ annually)	Employer Consortium	All members, Synergy	2027-2028	\$75K coordination + administration	20+ employers, \$500K+ annual co-investment, dedicated HR liaison roles
Develop apprenticeship pathway with formal employer sponsorship (2-3 year apprenticeships following micro-credentials)	Employer Consortium	NIC, ITA, Synergy	2027-2029	\$600K-\$800K total (employer cost-shared)	25+ apprenticeships active, 90%+ completion and journey person certification
Establish employer innovation lab for circular economy business development (coaching, funding, supply chain connections)	Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) + Employer Consortium	Business development orgs, Synergy	2028-2029	\$90K-\$140K annually	5-6 new circular economy enterprises launched, \$1.5M+ capital mobilized

Budget Rationale for Apprenticeship Pathways (\$600K-\$800K total over 3 years, employer cost-shared):

- Training delivery costs (NIC + employer share): \$300K-\$375K
- Apprentice wage subsidies during training blocks: \$150K-\$200K
- Tools, safety equipment, and certification costs: \$75K-\$100K
- Program coordination and ITA liaison: \$75K-\$125K
- Note: Employers contribute 40-50% through paid work terms and supervision

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Centre of Excellence operated with 50%+ employer governance and financial contribution; employers fully integrated into curriculum design	Centre of Excellence Board	Employer Consortium	2032-2034	\$500K+ annual employer co-investment	Employer governance formally embedded, curriculum refreshed annually by employers
Establish \$3M+ regional circular economy supply chain network connecting Port Alberni suppliers with larger regional employers	Employer Consortium	Regional business councils, NEDC	2033-2036	\$350K-\$500K coordination and matchmaking	75+ Port Alberni suppliers in regional network, \$3M+ annual supply contracts

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

5.5 Pillar 5: Youth Pathways and Workforce Pipeline

This pillar creates early career exposure, innovation-focused programs, and Indigenous youth pathways that give young people (ages 15-30) visible portfolios of competencies and clear lines to employment.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Launch secondary school curriculum integration program with 5-week circular economy immersion in Grades 11-12	School District	NIC, employers, Synergy, Indigenous governments	Q1 2027	\$60K-\$80K development + delivery	Offered at 2 secondary schools, 40+ students engaged
Establish youth employment bridge program (ages 15-24) with subsidized first job placement and mentorship (12-week model)	WorkBC + Employment Services	Youth organizations, employers, Friendship Centre, Synergy	Q2 2026	\$200K-\$250K annually	35+ youth placed, 80%+ retention through year 1
Launch Indigenous youth pathways with cultural mentorship, family support, and paid employment outcomes	Indigenous governments	Friendship Centre, employers, Synergy	Q3 2026	\$100K-\$150K annually	30+ Indigenous youth (15-25) engaged, 20+ in paid circular economy employment
Develop innovation-focused capstone projects for Grades 10-12; youth teams design and prototype circular economy solutions	School District + NIC	Employers, Synergy, Indigenous governments	2026-2027	\$35K-\$55K annually	Offered in 3+ schools, 8+ projects completed, 2+ projects piloted with employers

Budget Rationale for Youth Employment Bridge Program (\$200K-\$250K annually):

- Youth wages during bridge placements: \$100K-\$125K (30-35 youth at \$2.8K-\$3.5K each over 8 weeks)
- Program coordination: \$30K-\$40K (1 FTE program manager)
- Employer engagement and placement development: \$20K-\$28K (job development, employer onboarding)
- Mentorship and coaching: \$15K-\$20K (mentor training, ongoing support)
- Materials and equipment: \$12K-\$18K (training resources, technology)
- Transportation and food: \$15K-\$20K (shuttle service, meals during programs)
- Contingency (10%): \$8K-\$12K

Budget Rationale for Secondary School Curriculum Integration (\$60K-\$80K):

- Curriculum development consultant: \$25K-\$35K (expert instructional design)
- Teacher professional development: \$12K-\$18K (training workshops, certification)
- Materials and equipment for 1-2 pilot schools: \$12K-\$18K (supplies, tools, technology)
- Employer partnership coordination: \$8K-\$12K (liaison, site coordination)
- Evaluation: \$3K-\$5K (assessment and outcome measurement)

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Expand secondary integration to all 3 secondary schools in region; 120+ annual enrollment	School District	NIC, Synergy, employers	2027-2029	\$150K-\$200K annually	Curriculum in all schools, 120+ annual enrollment, 55%+ post-program employment
Scale youth employment bridge to 45-60 annual placements with advanced mentorship and leadership development	Employment Services + Centre of Excellence	All partners, Synergy	2027-2030	\$250K-\$350K annually	45-60 placements, 75%+ retention, leadership track for 15+ per year
Develop Indigenous youth sector-specific pathways (Guardian/stewardship, blue economy, green building, tourism)	Indigenous governments	All sector employers, Synergy	2028-2030	\$150K-\$220K annually	4+ pathway streams, 60+ Indigenous youth in circular economy employment

Budget Rationale for Youth Employment Bridge Scaling (\$250K-\$350K annually):

