



SkillsPlus

Project Description

Greater Victoria employers can address the continual need to engage and retain employees by participating in a project designed to improve Essential Skills in the workplace. The SkillsPlus project also gives up to 40 eligible employees the opportunity to boost their skills.

Small businesses in the retail/wholesale/grocery and tourism/hospitality sectors are invited to take part in a joint project of the Victoria READ Society and the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. Funding is through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

The READ Society and the Community Council have independently examined employment and literacy issues that affect employers and employees during the last three years. That work combined with international research on best practices has shown that improving Essential Skills can benefit both employers and employees.

Through this project, additional training in Essential Skills such as computer use, reading and numeracy will be built into work-based training. Employers who have invested in Essential Skills training have seen accuracy, productivity, and safety improve as employees' self-confidence, loyalty and flexibility increase.

How does the SkillsPlus project work?

Employer and employee needs are first identified through small business and individual needs assessments. Next, customized Essential Skills programs are created and delivered. Training delivery can take place on-the-job in the workplace or wherever and whenever most suits participant needs. This approach demonstrates how Essential Skills programs can be tailored to assist employers and employees across the region

The READ Society is expanding its workplace offerings by developing an organizational needs assessment tool to help small employers identify the best focus for their training dollars. READ's workplace educators will design and deliver training programs that are aligned with business goals, and relevant to employee needs.

The Community Council is contributing and building on its findings from the *Labour Market Dialogues, Phases I-III*, which researched and documented a series of concrete tips and strategies to help employers welcome people facing barriers to



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employment. In the SkillsPlus project, the Community Council will continue to engage employers, provide quarterly economic reports and feature employer success stories in its e-newsletter, *The Employer Challenge*.



Why Essential Skills Improvement?

With a shift in the Canadian economy from manufacturing and natural resources to a knowledge-based economy, continuous learning is crucial. Essential skills are needed in order for Canadians to keep pace with the continuous change in today's world of work. Essential skills include reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning. These skills can be developed at increasing levels of complexity throughout life. They provide the foundation for all other learning and enable people to adapt as their jobs change.

Participate in This Project

Up to five Greater Victoria small businesses in the retail/wholesale/grocery and tourism/hospitality sectors are candidates for participation. Training opportunities may be developed and delivered for up to 40 eligible employees. Help with childcare and transportation costs may be available for employees. Call us to see how we can help each other.

The READ Society and the Community Council also offer:

- Expert advice
- Community presentations
- Resources
- Workplace learning educators
- Economic analysis
- Recognition of workplaces that strive to improve literacy
- More at www.readsociety.bc.ca and <http://www.communitycouncil.ca>

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