- Youth wages during bridge placements: \$125K-\$175K (45-60 youth at \$2.2K-\$3K each)
- Program coordination: \$45K-\$60K (1 FTE)
- Employer engagement and placement development: \$30K-\$40K
- Mentorship, coaching, and leadership development: \$22K-\$32K
- Materials, transportation, and food: \$20K-\$30K
- Contingency (10%): \$8K-\$13K

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Establish youth-led social enterprises (recycling, deconstruction, aquaculture, energy) with youth ownership and governance	Youth-led consortium	Synergy, employers, Indigenous governments	2032-2035	\$350K-\$500K seed capital (self-sustaining model)	3-4 youth enterprises operational, generating \$1.5M+ revenue, employing 75+ youth
Launch Post-Secondary Integration Initiative: all Port Alberni high school graduates have clear pathway to post-secondary credential or employment	School District + post-secondary	NIC, Centre of Excellence, employers	2033-2035	\$100K coordination + transition support	100% of graduates in pathway, 90%+ completion/employment rate

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

5.6 Pillar 6: Policy, Infrastructure, and Systems Alignment

This pillar advocates for and implements zoning reform, training facility development, childcare expansion, housing strategies, circular procurement policies, and education/training system redesign that enable all other pillars to succeed.

Short-Term Actions (2026-2027)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Present Workforce Development Plan to Port Alberni City Council, the ACRD Board, Tseshaht First Nation, and Hupačasath First Nation before October 2026 election; secure formal endorsement and corporate strategic plan integration	Synergy (with Indigenous governments pending presentation and buy-in)	Employers, community partners	Q2-Q3 2026	\$20K presentation + engagement [Multiple Q2–Q3 2026 presentations planned: Port Alberni City Council, ACRD Board, Tseshaht Chief and Council, Hupačasath Chief and Council, and Employer Consortium]	Plan presented, endorsed by council, included in corporate strategic plan
Advocate for zoning bylaw reform to permit circular economy training facilities, deconstruction, aquaculture, and renewable energy in appropriate zones	Local government	Synergy, employers, planning consultants	Q3 2026–Q1 2027	\$50K–\$75K professional planning support	Zoning review completed, circular economy uses permitted in 2+ zones
Establish municipal circular procurement policy requiring 10% of city contracts for certified circular economy suppliers/services	Local government	Synergy, Employer Consortium	Q4 2026	\$20K policy development	Policy adopted, baseline procurement data collected
Secure access to public facilities for training delivery (Gyro Youth Centre, Trade Bay Vocational Centre, secondary school spaces)	Local government	Synergy, school district, employers	Q2-Q3 2026	\$0 cost (facility allocation)	Facilities agreements signed, training underway by Q3 2026

Budget Rationale for Zoning Reform (\$50K-\$75K):

- Professional planning consultant: \$25K-\$40K (specialist expertise in zoning and land use)
- Community engagement and consultation: \$12K-\$18K (meetings, feedback sessions, communications)
- Legal review and bylaw drafting: \$10K-\$15K (legal fees, bylaw revision)
- Administrative support: \$3K-\$5K (staff time, documentation)

Medium-Term Actions (2027-2030)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Secure capital funding and land for permanent Centre of Excellence facility (8,000-10,000 sq ft) with integrated classrooms, workshops, office, and commons	Local government + Synergy	Provincial/federal funding agencies, employers	2027-2028	\$1.5M-\$2.2M capital (leveraged from Green Municipal Fund, CROI, provincial grants)	Site selected, funding secured, construction initiated by end 2028
Implement childcare expansion plan: 20+ new spaces including shift-based care (7am-7pm) aligned with employer schedules	Local government	School District, childcare operators, employers, Synergy	2029-2030	\$350K-\$500K capital, \$200K+ annual operations	20+ new spaces operational, integrated with training program schedules
Initiate workforce housing development strategy: 150+ units pipeline with 30+ units for trainees and essential workers	Local government	IGV Housing, CMHC, BC Housing, developers, Synergy	2028-2030	\$300K planning + leveraged partnerships	150+ units in planning/development pipeline, 20+ operational
Advocate for education system reform: integrate circular economy content K-12, formalize school-to-work transitions, establish dual-credit pathways	School District	NIC, Synergy, employers, Indigenous governments	2028-2029	\$100K curriculum integration support	Circular economy content K-12, dual-credit pathways in operation

Budget Rationale for Centre of Excellence Capital (see Pillar 1 for detailed breakdown):

- Capital costs detailed under Pillar 1: \$900K-\$1.3M phased
- Municipal contribution: in-kind land/building access (reducing capital requirements)
- Green Municipal Fund application targets \$500K-\$900K in loans + grants

Long-Term Actions (2031-2036)

Action	Lead	Partners	Timeline	Budget	KPI
Centre of Excellence facility operational, fully functional with 6+ concurrent programs and 120+ annual training completions	Centre of Excellence	All key contributors	2032-2033	\$300K-\$450K annual operating budget (self-sustaining by 40%+ by 2036)	Facility fully operational, 120+ annual completions, 80%+ employment rate
Workforce housing fully operational: 150+ units for trainees and essential workers integrated with training program completion	Local government	Housing partners, Synergy	2034-2036	\$300K-\$400K annual housing operations/support	150+ units operational, 85%+ occupancy by trained workers
Port Alberni recognized as provincial centre of excellence for circular economy workforce development; model shared with other BC regions	Centre of Excellence	BC government, other regions, employers	2034-2036	\$150K-\$200K annually (knowledge transfer, coaching)	Recognition earned, 2+ regions engaging with model, 10+ inter-regional partnerships

Long-term budget projections (2031-2036) are indicative and will be refined through Phase 1 and 2 results. Costs are expected to decline as the Centre of Excellence achieves self-sufficiency through earned revenue, employer co-investment matures, and programs become embedded in institutional budgets. The figures above represent the grant-funded portion only; total program value including employer contributions, in-kind support, and earned revenue is projected to be 40-60% higher.

7. Funding and Investment Strategy

Delivering the Workforce Development Plan requires a total estimated investment of \$9 million to \$13 million over 10 years. This section provides detailed funding source profiles, an alignment matrix mapping pillars to optimal funding programs, a quarter-by-quarter application timeline, and a sustainability strategy transitioning from grant dependency to self-sustaining revenue models.

7.1 Budget Summary

Short-Term (1-2 Years)	Medium-Term (3-5 Years)	Long-Term (6-10 Years)
\$2.2M - \$3.0M	\$3.5M - \$4.8M	\$3.0M - \$4.5M

7.2 Key Funding Sources and Program Profiles

Canada Retraining Opportunities Initiative (CROI)

Status: Already funding Port Alberni. Allocation: \$30M over 2 years nationally. CROI is designed specifically to support workforce development in regions experiencing economic transition, making Port Alberni an ideal fit. This plan can be leveraged to extend and expand CROI funding beyond initial allocations. Contact: ESDC regional office.

Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG)

Provider funding: Up to \$300K per training provider per intake period. Per-participant funding: Up to \$20K per participant. Intake: Through BC fiscal year (April-March). Timeline: Intakes 1-4 in spring 2026, Intake 5 in fall 2026, new fiscal year intakes spring 2027. This program is ideal for NIC and training provider scaling. Port Alberni can apply for multiple intakes to fund 150+ participants annually.

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISET)

Covers tuition, mandatory fees, living expenses, childcare, travel, and other costs for Indigenous participants. Intake: May-December 2026 and ongoing. Particularly suited for Pillars 2 and 5 (Indigenous leadership and youth pathways). Can fund up to 100+ Indigenous participants annually if fully leveraged.

Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program (SWSP)

Funding: \$94.5M over 5 years for sector-specific training aligned to employer demand. Application window: Multiple calls annually. SWSP is ideal for maritime, green building, and environmental restoration programs. Employers must be co-signers and demonstrate commitment to hiring. One application could fund \$500K+ annually for maritime training alone.

BC Employer Training Grant (ETG)

Employer funding: Up to \$10K per employee, up to \$300K per employer annually. Cost share: 80% grant, 20% employer cost share. Ideal for employer-specific training and apprenticeships. IGV Housing, AMIX Group, and other core employers should apply to support their own trainee development.

StrongerBC Future Skills Grant

Per-participant: Up to \$3,500 per participant. Priority sectors: Clean Economy and Marine Transportation (both aligned to Port Alberni). Application: Rolling intake. This program can fund 100+ participants at \$350K+ annually.

BladeRunners Program

Age: 15-30 years. Program model: 4-6 weeks intensive with emergency supports (food, transportation, equipment, mental health). Provincial program with allocation across districts. Port Alberni can advocate for increased allocation and direct Blade Runners students into local training.

Canada Summer Jobs

Funding: \$594.7M over 2 years federally (2024-2026). Age: 15-30 year-olds. Priority: Green jobs. Excellent for youth summer employment and bridge programs. Port Alberni can fund 30+ summer positions annually through this program.

Green Municipal Fund (GMF)

Funding: \$1.65B total, with loans up to \$5M plus 15% grant for eligible projects. Ideal for Centre of Excellence facility, renewable energy training infrastructure, and deconstruction/circular economy facilities. GMF has funded 400+ projects nationally and is actively seeking applications.

New Relationship Trust (NRT) Indigenous Workforce Development Fund

New program opening May 2026. Designed specifically for Indigenous Nations and organizations. Intake: May-December 2026. Funds community-driven workforce development grounded in Indigenous governance. Critical for Pillar 2 expansion.

National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF)

Loans: Low-interest capital loans for affordable housing projects. Grant: Up to 25% of eligible costs. Ideal for workforce housing component (Pillar 3). CMHC is actively deploying capital through this fund.

SkilledTradesBC Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Targets Indigenous peoples and underrepresented groups. Funds pre-apprenticeship training leading to formal apprenticeships. Ideal for green building, maritime, and environmental restoration pathways.

7.3 Funding Alignment Matrix

The following table maps each strategic pillar to optimal funding programs and estimated available funding:

Pillar	Primary Funding Sources	Secondary Sources	Est. Available (Annual)	Window
1: Circular Economy Skills	CWRG, SWSP, CROI	STRB, Canada Summer Jobs, ETG	\$1.2M-\$1.5M	Year-round
2: Indigenous Leadership	ISET, NRT (new May 2026)	CWRG, CROI, foundation grants	\$800K-\$1M	May-Dec 2026
3: Barrier Removal	CWRG (supportive component), CROI	Community Futures, foundation grants, employer co-investment	\$400K-\$600K	Year-round
4: Employer Engagement	ETG, SWSP, employer co-investment	Innovation funding, business grants	\$500K-\$750K	Year-round
5: Youth Pathways	Canada Summer Jobs, BladeRunners, CWRG	Youth Foundation grants, school funding	\$600K-\$800K	Spring/Summer
6: Policy & Infrastructure	GMF (facility), NHCF (housing), CROI (capital)	Provincial capital grants, employer co-investment	\$2M-\$3M (capital heavy)	Project-specific

7.4 Funding Application Timeline by Quarter

Q2 2026 (April-June)

- **CWRG Intake 5:** Submit applications for Intake 5 (closes May 2026). Target 150 participants across green building, maritime, and trades programs. Budget: \$2M-\$2.5M.
- **Canada Summer Jobs:** Secure summer employment funding for 30+ youth (15-30). Budget: \$200K-\$250K.
- **BladeRunners coordination:** Meet with BladeRunners coordinator to establish target enrollment and program integration.

Q3 2026 (July-September)

- **New Relationship Trust (opens May 2026):** Submit applications for Indigenous-led workforce programs. Intakes through December 2026. Budget: \$500K-\$750K.
- **ISET engagement:** Formalize Indigenous participant enrollment targets and support service integration. Budget: \$600K-\$800K.
- **SWSP pre-application discussions:** Meet with sector associations (marine, green building) to align employer co-commitments for fall SWSP call.

Q4 2026 (October-December)

- **SWSP call for proposals:** Submit maritime operations and green building training proposals. Typical funding: \$500K-\$1.5M per sector. Budget: \$1.5M-\$2M.
- **BC ETG employer applications:** Support IGV Housing, AMIX Group, and other employers to submit ETG applications for apprenticeships and training. Budget: \$300K-\$400K (employer co-share).
- **Green Municipal Fund concept paper:** Submit early concept paper for Centre of Excellence facility. Budget: \$2M-\$3M potential.

Q1 2027 (January-March)

- **CWRG new fiscal year (BC FY 2027-28):** Submit applications for spring 2027 intake (deadline typically mid-February). Budget: \$2M-\$2.5M.
- **Green Municipal Fund full application:** Submit detailed application for Centre of Excellence facility and training infrastructure. Budget: \$2M-\$3M.
- **NHCF pre-application:** Begin workforce housing pre-application conversations with CMHC for 2027-28 funding window.
- **StrongerBC Future Skills Grant (rolling):** Ongoing applications for individual participant funding. Budget: \$250K-\$350K for spring cohorts.

Ongoing (All Years)

- **CROI continuation:** Maintain active CROI coordination; expand funding allocations for program scale-up.
- **ISET ongoing:** Rolling intake (not calendar-based). Maintain continuous enrollment of Indigenous participants.
- **Foundation grants:** Submit targeted grants to BC foundations for Indigenous programming, youth pathways, and barrier removal.
- **Employer co-investment:** Formalize employer co-investment through Employer Consortium (in-kind and cash contributions targeting \$500K+ annually by 2028).

7.5 Funding Sustainability Strategy

The plan's long-term vision includes a transition from grant dependency toward a self-sustaining model where 60%+ of ongoing operational costs are met through earned revenue, employer contribution, social enterprise revenue, municipal investment, and tuition—with no more than 40% dependent on competitive grants by 2036.

Year 1-2 (2026-2027): Grant Dominant

Percentage: 90% grant-funded, 10% employer/other co-investment. This phase focuses on program launch and scale-up through available federal and provincial programs (CROI, CWRG, SWSP, ISET, Canada Summer Jobs).

Year 3-5 (2028-2030): Mixed Funding

Percentage: 70% grant-funded, 30% earned/employer revenue. This phase expands employer co-investment through Employer Consortium (\$500K+ annually), launches initial social enterprise revenue (deconstruction, recycling), and begins tuition-based programs for accredited credentials.

Year 6-10 (2031-2036): Sustainable Model

Percentage: 40% grant-funded, 60% earned/employer/municipal revenue. This phase fully operationalizes the Centre of Excellence with multiple revenue streams: employer co-investment (\$750K+ annually), social enterprise revenue (\$500K+ from deconstruction and recycling), tuition/fee revenue (\$300K+ from accredited programs), municipal investment (\$250K+ annually), and foundational grants (\$400K-\$600K). This model provides resilience and reduces vulnerability to grant cycles.

Sustainability Revenue Streams

- **Employer co-investment (target \$750K+ annually by 2032):** Employer Consortium members commit to direct funding (training costs, apprenticeships), in-kind contributions (facilities, mentorship, equipment), and apprentice wages during training.
- **Social enterprise revenue (target \$500K+ annually by 2030):** Deconstruction operations, recycling/upcycling revenue, environmental restoration contracts, and aquaculture/blue economy ventures generate revenue reinvested in training.
- **Municipal investment (target \$250K+ annually by 2031):** Port Alberni budget allocation recognizes workforce development as strategic infrastructure investment with long-term tax base benefits.
- **Tuition and credential fees (target \$300K+ annually by 2030):** Accredited programs generate tuition revenue from participants able to pay and employer-sponsored participants.
- **Foundation grants (target \$400K-\$600K annually, ongoing):** Sustained foundation funding for Indigenous programming, youth pathways, and innovation initiatives (more targeted and less reliant on competitive cycles).
- **Philanthropic contributions:** Individual and corporate donations through Annual Fund and campaign-based giving focused on named initiatives (e.g., 'Indigenous Leadership Fund,' 'Youth Pathways Fund').

8. Implementation Roadmap: Quarter by Quarter

This roadmap depends on community leadership: scheduling council and Nation presentations, building and maintaining relationships with employers and training partners, and collaborating on funding applications. Synergy acts as convener/facilitator, not owner.

This section provides a detailed quarter-by-quarter roadmap from Q2 2026 through Q4 2027 (Phase 1), with overview timelines for Phases 2 and 3. Every action has a lead, a measurable milestone, and a success indicator.

Phase 1: Foundation (Q2 2026 – Q4 2027)

Q2 2026: Leadership and Governance

- **Establish Circular Economy Workforce Governance Council** (Lead: Synergy, Partners: NIC, Indigenous governments, employers, local government)
 - Convene founding members and secure formal terms of reference by end of month [Lead: Indigenous Governments and local Governments (Port Alberni, ACRD); Synergy in convening/support role. Founding work belongs to the community.]
 - Establish Indigenous co-leadership structure; Indigenous Nations hold 50%+ of governance positions
 - Secure operational budget (\$50K for coordination and meetings)
 - Success indicator: Governance council operational with quarterly meeting schedule
- Partners include Tseshaht First Nation, Hupačasath First Nation, ACRD Board, and Employer Consortium. **Present Workforce Development Plan to Port Alberni City Council, the ACRD Board, Tseshaht First Nation, and Hupačasath First Nation** (Lead: Synergy, Partners: Employer Consortium, Local Governments and community partners)
- Secure formal council endorsement and corporate strategic plan integration
- Success indicator: Plan endorsed by council before October 2026 election
- **Formalize Employer Consortium with Charter** (Lead: Synergy, Core members: IGV Housing, AMIX Group, Indigenous Fishers First, tourism operators, Coastal Restoration Society)
- Recruit founding members and secure commitment letters
- Draft and adopt Consortium Charter with co-investment targets (\$50K+ per employer annually)
- Establish quarterly meeting schedule
- Success indicator: 10+ employers formally committed with signed charter

Q3 2026: Program Design and Partner Alignment

- **Launch Green Building Training Cohort 1 [Actuals: Green Building Manufacturing Cohort 1 ran March 10 – April 14, 2026 (5 weeks, 15 participants, all 15 completed); Green Building Manufacturing Cohort 2 runs May 19 – June 19, 2026 (5 weeks, 15 participants)]** (Lead: NIC, Partners: IGV Housing, Synergy, Employment Services)
- Finalize 5-week curriculum
- Recruit 15 participants with priority to displaced workers and Indigenous candidates (July intake)
- Program runs July 21 – August 25, 2026 (5 weeks)
- Success indicator: Cohort 1 delivers as scheduled with 15 completions
- **Formalize and Launch Maritime Training Program [Actuals: Maritime Training Program Cohort runs June 8 – July 8, 2026 (4.5 weeks, 12 participants)]** (Lead: Coastal Restoration Society, Partners: NIC, Port Alberni port authority, Employment Services, Synergy). AMIX Group partnership is a next-step outreach, not yet formalized) and secure AMIX Group partnership

- Develop detailed 4.5 week maritime curriculum covering vessel operations, safety (STCW), restoration & remediation
- Recruit instructors (ideally with recent maritime industry experience)
- Launch Cohort 1: August/September 2026 intake
- Success indicator: Maritime Cohort 1 delivers as scheduled with 12 completions
- **Secure Training Support Fund and Implement Wrap-Around Supports** (Lead: Synergy, Partners: Employment Services, Friendship Centre, NIC)
- Secure funding commitments for the 2027+ cycle supports fund — target \$150K-\$200K for food (\$20/day), transportation, laptop loans, wellness support [current 2026 cohorts operate on existing CROI funding]
- Implement for all training cohorts starting Q3 2026
- Establish shuttle transportation routes serving training sites
- Embed wellness coordinator in each cohort once new funding is secured (2027+)
- Success indicator: All active participants receive full wrap-around support package
- **Indigenous Leadership Integration Begins** (Lead: Indigenous governments + Synergy, Partners: All training providers)
- Place Indigenous co-facilitators in all training cohorts by September 2026
- Develop wellness coordinator position and hire first coordinator
- Establish Indigenous-led culture and ceremony integration in all programs
- Success indicator: Indigenous leadership visible in all programs by September 2026

Q4 2026: Bylaw and Infrastructure Improvement

- **Zoning Bylaw Review Initiated** (Lead: Local government planning, Partners: Synergy, employers)
- Commission zoning review focused on circular economy uses (training, deconstruction, aquaculture, renewable energy)
- Complete review by end of Q4 2026
- Bring proposed zoning amendments to council January 2027
- Success indicator: Zoning review completed and amendments drafted by Q1 2027
- **Facility Securement for Centre of Excellence Begins** (Lead: Local government, Partners: Synergy, employers, provincial government)
- Identify potential sites for permanent Centre of Excellence (8,000-10,000 sq ft)
- Begin conversations with Green Municipal Fund about capital support
- Success indicator: Preferred site identified and pre-application discussions underway by end of 2026

Q1 2027: Youth Engagement and Support

- **Launch Indigenous Youth Employment Pathways Program** (Lead: Indigenous governments + Synergy, Partners: Friendship Centre, employers, schools)
- Develop youth-focused program design (ages 15-25) with cultural mentorship
- Recruit first cohort of 20 Indigenous youth (targeted for September 2027 enrollment)
- Launch with paid employment guarantee through Employer Consortium
- Success indicator: 20+ Indigenous youth engaged and 12+ in paid employment by end of 2027
- **Secondary School Curriculum Integration Planning** (Lead: School District, Partners: NIC, Synergy, employers, Indigenous governments)
- Meet with secondary school principals to secure buy-in for curriculum integration
- Begin developing Grade 11-12 circular economy curriculum (5-week immersion model)

- Pilot curriculum in one secondary school, launch January 2028
- Success indicator: Curriculum framework drafted and pilot school secured by end of 2027
- **Green Building Cohort 2 and Maritime Cohort 2 Deliver** (Lead: NIC, CRS, Partners: Synergy, employers)
- Second cohorts of both programs deliver with refinements from Cohort 1 feedback
- Expand to 40+ total participants in two major sectors [IGV Housing has committed to hire 30 program graduates; additional placements pending confirmation with employer partners across green building, marine, and tourism sectors and are framed as pipeline-to-hire.]
- Success indicator: Both Cohort 2s deliver on schedule with full retention
- **Secondary School Curriculum Pilot Launches** (Lead: School District, Partners: NIC, Synergy, employers)
- Grade 11-12 circular economy immersion begins January 2027
- Target 25 students in first pilot cohort
- Success indicator: Pilot cohort engaged with positive school and employer feedback
- **Centre of Excellence Green Municipal Fund Application Submitted** (Lead: Local government + Synergy, Partners: Provincial government, employers)
- Complete detailed GMF application with architectural plans, budget, and sustainability plan
- Submit by March 2027 deadline
- Success indicator: Application submitted with strong community support documented
- **Funding Applications in Progress** (Lead: Synergy, Partners: NIC, employers)
- CWRG new fiscal year Intake 1 submitted (deadline mid-February)
- SWSP pre-applications for 2027-28 funding cycle
- ETG employer applications from IGV Housing and AMIX Group
- Success indicator: \$5M+ in applications submitted
- **Employer Co-Investment Formalized** (Lead: Synergy, Partners: Employer Consortium)
- Secure \$250K-\$350K in employer co-investment commitments for 2027
- Co-investment covers facility use, mentorship, apprentice support, training sponsorship
- Success indicator: Employer Consortium commitments secured in writing

Q2-Q4 2027: Consolidation and Preparation for Scale

- **Multi-Sector Training Delivery Expands:** 3+ concurrent training cohorts across green building, maritime, and emerging sectors (environmental restoration, renewable energy). Target 75+ participants annually by end of 2027.
- **Indigenous Programming Expands:** Guardian and blue economy programs scale to 30+ participants. Indigenous youth employment pathways place 25+ youth in paid employment. Wellness and cultural integration fully embedded.
- **Youth Engagement Deepens:** Secondary school curriculum expanded to 2+ schools with 50+ students. Youth employment bridge program places 30+ participants. Innovation projects in development with 5+ employer partners.
- **Centre of Excellence Site Secured:** Land acquisition or long-term lease completed. Design and engineering underway. Construction timeline established for 2028-2029.
- **Policy Reforms in Progress:** Zoning amendments adopted. Circular procurement policy implemented. Childcare expansion planning underway.

Phase 2: Delivery (2028-2030)

Note: The following Phase 2 overview represents strategic directions informed by current evidence. A detailed Phase 2 Implementation Plan should be developed in Q1-Q2 2028, led by the Governance Council, incorporating Phase 1 evaluation results, updated funding landscapes, and recalibrated budgets based on actual delivery costs and outcomes.

Strategic directions for Phase 2 include: scaling to 4-6 concurrent training cohorts across 5 circular economy sectors, targeting 150+ annual training completions, opening the Centre of Excellence facility (2029), scaling Indigenous programs to 75+ annual participants, and expanding youth summer employment to 80+. Estimated investment: \$3.5M-\$4.8M over three years. Key outcome: 80%+ employment placement rate; Port Alberni positioned as regional training hub.

Phase 3: Scale And Transform (2031-2036)

Note: Phase 3 planning should commence in Year 4 (2030), building on the Phase 2 Implementation Plan and incorporating lessons from three to four years of program delivery. This planning process should engage all Governance Council members and include external evaluation of outcomes, sustainability modelling, and provincial-level policy alignment discussions.

Strategic aspirations for Phase 3 include: Centre of Excellence achieving 40%+ self-funding through earned revenue, expanding to 6+ annual training cohorts with 200+ annual completions, Indigenous Nations leading 50%+ of programming, youth-led social enterprises contributing to local employment, workforce housing operational, and 800+ circular economy workers trained over the decade. Port Alberni positioned for recognition as a provincial centre of excellence with potential for model replication in other BC regions.

Critical Path: First 90 Days (May 1 – July 31, 2026)

Success in the first 90 days is essential to program momentum and partner credibility. The following actions must be completed by July 31, 2026:

- **Governance and Leadership (May 2026):**
 - Establish and operationalize Circular Economy Workforce Governance Council
 - Secure Indigenous co-leadership (50%+ Indigenous decision-making authority)
 - Formalize Employer Consortium Charter with 10+ founding members
- **Program Launch (March-July 2026): [All three 2026 cohorts — two Green Building Manufacturing cohorts plus one Maritime Industry Training cohort — scheduled to complete by end of July 2026]**
 - Finalize and approve green building curriculum
 - Recruit 15 participants for green building Cohort 1 (launch July 21)
 - Hire 1 program coordinator (funded, in progress); wellness coordinator subject to future funding (2027+) (Roles: program coordinators handle participant recruitment, employer liaison, attendance and stipend administration, and reporting; the wellness coordinator — Indigenous-identified — embeds in cohorts to provide trauma-informed support, ceremony and family-flexibility coordination, and counselling referrals. Current state: 1 program coordinator funded under CROI; wellness coordinator role contingent on 2027+ funding.)
 - Secure training support fund (\$150K-\$200K) [existing CROI allocation for 2026 cohorts; new \$150K-\$200K ask is for 2027+ cycles] and begin allocating to participants
- **Partner Commitments (May-June 2026):**
 - Secure council endorsement of Workforce Development Plan
 - Formalize IGV Housing and AMIX Group facility and partnership agreements
 - Confirm employment/wraparound support partner commitments (employment services, Friendship Centre, transportation)

- **Funding (May-July 2026):** [Leads: NIC and Coastal Restoration Society lead their respective program applications; NETP leads Indigenous training applications; Synergy in convening/supporting role rather than sole lead.]
- Submit CWRG applications for Intakes 4 and 5
- Submit Canada Summer Jobs applications for 30+ youth positions
- Begin SWSP pre-application discussions with marine and green building sector associations

Success Metrics: End Of Phase 1 (December 2027)

Outcome Area	Target by End 2027	Success Indicator
Training Participants Completed	90-120 (2-3 cohorts across 2 sectors)	75+ employed in circular economy roles
Indigenous Participants	30-40 in training + employment programs	70%+ employment or further education
Youth Engagement	60-80 youth in programs (education + employment)	60%+ in paid employment or post-secondary
Employer Consortium	10-12 active employers, \$200K-\$300K co-investment	Work placements guarantee met (12+ per cohort)
Funding Mobilized	\$3.5M-\$4.5M in grants and co-investment	Grant diversification across 5+ funding sources
Policy/Infrastructure	Zoning reformed, Centre site secured, GMF application submitted	Clear path to Centre of Excellence operational by 2029

9. Moving Forward Together

Port Alberni and the ACRD region has every ingredient needed to build a workforce that is the envy of communities across British Columbia: a skilled trades foundation refined through generations of resource sector employment, exceptional environmental assets spanning deep-sea port, agricultural land, and aquaculture operations, Indigenous Nations ready to lead with cultural authority and economic vision, employers eager to hire and invest in local talent, training providers ready to innovate delivery models, and a community identity forged in resilience and resourcefulness.

What has been missing is a plan that turns these strengths into coordinated, funded, accountable action. This Workforce Development Plan provides that plan. It is grounded in evidence from the 2025 Labour Market Study, shaped by the voices of over 30 key contributors who told us what they need, what they can offer, and what must change. It is concrete: every action names leads and partners, sets timelines and budgets, and defines what success looks like. This is not a wish list—it is a work plan for shared ownership and collective accountability.

The actions in this plan are already underway. Green building and maritime training programs are enrolling participants in Q2 2026. The governance structures described here can be stood up within weeks. Employer partnerships are ready to be formalized. Indigenous Nations are positioned to lead. The question is not whether Port Alberni can build a circular economy workforce, but whether the region's partners will seize the moment and commit to the sustained, coordinated effort this transformation requires.

The Moment is Now

188,600 job openings are projected across the Vancouver Island and Coast region over the next decade. Canada's circular economy represents a \$6.1 trillion opportunity by 2030. 2026 is identified as a pivotal year for circular economy acceleration. Port Alberni, with its deep trades expertise, circular economy assets, and mobilized community partners, is uniquely positioned to capture a disproportionate share of this growth—if it acts now.

Synergy Foundation is committed to leading the coordination of this plan and to working alongside every partner named in these pages. We invite employers, training institutions, Indigenous Nations, local government, support organizations, and community members to step forward and claim their role in building the strongest workforce Port Alberni has ever had.

Appendix A: Acronyms and Funder Glossary

Port Alberni Circular Economy Workforce Development Plan (2026–2036)

This appendix defines the funder, program, and organizational acronyms referenced throughout the Port Alberni Circular Economy Workforce Development Plan. It is intended as a quick reference for readers reviewing the funding alignment matrix, the quarterly application timeline, and the strategic pillar action tables. Funding programs are listed alphabetically in the first table; other acronyms used in the plan are listed alphabetically in the second table.

A.1 Funding Programs and Funders

Acronym	Full Name and Description
BC ETG	BC Employer Training Grant — provincial program providing employers with up to \$10,000 per employee (up to \$300,000 per employer annually) on an 80/20 cost-share basis to support employee training.
BladeRunners	Provincial youth employment program (ages 15–30) delivering 4–6 week intensive training with emergency supports including food, transportation, equipment, and mental health services.
Canada Summer Jobs	Federal wage subsidy program supporting employers to create summer job opportunities for youth aged 15–30, with priority placement in green jobs.
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation — federal Crown corporation administering the National Housing Co-Investment Fund and other affordable housing programs.
CROI	Canada Retraining Opportunities Initiative — federal program supporting workforce development in regions experiencing economic transition; the funding source underpinning the current Port Alberni initiative.
CWRG	Community Workforce Response Grant — provincial program providing up to \$300,000 per training provider per intake and up to \$20,000 per participant; intakes follow the BC fiscal year (April–March).
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada — federal department administering CROI and other workforce-related funding programs.
ETG	See BC ETG (BC Employer Training Grant).
GMF	Green Municipal Fund — federally capitalized fund administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, offering loans up to \$5 million plus a 15% grant for eligible sustainability and circular economy projects.
ISET	Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program — federal program covering tuition, mandatory fees, living expenses, childcare, travel, and other costs for Indigenous participants in skills training.

Acronym	Full Name and Description
NHCF	National Housing Co-Investment Fund — federal CMHC program providing low-interest capital loans and grants of up to 25% of eligible costs for affordable housing projects.
NRT	New Relationship Trust — Indigenous-led organization administering the Indigenous Workforce Development Fund, with intakes opening May 2026 to support community-driven workforce development grounded in Indigenous governance.
SkilledTradesBC Pre-Apprenticeship Program	Provincial program targeting Indigenous peoples and underrepresented groups, funding pre-apprenticeship training that leads to formal apprenticeships.
StrongerBC Future Skills Grant	Provincial program providing up to \$3,500 per participant on a rolling intake, with priority for the Clean Economy and Marine Transportation sectors.
SWSP	Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program — federal program (\$94.5 million over 5 years) funding sector-specific training aligned to employer demand; requires employer co-signers and demonstrated commitment to hiring.

A.2 Other Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full Name and Description
ACRD	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District — the regional district encompassing Port Alberni and surrounding electoral areas referenced throughout the labour market profile.
AV WorkBC	Alberni Valley WorkBC — the regional WorkBC Employment Services Centre serving the Alberni Valley.
INEO	Indigenous Network for Economic Opportunities — partner organization referenced in the Governance Council and training delivery context.
ITA	Industry Training Authority (now operating as SkilledTradesBC) — the provincial body responsible for trades training and apprenticeship in British Columbia.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator.
NEDC	Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation — Indigenous economic development organization that has deployed over \$160 million in loans over 40 years to support local enterprise.
NETP	Nuu-chah-nulth Employment and Training Program — Indigenous training and employment service provider serving Nuuchahnulth Nations and members.

Acronym	Full Name and Description
NIC	North Island College — the post-secondary training partner delivering the Green Building & Manufacturing and Maritime Industry training cohorts.
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment — safety gear (boots, hi-vis vest, hard hat, etc.) provided to training participants.
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping — international maritime certifications required for vessel operations work.
WCMRC	Western Canada Marine Response Corporation — partner organization delivering marine spill response training through the Coastal Restoration Society.
WDP	Workforce Development Plan — this document.

Note on funding amounts and timelines: All program parameters (per-participant amounts, intake windows, fund totals) reflect information available at the time of plan development (May 2026). Readers preparing applications should confirm current parameters directly with the administering body before submission, as program guidelines are periodically updated.

For More Information

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